

## Embracing Christ's Resolve to Endure Unjust Suffering

1 Peter 4:1-6

### 1. We must resolve to endure unjust treatment for our faith (verse 1).

The hinge word "therefore" looks back to Christ's suffering in 3:18. "in the flesh" is literally "in flesh" referring to Christ's time in our world.

It is a reminder that we, like Christ, have become foreigners and aliens to this world because God has changed us by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

Consequently, we are different people from the rest of the world and should not expect any more acceptance from the world than Christ.

For this reason, comes the main exhortation of this paragraph in the next part of verse 1. "arm yourselves with the same way of thinking,"

That means we are to arm ourselves with Christ's resolve! What was His resolve? Better to suffer for doing God's will than to be controlled by the world's ways. See 2:20—23:

- No deceit came from Christ's speaking.
- He did not berate anyone who reviled Him.
- He did not threaten harm to anyone who afflicted Him with suffering.
- He continually entrusted Himself to the justice of God.

See also 3:10-12:

### 2. Reasons to make this resolve (verses 1b—4)

#### A. Reason #1: This resolve will fortify your life against sin.

You will "cease from sin".

But what is the cause of this effect? To "suffer in flesh" This suffering refers to whatever kinds of suffering that you could encounter as a result of enduring unjust afflictions.

"ceased from sin" cannot mean that you no longer sin. 1 John 1:8

"ceased from sin" means regularly making the choice to obey God even when everybody around you can't understand and opposes you for it.

#### B. Reason #2: It will enable you to escape bad human cravings and live for the will of God (verse 2).

It will enable you to live out the rest of your earthly days no longer controlled by sinful human desires. See 1:14 ; 2:1, 11-12.

C. Reason #3: Because human cravings dominate non-believers (verse 3). A sobering forecast of the human sinful condition in the last days, Revelation 9:20-21.

D. Reason #4: Because an open Christian testimony will be an offense to any community that rejects the gospel (verse 4). Wrath from the gods would descend if the Christians were allowed to deny them.

Today, people don't like to have their gods challenged, which are often liberties to sin.

The Christians' lifestyle of sober, moral living was a condemnation of the values of pagan society. And it is the same today--so they malign us.

### 3. Why Christians must exercise great patience and endurance in the face of unjust treatment (verses 5-6).

A. Because condemnation awaits all who reject Christ and afflict Christians for their faith (verse 5).

A dreadful accounting is coming to all who persist in rejecting Christ and afflicting Christians--the judgement of God. Revelation 20:11-15

Compared to that suffering of hell, what kind of suffering can lost people put on us?

B. Because Christians who have been despised and unjustly treated by the ungodly will find themselves welcomed by God into a glorious life that follows death (verse 6).

No "second chance" for repentance and salvation is taught here.

The idea is not in the context, the grammar, or the theology of the New Testament. Hebrews 9:

Though condemned by their countrymen for their non-conformity. . . believers can expect to come alive in the eternal spiritual realm of resurrection life.

And in resurrection live in the pure holiness of God's presence forever.

This means that a decision to live for Christ in this life is truly the wise decision, because no matter how bad the consequences may appear in this life, no matter how unworthy the world may judge you, in Christ, God has redeemed you and He will see to it that you are brought home to Him when you die.

Then all the world's criticisms and condemnations will be nullified and overturned.