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SPRING SERIES 2022 – WEEK 11

1 Peter 4:12-19: Unsurprised by Suffering

For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

– 1 Peter 4:17 ESV

- **No surprise here**

*Beloved, do not be **surprised** at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.* – 1 Peter 4:12 ESV

- Peter uses the same word he used in verse 4

*With respect to this they are **surprised** when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you...*

ξενίζω (*xenizō*)

to view as strange

to be astonished or shocked

to the point of being put off by it

- There were not to view their suffering as something shocking or unexpected
- And they were not to be angered by it

- They were not to see their suffering as something **strange**

ξένος (*xenos*)

alien, foreign, unheard of

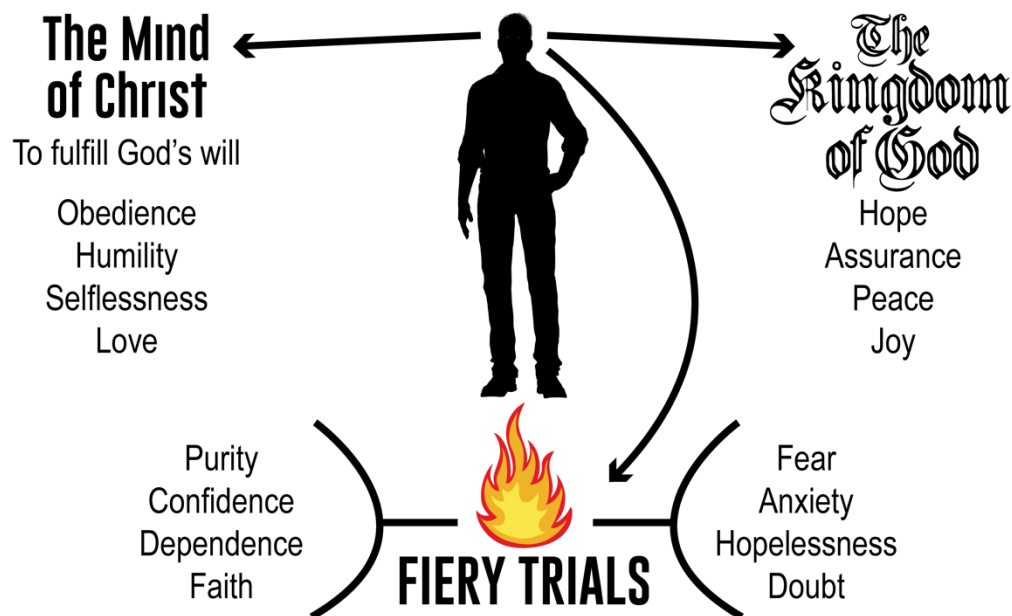
totally unexpected and unwanted

- Yet, this is how we tend to view trials

- And Peter has already addressed this issue

*So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. **It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold**—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. – 1 Peter 1:6-7 NLT*

- Faith that survives temporal trials is a genuine and lasting faith
 - We suffer fiery trials in this life
 - The lost will experience them for eternity



The benefits of fiery trials

They provoke **courage**
 They are proof of **godliness**
 They promote **confidence**
 They provide **rewards**
 They produce **joy**

- **Surprised by joy**

***But rejoice** insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. – 1 Peter 4:13 ESV*

- Peter gives them a preferred alternative
- They were to replace their shock and surprise with joy
- This is the same thing James promoted

*Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it **an opportunity for great joy**. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance*

has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. – James 1:2-4 NLT

- Both Peter and James have the end in mind
 - (James) When you are perfect and complete
 - (Peter) When his glory is revealed
 - And Peter has stressed this before

*In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor **at the revelation of Jesus Christ**. – 1 Peter 1:6-7 ESV*

- And the apostle John wrote about the same thing

*Behold what manner of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God. And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Beloved, we are now children of God, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that **when Christ appears**, we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as Christ is pure. – 1 John 3:1-3 BSB*

- We are to focus on Christ's return
 - It is a **reality**
 - It is a guaranteed **inevitability**
 - It will result in our **glorification**
 - It will complete our **sanctification**
 - We will require no further **purification**
 - Our faith will require no further **testing**
- **Blessed by the Spirit**

*If you are insulted for the name of Christ, **you are blessed**, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. – 1 Peter 4:14 ESV*

- The Spirit's presence is the proof of God's blessing

*...the Spirit of glory and of God **rests upon you**... – vs 14*

*By **his divine power**, God has given us everything we need **for living a godly life**. – 2 Peter 1:3 NLT*

*...he [God] has identified us as his own **by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts** as the first installment that **guarantees everything he has promised us**. – 2 Corinthians 1:22 NLT*

Fiery trials can produce:

Fear
Anxiety
Hopelessness
Doubt

Or with the Spirit's power, they can produce

Purity
Confidence
Dependence
Faith

- You can have your fiery trials **now** or **later**
- We can experience God's **fire of refinement**
- The lost will experience His **fire of judgment**
- One is **temporal** and the other is **eternal**
- One results in our **purification**
- The other ends in **condemnation**

- **The sad reality of self-condemnation**

- Look at the words of Jesus

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. **For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.**" – John 3:16-21 ESV*

- Jesus doesn't condemn us, we condemn ourselves
- He portrays the two options:
wickedness vs righteousness
doing evil vs doing good
condemnation vs commendation
retribution vs reward

- **Suffer for the right reason**

But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. – 1 Peter 4:15 ESV

- Everyone suffers in life
- But we are to suffer for the sake of righteousness
- It comes with no shame

- **Suffer with the judgment in mind**

For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? – 1 Peter 4:17 ESV

- Remember the words of Jesus:
*"And **this** is the judgment..."* – John 3:19 ESV
 - The light has come
 - But people prefer the darkness
 - Their words are evil
 - They love the darkness and hate the light
 - And they stand condemned
- Everyone has to make a choice
- We were all in the same predicament at one time

Some of you were once like that.

But you were cleansed;

you were made holy;

you were made right with God

by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. – 1

Corinthians 6:11 NLT

- **Remember the miracle of your salvation**

*And "**If the righteous is scarcely saved,***

what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" – 1 Peter 4:18 ESV

- What Peter is NOT teaching:
 - Salvation is virtually impossible
 - Even righteous people barely make it in

"The point is not so much the scarcity of salvation, or doubt about it, as it is the difficulty presented to God to save even a righteous person." – Paul J. Achtemeier, *Hermeneia, 1 Peter*

- There are NO righteous people

As the Scriptures say, "No one is righteous – not even one. No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one." – Romans 3:10-12 NLT

- A righteous person is "rarely" saved
 - Because they're like unicorns! – non-existent
- The God of the impossible

*“Children, **how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God!** It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, “Then who can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. **For all things are possible with God.**”*

- Salvation is the work of God
 - So...“*what will become of **the ungodly and the sinner?***” (vs 18)
 - There is no hope for the **serial** unbeliever
 - They stand **judged** and **condemned**
 - It’s their **unbelief**, not their **sins** that condemn them
- **Do good and trust God**

*Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will **entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.*** – 1 Peter 4:19 ESV

- Our suffering has a **purpose**
- Our trials are **productive** and not **punitive**
- Our God disciplines us out of **love**
- Our present difficulties are **temporary**
- Our future is **secure**

*And if we are children, then we are heirs: heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with Him, so that we may also be glorified with Him. **I consider that our present sufferings are not comparable to the glory that will be revealed in us.*** – Romans 8:17-18 BSB

- **Discussion questions**

Why is it so vital that we recognize just how improbable and impossible our salvation really is? And what keeps us from doing so??

Look at the diagram Ken discussed, which traits do the fiery trials in your life tend to produce and why? How does Peter say to change that?

What are some practical ways we can “entrust our souls” to God as we wait for Christ’s return?



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SPRING SERIES 2022 – WEEK 12 HOMEWORK

WEEK 12 – 1 PETER 5:1-14: Godly Shepherds and Submissive Sheep

Peter was a highly practical man who knew that theology alone was not enough to help his readers navigate the uncertain cultural waters in which they lived. They were drowning in a sea of competing ideologies that stood diametrically opposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ. And their status as followers of Christ made them a tempting target for all those who viewed them as a threat to the prevailing status quo.

In these verses, Peter focuses his attention on the elders whom God had appointed to shepherd the local fellowships to whom Peter had addressed his letter. These men played a vital role in guiding and protecting the men and women who were being “grieved by various trials” (1 Peter 1:6 ESV).

But Peter knew it was almost impossible to lead those who refused to follow. That’s why he turned his attention to the members of those local congregations to whom he wrote and urged them to live lives of humble submission and obedience, graciously and willingly submitting themselves to their elders and to one another. According to Peter, every member of a local congregation had the responsibility to adorn themselves with an attitude of humility. No one was to view themselves as irreplaceable or indispensable. An elder, while holding a leadership position within the body of Christ, was expected to be a servant of all. And every individual within a local fellowship was to maintain a humble evaluation of themselves.

- Read 1 Peter 5:1-14. Write down any thoughts that jump out at you from these verses.
- Set aside some time to read pages 77-92 of Ken’s Devotionalary™ on 1 Peter.

- This chapter contains Peter's wrap-up to his letter. Why do you think that he began this section with an address to the elders of the church?

Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-11. Write down the characteristics of an elder and why these would be so important in a local body of believers.

- According to verses 2-3 of 1 Peter 5, what does Peter expect of these men?

Why would failure to heed Peter's warning be so detrimental to the local church?

- What points of personal application do you get from verses 5-7? What would they look like in everyday life?
- Look at verses 8-9. Why would Peter associate sober-mindedness (serious thinking) with his warnings concerning Satan?

Why is it important that we take the reality of Satan seriously?

According to verse 9, what is the key to resisting him, and what would that look like in your life?

- What encouragement do you get from verse 10?