

Glorifying God As A Christian

by Johnny Hunt

TITLE:	Glorifying God As A Christian
BIBLE BOOK:	1 Peter 4 : 15-19
AUTHOR:	Johnny Hunt
SUBJECT:	Praise
OBJECTIVE:	Johnny Hunt remind us that the Peter exhorted the Christians to pursue virtues, including self-control, love, hospitality, and service. The objective was that God may receive praise through Jesus Christ.

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Introduction

Peter, basing his teaching on the example of Christ's suffering, admonishes the believers to not live for evil human desires but rather to obey the will of God. He teaches that those people who choose a life of sin and induce others to follow them will have to give an account to God. The believers who are now dead received the gospel for this reason during their earthly life. Christians should not be surprised when they experience suffering, because they are participating in the sufferings of Christ. They ought to rejoice whenever they are insulted because of Christ's name. Indeed, they are blessed. Peter warns the believers that no one should give occasion for suffering as an evildoer. When a believer suffers, he should not be ashamed but should praise God that he is a Christian. God's judgment begins with the family of God and then reaches out severely to those who disobey the gospel of God. Peter exhorts the believers to commit themselves to their faithful God and to serve him by doing good deeds.

Vance Havner said, "There is a comfortable attitude about Jesus Christ in our churches today, and it is our greatest peril. After all, we are not judged so much by how many sins we have committed but

by how much light we have rejected. In this day, when law and order seems on the way out and criminals get only a slap on the wrist, it is well to remember that "the wages of sin remain the same and what men sow they still reap." In this text, Peter warns the believers that no one should give occasion for suffering as an evildoer. When a believer suffers, he should not be ashamed but should praise God that he is a Christian. God's judgment begins with the family of God and then reaches out severely to those who disobey the gospel of God. Peter exhorts the believers to commit themselves to their faithful God and to serve Him by doing good deeds. Peter makes it clear that before God pours out His wrath upon this evil world, a "fiery trial" will come to God's church, to unite and purify it, that it might be a strong witness to the lost. There is nothing for us to fear, if we are suffering in the will of God. Peter encourages the readers not to see their suffering for Christ's sake as a misfortune or as something to be ashamed of, but as a privilege for which to be grateful to God.

I. The Reason For Suffering Verses 15-16

A. The Truth 15

The fact that we are Christians is not a guarantee that we escape the normal consequences of our misdeeds. Peter is saying, "let's be sure we are suffering because we are Christians and not because we are criminals." This is a reminder that should we suffer for criminal deeds, we would no longer be a testimony for Christ. By the way, a testimony is not what you have, as much as what you are. Peter is showing the difference between suffering deservedly for wrong doing and suffering innocently for the name of Christ. "evildoer" - an all encompassing word; covers any moral failure. If we do evil and suffer for it, we do not bring glory to God. 1 Peter 2:20, "For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God." "as a busybody" - Peter possibly invented this word. Such persons usually exhibit a notable lack of attention to their own problems. Allotrios - belonging to others. Episkopos - looking upon or looking into together, looking into that which belongs to another. Meddler; interfering in the lives of others; disrupts the peace and harmony in the local church and community. A self-appointed overseer in other man's affairs.

B. The Testimony 16

"as a Christian" - (little Christs); because of the common place frequency of this word, it has lost much of its actual impact. To early readers, the word was used both here and in Acts, must have generated an almost electric response. In being called Christians, these saints were labeled as belonging to Christ and, hopefully, as ones exhibiting the spirit of Christ in their lives. Word occurs three times in the New Testament. First occurrence in the 5th decade. In Acts 11:26, the Bible leads us to believe that the name did not originate with the believers, but with the unconverted population of Antioch. About 15 years later, Herod Agrippa II asked Paul, "do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian." Acts 26:28. When Peter wrote this letter, the cult of Caesar was the state religion of the Roman Empire, in which the emperor was worshipped as a god. It meant, and cost, something to be a Christian in those days. The members of the Imperial Cult looked down upon and persecuted the members of the body of Christ. Peter definitely remembered that awful night when he cowered before the might of Rome and denied his Lord. "let him not be ashamed" Romans 10:11, "For the scripture saith, whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." "When a believer meets scorn, ridicule, and contempt because of his faith, shame often prevents him from witnessing for Christ.

Illustrate: Older gentleman at the Atlanta Airport. Romans 10:13. He told me that some people think he shouldn't push his belief on others. He said, "You have to listen to the Lord." "Ashamed of Jesus! That dear Friend on whom my hopes of heaven depends! No; when I blush, be this my shame, that I no more revere His name." Joseph Griggs: He is not ashamed of us. Hebrews 2:11, "For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren." Hebrews 11:16, "But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them." 2 Timothy 1:12, "For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day." "I am not ashamed" - speaks of confidence "know whom I have believed" - speaks of certainty "He is able to keep" - speaks of His commitment "let him glorify God" - literally "let him glorify God by this name (Christian).

He must do so in such a way that his suffering brings glory to God and to the name he bears. Our lives commend the name we wear and bear. "But in that name let him glorify God" "in his capacity as a Christian". The opposite of shame is praise. The world may think suffering for conscientious adherence to Christianity is disgraceful, but actually it is an honor in God's sight.

II. The Refinement From Suffering Verses 17-18

The refining fire of judgment is leaving no one untouched, but Christians are being purified and strengthened by it, sins are being eliminated and trust in God and holiness of life are growing. Here we find a contrast. A Fiery Trial - A Flaming Fire.

A. A Fiery Trail 17a

"Judgment at the House of God." John Brown writes that God's disciplinary judgment falls upon His people "as a proof of their membership in His family, and a pledge of their escape from the end of those whom the last judgment shall find disobedient to the Gospel." The judgment here is the persecution which these saints were undergoing, a disciplinary judgment designed to purify their lives. Not condemnation, but the purging, chastening, and purifying of the church by the loving hand of God. Our Father does not pass over the failures and sins of His people, but disciplines them in order that they may be careful to walk in obedience to His Word. Reasons for discipline:

1. Always Proves His Love

Hebrews 12:6, "For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives."

2. Always Acknowledges Our Sonship

Hebrews 12:7, "If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?"

3. Always For Our Profit

Hebrews 12:10, "For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness."

4. Always That We Be Blessed

Hebrews 12:11, "Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." As our lives are purified and we become more like Jesus, the effectiveness of our testimony to the unsaved world is increased in our world.

J. Allen Blair If unbelievers do not see the effect of Christ's transforming power in us, they will continue in their unconverted and hardened condition, refusing to hear and obey the Gospel of God. Has it ever occurred to you that because of some little pet sin in your life you may be keeping someone from the joys and blessings of salvation and that this will ultimately result in their eternal separation from God? Such a possibility should provoke serious consideration.

B. A Flaming Fire 17b

If His judgment brings the believers earthly suffering, what must be the punishment of the unsaved? The salvation which God has provided for mankind cost God a great deal, for it involved the death of His Son. The destiny of the unbeliever who rejects that which cost God so much can never really be visualized or expressed. Verse 18 It does not imply uncertainty of the outcome, but the difficulty of the road that leads to it, namely, God's purging in discipline and trials by which the faith of His people are purified. Quotes Proverbs 11:31 "Scarcely" - copious labor; the concept is not of works salvation but of "unlikely" salvation or salvation appropriated with great difficulty. Only God can save. Man's finest efforts falter.

As John Newton wrote: Beyond a doubt, I rest assured Thou art the Christ of God; Who has eternal

life secured Promise and by blood. The help of men and angels join'd Could never reach my case
Nor can I hope relief to find But in thy boundless grace.

Charles Spurgeon reminded his congregation: "Do you not, dear brethren and sisters in Christ, sometimes feel how hard it is for you to be saved, when you put your soul before the tribunal of our enlightened conscience? Our own conscience, at the best, is a poor partial judge compared with the impartial and infallible. Judge who will, by and by, sit upon the great white throne.

"Paige Patterson: "The difficulty of salvation is not found in any limitation or insufficiency in the work of Christ. The difficulty is found in restraining the just wrath of God against sin. The severity of this affronted holiness is observable in the death of Jesus on the cross. While all men deserve condemnation, those who come to Christ escape that judgment. But since these "scarcely" are saved, what will happen to the ungodly and the unrepentant sinner? Again this is a rhetorical question, the response to which is a shaking of the head."

III. The Results Of Suffering Verse 19

A. A Principle 19a

Commitment is active; not simply flight to God from suffering that we endure. We commit ourselves in well-doing. NOTE: 1 Peter 2:12, 15, 20; 1 Peter 3:13, 16-17 "commit" - entrust; a banking term; to give to someone for safekeeping. Luke 23:46, "And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.' "Having said this, He breathed His last." Instead of wondering if you can endure, you should commit yourself to God Who is able to give victory in any situation. Christians do not suffer accidentally or because of the irresistible forces of blind fate; rather, they suffer according to God's will. Romans 12:2 says God's will is good, perfect, and acceptable.

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B. A Person And Promise 19b

"a faithful Creator" - the reliability of God; as Creator, He is the architect of all things, accomplishing His great design. Peter uses the word "Creator" to remind the readers of this letter that when they committed their lives to God, they were simply giving back to God what He had created. As Creator, God knows best the needs of His beloved creatures.

Conclusion: God has not only created man, but through His faithfulness, He also sustains him from moment to moment.