



# KING'S CHAPEL

## Daily Devotional - 1 Peter Study

Week 6 - Day 5

### Approaching God

**Read John 15:26-27** - *"When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning."*

**Prayer:** The more fully we give ourselves to a life of abiding in Jesus, the richer our fellowship will be with all three members of the Trinity; and intimacy with God will propel us into the mission of God. The more the gospel takes hold in our churches, the more we will be outward-facing in mission, not inward-facing in fear. Grace comes to us in order that it might flow through us. Take a moment to ask that God's grace might flow through you in new ways today.

### Bible Reading, Study & Meditation - 1 Peter 4:12-19

**Passage Introduction:** *Peter reminds confused Christians that suffering for Christ's sake is not unexpected or unaccountable. Indeed, if we understand why suffering comes, we will not only accept it, but rejoice in it. Peter shows the meaning of our suffering from two sides. First, our suffering for Christ finds its significance in Christ's suffering for us. Secondly, our suffering does not destroy us, but purifies us.*

#### **Bible Study Tips:**

*Don't forget the audience - Who is Peter writing to?*

#### **"Beloved"**

By calling his readers "beloved" (4:12), Peter shows his motivation for writing them: genuine love. He wants to prepare them for the inevitability of unjust suffering and to shepherd them through the reality of Christian suffering whenever they may face it, because he loves them.

**1 Peter 4:12-19** - **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.

**Start with Engaging the Text:** Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words. What words or ideas are repeated, related, compared, contrasted?

## Daily Study Questions

You may find it helpful to read through the commentary in “Resources for Further Study” at the end of today’s study to answer these questions.

### Questions for Study

- In vs. 12-13, Peter gives two instructions regarding trials. What are they? What does our surprise at “fiery trials” reveal about our expectations?
- Why does Peter say we should rejoice in persecution? (4:13-14)
- Look at 4:15. Here Peter gives examples of reasons we might suffer deservedly. What are they in your own words? Is there a sense in which this whole list could describe any of us? Or does Peter mean it as an exaggerated list?

### Questions for Meditation & Application

- Is your first response to suffering to “commit yourself to your faithful Creator and continue to do good?” (vs. 4:19) What wrong thinking can cause us to have a different reaction?
- Are you ever ashamed to suffer for Christ? What would make you feel that way? If this is a letter of encouragement written by Peter, how does he want us to be encouraged by thinking of the last judgment?

### Close in Prayer:

What impacted you most within this week’s passage of 1 Peter? How has Peter challenged you to set aside sin and endure suffering? What are the words of Peter asking of you personally. Take these reflections and share them with Jesus. Talk to him about where you need his grace as you are called to share his love with a sometimes hostile or closed off world.

---

## Resources for Further Study

---

1 Peter chapter 4 notes

### Commentary & Notes on 1 Peter 4:12-19

When the early English reformer William Tyndale was translating the New Testament into English, he was living in hiding, in exile in northern Europe. Translating the Bible into the vernacular language was strictly forbidden; the official clergy were worried that it would bring heresy into the church. Tyndale was short of funds for the project, and anxious to sell copies of the first edition of his translation so that he could fund further work and the revisions he knew were needed. But would people in England be prepared to buy his work, knowing they might get into trouble if they were found with it in their possession?

Then it happened. The Bishop of London got wind of the project and was furious. He was determined to stamp this nonsense out once and for all. So he commissioned his agents to buy up all the copies they could find and bring them together – to be burned! Little did he realize that he was feeding the problem he was trying to prevent. He got the books all right, and destroyed them. But the money he paid enabled Tyndale to move to the all-important second phase of the project. And it is his translation, though not always acknowledged, that forms the basis and the backbone for the world-famous King James Bible of 1611.

The argument of this passage of 1 Peter turns on a point like that, when something the opponent does actually serves to advance the cause. The heart of the passage is in verse 14: 'If you are abused because of the name of the Messiah, you are blessed by God, because the spirit of glory and of God is resting upon you.' The persecutors will lay a charge against you, in other words, that you belong to Jesus, known as Messiah. But the very naming of Jesus, and giving him his royal title, invokes Jesus himself in all his majesty and glory, and the curses the persecutor wants to call down on you turn into blessings instead.

As the apostles in Acts discovered, it is an enormous privilege to be labeled with the name of the Messiah (Acts 5.41). It means you are known as part of the royal family. But, more than that, the name itself carries power, and the Messiah as the chief temple-builder (2.4–5) will come in his glorious spirit and dwell in your midst. Give God the glory for that splendid name, says Peter (verse 16)! That is the promise, however galling it would be to the persecutors if they did but know what they were doing.

The problem Peter is facing here is not simply that, by definition, nobody likes to be persecuted and ill-treated. That is a given. The underlying problem is that this must have come as a great surprise to the early Christians – to discover that even though the Messiah had been raised from the dead there was still a period of time, the time they themselves were living through, in which intense suffering would occur to his people. Had he not defeated all the powers of sin and death? Why should this still be happening?

In answer, Peter once more invokes memories of Israel's scriptures. This time he is thinking particularly of the (to us) quite difficult book of Zechariah. There, in a passage which Jesus himself quoted on the night he was betrayed (Mark 14.27), the prophet speaks of the 'shepherd' who is to be struck and killed, with the sheep being scattered (Zechariah 13.7). Jesus himself seems to have seen that as a prophecy of his own death. But, immediately after that, those who remain of his followers are to be put into the fire to be refined like silver or gold (Zechariah 13.9). The effect

of the 'shepherd's' death is not in question. Jesus has rescued his people from the power of evil. But they are still to expect this time of 'fiery ordeal' (verse 12). It isn't something strange. It's what the scriptures had foretold. It is not pleasant to be persecuted. But if, when it happens, you can see it as a road sign, telling you that you are on the right path, that may make all the difference.

Once again Peter reminds his readers that they must see everything that is happening in the light of the final judgment which is yet to occur. The outcome is not in doubt: Jesus will vindicate his faithful people. But even for them the thought ought to be sobering. Judgment will begin – not with the obviously wicked, but with God's own household (verse 17).

The fact that God's faithful people are assured of ultimate salvation does not make this any less serious. As Paul insisted in 1 Corinthians 3.12–15, there will be a judgment for Christians too, and though genuine Christians will be saved, some will be saved 'only as through fire'. Peter puts it even more strongly here in verse 18: the righteous person is scarcely saved! From God's perspective, the holiest, most loving person is still someone who needs to be rescued, and is still so weighed down with sin that without the grace and mercy shown through Jesus that rescue would not happen.

This alarming reflection is not meant to produce panic, but rather gratitude. Those who are at present persecuting the church will meet their own judgment in due course, and God's people are called in the meantime to faith and patience. In particular, they should 'entrust their whole lives' to God, their faithful creator. We might expect this to mean that they should pray, day by day, giving over their lives to God; and no doubt this will be true as well. But Peter says something a bit different. They are to entrust their lives to God by doing what is good. This doesn't just mean rule-keeping, keeping your nose clean, not getting into trouble. 'Doing good' is much more positive than that. It means bringing fresh goodness, fresh love, fresh kindness, fresh wisdom into the community, into the family, to the people we meet on the street. When we do this, we are not saying 'Look at me, aren't I being good?' We are saying, to God, 'I trust you; this is what you have called me to do; this is what I am doing with the life you've given me; even though I am facing suffering, I will continue to be this sort of a person, to your glory.' Part of Christian faith is the settled belief that God is faithful, and that we can rely on him utterly at this point as at all others, and get on with the task of bringing his light and love into the world.

