



9/1/26

*1 Peter 4:12-19*

*As a Kingdom Outpost church, we are called to have a gospel minded perspective. According to our 14th reason to rehearse the gospel to ourselves every day, that will impact how we view the lost. Rather than judging them or ignoring their unbelief, we will long for them to know Jesus and look for opportunities to share our faith with them. So, we don't have to beat ourselves up to make ourselves feel bad enough so that we do speak the gospel. Instead, as we focus on the gospel, we can't help but want its truth to bring others to salvation. I think of those who weren't ashamed to share the gospel with me, and I'm so grateful! Did you have someone in your life that impacted your desire to know Jesus?*

*Blessings,  
Jonna*

*We're learning what it is to be living examples as a Kingdom Outpost church. Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 1:6, "And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit." Living examples live with joy in the Holy Spirit even when receiving the word means it's accompanied by affliction... as Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before Him... and as Paul and other believers endured suffering for the joy of our hope in Christ. As much as we would love for suffering to NOT be a part of our walk with God, receiving His word means that we receive His whole word... and His whole word talks quite a bit about our suffering. Our suffering is not a punishment, even though it sometimes feels like it is. God is doing something important and valuable. Paul wasn't the only one who believed this. Peter did, too. All the disciples did. I see Peter's exhortation in his letter to those who had been scattered from their homes because of their faith.*

*1 Peter 4:12-19 gives me perspective on my suffering.*

*Vs. 12-13 ~ "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. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed."*

*First, Peter calls the believers, "Beloved." God does not hate those who He allows to experience suffering. He loves us. Some might say, "I'd like to be loved a little less." But if we understand His purpose and His love, we'll see that it's worth it.*

*Next Peter says, "Don't be surprised by your trials as though they're strange." Ohhhh... this is why it's so important that we "receive the word"!!! When I ignore the word, I AM surprised by my trials! I do see them as punishment. I accuse God of abandoning me! But if I know that He's told me to expect them, I can prepare for whatever comes by studying His word and asking Him for help! Faith for the crisis moments is not something that floods in out of nowhere. It's all the little moments of learning to truth the Lord built up brick by brick, so that when the FIERY trials come, we cannot be shaken.*

*Peter says, "There trials come upon us to TEST us." Test what? OUR FAITH! Peter said in 1 Peter 1:6-7 that "now, FOR A LITTLE WHILE, we are grieved by various trials, if NECESSARY, SO THAT the tested genuineness of our FAITH may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." When is any relationship proven to be strong and unbreakable? When it goes through storms and survives. God has proven that no trial is too big for Him to face for us. The cross is our proof. What does my faith prove?*

*Every test of my faith, when I lean on the Lord, grows my faith in Him deeper because He proves Himself to be faithful to me. He proves to be with me, to be my strength, to be my peace, to sustain me through the trial.*

*So I can rejoice when I "share Christ's sufferings." What counts as Christ's sufferings? ANYTHING I face as a believer counts! John Piper says that even if I stub my toe as a Christian, it counts. Why? Because every tiny trial and every huge trial and every trial in between is an opportunity to say, "Lord, I want You more than I want comfort." Every trial, whatever it is, exposes what's in my heart... anger, fear, selfishness, pride, worry, despair... and it helps me to turn to the Lord for help and wisdom. I can rejoice now, and I can look forward to rejoicing when the fullness of His glory is revealed. The question is, am I willing?*

*Vs. 14 ~ "If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you."*

*Whatever the insult... whatever the struggle... if I'm a Christian, follower of Christ, and I turn to Him in faith and obedience even imperfectly and without full understanding, He blesses me. How? The Spirit of glory and of God RESTS on me! The Holy Spirit does NOT come and go. Whether God seems to be silent or loud... He will never leave me. I am never expected to walk through it alone. In fact, I'm expected to NOT walk through it alone! The Spirit teaches me, comforts me, transform me, strengthens me, sustains me. That is reason to celebrate.*

*Vs. 15 ~ "But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler."*

*What is my temptation when I face suffering? Get out of it as fast as possible!!! What happens*

*when I do that? I murder through hatred in my heart. I steal God's glory. I meddle with God's goodness, meaning that I choose to sin against Him rather than cry out to Him. This suffering is God's admonition because He loves me too much to let me stay in that sin.*

*Vs. 16 ~ "Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name."*

*Suffering for the sake of my relationship with Christ, even when He exposes things that need to go, is not reason for shame... just like a toddler learning to walk doesn't need to be ashamed when she stumbles. God is so patient and compassionate with us! Though we stumble, He will help us to rise. "For the righteous falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked stumble in times of calamity" (Proverbs 24:16). For the one who belongs to the Lord, "Though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the Lord upholds his hand" (Psalm 37:24). O Lord, if I stumble, let me stumble into Your arms!!! Let my weakness be Your glory... and I know Your glory is my good.*

*Vs. 17-18 ~ "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? And 'If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?'"*

*I've had both my achilles reconstructed. The pain I had AFTER my surgeries was worse than the pain I had before my surgeries. But if I had not had those surgeries, the pain would have led to more and more damage. The pain I felt after the surgeries led to my healing. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:10 that all believers will "appear before the judgment seat of Christ." But the outcome of that judgment will be far different than the outcome of the "ungodly and the sinner." The outcome for the believers will be reward based on what we did for the Lord in faith. The outcome for the ungodly and sinners, the unbelievers, will be determined by whether they were able to keep God's law perfectly. Sadly, not a soul alive other than Jesus can do that. That's why the gospel is so huge!!! Jesus fulfilled the righteous requirement of the law for all who confess Him as Lord. I am not judged by my perfection, but by His. Isn't He worthy of my worship and faith even though I face temporary trials here on earth?*

*Vs. 19 ~ "Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good."*

*Here's my call to respond. In light of all that God has done for me... and it wasn't just Jesus who suffered... the Father had to watch His Son die... the Spirit had to watch this One He loved say to the Father as He died, "Into Your hands I commit My Sprit" ... so that I could receive His Spirit! Here's my call. Follow Jesus' example. Entrust MY soul to my FAITHFUL Creator while doing good.*

*Entrust my soul to You, Lord. Instead of accusing You of not caring or of abandoning me in my suffering, entrust myself to You and don't give up. Paul said in Galatians 6:9, "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." O Lord, the only*

*way to not give up is to entrust our souls to You.*

*Instead of shying away from Your word, help us to cling to Your word. Instead of only calling on You when circumstances are so bad that we HAVE to call on You, help us to see that we can have a relationship with You that runs way deeper than our trials. Instead of questioning WHY, please help us to focus on WHO. Make us living examples of Jesus. I can't follow an example that I don't pay attention to. Whatever I'm paying attention to, that's the example I follow. Please help me to pay attention to You.*