

Sermon: Fiery Ordeal, 1 Peter 4:12-19.

This week's sermon talking points:

- 1. Don't be surprised when it's hard to live out your faith... both internally and externally.**
- 2. We don't preach "God is good" when someone has just been diagnosed with cancer. We must preach it beforehand so they already know it when that moment comes.**
- 3. Persecution is not necessarily something we ask for, but it must be something from which we must not shirk away.**
- 4. Instead of being shocked by persecution instead keep on rejoicing through it!**
- 5. The deeper the pain... the deeper the praise.**
- 6. Our longing for the end and Christ's return is proportional to the discontentment we have for our current position.**
- 7. During the most difficult of times, it seems the most palpable presence of God's Spirit is with us.**
- 8. All suffering is not the same.**
- 9. The persecutions you face serve as notice to all (including yourself) of your hope and assurance in things to come.**
- 10. Our endurance through identifying with Christ in His sufferings is the evidence of our eternal citizenship in heaven.**
- 11. When the world beats us up... keep the big picture and keep moving forward.**
- 12. We are to know nothing is arbitrary or random.**

Questions:

1. Why are we so often surprised when trial, struggle, or even persecution comes our way? What is our "natural" reaction to events like this? Why do you think we respond that way?
2. What kinds of truths need to precede difficult times? What truths need to be preached during the good times before the bad times come?
3. What benefits are derived from persecution? How do you stay in the "fire" to allow those effects to take place?
4. When in your life have you experienced great loss or pain? Looking back, how did that moment(s) shape you, your faith and your relationship with God?
5. How much are you ready for Christ to return? I.e. How content are you to have Him wait? Why did you answer that way? What does your answer reveal about where you are spiritually?
6. When have you sensed the greatest presence of God? How did God reveal Himself in that moment?
7. Through what difficult events have you passed that allowed you to confirm your faith and standing with God in Christ?
8. Entrusting ourselves to continue to do good while facing persecution is the active response to our faith in our sovereign God allowing the very moments with we find such difficulty. Why does Peter continue to call us to action? How does that action help us and others?
9. What stuck out to you from this weekend's message? Why?