

Suffering for Christ's Sake

2 Timothy 3:10-15

Introduction: *"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution"* (2 Tim. 3:12). After relating his own persecutions, Paul points out that his case was not peculiar. It is the common lot of all believers who wish to live a godly life. Call it a rite of passage for we must all suffer for Christ's sake.

I. Suffering is commendable.

A. It is commendable to suffer wrongfully (1 Pet. 2:19-24).

1. If we suffer for our wrongdoing it is justified.

2. We were called to suffer. Our Savior suffered for doing good; leaving us an example how to suffer well.

B. Doing the right thing when we are being wronged is hard. Peter desires us to keep things in the proper perspective (1 Pet. 3:8-17).

1. We are blessed when we suffer for doing good.

2. We should not be concerned with their threats. (For example, I've been threatened with no severance pay if I start a new work.)

3. Our good conduct will bring shame upon those who speak evil of us. They will defame us as evil doers.

4. Suffering for the Lord is a sure thing.

C. Suffering isn't bad nor unusual (1 Pet. 4:12-19).

1. We should rejoice that we get to suffer as Christ suffered.

2. When He returns, we will certainly rejoice for the evil we suffered.

3. We will be blessed by God.

4. We have nothing to be ashamed of and even more reason to glorify Him.

5. The "judgment" in verse 17 seems to refer to "the severe trial which would determine character" (Barnes). Such trials begin with the church first. If the righteous scarcely make it through such visitations, what will happen to the ungodly?

6. Therefore, we must commit ourselves to God and to doing good.

II. We won't go through trials alone.

A. The Lord comforts in times of trouble (2 Cor. 1:3-11).

1. If we are going to share in the glory to come, we will have to share in the sufferings of our Lord.

2. Our sufferings teach us not to trust in ourselves, but in God!

3. Prayer is how we respond to evil!

B. Paul learned that when we are weak, we become strong through Christ (2 Cor. 12:7-10). Trials, persecutions etc., can make us stronger.

III. In trials, as in life, we need one another.

A. We can't claim to love one another if one another are not a focus in our lives (Phil. 2:1-5).

B. Our focus in life should always be with one another (1 Thess. 5:11-22).

1. Notice we are not to ignore wrongdoing among our members.

2. We are to comfort, edify, love, uphold, be patient, pursue good, be at peace, rejoice, give thanks while admonishing, exhorting, warning, not quenching the Spirit and abstaining from evil.

Conclusion: If we are to be Christians, we will suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12-15). Evil people will only get worse. However, we must continue in what we know and are assured will get us to heaven. That trust must be in God's word!