

Don't Be Surprised

16 - 1 Peter: A New World & A New Way
Church on the Park | Sunday, 30 Dec 2012

Text: 1 Peter 4:12-19

Intro: In this part of Peter's letter, he sums up what he has been saying about being God's people. Especially, in this passage, we will see how the power of God moves on us in our pain.

1) Don't be surprised (v. 12)

- It's very easy for us to be **shocked** and **surprised** when life gets difficult.
- I felt the Lord wanted me to share this message earlier this week. But I debated it. Then I found out my **mom** had a very negative report from the doctor; they just discovered a Tuma in her stomach region that could be cancerous.
 - In the last few years we have had two people in our family die from cancer. But the Lord gave four of us this verse: "I will **not** die but live, and will proclaim what the Lord has done" (Psa. 118:17).
- Why do we get surprised?
 - Because we know God is our **protector** and he wants to **bless** us.
 - **But** God being for us does not mean there will be no difficulties in life. And we will especially go through troubles as believers, since we are foreigners and strangers in this world.
 - **Tests** actually protect and bless us. They bring us **deeper** into knowing Christ.
- **xenizō** - a stranger, a foreigner. A surprising guest.
- Peter is very real. He doesn't paint the Christian life as a **fantasy**. Yes, it's rewarding, but we will also go through the fire.
- **πύρωσις** *púrōsis*; gen. *purōseōs*, fem. noun from *purōō* (4448), to burn, or *púr* (4442), fire. The act or condition of being on fire, burning, conflagration (Rev. 18:9, 18). Figuratively meaning fiery trial, calamity, suffering (1 Pet. 4:12; see Is. 48:10 where *káminos* [2575], a furnace, is used).¹
- *John 16:31-33. "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have **trouble**. But take heart! I have overcome the world."
- **When life gets tough, remember, God has not left you.**

2) Rejoice in the fire (vv. 13-18)

- Peter describes suffering as being in the **fire**. In other words, yes it's hot, but we are being refined. (see the Message)
- **Daniel 3:16-30**: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego
- Isaiah 43:1-2: "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze"
- Your **perspective** is key.
 - You have **something**, not nothing. God is **for** you not against. You are being made into the **image** of Christ. Your **relationship** with Christ will grow stronger. This is an **opportunity** for God to show his glory.
- Why rejoice? Here's FIVE reasons:

¹ Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

- 1 - You're participating in the sufferings of Christ (v. 13; Phil 3)
 - Therefore, you're growing in a deeper knowledge of Christ
 - God is working spiritual maturity (James 1:2-8; Rom. 8:28-30)
- 2 - You will appreciate the revelation of Christ's glory more (v. 13)
 - In this age and when he comes again
- 3 - You are blessed. (v. 14; Matt 5:3ff)
 - Perspective
- 4 - This Spirit of God and glory rests on you (v. 14)
- 5 - You bear the name of Christ—Christian. This is an honor (v. 16)
- Your attitude in a test will either keep you going higher in God or sinking down in despair.
- ***Rejoicing in the fire is a choice that we make when we have God's perspective.***

3) Commit & Continue (v. 19)

- When we are in the fire it's easy for us to want to **give up**.
- What should we do?
 - **Commit** ourselves to God
 - FAITHFUL CREATOR
 - The Scripture means: entrust ourselves to God, let go and let God, place ourselves in the Lord's hands.
 - Jesus did this on the **cross** when he said, "Into your hands I commit my spirit."
 - That does not have to be a dying prayer. It can be an everyday prayer.
 - **Don't give up**, but rather continue to do good (Luke 23:32-43).
 - Don't say, "I'm going to give up doing good because God isn't being good to me."—that's the wrong attitude.
 - Jesus also show us this on the cross. Remember how he took care of his mother and extended forgiveness to the thief. Also how he said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

Conclusion: Let's not be surprised when we experience a fiery ordeal. These are normal for the Christian life. Instead, let's have the right perspective and rejoice in the fire. During our pain we need to commit ourselves to God and continue to do good.

END NOTES

Message Version - 1 Peter 4:12-19

"Friends, when life gets really difficult, don't jump to the conclusion that God isn't on the job. Instead, be glad that you are in the very thick of what Christ experienced. This is a spiritual refining process, with glory just around the corner.

If you're abused because of Christ, count yourself fortunate. It's the Spirit of God and his glory in you that brought you to the notice of others. If they're on you because you broke the law or disturbed the peace, that's a different matter. But if it's because you're a Christian, don't give it a second thought. Be proud of the distinguished status reflected in that name!

It's judgment time for God's own family. We're first in line. If it starts with us, think what it's going to be like for those who refuse God's Message!

If good people barely make it,
What's in store for the bad?

So if you find life difficult because you're doing what God said, take it in stride. Trust him.
He knows what he's doing, and he'll keep on doing it."

The night is lonely
The voices are many
The moans are empty
The cries are unanswered
But God is here with me

Scared as hell
Fragile as a mountain flower Weak to the bone
Shaky to the core
But God is here with me.

Stinging needles
Sticky floors
Tape and gauze
Bright lights thru squinty eyes
But God is here with me

A caring thought
A caring touch
A servants heart
A sharp mind
But God is here with me

Thoughts and prayers
Peace and calm
A healing touch
A Grateful heart
But God is here with me

Amen

Gideon Hodulick