

Suffering as a Christian? How to Respond, and why!¹

1 Peter 4:12–19

Suffering as Christians should not be a surprise.

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.

Suffering, rather, should be an occasion for celebration. Here's why!

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

Suffering as a Christian is evidence of belonging.

¹⁴ If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

Don't start whining if you bring the suffering upon yourself.

¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.

One the other hand, don't be ashamed about suffering as a Christian.

¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

This is very important for Christ's followers to know: Suffering for Christ's sake is part of God's saving work in our lives.

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?"

The bottom line: It's all about entrusting ourselves to our FAITHFUL CREATOR.

¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

WHY DO CHRISTIANS SUFFER?

1. Because of personal sin (temporal judgment). This does not imply that all problems and negative circumstances are a result of sin (cf. Job; Ps. 73; Luke 14:1–5; Neh. 9; Acts 5:1–11; 1 Cor. 11:29–30; Gal. 6:7).
2. To develop Christlikeness (Heb. 5:8). Even Jesus, humanly speaking, had to be matured, so too, His followers (cf. Rom. 5:3–4, 8:28–29; 2 Cor. 12:7–10; Heb. 12:5–12; James 1:2–4; 1 Pet. 1:7).
3. To develop a powerful, effective witness (cf. Matt. 5:10–12; John 15:18–22; 1 Pet. 2:18–21, 3:13–17).
4. As a sign of the birth pains of the New Age (cf. Matt. 24:6; Mark 13:8). (*Utley, 1 Peter, pg. 252*)

¹Message prepared and shared with the congregation of West Salem Baptist Church by Dr. Paul Null, Sunday, July 12, 2020. Citations from Scripture are from the English Standard Version of the Bible.