



**MATT BLACK**, Sun, Feb 11, 2018  
livinghopechurch.net

# 20 | 1 PETER 4:12-19

## WHY SUFFERING?

### **Outline**

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Rome is Burning  
Suffering is the Will of God

#### **1. Suffering Brings Purification (4:12)**

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Don't be Surprised  
The Purpose is to Refine You  
Your Verbal Commitment Put to the Test  
Sufficient Grace

#### **2. Suffering Prepares us for Glorification (4:13)**

Prepared by Sharing with the Man of Sorrows  
Prepared by Rejoicing in the King of Glory

#### **3. Suffering Brings Transformation (4:14)**

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A Living Letter of Jesus

#### **4. Suffering Brings Evaluation (4:15-18)**

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God Evaluates the Passion of Our Heart  
Judgment Begins at God's House  
    It Means Believers are Marked  
    It Means Believers are Pruned  
    It Means Believers are Protected  
Judgment for the World

#### **5. Suffering Brings Mobilization (4:19)**

Mobilized by God's Will  
Mobilized To Do Good

## Announcements

1. Welcome Visitors!
2. Small groups begin **this week**
3. Winter fellowship is next Sunday, Feb 18 – Sign up today!

Open your Bible if you will to 1 Peter 4. We are again in our study of 1 Peter. The question we are asking this morning is “why suffering?” God tells us throughout the Bible that he is the Potter and we are the clay. Suffering is one way that God softens us and molds us to be a vessel he can use. I want to be used, don’t you? Peter is writing to a hurting and persecuted people who desperately need to know God loves them.

## GOD’S CHISEL

An artist in Florence, Italy once asked the great Renaissance sculptor Michelangelo what he saw when he approached a huge block of marble. The famous sculptor stood back and looked at that big square block of white marble, rubbed his chin thoughtfully, and replied, “I see a beautiful form trapped inside and it is my responsibility to take my mallet and chisel and chip away until the figure is set free.” I love that illustration because you can relate to it. Inside of us is a beautiful form, right? **Colossians 1:27** says so. It speaks of the hidden figure inside of each believer longing to be “set free”. It is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” It’s within us, like a seed, like a possibility, like a potential; it’s what you hope for: Christ in you glorified through your life, right? The idea is there and our Heavenly Father is like a sculptor. He wants to form his Son in you. And so, he uses affliction like a hammer and trouble just like a chisel, and he chips and cuts away at us through trials to reveal Jesus’ image in you and me. God chooses as his model his Son, Jesus Christ because **Romans 8:29** says: “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son.”

I don't need to tell you that you, and I have lot of hard marble in my life that needs to be chipped away before Christ can be seen in me. We all have that marble.

That hammer hurts, doesn’t it? Those trials, that chisel bites! After time, the rough form begins to take shape.

## ROME IS BURNING

As Peter writes in AD 64, Rome is burning. The persecution has begun in some ways, but it is not in full force. Some have already died for Christ (4:6), and Peter is getting the church ready for suffering. The Roman government is about to try and obliterate Christianity.

The Emperor Nero at 26 years of age wants Rome to burn down so he can rebuild it. Seventy percent of the city is in ashes. The once great city is smoldering as Peter writes. Nero blames the fire on the Christians. Rumor is spreading and the people’s hatred is stirring against the followers of Jesus. Peter writes to warn them. Get ready. **Suffering is coming**. But the truth is, suffering is coming for all of us. Suffering is God’s tool to conform us into the image of Christ.

*Let's listen to God's Word.*

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. 17 For 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? 18 And “If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” 19 Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good” (4:12-19).

*This is God's Word.*

### **SUFFERING IS THE WILL OF GOD**

CS Lewis of Narnia fame says this about suffering:

“God whispers to us in our pleasures,  
speaks in our conscience, but shouts in  
our pains: it is his megaphone to rouse  
a deaf world.”

Oh how deaf we are sometimes. Sometimes each of us in the church can be deaf. So we are going to go through great pain in the Christian life. The Bible here tells us that Christians are **undoubtedly called to suffer according to the will of God**. This contradicts a lot of theology out there that negates any kind of suffering or trials for the Christian in the will of God. This passage is the death knell to the so-called “prosperity Gospel.” Christians are called to suffer in many ways. They are suffering today throughout the world. More Christians died in the last hundred years than in all the previous centuries combined. All over the world, Christians are suffering. Daily Christians are persecuted – in India, in all the Muslim countries, in Syria, Uganda, Nigeria, and in Sudan, over 2 million Christians have died over the last decade for Christ.

Here in 1 Peter 4, we have a call for believers to suffer “according to the will of God.” Paul says, “that I may know him, and the fellowship of his suffering...” (Phil 3:10). Peter says that this suffering and evaluation will begin at the house of God. “It is time for judgment to begin at the house of God” (4:17). Suffering is sent from God for several reasons:

- Purification (4:12)
- Glorification (4:13)
- Transformation (4:14)
- Evaluation (4:15-18)
- Mobilization (4:19)

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## 1. SUFFERING BRINGS PURIFICATION (4:12)

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**1 Peter 4:12**, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you” (4:12).

### BELOVED

Peter loves his brothers and sisters. He’s wanting them to know that God loves them. They are beloved by him and by God. Suffering doesn’t ever mean that God has stopped loving us. In fact, God is so committed to conforming you to Christ’s image, he allows suffering in your life. Remember Job’s wife misunderstood the suffering Job was going through. She uttered the horrible words: “Curse God and die!” (Job 2:9). We must never be so near sighted. Though we go through suffering, God loves his children. He loves you.

### DON’T BE SURPRISED

The believers to whom Peter was writing were surprised by their suffering. Peter says, “do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you” (4:12). The Christians were not expecting to be treated so hatefully. You know how it is. We trust in Christ; our sins are forgiven. We are filled with “unspeakable joy, full of glory” (1 Pet 1:8). Now that we know true love in Christ, we don’t expect people will hate us for it. But they do. God has called all of his children to enter into the crucible of suffering. Jesus says, “In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (Jn 16:33).

Jesus also says, “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first” (Jn 15:18). “The servant is not greater than his master” (Jn 15:20). “All who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Tim 3:12). All those who follow Christ must “count the cost” before we follow him. It’s a high cost of suffering (Lk 14:28-32).

“Something strange” is not happening to you if you are suffering as God’s child. It’s part of his plan.

### THE PURPOSE IS TO REFINE YOU

The purpose of the “fiery ordeal” we are about to go through is **purification**. The “testing” Peter is talking about is the refining fire. Job said, “He knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold” (Job 23:10). He wants to refine us like gold. He puts us in a furnace of suffering, like the furnace that melts down metal to purge it of impurities (cf Psa 66:10). Wise Solomon said: “The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and the Lord tests hearts” (Pro 17:3).

Don’t be surprised by the suffering. Jesus wants to bring us into greater fellowship, greater communion and intimacy with him. It will be a fiery testing. It will begin with the people of God. Why is Jesus calling us to a place of suffering? Why must judgment begin at the house of God? Why? To try us. To put us to the test. God is trying us. There is a sense of warning. There is a time of great trying and testing coming to the church worldwide. It’s already begun.

## YOUR VERBAL COMMITMENT PUT TO THE TEST

In order for us to change we must be put to the test. At some point, **our verbal commitment for Christ has to be put to the test**. You say you love Jesus. Do you know what that means? It means he's the very center of your life. Some of you would not pass the test today. Some of you would not pass the test on the Judgment Day, the Day of the Lord. Your verbal commitment must be put to the test. It's not enough to say you love Jesus. God promises trials to refine you.

### SUFFICIENT GRACE

***Thorn in the Flesh.*** God is not cruel. Remember Paul asked God to remove his "thorn in the flesh" three times. Do you recall Jesus' words to him? "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9a). Paul says, "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. <sup>10</sup> For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:9b-10).

If you know him, you will truly love him. Loving Jesus is costly. God will send trials and pain to test your faith. Can you love him still when all your earthly dreams come crashing down and he's all you have left? Is he enough? Is Jesus enough? In your suffering, God is purifying your motives. He's purifying your character. That's the number one thing God is after. He wants to purify your heart.

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## 2. SUFFERING PREPARES US FOR GLORIFICATION (4:13)

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Don't be surprised by the suffering and trials you are going through. Instead, rejoice! Jesus is preparing you for his Second Coming. "But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed." (4:13).

### PREPARED BY SHARING WITH THE MAN OF SORROWS

"Rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings" (4:13a). The sweet Savior is here among us this morning. He says to all of us: "I am a Man of Sorrows." You know me as a Man of joy, a Man of teaching, a Man of the Spirit of God and wisdom. "But I want to tell you this morning" says Jesus, "I am the Man of Sorrows, and I'm going to bring my church into a new place of transformation. Join me in my suffering." That's where transformation comes. Jesus has not come to simply save us from hell, but to transform us into his image. We are to enter into his sorrows. Yet he calls us to rejoice because we are not alone in our sorrows. We are sharing in Christ's sorrows!

### All I Have is Christ: Rejoice!

When great suffering comes, *all I have is Christ.*

When great loss comes, *all I have is Christ.*

When I'm persecuted for Christ's Name, *all I have is Christ.*

When severe depression comes, *all I have is Christ.*

When confusion comes, *all I have is Christ.*

Listen at the end of the day, if I lose everything, I have lost nothing, because *all I have, and all I need, and all I long for is Christ!*

## PREPARED BY REJOICING IN THE KING OF GLORY

Jesus is not only the Man of Sorrows. He is the King of glory! “Rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings” (4:13a) – why? “that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed” (4:13b). Jesus is not only the Man of Sorrows, he is the King of glory! Jesus is coming again! The Lord resumed the full exercise of **His glory** after He ascended to heaven, but He has not yet revealed it on earth for everyone to see. On that day, every knee will bow to Jesus. Every tongue will confess he is Lord! And when he comes again, we will be “caught up together with him in the air” (2 Thess 4:17). And at that moment, we will be glad for all the suffering that brought us into closer relationship with him.

***Every Trial Getting You Ready.*** When you think of that glorious day, you realize that **every insult is preparing you to see our precious Jesus.** Every trial is getting you ready to see Jesus. **Rejoice**, because when you suffer, the Spirit rests upon you and prepares you for Jesus' final victory. He's coming again. Suffering is God's chisel, and he's molding you to be like Jesus. He's pushing you deeper and deeper into intimacy with Christ. Paul says, “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Rom 8:18).

Affliction has the power to transform us. Can you testify with David? “It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes” (Psa 119:71).

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## 3. SUFFERING BRINGS TRANSFORMATION (4:14)

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Don't be surprised by the suffering and trials you are going through. Instead, rejoice! Jesus wants to bring us into greater fellowship, greater communion and intimacy with him.

### TRANSFORMED BY BLESSING FROM GOD'S SPIRIT

“If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you” (4:14).

There is a manifestation of the Spirit upon you when you suffer for Christ. The picture Peter uses is from the Old Testament when God's glory cloud rested on the Tabernacle and Temple. What a blessing that we are the Temple of God's Spirit. There is no higher blessing.

Our suffering does not diminish our blessedness; suffering increases our blessing. How are we blessed? It's a present blessing, **because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on** you when you suffer. Let me clarify, you don't get more of the Spirit when you suffer. You have all of the Spirit already. But he manifests himself when you suffer.

We need to awaken to the fact that Jesus is more interested in transforming our character than anything else. When suffering occurs let us rejoice! We get an increase of influence from the Spirit. We grow deeper in intimacy with Christ. **James 1:2-3** says, “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds [many colors],<sup>3</sup> for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.<sup>4</sup> And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

## A LIVING LETTER OF JESUS

“If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you” (4:14). When God’s Spirit rests upon you, you are a testimony to this lost world. You are salt and light. Your light shines and people have to give glory to our Father in heaven.

God wants our lives to be a living example of Jesus’ life. The apostle Paul said to his hearers: you are the Bible in action. You are a living “letter of Christ...” “known and read of all men” (2 Cor 3:2, 3).

You are a living letter testifying to the life and ministry and majesty of Jesus of Nazareth. Paul said this to those in Corinth. Jesus says to you: *“Be a living letter in Roselle, in Hanover Park, in Elgin, in St. Charles, in Glendale Heights, in Elk Grove.”* Live the life and majesty of Jesus! Shine his light!

How? You suffer so differently than the world. We press into God when we suffer. We see the saints huddling around us when we suffer. We have the Word pressed into us when we suffer. We are carried by the sufficient grace of God when we suffer. We suffer so differently. Peter says, “don’t be surprised by the fiery trial that’s about to try you.” Jesus wants to bring you to a new place of fellowship with Jesus. How wonderful it is.

God wants to set us apart into a greater intimacy with Jesus. Jesus’ life often brought him into conflict with the world. Too much of the church today looks like the world. The Savior is calling us to partake of his fellowship, and to come to a new place in our relationship with him.

This place of trial and difficulty in your life is a place of sweet fellowship. We will come to know him better. We will be equipped as never before to serve him.

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## 4. SUFFERING BRINGS EVALUATION (4:15-18)

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“But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. 17 For 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? 18 And “If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” (4:15-18).

“To whom much is given, much will be required” (Lk 12:48). There is an evaluation that God brings through suffering. This is why Peter says, “it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God.” That’s where it began in the Old Testament. God used the Babylonians to purify his people. There is an evaluation of a Christian’s life that God brings daily.

### GOD EVALUATES THE PATTERN OF OUR LIVES

“But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler” (4:15).

The idea is that God will evaluate his people in their suffering. Christ is here with us, and he’s calling his people into a place of suffering. Why will there be this fiery trial? To **evaluate** you. To see what you are made of when the pressure is on. Are you a Christian?

You will suffer according to the will of God – not “as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler” (4:15), but because your life is clean and you love Jesus.

Christians live a new life. **Murder** and **thievery** were capital offenses in Rome. Believers practice righteousness, not **evil**. **Meddling** had the idea of getting too much involved in other people’s business or getting carried away with the business civil politics. Keep your eyes fixed on God’s kingdom. Don’t get distracted.

Our citizenship is in heaven. We live a life of fellowship with Christ, walking in righteousness. Evaluate your behavior. No true believer can live comfortable in sin. No true believer lives the life of any of these categories of sin. I need to get realigned at times. God brings suffering to realign me. In your suffering, God is evaluating the **pattern** of your life.

There is a radical change in the heart of a true Christian. The apostle John says in **1 John 3:9**, “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.” In suffering, God is evaluating the pattern of your life. Is there a pattern of holiness? You can put on a show when life is easy, but when life is hard what you really are comes out.

**Tea Bag.** We are all like a tea bag. When we are in hot water, whatever is on the inside comes out! Suffering is a way where God evaluates the **pattern** of your life.

### **GOD EVALUATES THE PASSION OF OUR HEART**

God also evaluates the **passion** of your heart. “Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name” (4:16). “Christian” was first used as a derogatory term. Peter says, “glory in that name.” Do you love the name of Jesus? Glory in that name! The world means it for an insult to you. Don’t be afraid to identify with Jesus. Don’t be afraid to walk the road that Jesus trod.<sup>1</sup>

I hope your passion is to be identified with Jesus. He has a Name that is exalted above all names. Though people insult you with that name, don’t be ashamed, but rather “glorify God in that name.” What an honor to suffer for the name of Jesus!

Jesus says in **Matthew 5:12**, “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” What an honor to suffer for the Lord! He has not forgotten us. Many prophets and preachers in the past have given their lives for him. Don’t be ashamed to identify with Jesus. God uses these kinds of suffering to evaluate the **passion** of your heart.

### **JUDGMENT BEGINS AT GOD’S HOUSE**

This divine evaluation begins with us, the household of God. We are the family of God. We have to be first. As I said before “To whom much is given, much will be required” (**Lk 12:48**). God always begins his evaluation with his own family.

Listen to Peter in verse 17: “For 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? 18 And ‘If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?’” (**4:17-18**).

<sup>1</sup> David R. Helm, *1 & 2 Peter and Jude: Sharing Christ’s Sufferings*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 152.



What does it mean that “judgment begins at the house of God?”

### *It Means Believers are **Marked***

Peter is referencing Ezekiel 9 where God began to purify his saints at his very sanctuary in Jerusalem when God’s glory departed from the Temple.

**Believers Marked as God’s Glory Departs.** Before the glory of the Lord departs out of the Eastern Gate and onto the Mount of Olives, God marks every true believer in the city of Jerusalem. Anyone without the mark of God on them perished in the city of Jerusalem. Only God’s remnant survived, and judgment was to begin at the house or temple of God (cf Jer 25:15-29). How serious God’s judgment is! Those remaining were taken to Babylon for purification through suffering.

**God Begins to Purge Where His Name is Written. Amos 3:2** says that God will begin his **evaluation** where his name has been written. His name is written on Jerusalem (2 Chron 6:6). His name is also written on you. “To the one who overcomes... I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name (Rev 3:12). God’s name “El Shaddai is literally written in the valleys of Jerusalem. The Hebrew letter “shin” looks like a W and these three valley literally form God’s initial, “El Shaddai.” Psalm 91:1, “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty [El Shaddai].”

True children of God suffer for Christ. We read in Romans 8 that we are children of God, and just as his Son suffered, we will suffer. “And if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him” (Rom 8:17).

### *It Means Believers are **Pruned***

If you are one of God’s true children, judgment, evaluation will begin with you. Jesus says this in **John 15:1-7**, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.”

God is a good gardener. God will take care of his own garden. But if you are not part of his garden, you get thrown away and burned.

If you are bearing some fruit in your life, God is always going to cut you back. Remember that. What happens if you are not bearing fruit? You are “thrown away” like a **dead branch**. You are “thrown into the fire and burned.”

## *It Means Believers are **Protected***

**God Will Finish His Work.** This is not judgment in the sense of **condemnation**, but in **evaluation**.

In **Romans 8:30**, the Bible promises we are “**predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.**” Paul says, I am “**confident of this very thing, that he who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ**” (**Phil 1:6**). God evaluates our faith when we go through suffering. Who or what do you turn to when you suffer? Peter explains that the ‘fiery ordeal’, or ‘refining fire’, of verse 12 is really a fire of God’s purification. “**Whom the Lord loves he chastens**” (**Heb 12:6**).

A fiery trial awaits us. The Old Testament saints suffered by being taken to Babylon. Their faith was tested. Think of Daniel and his three friends. They suffered. But they stood for the King. Not Nebuchadnezzar, but Jesus the King of kings!

### **JUDGMENT FOR THE WORLD**

The world is going to be judged in a different way. The saints get judged on earth in the sense of God’s chastening. But the lost get judged for their sins.

“And if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And “If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” (4:17-18).

Peter makes an important point: the world is going to be judged. For believers judgment is some thing good. It’s something that purifies us. But for unbelievers, it’s awful. There is an eternity in the Lake of Fire for anyone who will not obey the Gospel to repent and believe.

Every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. No one gets out of that. If you don’t know Jesus, you will perish. You will be judged. “If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (**Rev 20:15**).

Dear saints, let us reach the world. They will hate us. In some parts of the world you will lose your livelihood, your home, your belongings. You may even lose your own life. But what have you really lost if you die? “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Phil 1:21). The world doesn’t have your hope.

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## **5. SUFFERING BRINGS MOBILIZATION (4:19)**

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What should be our response to suffering? Getting busy. Doing good. Serve God and others. “Therefore let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good” (4:19).

Those who trust God in suffering are used by God in magnificent mighty ways to bring the ultimate good of the Gospel to others.

**Book of Acts.** Remember the persecuted believers in the book of Acts. They are hit hard with Jewish persecution, and they go everywhere spreading the good news of the Gospel.

### **MOBILIZED BY GOD’S WILL**

Let’s not forget, we are suffering “according to God’s will.” He works “all things after the counsel of his own will” (**Eph 1:11**). We can trust him. He is a faithful Creator. His

mercies are new every morning. Let us say, “Great is Thy faithfulness” (**Lam 3:22-23**). He says, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb 13:5). Never, never, never, never. He will never in anyway leave you. You may not be able to see God, but he can see you. “The steps of a justified person are ordered and planned by the Lord, and He delights in his way. <sup>24</sup> Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the Lord upholds *him with His hand*” (**Psa 37:23-24**).

Trust God. He will carry you. Do not fear. He will lift you up. He is the “Sun of righteousness with healing in his wings” (**Mal 4:2**).

### **MOBILIZED TO DO GOOD**

Let’s not forget, the purpose of suffering is to prepare you to do good. Your suffering is not in vain. “Therefore let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator **while doing good**” (4:19).

Paul tells us the purpose of suffering is that God is growing our heart to do good. **2 Corinthians 1:3-4**, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

You may wonder, “God why am I suffering so much.” He’s preparing you for a life of doing good. Get motivated.

We are not victims. We are warriors. We are called to “put on the whole armor of God” and to “stand in Christ” (**Eph 6:10ff**). We are warriors in training. We are called in our suffering to learn from it and to do good.

Ultimately, God’s brought suffering in your life according to his will so that you will learn to do good and trust him for the remarkable outcome. He is making us a people that harmonize our plans and our goals with the will of God. Confess to God and to the world that your life is entwined with the will of God.

### **Conclusion**

**God is the Potter**, we are the clay. I’ve never been good at pottery. Maybe some of you are really good. But there is no one better at pottery than God. He’s the Master Potter. We can trust him to make us vessels to do his will. Yes it comes with much suffering, but his hands are gentle.

One day, God will “wipe away all tears” from our eyes with those gentle hands. Look at **Revelation 21:3-5**, “and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, **“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.’ <sup>5</sup> And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.”**”

These trials will not last forever. Soon Jesus will come again and wipe away our tears. Even so come quickly Lord Jesus!

### **Invitation**

He’s asking you now, “Do you really want to know me? To fellowship with me at a deeper level? Then take my hand. And the glory of the Spirit of God will be upon you, as

you share in my suffering. Let's go. Let's go to the cross!" There is no glory until there is suffering. There is no crown before there is a cross. Jesus is calling out to you right now: "Let's go to the cross. Let's die together. Let's give our life up." He did it for world redemption. We do it to know him and to do his will.