

**Text: 1 Pt 4.15-16**

In the Sunday bulletin, I previewed this message with the title, “*Proper Suffering.*” I usually create these titles in a rush as I am preparing the bulletin. This title captures something of what I want to say tonight, but I think a better title is in order:

*Suffering as a Christian*

We’ve talked about this topic regularly over the last several weeks. I am also going through 1 Peter at my usual slow pace. I think the repetition and the “granular focus” may keep us from getting a real strong impact on our thinking from our texts.

This morning, I happened to sit down and read through 1 & 2 Peter in one sitting. I would recommend you try that as well, it might take 45 minutes, but if you do that kind of thing regularly, it will help keep all the ideas in 1 Peter in your head as we study it.

One thing I noticed was that *suffering as a Christian* is a theme Peter is working on right from the beginning:

1 Pt 1.6-7 In this [salvation] you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, <sup>7</sup> so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

The second thing I noticed today was the repeated emphasis on Christian ethics. I don’t think we should miss that. Here are a few exhortations to remind you:

- “prepare your minds for action, keep sober” (1.13)
- “be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior” (1.15)
- “abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul” (2.11)
- “Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution” (2.13)
- “To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit” (3.8)

There are many more, but these serve to make the point: the focus of Christian discipleship is holy, quiet, faithful, submissive lives, lived separate from the world. All of this even when “distressed by various trials” (1.6).

Let's look at our passage for tonight:

Read 1 Pt 4.12-19 (text 15-16)

In our text we are exhorted not to suffer one way, but to suffer another way. Our passage particularly points to our *attitude* in suffering, to keep our hearts and minds fixed on a certain object when we suffer and so glorify God.

## I. A curious list: “make sure that none of you suffers as ...”

### A. The construction of the list:

Lit. “for don’t any of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as...”

1. The little word “as” serves as a category marker
  - a. Category 1: “murderer, thief, evildoer” (the criminal category)
  - b. Category 2: “troublesome meddler” (κιν “busybody”)
2. The categories are not at the same level!

“The fourth designation, ‘or even as a meddler’ (*ē hōs allotriepiskopos*), by the repeated use of ‘as,’ is placed in a category by itself.”<sup>1</sup>

### B. Remember the exhortations of Christian living

1. Holy
2. Sober
3. Faithful
4. Submissive
5. Separate from world

How many Christians are really tempted to murder? (I suppose some, but even though I’ve gotten mad a few times, never thought of murder.)

Thief (Gk. *kleptos*) is similar

Evildoer also similar, a more general word, but in the criminal category

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<sup>1</sup> D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter* (Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 1997), 289.

### C. Thinking about category two

1. “troublesome meddler”
2. KJV “busybody”
3. ESV “meddler”
4. NET “troublemaker”
5. YLT “an inspector into other men's matters”

Now, this kind of person isn’t “holy, sober, quiet,” but he is also not “a murderer, thief, evildoer.”

What does Peter mean by this wide disparity of extremes in his list? Let’s look at category 3:

## II. The third category: “but if as a Christian”

### A. Translation notes

1. First, “suffers” is not in v. 16, but repeated from v. 15 by implication
2. Second, “as” shows up again:

Lit. “for don’t any of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as... but if as a *christianos* [Christian]”

3. Peter is comparing suffering in these categories

### B. How does one suffer as

1. Category 1?
2. Category 2?
3. But, in contrast, as Category 3?

### C. Key word in v. 26: “don’t be ashamed”

1. If I suffer in Category 1, should I be ashamed? Yes
2. If I suffer in Category 2, should I be ashamed? Yes
3. But in Category 3, “don’t be ashamed”

### III. The glory of the name

#### A. What “Christian” means

1. Not “a little Christ” but a “partisan follower”<sup>2</sup>
2. Compare “Herodians”

Mt 22.16 And they sent their disciples to Him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any.

Mk 3.6 The Pharisees went out and immediately *began* conspiring with the Herodians against Him, *as to* how they might destroy Him.

Mk 12.13 ¶ Then they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Him in order to trap Him in a statement.

- a. The Herodians were a partisan group among the Jews
  - b. They particularly aligned themselves with Herod (Antipas), the ruler who put John the Baptist to death
3. A Christian, then, designates men “as ‘members of the Christ-party,’”<sup>3</sup>
  4. Think of it this way: Christ means “the Anointed One” (*Meshiach*, Heb.)
    - a. When Greeks heard Christians referring to “Christos,” they are hearing “Anointed”
    - b. When they first used this term, in Antioch (Acts 11.26), they are calling them “the Anointed party”

Similar to how people will refer to Christians today as “born-again”

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<sup>2</sup> Hiebert, 290.

<sup>3</sup> Hiebert, 290.

**B. What it means to suffer as a Christian**

1. We embrace it, we aren't ashamed of it
2. If we suffer as "born-again," we embrace it, we aren't ashamed of it
3. The world wants to make us suffer for Christ's sake, we accept it and glory in it

**C. And even more, the focus isn't on us, but on him: "glorify God in this name"**

1. We want the world to know that we are glad to belong to God
2. We want the world to know that we rejoice to be counted as belonging to God

**Conclusion:**

We live out our Christian ethics: living "holy, quiet, faithful, submissive lives, ... separate from the world."

The world mocks us and might cause us to suffer for it.

We turn their mockery around, glorying in it as "counted worthy to suffer for his name" and thus glorify God.