

June 5, 2011
 Sermon for Seventh Sunday of Easter
 St Peter Lutheran Church
 Bowie, TX
 Larry Knobloch, Pastor
 1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:6-11 (ESV)

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

1 Peter 4:12-19 (ESV)

¹² 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. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. ¹⁷ 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? ¹⁸ And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" ¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

1 Peter 5:6-11 (ESV)

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. ⁸ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. ¹⁰ And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹ To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

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¹ *The Holy Bible : English Standard Version.* Wheaton : Standard Bible Society, 2001

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Amen.

Is modern day Christianity merely a spectator sport? I know, a hard question. But our Epistle this morning is heavy on the law. Sandwiched between two other readings full of grace, yet for some reason, I was drawn to 1 Peter this morning and the question that I opened with... Is modern day Christianity merely a spectator sport? Are we here for just one hour (or maybe a little more) on Sunday mornings, go through the motions and then we feel that we have done our bit for the week. Our offerings of time and treasure end up being an afterthought as we go about our busy lives.

Maybe a good question to ask ourselves, is if you were arrested for being a Christian; would there be enough evidence to convict you?

In our Text, Peter reminds us that we believers are called to pay a price. And that price is something other than avoiding certain things, things that we do without because we follow Christ. Partaking of the sinful things in life that the world calls "fun". Or taking the easy way out of lying, cheating or stealing.

If we are called to the carpet for being a Christian, to face persecution, that is the price or the trial that Peter is speaking of. Look at what Christ went through on the way to the cross. Look at what His followers faced at the hands of the Romans after His death and beyond. Read up on your history even how Christians treated Christians in Medieval times. Some rough stuff often greeted those who called upon the Lord.

But then we look around and say, but this is the 21st Century, Peter was talking to the 1st Century Christians, we've come a long way since then, so this doesn't apply. There is no suffering for Christianity today...and sadly, that is too true. Why? Because we are avoiding persecution by keeping our mouths shut. Be it in the name of political correctness, or business practices, or whatever. How we survive in this world all too often comes at the price of our leaving Christ behind. Seriously, do you hide your Christianity? Do you miss opportunities to praise His name because it might offend someone? Do we not offer to pray for someone because we're not sure if they are a Christian or not? Is there someone in your circle of friends or that you deal with in your job or social circle that could honestly use the phrase: "Why I didn't know you were a Christian?"

How about our behavior or language in the workplace? Our ethics or honesty in business dealings? A missionary once was complaining about not having enough Bibles for all of the recent converts to Christianity in their mission congregation, until one of the newly converted said: "oh, we don't need more Bibles, You are our Bible. As you live, we see Jesus in you." The missionary later told a friend that he didn't sleep very well that night. I can understand why.

None of us are fully committed to sharing in Christ's sufferings. This is what Peter tells us to rejoice in...so can we truly rejoice? Think about that for a bit...can we truly rejoice when we really look at ourselves and see how we have so often failed in sharing in our Lord's sufferings?

Peter goes on in chapter 5 telling us to be sober minded and watchful, because the adversary, the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, seeking

someone...seeking YOU to devour. Sometimes his roars don't sound that bad...almost inviting when they call us to fun, earthly things.

Can you rejoice? Look at yourself and be truthful...can you? As you look at yourself, the answer would have to be no. But the Holy Spirit, speaking through Peter doesn't tell us to look at ourselves. 1 Peter 5:6-7 tells us, *"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time He may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you."*

Look to Christ! Wherever you have failed, He has succeeded on your behalf. He suffered for you so that even though you fail, in Him you can rejoice. When we fail to acknowledge Christ, when we fail to proclaim His name, when we fail in any way, we have the opportunity to cast those sins upon our Lord.

We acknowledge and repent of our sins, we cast our sins and all our anxieties upon Him and they are forgiven. Why? As we just read in v.7 *"because He cares for you"* God cared enough to send His only begotten Son to die for your sins...all of your faults, mistakes, betrayals, all sins! Through repentance and faith in His Son as your Savior, you are forgiven. You can rejoice!

Not in what you have done, but in what your Savior has done for you!

Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.