

A Share In Christ's Sufferings

Promise: those who share in Christ's suffering will share in His glory

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Acts 1:12-26; Ps 68:1-10; 1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:6-11; John 17:1-11
(Seventh Sunday of Easter, 5/21/23)

But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. – 1Pe 4:13

Lead In – The Apostle Peter addresses his First Letter to Christians throughout Asia Minor, many of whom have suffered persecution on account of the Christian Faith. Such suffering continues to the present day and has been most pronounced in Muslim and Communists countries. Increasingly, we are getting a taste of it in our own land as our culture is becoming progressively more and more at odds with the Christian Faith. So, in what sense does Peter inform us that we rejoice in such suffering? ...

I. A Particular Type of Suffering Is Singled Out

- A. Let none of you suffer for doing evil...
- B. Insofar as you share Christ's sufferings...
- C. We are to witness, explain, and proclaim Christ...

II. How Does Christ's Body Continue to Suffer?

- A. Is Paul off his rocker in his claim in Colossians 1:24?
- B. The Risen Christ says He continues to be persecuted!
- C. We are members of Christ's body...

III. So, How Is It That We Can Rejoice in This?

- A. Our reward is great in heaven...
- B. We could not possibly enjoy better company!
- C. Joined to Christ in His suffering and death means...

Parting Shot – Two final words. First, we don't need to go looking for suffering or pretend that suffering is pleasant. It will come looking for us, and it isn't pleasant. And second, though it is not pleasant, if it is indeed suffering for righteousness, for Christ, then far from destroying faith, it will confirm our faith and strengthen it. For you can bet it will deepen our reliance on God's Word. It will deepen our prayers. It will deepen our partaking of the means of grace. We will turn to other members of Christ's body and look to things above...

Ro 13:3, 4 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. ... But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

Mt 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

1Pe 2:21, 23 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ... When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

Cl 1:24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church.

Ac 9:4-5 And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" ⁵And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."

1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:6-11 ESV

Suffering as a Christian

¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. ¹⁵But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. ¹⁷For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" ¹⁹Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

^{5:6}Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. ⁸Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. ¹⁰And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1Co 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Mt 5:11-12 Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Ro 6:4-5 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

...indeed, we will have found ourselves honored to have shared in Christ's suffering.