

The Way Involved In Suffering

by David E. Owen

TITLE:	The Way Involved In Suffering
BIBLE BOOK:	1 Peter 4 : 1-19
AUTHOR:	David E. Owen
SUBJECT:	Suffering
SERIES:	1 Peter
OBJECTIVE:	Suffering is universal among human beings. Sometimes we are prone to wonder why we, as believers, suffer or should suffer. Dr. David Owen deals with this great question in his exposition of 1 Peter 4:1-19. When we understand suffering, it makes our hardships more acceptable and can cause us to praise God in the midst of adversity.

Introduction
I. Peter Reminds Us Of The Proper Mindset Through Our Suffering
A. Peter Instructs Us In Mentally Understanding Our Lives
1. A Present Mindset of Death
2. A Prospective Mindset Of Dedication
3. A Past Mindset Of Defilement
B. Peter Instructs Us In Mentally Understanding The Lost
1. The Lost Are Astonished By Our Choices
2. The Lost Are Accountable To Christ
3. The Lost Are Antagonistic In Their Conclusions
II. Peter Reminds Us Of The Potential Ministry In Our Suffering
A. The Foundation Of Our Ministry
1. The Foundation Of Commitment
2. The Foundation Of Compassion
B. The Formula Of Our Ministry
1. Sharing Is The Ingredient In This Formula Of Ministry
2. Stewardship Is The Instruction In This Formula Of Ministry
C. The Flow Of Our Ministry
1. Origination of this Flow
2. The Object Of This Flow
III. Peter Reminds Us Of The Profound Message Of Our Suffering
A. We Can Recognize The Blessedness Of Suffering
1. Notice The Oddity In Our Suffering
2. The Outcome In Our Suffering

B. We Can Rise Above The Blame in Suffering
1. Suffering Should Not Come From Evil In Our Lives
2. Suffering Should Not Come With Embarrassment In Our Lives
C. We Can Rejoice That We Are Believers Suffering
1. Peter Reminds Us Of The Inevitable Conclusion Of The Sinners
2. Peter Reminds Us Of The Important Commitment Of The Saints
IV. Conclusion

Introduction

In our study of this epistle, we have seen “A Message Concerning The Believer’s Salvation” in 1 Peter chapter 1. In chapter 2 and the first half of chapter 3, there is “A Message Concerning The Believer’s Submission.”

In the second half of chapter 3, we discovered a theme that continues now throughout chapter 4, namely “A Message Concerning The Believer’s Suffering.” In chapter 3, there was an emphasis upon “The Witness Involved In Suffering.” And now in chapter 4, we find an emphasis upon “The Way Involved In Suffering.”

I. Peter Reminds Us Of The Proper Mindset Through Our Suffering

(vs. 1-6)

(1 Peter 4:1) Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

Mind ?ennoian?. Literally the word means “thought,” and so some render it here. ... It seems ... to be the thought “as determining the resolution.” (From Vincent’s Word Studies in the New Testament)

A. Peter Instructs Us In Mentally Understanding Our Lives

(vs. 1-3)

1. A Present Mindset of Death

Through Suffering, We Realize A Present Mindset Of Death To The World

(1 Peter 4:1) Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm (to equip with weapons) yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; Cf. (Romans 6:2) God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Cf. (Romans 6:11) Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Being Dead To The World Is Our Armament – It Is A Defensive Process

The Barnes’ Notes Commentary says...

[Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind] That is, evidently, the same mind that he evinced – a readiness to suffer in the cause of religion, a readiness to die as he had done. This readiness to suffer and die, the apostle speaks of as armour, and having this is represented as being armed. Armour is put on for offensive or defensive purposes in war; and the idea of the apostle here is, that that state of mind when we are ready to meet with persecution and trial, and when we are ready to die, will answer the purpose of armour in engaging in the conflicts and strifes which pertain to us as Christians, and especially in meeting with persecutions and trials. We are to put on the same

fortitude which the Lord Jesus had, and this will be the best defense against our foes, and the best security of victory.

Being Dead To The World Is Our Attitude – It Is A Dying Process

The Barnes' Notes Commentary goes on to say...

[For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin] Compare the notes at Romans 6:7. To "suffer in the flesh" is to die. The expression here has a proverbial aspect, and seems to have meant something like this: "when a man is dead, he will sin no more;" referring of course to the present life. So if a Christian becomes dead in a moral sense-dead to this world, dead by being crucified with Christ (see the notes at Galatians 2:20) - he may be expected to cease from sin. The reasoning is based on the idea that there is such a union between Christ and the believer that his death on the cross secured the death of the believer to the world.

Cf. (Galatians 2:20) I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

2. A Prospective Mindset Of Dedication

Through Suffering, We Realize A Prospective Mindset Of Dedication To God's Will

(1 Peter 4:2) That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

Peter Mentions The Portion Of Our Lifetime

WE read that F. B. Meyer said of the phrase "the rest of his time in the flesh"...

Who can tell how long that may be for any one of us? The sands run swiftly through life's hour glass. The shadow hastens to go down upon the dial. The waves eat away so quickly the dwindling shoal of land which crumbles beneath us. The Christian finds nothing in such thoughts to make him sad. Every milestone marks the growing nearness of his home. (From The Biblical Illustrator)

Peter Mentions The Purpose Of Our Lifetime

will (of God) – Greek 2307. thelema, thel'-ay-mah; from the prol. form of G2309; a determination (prop. the thing), i.e. (act.) choice (spec. purpose, decree; abstr. volition) or (pass.) inclination:-- desire, pleasure, will.

Warren Wiersbe said...

The contrast is between the desires of men and the will of God. Our longtime friends cannot understand the change in our lives, and they want us to return to the same "excess of riot" that we used to enjoy. But the will of God is so much better! If we do the will of God, then we will invest "the rest of our time" in that which is lasting and satisfying; but if we give in to the world around us, we will waste "the rest of our time" and regret it when we stand before Jesus. The will of God is not a burden that the Father places on us. Rather it is the divine enjoyment and enablement that makes all burdens light.

The late, great Vance Havner wrote a book entitled "Lord of What's Left." And that is the idea that Peter wants to convey ... that He should be Lord of the time that we have left.

Barnes' Notes says of this phrase "that he no longer should live," that it means that the believer "he has become, through the death of Christ, dead to the world and to the former things which influenced him, in order that he should hereafter live not to the lusts of the flesh." And then Barnes refers to 2 Corinthians 5:15 which says...

(2 Corinthians 5:15) And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

3. A Past Mindset Of Defilement

Through Suffering, We Realize A Past Mindset Of Defilement In Wickedness

(1 Peter 4:3) For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

Our Unregenerate Life Was Sufficient In Its Duration

The Barnes' Notes Commentary says...

[For the time past of our life may suffice us] "We have spent sufficient time in indulging ourselves, and following our wicked propensities, and we should hereafter live in a different manner." This does not mean that it was ever proper thus to live, but that, as we would say, "we have had enough of these things; we have tried them; there is no reason why we should indulge in them any more."

Matthew Henry said of the statement "the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles"...

Here the apostle argues from equity. "It is but just, equal, and reasonable, that as you have hitherto all the former part of your life served sin and Satan, so you should now serve the living God."

Our Unregenerate Life Was Sinful In Its Diversity

lasciviousness – Greek 766. aselgeia, as-elg'-i-a; licentiousness (meaning reckless and unrestrained sexual conduct) (this can sometimes include other vices):--filthy, lasciviousness, wantonness (meaning debauchery).

lusts – Greek 1939. epithumia, ep-ee-thoo-mee'-ah; from G1937; a longing (especially for what is forbidden):--concupiscence (which may suggest sexual lust specifically), desire, lust (after). This is covetousness or inappropriate and perhaps even obsessive desire for what belongs to someone else or what is forbidden.

excess of wine – Greek 3632. oinophlugia, oy-nof-loog-ee'-ah; from G3631 and a form of the base of G5397; an overflow (or surplus) of wine, i.e. vinolency (drunkenness):--excess of wine.

?From ?oinos?, "wine," and ?fleooo ?or ?fluoo?, "to teem with abundance;" thence, "to boil over or bubble up, overflow." It is the "excessive, insatiate" desire for drink, from which comes the use of the word for the "indulgence" of the desire-"debauch." (From Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament)

revellings – Greek 2970. komos, ko'-mos; from G2749; a carousal (as if a letting loose):--revelling, rioting.

?Vincent's Word Studies says that "the word originally signifies merely a 'merry-making'," but it is used here of something much worse. It suggests a looseness manifested through a party environment, perhaps an orgy.

banqueting – Greek 4224. potos, pot'-os; from the alt. of G4095; a drinking-bout or carousal:--banqueting.

In modern terms, this would be like a so-called "keg party."

abominable idolatries – according to the Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, "abominable" [athemitois?] suggests "lawless idolatries, violating God's sacred law."

B. Peter Instructs Us In Mentally Understanding The Lost

(vs. 4-6)

1. The Lost Are Astonished By Our Choices

(1 Peter 4:4) Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

Notice Their Running

Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament says...

Run not with them. "In a troop" (Bengel); like a band of revellers. Compare Ovid's description of the Bacchic rites:

"Lo, Bacchus (the Greek and Roman god of wine) comes! And with the festive cries

Resound the fields; and mixed in headlong rout,

Men, matrons, maids, paupers, and nobles proud,

To the mysterious rites are borne along."

(Metamorphoses, iii., 528-530.)

Excess ?anachusin?. Only here in New Testament. Literally, "pouring forth." The English Revised Version (1885) has "flood" in margin. The word is used in Classical Greek of the "tides" which fill the hollows.

Riot ?asotias?. From ?a?, "not," and ?soozoo?, "to save." Literally, "unsavingness," prodigality, wastefulness; and thence, of squandering on one's own debased appetites, whence it takes the sense of "dissoluteness or profligacy."

Notice Their Ranting

speaking evil (of you) – Greek 987. blasphemoeo, blas-fay-meh'-o; from G989; to vilify (speak ill of); spec. to speak impiously:--(speak) blaspheme (-er, -mously, -my), defame, rail on, revile (insult), speak evil.

2. The Lost Are Accountable To Christ

(1 Peter 4:5) Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

There Will Be A Response On The Part Of Those Who Are Judged

The phrase "give account" comes from two Greek terms – apodidomi (give) meaning "to render something in fulfillment of an obligation or expectation," and logon (account) which has the idea of those things that are collected and put together in thought and then expressed in words.

There Will Be A Readiness On The Part Of He Who Is Judging

It was A. T. Roberson who said of the phrase "him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead" that it means..."to the one readily judging," correct text, not ?hetoimoos ??echonti ??krinai?, "to the one ready to judge," which "softens the rugged original" (Hart). That is Christ apparently (1 Peter 1:13; 2 Corinthians 5:10), but the Father in 1 Peter 1:17. The quick and the dead ?zoontas ??kai ??nekrous?. "Living and dead." Those living at the time and those already dead (1 Thessalonians 4:15).

Marvin Vincent said...

That is ready ?hetoimoos ??echonti?. Literally, "having himself in readiness;" there at God's right hand in heaven, whither he has gone (1 Peter 3:22). Implying, also, a "near" judgment. Compare 1 Peter 4:7.

3. The Lost Are Antagonistic In Their Conclusions

(1 Peter 4:6) For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

Peter Mentions The Men Who Brought Judgment

judged – Greek 2919. krino, kree'-no; prop. to distinguish, i.e. decide (mentally or judicially); by impl.

to try, condemn, punish:--avenge, conclude, condemn, damn, decree, determine, esteem, judge, go to (sue at the) law, ordain, call in question, sentence to, think.

Albert Barnes said...

?The word "judged" here, I suppose, therefore, to refer to a sentence passed on them for their religion, consigning them to death for it. There is a particle in the original – ?men (Greek)?, "indeed" – which has not been retained in the common translation, but which is quite important to the sense: "that they might indeed be judged in the flesh, but live," etc. The direct object or design of preaching the gospel to them was not that they might be condemned and put to death by man, but this was indeed or in fact one of the results in the way to a higher object.

Peter Mentions The Martyrs Who Believed Jesus

John MacArthur wrote...

Peter thus reminds his readers that the gospel (the saving message of Christ) has for this purpose been preached (announced) even to those who are dead (those who had heard and believed the gospel but had died by the time he wrote). Some who read this letter would have known them and realized that some of the dead saints were martyrs. Though some of the dead believers were judged in the flesh as men (physically put to death), they were triumphantly alive in the spirit according to the will of God. Peter's point is that believers, even under unjust treatment — including death — should be willing and unafraid to suffer, knowing that all death can do is triumphantly bring their eternal spirits into everlasting life in heaven.

Barnes goes on to say that "the word 'live' here seems to refer to the whole life that was the consequence of their being brought under the power of the gospel: (a) that they might have spiritual life imparted to them; (b) that they might live a life of holiness in this world; (c) that they might live hereafter in the world to come."

II. Peter Reminds Us Of The Potential Ministry In Our Suffering

(vs. 7-11)

A. The Foundation Of Our Ministry

(vs. 7-9)

(1 Peter 4:7-9) But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. {8} And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. {9} Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

1. The Foundation Of Commitment

Peter Indicated That There Should Be The Foundation Of Commitment In Our Ministry

(1 Peter 4:7) But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

Albert Barnes said...

[But the end of all things is at hand] This declaration is also evidently designed to support and encourage them in their trials, and to excite them to lead a holy life, by the assurance that the end of all things was drawing near. The phrase, "the end of all things," would naturally refer to the end of the world; the winding up of human affairs. It is not absolutely certain, however, that the apostle used it here in this sense. It might mean that so far as they were concerned, or in respect to them, the end of all things drew near. Death is to each one the end of all things here below; the end of his plans and of his interest in all that pertains to sublunary (below the moon – earthly) affairs.

We Should Be Committed To Perception

sober – Greek 4993. sophroneo, so-fron-eh'-o; from G4998; to be of sound mind, i.e. sane, (fig.) moderate:--be in right mind, be sober (minded), soberly.

We Should Be Committed To Prayer

watch – Greek 3525. nepho, nay'-fo; of uncert. affn.; to abstain from wine (keep sober), i.e. (fig.) be discreet:--be sober.

?Marvin Vincent said that Tyndale rendered it, “Be ye discreet and sober, that ye may be apt to prayers.”

2. The Foundation Of Compassion

Peter Indicated That There Should Be The Foundation Of Compassion In Our Ministry

(1 Peter 4:8-9) And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. {9} Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

There Is The Meaning Of This Compassion – “Have Fervent Charity” Indicates The Concept

fervent – Greek 1618. ektenes, ek-ten-ace'; from G1614; intent:--without ceasing, fervent.

charity – Greek 26. agape, ag-ah'-pay; from G25; love, i.e. affection or benevolence; spec. (plur.) a love-feast:--(feast of) charity ([-ably]), dear, love.

There Is The Manifestation Of This Compassion – “Use Hospitality” Indicates The Charge

hospitality – Greek 5382. philoxenos, fil-ox'-en-os; from G5384 (philos – fondness) and G3581 (xenos – foreigner) (fondness for foreigners); fond of guests, i.e. hospitable:--given to (lover of, use) hospitality.

grudging – Greek 1112. goggusmos, gong-goos-mos'; from G1111; a grumbling:--grudging, murmuring.

B. The Formula Of Our Ministry

(vs. 10)

(1 Peter 4:10) As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

1. Sharing Is The Ingredient In This Formula Of Ministry

The Gift Has Been Divinely Shared

received – Greek NT:2983. lambano; to receive (what is given); to gain, get, obtain (From Thayer's Greek Lexicon)

Barnes said...

[As every man hath received the gift] The word rendered “the gift” ?charisma?, in the Greek, without the article, means “endowment” of any kind, but especially that conferred by the Holy Spirit. Here it seems to refer to every kind of endowment by which we can do good to others; especially every kind of qualification furnished by religion by which we can help others. It does not refer here particularly to the ministry of the word – though it is applicable to that, and includes that – but to all the gifts and graces by which we can contribute to the welfare of others. All this is regarded as a gift, or charisma, of God.

The Gift Should Be Dutifully Shared

minister – Greek 1247. diakoneo, dee-ak-on-eh'-o; from G1249; to be an attendant, i.e. wait upon (menially or as a host, friend or [fig.] teacher); techn. to act as a Chr. deacon:--(ad-) minister (unto), serve, use the office of a deacon.

Not everyone can fill the position of a deacon, but every believer can fulfill the role of a deacon in “waiting upon the Lord.”

Barnes goes on to say...

[Even so minister the same one to another] In anything by which you can benefit another. Regard what you have and they have not as a gift bestowed upon you by God for the common good, and be ready to impart it as the needs of others require. The word “minister” here ?diakonountes ?would refer to any kind of ministering, whether by counsel, by advice, by the supply of the needs of the poor, or by preaching. It has here no reference to any one of these exclusively; but means, that in whatever God has favored us more than others, we should be ready to minister to their needs.

2. Stewardship Is The Instruction In This Formula Of Ministry

Consider How The Grace Of God Is Managed

stewards – Greek 3623. oikonomos, oy-kon-om'-os; from G3624 and the base of G3551; a house-distributor (i.e. manager), or overseer, i.e. an employee in that capacity; by extens. a fiscal agent (treasurer); fig. a preacher (of the Gospel):--chamberlain, governor, steward.

Consider How The Grace Of God Is Manifold

manifold – Greek 4164. poikilos, poy-kee'-los; of uncert. der.; motley, i.e. various in character:--divers, manifold.

C. The Flow Of Our Ministry

(vs. 11)

(1 Peter 4:11) If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

1. Origination of this Flow

Consider The Origination Of This Flow – It Is The Ability That Flows From God

The Essence Of The Message Flows From God

speak – Greek 2980. laleo, lal-eh'-o; a prol. form of an otherwise obsol. verb; to talk, i.e. utter words:--preach, say, speak (after), talk, tell, utter.

oracles – Greek 3051. logion, log'-ee-on; neut. of G3052; an utterance (of God):--oracle.

Peter indicates that if any speak, let them speak that which has come from God – to say what God has expressed, to say what God would say if He were standing there.

The Enablement In Ministry Flows From God

He says that if any minister, in other words if they serve God, then do it through the enabling power of God.

minister – Greek 1247. diakoneo, dee-ak-on-eh'-o; from G1249; to be an attendant, i.e. wait upon (menially or as a host, friend or [fig.] teacher); techn. to act as a Chr. deacon:--(ad-) minister (unto),

serve, use the office of a deacon.

ability – Greek 2479. ischus, is-khoos'; from a der. of is (force; comp. eschon, a form of G2192); forcefulness (lit. or fig.):--ability, might [-ily]), power, strength.

2. The Object Of This Flow

Consider The Object Of This Flow – It Is The Adoration That Flows To God

We Can Glorify God In Everything

glorified – Greek 1392. doxazo, dox-ad'-zo; from G1391; to render (or esteem) glorious (in a wide application):--(make) glorify (-ious), full of (have) glory, honour, magnify. This word points to the showing of the glory.

praise – Greek 1391. doxa, dox'-ah; from the base of G1380; glory (as very apparent), in a wide application (lit. or fig., obj. or subj.):--dignity, glory (-ious), honour, praise, worship. This word points to the substance of the glory.

dominion – Greek 2904. kratos, krat'-os; perh. a prim. word; vigor ["great"] (lit. or fig.):--dominion, might [-ily], power, strength.

We Can Glorify God In Eternity

The enablement in our ministering comes from God, and the exaltation for our ministering goes to God.

III. Peter Reminds Us Of The Profound Message Of Our Suffering

(vs. 12-19)

A. We Can Recognize The Blessedness Of Suffering

When It Comes To Suffering, We Can Recognize The Blessedness (vs. 12-14)

(1 Peter 4:12-14) Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: {13} But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. {14} If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

1. Notice The Oddity In Our Suffering

Though Peter said to "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you," there is something strange in how we see our experience of suffering.

strange (vs. 14: first occurrence) – Greek 3579. xenizo, xen-id'-zo; from G3581; to be a host (pass. a guest); by impl. be (make, appear) strange:--entertain, lodge, (think it) strange.

strange (vs. 14: second occurrence) – Greek 3581. xenos, xen'-os; appar. a prim. word; foreign (lit. alien, or fig. novel); by impl. a guest or (vice-versa) entertainer:--host, strange (-r).

rejoice, inasmuch (in proportion as) as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings

rejoice – Greek 5463. chairo, khah'ee-ro; a prim. verb; to be "cheer"ful, i.e. calmly happy or well-off; impers. espec. as salutation (on meeting or parting), be well:--farewell, be glad, God speed,

greeting, hail, joy (-fully), rejoice.

sufferings – Greek 3804. pathema, path'-ay-mah; from a presumed der. of G3806; something undergone, i.e. hardship or pain; subj. an emotion or influence:--affection, affliction, motion, suffering.

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye

reproached – Greek 3679. oneidizo, on-i-did'-zo; from G3681; to defame, i.e. rail at, chide, taunt:--cast in teeth, (suffer) reproach, revile, upbraid.

happy – Greek 3107. makarios, mak-ar'-ee-os; a prol. form of the poetical makar (mean. the same); supremely blest; by extens. fortunate, well off:--blessed, happy (X -ier).

2. The Outcome In Our Suffering

when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy

With exceeding joy, [?agallioomenoi?] - 'exulting joy:' now ye rejoice amidst sufferings; then ye shall Exult forever free from sufferings (1 Peter 1:6,8). If we will not bear suffering for Christ now, we must bear eternal sufferings hereafter. (The Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary)

the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you

Albert Barnes said...

[For the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you] The glorious and Divine Spirit. There is no doubt that there is reference here to the Holy Spirit; and the meaning is, that they might expect that that Spirit would rest upon them, or abide with them, if they were persecuted for the cause of Christ. There may be some allusion here, in the language, to the fact that the Spirit of God descended and abode on the Saviour at his baptism (John 1:33); and, in like manner, they might hope to have the same Spirit resting on them. The essential idea is, that, if they were called to suffer in the cause of the Redeemer, they would not be left or forsaken. They might hope that God would impart his Spirit to them in proportion to their sufferings in behalf of religion, and that they would have augmented joy and peace. This is doubtless the case with those who suffer persecution, and this is the secret reason why they are so sustained in their trials. Their persecutions are made the reason of a much more copious effusion of the Spirit on their souls.

B. We Can Rise Above The Blame in Suffering

When It Comes To Suffering, We Can Rise Above The Blame (vs. 15-16)

1. Suffering Should Not Come From Evil In Our Lives

(1 Peter 4:15) But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

suffer – Greek 3958. pascho, pas'-kho; includ. the forms (patho, path'-o) and (pentho, pen'-tho), used only in certain tenses for it; appar. a prim. verb; to experience a sensation or impression (usually painful):--feel, passion, suffer, vex.

murderer – Greek 5406. phoneus, fon-yooce'; from G5408; a murderer (always of criminal [or at least intentional] homicide

thief – Greek 2812. kleptes, klep'-tace; from G2813; a stealer (lit. or fig.):--thief.

evildoer – Greek 2555. kakopoios, kak-op-oy-os'; from G2556 (depraved or injurious) and G4160 (to do); a bad-doer; (spec.) a criminal:--evil-doer, malefactor.

busybody – Greek 244. allotriepiskopos, al-lot-ree-ep-is'-kop-os; from G245 and G1985; overseeing

others' affairs, i.e. a meddler (spec. in Gentile customs):--busybody in other men's matters.

Barnes says this word refers to "one who busies himself with what does not concern him; that is, one who pries into the affairs of another; who attempts to control or direct them as if they were his own."

2. Suffering Should Not Come With Embarrassment In Our Lives

(1 Peter 4:16) Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

Let him not be ashamed - though the world is ashamed of shame. To suffer for one's faults is no honour (1 Peter 4:15; 2:20) - for Christ, is no shame (1 Peter 4:14; 3:14). (From the Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary)

ashamed – Greek 153. aischunomai, ahee-skho'-nom-ahee; from aischos (disfigurement, i.e. disgrace); to feel shame (for oneself):--be ashamed.

Cf. (1 Peter 3:14) But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

C. We Can Rejoice That We Are Believers Suffering

When It Comes To Suffering We Can Rejoice That We're Believers (vs. 17-19)

1. Peter Reminds Us Of The Inevitable Conclusion Of The Sinners

(1 Peter 4:17-18) For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? {18} And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

Barnes says...

The word "judgment" here ?krima ?seems to mean "the severe trial which would determine character." It refers to such calamities as would settle the question whether there was any religion, or would test the value of that which was professed. It was to "begin" at the house of God, or be applied to the church first, in order that the nature and worth of religion might be seen. The reference is, doubtless, to some fearful calamity which would primarily fall on the "house of God;" that is, to some form of persecution which was to be let loose upon the church.

[And if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?] If God brings such trials upon us who have obeyed his gospel, what have we not reason to suppose he will bring upon those who are yet in their sins? And if we are selected first as the objects of this visitation, if there is that in us which requires such a method of dealing, what are we to suppose will occur in the end with those who make no pretensions to religion, but are yet living in open transgression? The sentiment is, that if God deals thus strictly with his people; if there is that in them which makes the visitations of his judgment proper on them, there is a certainty that they who are not his people, but who live in iniquity, will in the end be overwhelmed with the tokens of severer wrath.

2. Peter Reminds Us Of The Important Commitment Of The Saints

(1 Peter 4:19) Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

IV. Conclusion

The famous preacher D.L. Moody told about a Christian woman who was always bright, cheerful, and optimistic, even though she was confined to her room because of illness. She lived in an attic apartment on the fifth floor of an old, rundown building. A friend decided to visit her one day and brought along another woman—a person of great wealth. Since there was no elevator, the two ladies began the long climb upward. When they reached the second floor, the well-to-do woman commented, “What a dark and filthy place!” Her friend replied, “It’s better higher up.” When they arrived at the third landing, the remark was made, “Things look even worse here.” Again the reply, “It’s better higher up.” The two women finally reached the attic level, where they found the bedridden saint of God. A smile on her face radiated the joy that filled her heart. Although the room was clean and flowers were on the window sill, the wealthy visitor could not get over the stark surroundings in which this woman lived. She blurted out, “It must be very difficult for you to be here like this!” Without a moment’s hesitation the shut-in responded, “It’s better higher up.” She was not looking at temporal things. With the eye of faith fixed on the eternal, she had found the secret of true satisfaction and contentment (even in the midst of suffering). From an issue of Our Daily Bread

(<http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/s/suffering.htm>)