



Suffer Well

1 Peter 4:12-19

Sermon Outline

1. Expect Suffering
2. Rejoice in Suffering
3. Understand the Cause of Suffering
4. Judgment in Suffering
5. Trust God in Suffering

Discussion 1: Expect Suffering... Really?

– *Is it God's will that you suffer?*

^{ESV} **Philippians 1:29** For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,

^{ESV} **2 Timothy 3:12** Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

^{ESV} **1 Peter 4:19** Therefore let those who **suffer according to God's will** entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

– *Why does that rub us the wrong way?* [confess it does first!]

- culturally, is religion supposed to be *about us* and our happiness, fulfillment, and growth?
- Is it difficult to accept that it's all about God's glory?

- *Can God be glorified in human suffering?*

Though this week's text is more specifically focused on suffering for Christ's sake, some of these examples are suffering to God's glory in a more general sense.

- Joseph (sold into slavery...)
- Jesus!
- Elisabeth Elliot¹ (and family --)
- ... *think of others...*

¹ *Through the Gates of Splendor*: <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0842371524/> and the movie adaptation: <http://www.amazon.com/Beyond-Gates-Splendor-Steve-Saint/dp/B0009XT8A6>

Others have suffered to God's glory not specifically for their Christian testimony (and not as directly related to this week's text...) but are worth noting:

- Corrie ten Boom²
- Joni Eareckson Tada
- ... *think of others*
- Great resource for personal suffering to the glory of God:
 - *Don't Waste Your Cancer*³, John Piper.
 - Matt Chandler⁴ (Dallas pastor who didn't waste his)

Discussion 2: Rejoice in Suffering? --Are you serious?

- *Is this just Christian crazy talk? --Make sense of these:*

^{ESV} **Acts 5:41** Then they left the presence of the council, ^arejoicing that they were counted worthy ^bto suffer dishonor for ^cthe name.

[Is this "Pollyanna Christianity" (play the "glad game") or did they truly have something to rejoice about? (see next)]

^{ESV} **Matthew 5:11-12** ^a"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely ^bon my account. ¹² ^aRejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for ^bso they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
[Eternal perspective--God's big picture.]

^{ESV} **Romans 8:16-17** ^aThe Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then ^aheirs--heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, ^bprovided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

[What of this link between suffering and glorification? "in order that..."
Suffering is a sign (2Ti 3:12) of who we are in Christ. These verses reveal it goes far beyond just "forgiven sinner" to children of God and joint heirs. Grace multiplied!]

Discussion 3: Judgment/Purpose in Suffering

- *What is the difference between judgment and punishment?*

² *The Hiding Place*: <http://www.amazon.com/Hiding-Place-Hendrickson-Classic-Biographies/dp/1598563394/>

³ <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/taste-see-articles/dont-waste-your-cancer>

⁴ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AiRJzwZ3iRs>

[Not all judgment is with regard to guilt of offense (negative in nature), punishment is specific to judgment of guilt... Some judgment is with respect to discipline (a positive thing!) and sanctification of God's people.]

– *What is the purpose of God revealed in the following texts?*

^{ESV} **1 Peter 1:6-7** In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by ^avarious trials, ⁷ so that ^athe tested genuineness of your faith--more precious than gold that perishes ^bthough it is tested by ^cfire--may be found to result in ^dpraise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

^{ESV} **Romans 5:3-5** More than that, we ^arejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering ^bproduces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and ^ahope does not put us to shame, because God's love ^bhas been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

[More of that "crazy" rejoicing in suffering talk... We see here that this suffering is unto something worth rejoicing over.]

if you have time...related topic of general suffering...

Discussion 4: Glorifying God in Our Suffering ("Don't Waste Your Suffering")

– *What does it look like to trust (and therefore glorify God) in our suffering?*

This is an adaptation of Piper's main point in *Don't Waste Your Cancer* (summary attached). Go through the points and see how God is/can be glorified when we don't waste our suffering.

1. You will waste your *suffering* if you do not believe it is designed for you by God.
2. You will waste your *suffering* if you believe it is a curse and not a gift.
3. You will waste your *suffering* if you spend too much time reading about [*the cause of this*] *suffering* and not enough time reading about God.
4. You will waste your *suffering* if you let it drive you into solitude instead of deepen your relationships with manifest affection.
5. You will waste your *suffering* if you grieve as those who have no hope.
6. You will waste your *suffering* if you treat sin as casually as before.
7. You will waste your *suffering* if you fail to use it as a means of witness to the truth and glory of Christ.



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1 Peter 1:6-7

Romans 5:3-5

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