

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost ~ Sunday, June 23, 2019

“A Living Hope: Lessons From the Hard Times”

1 Peter 4:12-19

We don't learn very much from \_\_\_\_\_ health, good food, happy days, or money in the bank. We need to spend time in the school of \_\_\_\_\_ in order to learn the lessons God has for us.

4 LESSONS THAT WE NEED TO LEARN

#1. Hard times are \_\_\_\_\_.

“Beloved friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.” (1 Peter 4:12)

TWO IMPORTANT WORDS

• \_\_\_\_\_  
Perhaps they expected their life in Christ to be full of \_\_\_\_\_, benefits, and divine \_\_\_\_\_.

The reality is, the Gospel is \_\_\_\_\_ to many; and as we're obedient to God's Word and \_\_\_\_\_ in proclaiming the gospel, \_\_\_\_\_ from unbelievers is inevitable.

“For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?” (2 Cor 2:15-16)

\_\_\_\_\_ is a corollary to biblical faith.

“If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first.” (John 15:18)

“Indeed, all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” (2 Timothy 3:12)

• \_\_\_\_\_  
The problem with suffering is that it can tempt us to \_\_\_\_\_ God's love and faithfulness.

“Do you still hold fast to integrity? Curse God and die!” (Job 2:9)

Peter is reassuring us that God's love for us—especially in the face of suffering—is meant to be a \_\_\_\_\_ for our weary souls to rest on.

“If God is for us, who is against us?” (Romans 8:31)

**How do you respond to the trials and challenges of life?**

#2. Hard times can bring us \_\_\_\_\_ to God.

“But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.” (13-14)

Suffering isn't just an inevitable part of the Christian life, but it can also \_\_\_\_\_ us in three ways:

- \_\_\_\_\_: We share in the sufferings of Christ.
- \_\_\_\_\_: We experience the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- \_\_\_\_\_: We will rejoice when we see Christ.

If we \_\_\_\_\_ our allegiance to Him, the world would leave us alone because it's not us they hate, but \_\_\_\_\_ in us. That's why the world doesn't persecute \_\_\_\_\_ Christians or a \_\_\_\_\_ believers—because its not \_\_\_\_\_ by them. Persecution is a sign that we're doing what God wants us to do.

**participate = koinonia =**

Peter speaks here of having fellowship in the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ. In other words, our sufferings \_\_\_\_\_ us with Jesus in a way that nothing else can.

It's not that suffering in and of itself brings us to Christ; it's what suffering does \_\_\_\_\_ us and \_\_\_\_\_ us.

God allows us to go through hard times so that we can be completely \_\_\_\_\_ upon, and \_\_\_\_\_ with Jesus, in suffering.

Just as Jesus' sufferings were not in \_\_\_\_\_, but had an eternal purpose—the redemption of the world—all our sufferings have an eternal \_\_\_\_\_ and can be used by God for His glory. They unite us to Jesus, and make us more like Him. We become \_\_\_\_\_ with Him and we partake of His glory.

Sharing in Christ's sufferings actually gives us \_\_\_\_\_ that no matter what happens to us, this world isn't the \_\_\_\_\_—we were made for more than this earthly life—and we'll be with God forever. This hope can give us a sense of \_\_\_\_\_ that surpasses all human understanding.

“...we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” (Romans 5:3-5)

**How do you respond to suffering?**

**Do you allow it to move you closer to Jesus or farther away?**

**#3. Hard times can lead to \_\_\_\_\_.**

“If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And, ‘If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?’” (1 Peter 4:15-18)

Sometimes we bring suffering on \_\_\_\_\_. We all make mistakes; we all make bad \_\_\_\_\_. As Paul says in Romans 3:23, we all \_\_\_\_\_ and fall short of God’s glorious \_\_\_\_\_. And there are \_\_\_\_\_ to our choices and actions.

**meddler = *allotriepiskopos* =**

Peter us telling us not to do anything to \_\_\_\_\_ the name of the Lord. Instead, we should praise God that we’re counted \_\_\_\_\_ to suffer for His name. He tells us that suffering forces us to examine our life and faith—to decide where we stand and what we \_\_\_\_\_.

• **“The house of God” = \_\_\_\_\_.**

We are saved by \_\_\_\_\_. However, even though we’re God’s children, we’ll still face \_\_\_\_\_ when Christ returns. And so, God allows the heat to be turned up in in our lives so that we can be \_\_\_\_\_ by our trials.

God disciplines us to make us \_\_\_\_\_, and hard times are part of His \_\_\_\_\_ to us. They loosen us from our love of the \_\_\_\_\_, and make us long for \_\_\_\_\_.

“I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.” (Romans 8:18)

• **“who don’t obey the gospel of God” \_\_\_\_\_.**

“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)

Today God holds back judgment so we can run to the \_\_\_\_\_ and be saved, but one day His \_\_\_\_\_ will come to an end.

**How self aware are you? Where do you stand in relation to Jesus?**

**#4. Hard times can teach us to \_\_\_\_\_ God.**

“Therefore, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to

their faithful Creator and continue to do good.”

When trouble comes we can’t do much about our circumstances. However, we can \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves to God.

**commit = *parathemi* =**

Because God is \_\_\_\_\_ in Himself and to His own promises, our souls can find \_\_\_\_\_ in Him.

In His \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

“‘The mountains and hills may crumble, but my love for you will never end; I will keep forever my promise of peace.’ So says the Lord who loves you.” (Isaiah 54:10)

**Have you ever done that? Have you made a deposit into the Bank of Heaven and told the Lord He can do whatever He wants in your life?**

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“...in this world you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

Jesus has \_\_\_\_\_ the world; and we can be confident, that He is \_\_\_\_\_ than anything this world can throw at us.

No matter what comes our way, God promises to see us \_\_\_\_\_, if we fix our eyes on Jesus and the \_\_\_\_\_. Apart from the cross, it makes no sense to \_\_\_\_\_ in our suffering.

At the cross we see how the evil purposes of the world serve the eternal \_\_\_\_\_ of God. At the cross we see untold human \_\_\_\_\_ accomplishing our eternal \_\_\_\_\_.

The next time you’re facing a trial or challenge, fix your eyes on the cross. Start there and your troubles will come into proper \_\_\_\_\_. What God did for Jesus, He will also do for \_\_\_\_\_.

**“Adversity is the diamond dust heaven polishes its jewels with.”**

~ **Archbishop Robert Leighton**