

Fiery Trial

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: 1 Peter 4.

B. The Christian life brings with it its own problems.

C. Because we confront the world, we are going to suffer for it. Suffering is a part of discipleship.

D. Areas of suffering for righteousness' sake: reviling, slanders, speaking of evil, false accusations, scourgings, rejection by men, hatred by the world, hatred by relatives, martyrdom, temptations, shame for Christ's name, tribulations, imprisonments, stonings, beatings, being a spectacle of men, misunderstandings, defamation, despising, troubles, afflictions, distress, tumults, labors, watchings, fastings and reports.

E. There are several sides to suffering.

II. Promise: suffering is part of the Christian life. (Acts 14:22, 2 Timothy 3:12)

III. Purpose.

A. The fiery trial is part of purification. (Job 23:10)

B. Suffering is a test.

1. It is a test of the reality of your faith.

2. It is a test of the strength of faith.

IV. Participation: we participate in Christ's suffering. (Philippians 3:10)

A. This refers to the suffering that Christ went through because of others' sin. (1 Peter 4:1, Galatians 5)

B. This does not mean we bear sin for others.

C. We should rejoice in suffering because it brings glory. (Hebrews 12:2)

V. Power: one is blessed when he is reproached for Christ. (Acts 6:15)

VI. Peril:

A. Sin and suffering does not end in glory. The cause of the suffering makes the martyr, not just plain suffering.

B. Do not be ashamed of Christ in suffering.

VII. Purging:

A. To purge the world we must begin with God. (Ezekiel 6)

B. God must purify the church before he returns.

C. Suffering is often the tool for purging.

VIII. When you suffer, commit yourself to God and his purpose in it.

Application Questions:

1. What does it mean to participate in the suffering of Christ?

2. Why do Christians suffer?

3. When have you experienced Christian suffering? What did you learn?
