

THE CALLING AND GLORY OF OUR SUFFERING

INTRO: the Apostle has laid out for us what the grace of God has made us: lively stones built up a spiritual house built upon Christ. We are “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” The Apostle applies that truth to various situations, and now finally to servants.

I. **THE CONTRAST IN OUR TEXT.**

- A. There is suffering for doing wrong.
 1. In the context of our passage, a servant might suffer because he is lazy, and might be fired. You lose your job.
 2. Boys and girls, you might be disobedient to your parents or teachers, and you get a good spanking or punishment.
 3. You might be mean or obnoxious, so that others avoid you, and you are lonely.
 4. This is suffering, but it is not “thankworthy” but it is simply the consequences of your own wrongdoing.
 5. “buffeted” (vs.20) means literally being struck, struck in the face or boxed on the ear.
- B. There is suffering for doing good but with the wrong motives.
 1. A person suffers while at work from boss or fellow workers, but says nothing for fear of losing their job.
 2. Another is simply is a rather naturally patient person towards others, not easily ruffled.
 3. And then there is the stoic who just hardens himself to suffering without grumbling.
- C. There is suffering “for conscience toward God enduring grief, suffering wrongfully.(vs.19)
 1. You do a good job at the workplace, and fellow workers are threatened and try to slow you down or hinder you.
 2. You do the best of you ability and your employer does not recognize it or pay you what he should.
 3. At school you refuse to cheat or engage in bad activity, and you are labeled as a goody-goody or teacher’s pet.
 4. Family or other church members are walking in sin, and you warn them, you suffer bitterness or scorn.

II. **THE CALLING THAT IS GIVEN TO US**

- A. It is a calling from God to his people.
 1. The Apostle Peter is not giving here merely a suggestion. This is not just one option for us.
 2. We are to endure grief: the suffering can be physical suffering, mental suffering, insults, reproach, and shame.
 3. We are called to suffer wrongfully for God’s sake, for Christ’s sake.
 4. We are called to this in the midst of the world, living as light in darkness, shining. The world will hate us more!
- B. We are called to suffer “on account of conscience towards God.”
 1. Conscience means “to know together.’ Suffer on account of the knowledge of God.
 2. We suffer standing before God’s face.
 3. We are called to suffer to glorify God, for God’s sake.
- C. We are to endure that suffering.
 1. We are not to rebel against it, to despair, to quit, and surely not to retaliate against those who hate us.
 2. But we are to bear up with the grief.
 3. We are to remain under that heavy hand that is placed upon us.
- D. We are to suffer with patience.
 1. The idea here is prolonged patience.
 2. Spoken of here is the Christian virtue that is the fruit of the Holy Spirit.
 3. It is the patience of faith: patience for God’s sake, for Christ’s sake, as before the face of God.

III. **HOW AND WHY WE ARE TO CARRY OUT THIS CALLING**

- A. How? Christ suffered on our behalf.
 1. Christ suffered in our place as our substitute, but he also suffered for our benefit.
 2. We receive the benefits and fruit of his suffering
 3. These are the blessings of salvation: regeneration, faith, justification, and sanctification.
 4. Therefore we are able to walk in his steps.
- B. Following in his footsteps.
 1. Christ left an outline, a picture of the way that we are to walk.
 2. We are to track him, as a hunter tracks the deer.
 3. This is not our working or meriting anything, for example asking, “What would Christ do in this same situation?”
 4. Meant here is that we walk in the light of Christ’s precepts, in the light of his word, his light shining on our way.
 5. With his light he guides us. We must walk as Christ walked in his suffering. The next verses are the climax!
- C. Why does God look down with favor at this walk of suffering?
 1. To answer this we must look again at the suffering of Christ. Why did he suffer? Not only for our sins.
 2. Jesus suffered in the midst of and from wicked men, manifesting the righteousness of God as he judges.
 3. By his suffering, God reveals that he world is condemned and was to be condemned.
 4. This suffering of Jesus Christ is to be filled up (Col. 1:24). Not suffering the wrath of God, but at wicked hands.
 5. The world hating and persecuting us is showing its hatred for Christ.
 6. Christ suffers with and in his people as far as the iniquity of the world is concerned.
- D. God’s Word tells us that “this is acceptable with God (vs. 20).”
 1. The idea is that this is good, this is pleasant, this is beautiful in God’s sight.
 2. God looks down with favor and grace on such an attitude of being willing to suffer for doing good for God’s sake.
 3. Beautiful, because it works for the theodicy: God is justified in his condemnation of the wicked who oppose him.
- E. This is thankworthy; it brings praise to God and his church. Suffering for welldoing. What a beautiful light in the dark!