



1 Peter

The Journey Home

Strange Times

1 Peter 4:12-19

Message #10 of 13 – S691

Sermon given on June 5, 2016



Sunday Morning Service

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Strange Times

1 Peter 4:12-19

Opening Comments

- Turn to **1 Peter 4**
- Today, we continue our series through the first letter from Peter –
The Journey Home
- Jesus made a prediction in **John 16:33**

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

- We don't usually describe our tribulations as tribulations
- We use different words like struggles, difficulties, hard circumstances, battles, and the like
- The Bible also uses another word, 'trials'
- Jesus says that these are going to come into the life of all believers
- But the reality is, that, deep down, we don't believe it is going to happen to us
- Trials and tribulations surprise us
- And we end up asking questions like, 'Why is this happening to me?' 'Where is God in this?' 'Is God mad at me?' 'Doesn't God love me?'
- Peter is writing to Christians who are suffering
- And in verse one of this chapter told them 'arm yourselves with the same mind'
- He was referring to the mind of Christ
- Peter wants us to have the same attitudes about the hard things in our life that Jesus had for the hard things that came into His life
- And having the right attitudes, the mind of Christ can make all the difference as we travel on this journey home we call the Christian life
- If you are able and willing to do so, please stand as we read today's text as a sign of reverence for God's Word
- Read **1 Peter 4:12-19**
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Strange Times**

- If you are not experiencing difficult times right now, then it is my prayer that you never do
- But the reality is that all of us will face ‘fiery trials’ in this life
- And if we don’t understand them, then we won’t be able to do what Peter said earlier **1 Peter 3:15-16**

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.*

- ‘fiery trials’ should never shake our faith – should strengthen our faith as we watch God work in the midst of the trial
- Today, would like to give you three attitudes that will help us to live in Strange Times
- **1 Peter 4:12**
- Peter begins with – ‘do not think it strange’ - Don’t be surprised
- And this is all about your perspective
- Turn to **John 17**
- If you are looking at it from a human perspective then ‘fiery trials’ are strange
- If we are going to live in these strange times, in a way that pleases God, blesses other, and grows our faith, we will need to look at our trials from Jesus’ perspective
- Jesus spoke these words on the night that He was betrayed
- **John 17:1-5**
- The ‘hour’ that Jesus was referring to was the hour of His suffering for the sins of the whole world
- Jesus connected glory to suffering
- Jesus knew glory came through the cross
- Suffering comes before glory – the cross before the crown
- Jesus was not surprised by His suffering
- It is no different for us – there must come some amount of suffering into the life of a believer
- Turn back to **1 Peter 4**
- Peter says the fiery trial ‘is to try us’ = to examine us – our faith
- We don’t know how much faith we have until we are examined

- Peter goes on to say ‘as though some strange thing happened to you’
- Your trial, tribulation, hard thing didn’t just happen as if by accident
- It is a part of God’s plan for your life and His plan of redemption for this world
- In fact, it would be strange if true Christians didn’t experience ‘fiery trials’
- We have an enemy, Satan, who is out to get us **John 10:10**
The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.
- If we are suffering because we are Christians it is because Satan hates everything that points to God
- So don’t be surprised...instead
- First attitude for living in strange times – **Be Joyful**
- **1 Peter 4:13-14**
- Jesus told His disciples to ‘Follow Me!’
- Turn to **Acts 5**
- That was not a calling to a palace, a place of comfort and peace
- Jesus called them to follow Him all the way to the cross
- In Acts 5 Peter and the other apostles have been preaching and healing in Jesus’ name and many people are responding
- The religious guys had Peter and the gang brought before them
- They tell Peter and the guys to stop preaching in Jesus’ name
- They say no, we must obey God, even if it means disobeying you
- The religious leaders want to kill them, but they are talked out of it
- **Acts 5:40-41**
- Peter and the guys get a beating, and then go out rejoicing
- Turn back to **1 Peter 4**
- Not in the beating, but in what it says about their faith
- When we suffer because we are Christians, we are ‘partaking’ or participating in Christ’s suffering
- And when we are partaking in His sufferings, verse 14 tells us that ‘the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you’
- This is where the joy comes from
- To the extent that I am suffering for Christ, the more I will sense the presence of God and His Spirit

- The more intimately will I know His grace and comfort
- First attitude to living in strange times – **Be Joyful**
- Maybe you might think – it would be better to be an undercover Christian and escape persecution
- The second attitude – **Be Unashamed**
- **1 Peter 4:15-16**
- Verse 15 is a call to examine your life – make sure you don't suffer for your own sin
- A call to live in such a way that you do not deserve the ill will of the wicked
- Notice 'busybody' or meddler in the same verse as 'murderer'
- This reminds us that to God sin is sin
- Your little sins are just as ugly to God as someone else's huge sins
- Your 'hidden' sins are just as disgusting as someone else's public sins
- And for the undercover Christians, they are guilty of another sin

James 4:17

Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin.

- Not doing good in the name of Christ is the sin of rebellion
 - And not obeying God because you are afraid of persecution is still disobedience
 - Persecution may come if you obey God, God knows that
 - Peter says here don't be ashamed if you suffer for Christ
 - Paul was well acquainted with suffering for Christ **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.**
- Sadly, this is not a popular topic today
 - People today will do whatever they can to avoid any form of discomfort – suffering is absolutely out of the question
 - Turn to **Mark 8**
 - Even Christians are embarrassed that they might be suffering for Christ
 - So much so that they will avoid even mentioning Christ or God or the Bible or the church to avoid 'being embarrassed'
 - Jesus gives us strong word of warning on that

- **Mark 8:34-38**

- This world needs bold Christians who will unashamedly live out their Christian faith humbly
- They need to see you going through the ‘Strange Times’ of your life
- And as they talk to you about your life, be ready to explain to them how God is working in your life – the reason for the hope
- Turn back to **1 Peter 4**
- If you are living your life for Christ, you never have to be ashamed of the ‘fiery trials’ which come into your life
- God allowed them so that the world can see His glory
- Those ‘fiery trials’ also point to a future reality

- **1 Peter 4:17-18**

- We cannot presume that just because we have been saved that we can live any way that we want to
- God is not going to wink at our sin
- The Bible teaches clearly, that even though all our sins have been forgiven, there may be a consequence if we continue to sin **Hebrews 12:6-8**

“For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.”If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

- The Bible teaches that there are two judgments coming
- One is for Christians – called the Judgment Seat of Christ
- Believers from all ages will present themselves to God and their works will be examined – worthy of God or not
- Rewards will be distributed
- The other judgment is called the White Throne Judgment – where all unbelievers of all time will stand before Jesus and there they will be given their punishment for rejecting God’s Son
- They will be ashamed because they will realize they could have and should have believed
- The only difference between the two is Christ – believed or not
- Living in Strange Times – Be Joyful – Be Unashamed
- Third attitude **Be Committed**

- **1 Peter 4:19**

- The hardest time to trust that God is faithful is when we are experiencing ‘fiery trials’

- Brothers and sisters, you were created to do good **Ephesians 2:10**
For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

- It is always God’s will that we do good

- And in a world that hates God, doing good in the name of Christ may result in suffering

- But God promises that if it does we will experience the joy of His presence and the presence of the Holy Spirit upon our lives

- To do good no matter what the possible consequences might be requires that we commit our soul to Him...as to a faithful Creator

- Jesus taught about this concept of committing our soul to God **John 12:24-26**

Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

- The sense of verse 19 also tells us that we are to continue doing good even if we are in the midst of suffering

- Trust our soul to Him our Creator

- As we get ready to close this service I want to pause and look at this title that Peter used for God – Creator

- Of all the titles Peter could have used, he chose ‘Creator’

- Meaning = the uncreated one who brings everything into existence out of nothing

- When we are suffering it should comfort us that He who has the power of creation is watching over us

- And He has the power to turn my suffering into good **Romans 8:28**
And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

- We live in a world where suffering is common to all people

- Only Christians have the hope of Christ, the rest of the world has no hope

- Fiery trials will come – I wish it weren't so – but your heart tells you that it is true
- Strange times are not strange in the life of a Christian
- Are you ready?
- Start developing the attitudes of Christ
- Be Joyful – Be Unashamed – Be Committed
- And then when the fiery trial comes, watch God make good come from it
- Watch Him glorify Himself through Christ – watch Him bless others through you in the name of Christ – and watch your faith grow as you become more like Christ
- Amen–**Pray**