

“*If Anyone Suffers...*”

1 Pet. 4:15, 16

Introduction:

A. Suffering is part of every person’s earthly life.
1. Has world’s attention: Politicians, newsmen, sociologists, theologians, etc.
2. Has useful place in our lives.
   a. Makes us humble. (2 Cor. 12:7-10).
3. Has various forms: mental and physical. (Cf. Mt. 5:11; Mt. 23:37).

B. Suffering was part of Jesus’ earthly life.
1. A model sufferer (1 Pet. 2:21)

C. Suffering of two types discussed by the Apostle Peter:

Discussion:

I. Unavoidable Suffering. (4:12).

A. Christians could not avoid tribulation of fall of Jerusalem. (4:7, 12, 17-17; Mt. 24:1-2; 14-21).
B. Christians are not always responsible for their suffering. (cf. Jno. 9:2; Job 22:5).
   1. Disease, death, disasters, slander, mistreatment, etc. may not be because of personal faults.
   2. Disease, death, etc. upon all because of sin in the world. (1 Cor. 15:22; Heb. 9:27).
   3. Disease, death, etc. are no reason to charge God foolishly. (Job. 1:25).

II. Avoidable Suffering.

A. One can avoid suffering for his faults. (2:20; 4:15).
   1. No virtue in suffering as “murderer...busybody” (cf. John 21:20-22).
   2. No merit in crying “persecution”, “brutality”, etc if caught doing wrong.
B. On can avoid suffering as a Christian - but should not. (4:17; cf. Heb. 11:35).
   1. John could have avoided death by being soft on sin. (Mt. 14:1-12).
   2. Stephen could have avoided stoning by ignoring Jews’ sins. (Acts 7).
   4. We can avoid slurs, criticism, mal-treatment by softening stand for right.
      a. A wife married to husband who abuses her because of her faithfulness to Lord.
      b. A worker working around worldlings can avoid much by compromise.
C. One can avoid the blessings of suffering for Christ. (Matt. 5:11, 12; Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17)
D. One can avoid heaven by trying to avoid suffering, if not careful. (2 Tim. 3:12; 2 Pet. 2:9).

Conclusion:

A. Let’s seek to avoid suffering as evildoers, but not as Christians.
B. Let’s seek heaven above all else - will make suffering seem light.
C. Let us *be* Christians so we can *suffer as* Christians - become one now.
If Anyone Suffers...

Part every person’s life • World’s attention: Politicians, news, sociologists, theologians • Useful - humble (2 Cor 12:7-10) • Heaven attractive (Rv 21:4) • Forms: mental & physical. • Part of Lord’s life • Model (1 Pt 2:21) • Patient (1 Pt 2:22,23) • Innocent (cf. Lk 23:41) • Two types discussed by Peter:

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<th>Unavoidable Suffering (4:12)</th>
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<td>Could not avoid trib. fall of Jeru. (4:7,12, 17-19; Mt. 24) • Not always responsible (cf. Jn 9:2; Job 22:5) • Disease death, disaster, slander, mistreatment • Sin in world (1 Cor. 15:22; Heb 9:27) • No reason to charge God foolishly (Job. 1:25).</td>
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<th>Avoidable Suffering.</th>
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<td>For faults (2:20; 4:15) • No virtue in suffering as “murderer”, “busybody” (cf. Jn 21:20-22). • No virtue in crying “persecution,” “brutal”, etc. if caught • As a Christian (4:17; Heb 11:35) • John could avoid (Mt 14:1-12) • Stephen could avoid (Acts 7) • Paul could avoid hardships (Acts 20:20,27) • We can avoid slurs, criticism, mal-treatment by softening stand for right • Wife married to abusive husband • Worker working around worldlings. • Can avoid blessings of suffering (Mt. 5:11,12; Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17) • Can avoid heaven by avoiding some suffering (2 Tim. 3:12; 2 Pet. 2:9)</td>
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Let’s seek to avoid suffering for evil, not as Christians • Let’s seek heaven above all else — will make sufferings light. • Let’s become Christians so we can suffer as Ch.