

## “Suffering, Serving, Sharing!”

### I. **INTRO:**

- A. **Announce:** H.S. 4 scholarships, H.S. camp. \$150 each (Heather/info booth)
1. 3.5 Junior High scholarships needed for winter camp.
- B. **Prayer:** Scott Madden 12 hour brain Surgery tomorrow; Baileys in Pakistan.
- C. **A Rose** crushed under foot, is fragrance released;  
**Sycamore Fruit** must be cut or punctured, for it to be ripen w/sweetness;  
**Gold** must be placed into the furnace, to reach full value & purity;  
**An Old Log** must be laid on the fire, before its imprisoned music is set free;  
 We as **Saints** must be laid low, before we will look high;  
 We must know His **Smiting**, before we know His smiling;  
 Our **Hearts** must be broken, before their richest contents can leak out to bless others.
- D. **Outline:** **Suffering** For His Glory; **Serving** For His Glory; **Sharing** In His Glory.

### II. **SUFFERING FOR HIS GLORY! (1-6)**

- A. Some experts state that approximately *200 million Christians* worldwide face the **continual threat** of harassment, torture, & even death because of their faith in Jesus Christ. It is believed that more followers of Christ were martyred in the 20<sup>th</sup> cent than in the previous 19 centuries combined.<sup>1</sup>
1. In **good times** the church seems to become **stagnant & complacent**;  
 In **hard times**, the church seems to **grow & be strengthened**. **Why is that?**
  2. Peter doesn't share **mushy words** of condolences, not even **sympathy**,  
**instead powerful promises** from God's word!
    - a) 1] This world **isn't all there is** Christian. 2] This world **isn't your home** believer.  
 3] There is a **guaranteed future** too wonderful for words.  
 4] And you have a **unique opportunity** to introduce others to the Savior.
  3. Peter gives encouragement for **endurance**. **Practical instruction** based on Christ's example in dealing w/suffering.
- B. **4 reminders** of our new condition:
- C. **#1 Sin Is No Longer Our Master!** (1)
- D. (1) **Therefore** – refers back to vs.18.

<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur; pg.33.

- E. **Arm yourselves with the same mind** - Arm yourselves w/Jesus' same mind, insight, & thought toward suffering...which is *the will of God!*
- F. **Ceased from sin** – this refers to a break w/a sinful life (listed in vs.3)
1. Rom.6:6,7 **knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be **done away with**, that we should no longer be **slaves of sin**. For he who has died has been **freed from sin**.** (or declared righteous)
- G. **#2 Desires/Lusts Are No Longer Our Master!** (2a)
- H. Do you realize your lusts are the exact opposite of *the will of God*.
- I. **#3 We Can Now Live For The Will Of God!** (2b)
- J. **Note:** It's either the will of God or the will of the Gentiles...*choose this day whom you'll serve!*
- K. **#4 We No Longer Have To Live For The Will Of The Gentiles!** (3)
- L. (3) Peter says there **MUST** be a break from our old ways!
1. You should not allow **the old life** to control you.
  2. **Life is too short to waste it on godless living.**
    - a) Eph.5:13-18(NLT) **So be careful how you live, not as fools but as those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity for doing good in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but try to understand what the Lord wants you to do. Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, let the Holy Spirit fill and control you.**
  3. **Q:** Has your break from your old ways been noticeable?
  4. **Q:** If you could break off one more thing what would that be?
  5. **Q:** What must you do to accomplish it? What holds you back?
- M. **4 reminders of our new condition:**  
*Sin* is no longer your master; *Lusts/Desires* are no longer your master; We can now live for *the will of God*; We no longer have to live for *the will of the Gentiles*.

### III. **SERVING FOR HIS GLORY! (7-11)**

- A. **4 marching orders for spiritual Soldiers:**
- B. **#1 Have Serious & Watchful Prayers!** (7)
- C. **Serious** – sound in mind. *“Keeping a cool head & having a balanced mind to exercise self-control or moderation.”* (LKGNT)
- D. **Watchful** – sober, to keep a clear head.
1. So, to be **serious & watchful** in **prayer** is to have a **cool head & a clear head**.
  2. Attach these to **prayer** & you get...**clear, reasonable, & sober** communication with God!

- E. **#2 Have Fervent Love!** (8)
- F. **Fervent love?** – Love each other deeply.
1. **Fervent** = stretched or strained. *“Like the taut muscles of an athlete who strains to win a race.”*<sup>2</sup>
  2. Love that seeks the good of others first & w/o concern for cost.
- G. **Cover** = will hide. This strenuous love is **not blind** but **sees & accepts** the faults of others
1. **Prov.10:12** Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins.
  2. **Covers** = *overwhelms*, *“love overwhelms all sins.”*
  3. The idea is to practice forgiveness & overlook insults and **unkindness**.
- H. **#3 Be Hospitable!** (9)
- I. **Hospitable** w/o **grumbling** – lack of hotels caused people to be ready to provide board & lodging for friends/strangers at any time. This was a very highly esteemed ministry in that day.
1. If Hospitality means *friendly & welcoming*...
  2. **Q:** What would **biblical hospitality** look like in your life?
  3. **Q:** **Who** do you know that is a **good example** of this?
  4. **Q:** What **1 step** in that direction can you take today?
- J. **#4 Serve One Another!** (10,11)
- K. **Each gift** is to be used to **serve** or **minister to others!** [i.e. *Keep serving one another*]
1. Every believer has something to contribute.
  2. We did not **determine** our gift, **deserve** it, or **earn** it. [cuz it's a gift!]
  3. This **isn't** a gifting to make you feel better about yourself, to boost your ego, or to serve your own interests. **Rather**, these are investments God has made in various members of His body, & He expects a return on that investment.
    - a) **Don't weaken** the Lords work, **nor grieve** his heart; by **not** using your gift for the body of Christ!
- L. **Stewards** – those who served as **house managers**, who had no wealth of their own, but **distributed** his master's wealth according to his Master's **will & direction**.
1. Thus, these gifts are on loan from God!
  2. **Q:** Are you using the gifts God has given you to serve/build up the body of Christ?
  3. Gifts are always given to build up the body not to enhance your own position or prestige.

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<sup>2</sup> The Knowledge Bible Commentary.

M. **Manifold** – many colored, variegated, rich in variety.

1. The **Grace of God** is like **a diamond**, multifaceted, rich in color, shining forth w/many prisms of light, throwing radiance on all those in His presence!

N. (11b) **And the ultimate military objective?** The ultimate mission? **That...** [*Doxology*]

O. (11) Peter divides Christian service into 2 categories:

1. Those who **Speak**; those who **Serve**. {often overlap}
2. This distinction is also found in **Acts 6:2&4** **It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables...but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.**

P. At the mention of Christ's name Peter busts forth w/a *doxology* here!

1. **Q:** Does hearing His precious name ever have that impact on you?

Q. **God may be glorified** – **Q:** How should the “**glory of God**” figure into a believers **daily activities & schedule**? (100%) *The goal of everything!*

1. **Q:** What are some **practical & simple changes** you could make today so as to live more fully for the glory of God?

R. **So, the 4 marching orders for spiritual Soldiers are:** *Have serious & watchful pray; Have Fervent love; Be Hospitable; & Serve one another!*

IV. **SHARING IN HIS GLORY! (12-19)** esp. 14b the spirit of glory & of God rests upon you.

A. **Expect Trials! Use Trials! Glorify God with Trials!**

B. **Expect Trials!** (12)

C. For most of the last 2000 yrs., Christians have had to endure suffering & persecution as a way of life. It has been a recent phenomenon (generally only in “Christian” cultures) that suffering for the faith has become the **exception** rather than the **rule!**

D. **Think it strange** – be surprised, be amazed.

E. **Fiery Trial** – “the among you burning”(Metaphorical or historical reality?).

1. 2 Tim.3:12 **all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.**

F. **Happened** – to fall by chance. **Persecution isn't** an accident. **God allows it & even designs it** for the believers **testing, purging, & cleansing**.

1. **Q:** What form of Christian persecution are you experiencing? At home/work?
2. **Q:** How can you provide **encouragement** this week to a Christian brother or sister who is suffering because of his or her faith?

G. **Use Trials!** (13,14)

H. Anything that we suffer for the sake of Christ is a **privilege**, not a **penalty!**

1. **Persecution** quickly burns away chaff in the church.
2. Those who have made only a superficial profession of Christ have **no new nature** to motivate them to suffer for Christ, & **no divine power** to enable them to endure it if they wanted to.
3. Nothing is more spiritually purifying & strengthening than **persecution**.
4. Successful **Christians & Churches** will make waves, & inevitably provoke a *hostile reaction* from either **the world** or the **satanic realm**,...*or both!*

I. **Glorify God with Trials!** (16-19)

J. **Christian** – only used 3 x's in NT (here & in Acts 11:26; 26:28) **Originally a term of scorn.**

K. (17) This verse should be the most **sobering** for us saints.

1. **He will purge us for 2 reasons:** So we will be a **good witness** & a **good warning** to the lost.
2. **If He judges His own kids**, how much more will He judge **lost sinners?**

L. (18) Peter quotes the **Septuagint's** rendering of Prov.11:31 here.

1. **Peter's not teaching *salvation is earned***, but simply that those who are saved are not exempt from *temporal disciplinary judgments* which are the natural consequences of sin.

M. (19) **Commit their souls to Him** – a banking term meaning, *to deposit for safe keeping*.

1. Remember, you have been deposited into the **FCB** (Faithful Creator Bank) for safe keeping. Therefore, know you not only are "*Federally Insured*" but also, **Eternally Secured!**

N. **Suffer according to the will of God** –

1. **Choosing to suffer** means that there must be something wrong with you, but **choosing God's will**, even if it means you'll suffer, is something very different.
2. **No normal, healthy saint ever chooses suffering**; he simply chooses God's will, just as Jesus did, whether it means suffering or not.

O. **Expect Trials! Use Trials! Glorify God with Trials!**

P. **End:** Christ with me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right hand, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise, Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me.

St. Patrick (390-461)

## Message Bible

**1–2** Since Jesus went through everything you're going through and more, learn to think like him. Think of your sufferings as a weaning from that old sinful habit of always expecting to get your own way. Then you'll be able to live out your days free to pursue what God wants instead of being tyrannized by what you want.

**3–5** You've already put in your time in that God-ignorant way of life, partying night after night, a drunken and profligate life. Now it's time to be done with it for good. Of course, your old friends don't understand why you don't join in with the old gang anymore. But you don't have to give an account to them. They're the ones who will be called on the carpet—and before God himself.

**6** Listen to the Message. It was preached to those believers who are now dead, and yet even though they died (just as all people must), they will still get in on the life that God has given in Jesus.

**7–11** Everything in the world is about to be wrapped up, so take nothing for granted. Stay wide-awake in prayer. Most of all, love each other as if your life depended on it. Love makes up for practically anything. Be quick to give a meal to the hungry, a bed to the homeless—cheerfully. Be generous with the different things God gave you, passing them around so all get in on it: if words, let it be God's words; if help, let it be God's hearty help. That way, God's bright presence will be evident in everything through Jesus, and he'll get all the credit as the One mighty in everything—encores to the end of time. Oh, yes! Glory Just Around the Corner.

**12–13** Friends, when life gets really difficult, don't jump to the conclusion that God isn't on the job. Instead, be glad that you are in the very thick of what Christ experienced. This is a spiritual refining process, with glory just around the corner.

**14–16** If you're abused because of Christ, count yourself fortunate. It's the Spirit of God and his glory in you that brought you to the notice of others. If they're on you because you broke the law or disturbed the peace, that's a different matter. But if it's because you're a Christian, don't give it a second thought. Be proud of the distinguished status reflected in that name!

**17–19** It's judgment time for God's own family. We're first in line. If it starts with us, think what it's going to be like for those who refuse God's Message!

*If good people barely make it,*

*What's in store for the bad?*

So if you find life difficult because you're doing what God said, take it in stride. Trust him. He knows what he's doing, and he'll keep on doing it.