

“Crucible”

1 Peter 4.12-19

- **“If you are going to experience something difficult, it helps to be prepared”**
- Jesus graciously prepared his followers: [John 16.33.]
- Dealing with being a stranger/exile in the world is a major Theme of 1 Peter: [1Peter1.1]
- We live in broken world where difficulty is common human experience BUT there are particular difficulties as followers of Jesus
- **1 Peter 4.12-19** [p1016] - summarizes how can can prepare for difficulty
- Q: Have you ever responded poorly to **criticism, opposition, temptation?**

Big Idea: You need a strategy for the crucible of faith.

- **5 ways we can prepare for the inevitable difficulties as followers of Jesus.**

1. When you face difficulty, don't be surprised [12]

- [v12] ***Do not be surprised*** -“ie: don't consider it a foreign idea that you face difficult things as a Christian”
- [v12] ***Fierly trial*** (crucible) - refining by difficulty. (God allows for his greater purposes) The difficulties may not be good but good comes from them: both internal and external good
- If you don't anticipate difficulty as follower of Jesus it leads to confusion, resentment
- [Peter also says] we should not only anticipate it, but actually get excited about it.

2. When you face difficulty, find the joy of being with Jesus [13-14]

- [13] ***Rejoice*** now (in difficulty), as you look forward to super-rejoicing when he returns in glory!
- Logic: IF you experience difficulty as a follower of Jesus > THEN: indication you are really “with Jesus” > IF you are really “with Jesus” now > THEN: you will be “with him” in his glory

3. When you face difficulty, evaluate it [15]

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

- Suffering-while-being-a-Christian is very different than Suffering-as-result-of-being-a-Christian
- Notice: starts intense (***murderer, thief***) —> less intense (***evildoer, meddler***)
- [15] ***Evildoer*** - contrast “doing good” - Peter insists Christians should be known for doing good, beautify, loving things opposed to doing bad, ugly, criminal, or annoying things (Repeated theme in 1 Peter: 1.12, 2.14-15, 2.20, 3.10-13, 3.16-17, etc.)
- [15] ***Meddler*** - overstepping your realm, intruding in matters that are not yours
- McArthur suggests it refers to **“trying to overturn or disrupt culture”**
Vines: suggests: “a legal term for a charge against Christians as being hostile to society by trying to make gentiles conform to Christian standards.”
- We don't change the culture by imposing our beliefs & morals on unbelievers but by living our beliefs & morals + doing good + good news

4. When you face difficulty, glory in it [16-18]

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

- [16] **Christian** - only used 3x in N.T., a derogatory term used by non-Christians to refer to Jesus followers.
- IF labeled as negative stereotype because you are criminal/obnoxious > should be ashamed BUT IF labeled a negative stereotype because: goodness, good deeds, good news > wear it as a badge of honor.
- PJ: "I'm a **FOOL** for Jesus; whose fool are you?"
Believer (India) "I'm a **DONKEY** for Jesus; whose donkey are you?"
DC Talk: "I don't really care if they label me a Jesus **FREAK**"
- "**rejoice and be glad**" "**Glory in it**" is easier said than done!!! Is Peter is discounting true difficulty?
- Easy to say "rejoice in suffering" in theory, but what if you are the one who..
 - Lost friends or job because you faithfully followed Jesus
 - Under government watch, and arrested for faith
 - Watched your fiends hunted down and executed while you face the same?
- Peter is not writing as aloof/distant BUT from deep first-hand experience.
 - Luke 22: his shameful denial
 - Acts 4: Peter was apprehended after healing and sharing the gospel. When released he prayer for boldness to continue
 - Acts 5 Peter healed people and preached the gospel > arrested and imprisoned > miraculously released > returned to publicly proclaiming the gospel > arrested again! > received beatings and released > went away rejoicing!
 - [Acts 12] Peter's close friend was executed for gospel and Peter faced the same fate
- Peter understood difficulty! He lived it! He can be trusted when he says "don't be surprised" "rejoice in it" "glory in it" and...

5. When you face difficulty, entrust your life to God [17-19]

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

- Believing that God is **faithful creator**, I can **entrust** my *soul*/life to his care.
> When I entrust my life to God care > I can keep 'doing good' come-what-may.
- Goodness + good deeds + good news and let God handle the outcomes

CHALLENGE: make a plan to endure.