

“What If You Should Suffer?”

I Peter 3:13-18

We know from biblical examples, church history and contemporary reality, that genuine Christians (Christ-followers) experience various levels of suffering. Jesus said, “In the world you have tribulation...” (John 16:33) and the Apostle Paul told young Pastor Timothy, “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (II Timothy 3:12).

It is not a matter of “IF” we’ll face persecution but more a matter of “WHEN” and to “WHAT EXTENT.”

So, we ask ourselves, “What if I should face harsh suffering for my faith?” What would I...should I...be prepared to do? In I Peter 3:13-18 we discover some PRE-REQUISITES for facing persecution. If suffering is going to be unavoidable, it only makes sense that we should be as prepared as possible.

- I. To face suffering, we must SURRENDER TO JESUS AS OUR LORD (vv.13-17).
 - A. When Jesus is Lord, FEAR IS DECREASED (vv.13-14)
 - B. When Jesus is Lord, FAITH IS INCREASED (v.15)
 - C. When Jesus is Lord, FREEDOM IS EXTENDED (v.16)
- II. To face suffering, we must ACKNOWLEDGE JESUS AS THE GREATEST SUFFERER (v.18).

Consider His sacrifice from five (5) vantage points:

- A. The PERSON who suffered (v.18a “For Christ...”)
- B. The PENALTY He suffered (v.18b “...died for sins...”)
- C. The PERMANENCE of His suffering (v.18c “once for all...”)
- D. The PURPOSE for His suffering (v.18d “...the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God...”)
- E. The POWER over His suffering (v.18e “...having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit”)

We know that “all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (II Timothy 3:12).

There are two very important actions we can take to prepare for whatever suffering that awaits us:

- (1) SURRENDER TO JESUS AS OUR LORD! (Have you?)
- (2) ACKNOWLEDGE JESUS AS THE ONE WHO SUFFERED FOR US! (Have you?)