

TITLE: "Armed for Suffering" (Part 1)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 4:1-2

THEME: *The time for sinning is past, the time for suffering is now, so suffer well!*

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Said a few weeks ago that Peter can be difficult . . .

That he had the audacity to write in his 2nd letter (2 Peter 3:16) that some of what TAP wrote was "hard to understand." δυσνόητος - From δυσ prefix meaning "hard or difficult" & t/verb νοεω - "to know or comprehend."

The audacity of Peter to write such a thing! - Esp when I have spent some 20 hours studying this passage & I'm nowhere near done.

Difficult text from the 1st v. to the last & that's reflective of t/various interpretations that different commentators & scholars give. Quite a bit of debate as to what Peter is saying here - at least in t/details.

By God's grace we hope to navigate through all that & come up with a strong sense of what God by His Spirit is telling us thru His Word.

{Read Passage}

Could argue that t/key verb in this entire text is the command "arm yourselves" in v. 6.

Peter wants his readers to be ready, to be armed if you will.

We often hear of police reports about a notorious felon who is said to be "Armed and Dangerous." Peter is telling us that it is perilous for us if we're not properly armed.

In that regard we're back to the idea of suffering

Everything from the previous passage going all the way back to 13 - is focused on preparing Peter's readers, believers, us, to suffer well. Mainly, to suffer persecution from a hostile world. Suffering unjustly.

Back on day one we said the theme of 1 Peter is "Hope for the Hurting" - He writes to believers who were suffering.

We've caught glimpses of that all along the way

1:6-9 {read} - implication?

2:19-21 (read) - implication?

3:13-17 {read} - implication?

4:14-19 {read} - implication?

5:6-11 {read} - implication?

You get the idea that if you want to be a real Christian it's not going to be easy. There's suffering involved. It's not the popular thing.

Why Jesus gave us so many warnings . . .

JOH 12:25 "He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal."

It was never about t/crowds or t/popularity of the thing.

Suffering isn't popular - Topic of Suffering isn't either

This is a message you won't hear in most CHs - esp. t/so-called mega-CHs. Most M.C.s are M.C.s because they don't preach this sort of message. If they did, they wouldn't be M.C.s !

On Thurs. I was invited to see a screening of t/upcoming Christian film, "The Secrets of Jonathan Sperry." I've gotten to know t/director & producer, Rich Christiano who is a like-minded brother in t/Lord.

After t/screening we were talking in t/parking lot afterwards & he was relaying his struggles against t/whole Hollywood mind-set, a mind-set that has influenced other Christian film makers to compromise truth & basically make watered-down religious movies that are called "Christian" but really aren't.

As we were talking in the parking-lot it an interesting parallel dawned on me. I said to him, "You know, Rich, there's a parallel here between what you do & what I do that I never thought of."

Think about it. What would t/Hollywood executives & prominent celebs think about your movie? Your movie budget was about 1/30th of what many Hollywood movies are. Your film will play in a fraction of the theaters and bring in a tiny fraction of t/money. And, c'mon, this Bible and Jesus stuff? That's not popular! No profanity; no nudity, no blood.

Hollywood executives would look at what he does as second rate child's play.

I thought, you know, that's what CHs like ours are like compared to t/TV-stardom of t/mega-church. It's easy to be awe-struck by a CH of 2k or 5k or 10k that takes in more in 1 Sun. that we do in a year. Churches that have multi-million dollar facilities (this sanct. cost 3,500 to build in 1825), all the bells and whistles of multi-media, sports parks, eateries, and coffee shops. Kiosks where you can tithe by credit card.

And, listen, I know that many of these people look down on small CH's w/modest ministries as being sub-standard. I've experienced that first hand!

"Oh, your little church? Someday you'll grow up and have a real church." I've said it many times, pastors climb t/ladder of CHs like aspiring business executives. Congreg. of 50 or 100 is a "starter CH" for a young man fresh out of seminary, or an older man who isn't very gifted. But, if you really want to be someone you will move upward so that you are eventually in a CH of at least 500 or 1000 by the time you're 40. It's easy to get a chip on your shoulder!

Fascinating account in 14th chapter of Luke's Gospel....

25a Now great multitudes were going along with Him;

25b-26 and He turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.

What?! That's not a popular message!

27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

28 "For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it?

29 "Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him,

30 saying, ' This man began to build and was not able to finish.'

31 "Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand {men} to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand?

32 "Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks terms of peace.

33 "So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

Paul ==>

ACT 20:24 "But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

Paul also said that it is through many trials that we must enter the KD.

This is t/message of t/Bible. This is t/message of 1 Peter.

As it relates to 4:1-6 (to put it in a nutshell) ==>

The time for sinning is past, the time for suffering is now, so suffer well!

Key verb: "arm yourselves" ==>

(ὁπλιζέω - to equip, arm * Imperative).

We are to be equipped / armed to suffer. What does that mean? That's t/question we are going to be answering t/next few weeks.

I. What Does it Mean to be Armed for the Purpose of Suffering? Seven answers to that question . . .

A. To be Armed for the Purpose of Suffering Means We Have

Clothed Ourselves With The Attitude of Christ (v 1a)

Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same attitude . . .

1. Peter is returning to the thoughts of 3:18

For Christ has suffered for sins, once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God; having been put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.

a. That paragraph (3:18 to end of the chapter) - entitled ==>

"Christ's Suffering and Our Salvation"

The path to the promised land is paved with pain and suffering; but we can persevere through whatever lies ahead because Christ traveled the same path and prevailed for us.

Christ's suffered for a time so that we could be saved for eternity.

b. In that one verse we noted:

(1) The Fact of Christ's Suffering

For even Christ suffered . . .

That is, there is no doubt that JC really and truly suffered as a man while on this earth.

(2) The Nature of Christ's Suffering

(a) He Suffered for Sin and Because of Sin

Not his own sin, but ours.

(b) His Suffering was Unique and Unrepeatable

. . . **once for all concerning sin . . .** kind of sacrifice.

A hapax. An unrepeatable act.

(c) His Suffering was Vicarious

... **just for the unjust...**

Substitutionary.

(3) The Purpose of Christ's Suffering

(a) Christ's Suffering Reconciles us to God the Father

... **in order to reconcile us to God—**

(4) The Culmination of Christ's Suffering (18d)

(a) His Suffering Ended With His Death

He who was put to death in the flesh . . .

(b) His Suffering was Vindicated by His Resurrection

... **but made alive by the Spirit.**

2. We need to track Peter's argument here

When he says in 4:1 ==>

Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh . . .

He's emphasizing the fact that JC really and truly suffered.

Most of us are old enough to remember the popular advertising phrase, "Bo Knows." The phrase refers to Bo Jackson, an All-Star athlete in pro football and baseball.

The commercial firm Weiden & Kennedy came up with the idea in the late 80s & it made them & Nike shoes for whom it was made, millions.

The original TV ad shows Jackson playing baseball. Fellow Major-

Leaguer Kirk Gibson remarks, "*Bo knows baseball.*" The next scene shows Jackson on the football field with NFL quarterback Jim Everett explaining, "*Bo knows football.*"

On and on the ads go. Bo is shown playing basketball, tennis, ice hockey, and even tries his hand as a 235 pound jockey.

I couldn't help but think of that when I was pondering this text. Jesus knows suffering.

a. He suffered in his σαρξ - his "flesh" (or his "body" as some translations render the noun)

Peter's emphasis is on t/fact of X's real suffering as a real man. This isn't primarily t/suffering that surrounded His death (scourging, crucifixion).

That was t/emphasis in 3:18. Not so much here. Peter is looking more broadly than that. This was t/suffering that He encountered t/o His life.

Remember, Peter's readers were suffering t/sort of persecution that fell short, for t/most part, of physical harm. That would come later after news spread of t/Great Fire in Rome in AD 64 - Nero blamed on them.

I. What Does it Mean to be Armed for the Purpose of Suffering?

A. To be Armed for the Purpose of Suffering Means We Have Clothed Ourselves With The Attitude of Christ (v 1a)

... since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same attitude . . .

3. Some translations have "purpose"

But we are not to emulate t/same purpose for X's suffering - to atone for sin (we can't). Rather, we are to adopt a similar attitude in suffering.

a. From the word "νοῦς" meaning "mind"

It's having t/mind of X. Not so much adopting a purpose as an attitude.

Phil. 2:5 ff. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him

(1) The same attitude we saw in 2:22-23 {cite}

It's to suffer for doing what is right rather than what is wrong (3:17).

A. To be Armed for the Purpose of Suffering Means We Have Clothed Ourselves With The Attitude of Christ (v 1a)

We are armed with this mind-set

4. Peter uses very picturesque language here

The phrase "arm yourselves" is from a Greek verb ὀπλιζέω that is only used here in the entire Bible.

It was a common word in Greek culture that was used of a soldier putting his armor on and taking up his weapons. The noun form was used of a heavily armed soldier who carried a pike and a large shield.

In the movie, "The Matrix" there's a scene where the main character comes to rescue the group leader who is being held captive in a secured

building. When he enters the building he's confronted with armed guards and a security screening. As he goes through the metal detector t/alarm goes off and the guard tells him to remove any metal objects he's carrying. The guards about fall over because under his coat is a veritable arsenal of firearms hanging there like a tree filled with overripe fruit!

a. This is to be heavily armed

There was a word that referred to being lightly armed. But Peter chose the stronger of the two words. It's to carry an arsenal, not just a single weapon.

As Paul reminds us in 2 Cor. 10 ==>

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh,
4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

So we are armed not with an arsenal of steel, but of the Spirit. The attitude of suffering as our Master himself suffered.

"The martial language indicates that discipline and grit are needed to live the Christian life, particularly in view of the suffering believers encounter." [Schreiner]

Soldiers are armed knowing that they face injury or death. We are to have the attitude of a warrior. We are to be warriors, not wimps. God doesn't need wimps for Christ. Unfortunate that so much of what is portrayed as Christianity today is downright wimpy sentimentality. If you're going to follow JC you have to be a little radical!

I. What Does it Mean to be Armed for the Purpose of

Suffering?

A. To be Armed for the Purpose of Suffering Means We Have Clothed Ourselves With The Attitude of Christ (v 1a)

B. To be Armed for the Purpose of Suffering Means We Have Parted Ways With Our Past Life of Sin (v 1b)

... for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,

1. This is the most difficult part of the verse

What does it mean that ==>

... he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ????

Who's the "he" here?

a. Some think that this is talking about Christ

If you maintain that this is X, you have a problem. What does it mean that the one who knew no sin, ceased from it?

Beyond that, the sentence structure/syntax implies that t/"he" here is the same as "the one who is to arm himself" - namely, believers.

b. Others think that this is talking about t/believer in a metaphorical sense

IOW - to suffer in the flesh is to die in the spiritual sense of Romans 6:7 (he who has died is freed from sin).

But this view doesn't do justice to the context of real suffering.

c. Others maintain that Peter is talking about those Christians who have died

Peter's not talking about martyrdom and that wasn't the kind of suffering his readers were experiencing.

Besides, it goes w/o saying.... It also doesn't make sense within t/context.

d. This is talking about believers and it relates back to the command that you prepare yourselves for suffering

(1) This is evidence of saving faith

... since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,

When you are willingly armed for the purpose of suffering for JC you give evidence that you possess genuine saving faith.

It demonstrates that you have counted all things as loss for His sake and that you have broken from your past life of sin.

It's evidence of Philippians 1:29 in your life ==>

For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

Resolving that we are willing to suffer indicates that we have ceased to let sin dominate our lives. We are resolved to suffer so that we can live to the will of God.

After all, as we will see in the next verse, we've had enough of our fill of living like pagans.

Wayne Grudem, in his commentary on 1 Peter, writes ==>

" . . . whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin means 'whoever has suffered for doing right, and has still gone on obeying God in spite of the suffering it involved, has made a clear break with sin.'"

[Grudem, 167]

The wonderful Scottish expositor of the 19th c., Alexander Maclaren:

" . . . the Apostle's thought seems to be that such suffering in daily life after Christ's pattern, and by His help, is at once a sign that the sufferer has shaken off the dominion of sin, and is a means of further emancipating him from it." [Maclaren, 125]

It's part of being disciplined by God in living t/Christian life. It's how he knocks t/barnacles of sin off our spiritual hulls.

Hebrews 12:7-11 7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

"Affliction, when it is borne humbly, encourages the heart to become disentangled from sin and weans it away from the world." [Leighton, 177]

Suffering loosens the tentacles of worldly-allures from our lives.

Revelation 3:19 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent.'

Someone asked me the other day, "What would you do if something happened to your daughter, like she were to die of some disease?" I said, I would probably drive to the coast of CA and walk up and down the beaches for a year. He asked me, "What would it do to your relationship with God?" My reply was that I would hope it would endure and even be strengthened. After all, if something like that would destroy my relationship with Him, I guess it wasn't much of a relationship. It would have more to do with my own selfishness.

After all, if it happens to someone else's kid and I don't complain, why should I do so if it is my own? What, is it okay for you to suffer and I'm fine with that, God, but not me?

Look at Job (theme of the book - why do the righteous worship God?).

Job 2 - 4 And Satan answered the Lord and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. 5 "However, put forth Thy hand, now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse Thee to Thy face." 6 So the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life." 7 Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. 8 And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes. 9 Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!" 10 But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

2. There's nothing that proves and purifies motives more than pain does

IOW - my motives are proven and purified when what I do isn't all about me and my personal comfort or self-interests.

You think someone is a great friend? Then, you do something to disappoint that person and they're through with you. Proves that they weren't such a great friend in the first place.

You want to be married? You love that person and would never leave them? What happens after you've been married to that person for 8 years. You're used to them. They no longer are so exciting. Maybe she put on 50 pounds. Maybe he did. Maybe someone looks better. Maybe you're pained to be married. What's your real motive?

See this with people who profess X. Lesson of the parable of the wheat and tares in Matthew 13. There will always be those who claim X when times are good. But when persecution or difficulty comes, they're gone.

Nothing proves motive more than pain. If I am willing to serve JC when it hurts me, I have demonstrated that I have made a break with sin. He really is my Master. I am not my own.

Job - "Even though He slay me, I will trust in Him!"

Luke 9:23 And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, & take up his cross daily, & follow Me. Matthew 10:38-39 38 "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 "He who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it.

The cross was a symbol of suffering and death . . . You want life? Be willing to pick up and carry a cross.

This is why we don't rest easy upon someone's confession of faith. Esp. true of children. There has to be times of trial & sacrifice & perseverance that prove whether one's faith is genuine.

B. To be Armed for the Purpose of Suffering Means We Have Parted Ways With Our Past Life of Sin (v 1b)

2 Corinthians 4:8-12 8 we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So death works in us, but life in you.

Thirdly ==>

C. To be Armed for the Purpose of Suffering Means We Are Engaged in the Pursuit of God's Will, Not Our Own (v 2)

for as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men but for the will of God.

1. Note the connection . . .

Christ suffered. Arm yourselves with the same mind-set. The one who suffers in the flesh has broken from sin. So that he might live the rest of his life for the will of God, not for the sinful desires of men.

2. "Rest of the time" means "the rest of your life"

The extent of time on earth that is sovereignly granted to you by God. It's the time of your stay on earth, (1:17).

Like I said a few weeks ago, we're a little bit like batteries. We come into the world fully-charged.

And the power slowly drains from that point onward. If we had those little power-meters on our sides like some batteries have, we could see this. "Gee, you're only at half-charge." "Yeah, I've lived half my life-expectancy already!" By t/time you get to be 75 or 80 (if God permits) there meter shows there's not much left.

When God calls us to saving faith, we are to take advantage of all the time that he grants us. Here's t/rub: We don't know how much that is. So we better get busy.

for as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men but for the will of God.

C. To be Armed for the Purpose of Suffering Means We Are Engaged in the Pursuit of God's Will, Not Our Own (v 2)

3. Living the Christian life is all about seeking and doing God's will

a. We are his slaves - that's the implication of the word "Lord"

He's t/Master, we're slaves. And slaves are concerned with one thing, and it isn't their own self-interests. Slaves are concerned about the will of their Master. And you can't have two masters.

b. There's single-mindedness here==>

Not for the lusts (sinful desires) of men, but for the will of God. Can't please God apart from a knowledge of His will.

(1) "What's His Will?"

Romans 12:1-2 1 I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

(a) What's His will?

It's to surrender yourself to God as a living sacrifice. (A sacrifice has no rights). // engaged in spiritual worship // to be transformed by renewing your mind rather than being polluted by conformity to t/world.

As James warns, Whomever wishes to be a friend with the world shows himself to be God's enemy.

4. The lines are drawn in this passage

Whose army are you in? You can't serve two masters. Stop playing games.

You must renounce your allegiance to the enemy.

Profess JC as your Lord and Savior adopting the attitude ==>

"My Master whom I love wills me to do this; therefore in His strength and for his glory I will. My life is His."

The ancient philosopher, Pythagorus, wrote: "This is the sum of religion, to be like the one you worship." [cited in Leighton, 177]

The word "Christian" means "one who is like Christ."

I can go to Mexico and buy a Rolex watch for 25 bucks. Problem is, it really isn't a Rolex. It's a cheap counterfeit.

There are cheap, counterfeit Christians out there. They are like a 25 dollar knock-off.

The genuine article, the real Christian is the one who hears His voice & who (what?) follows Him wherever the he goes. Like sheep faithful to the shepherd.

Years ago, a shepherd came in from the country district to the city of Edinburgh, Scotland. He brought with him a little dog. The man died while he was in the city, and was buried in Grey Friar's Churchyard. the little dog made it way in through the iron gates and lay down upon the grave of its master. It didn't lie there merely for a day or a week or a month--it lay there twelve years. Every day, at one o'clock, they fire the gun in the castle in Edinburgh. Then everyone looks at his watch to check the time. The little dog would run from the churchyard as soon as it heard the shot to a local baker who gave it a pie and some water. Then the dog would go back to the grave again. There it lay until he died.

[cited by Walter B. Knight, "Knight's Treasury of Illustrations," 121]

We are to be like that dog. So attached to the master that will spend t/rest of our lives reading tombstones rather than leave His side.
"Be faithful unto death."

"The only growing and thriving life comes through a living contemplation and application of Jesus Christ. You must be constantly studying him and conversing with him and drawing grace from him . . . Do you want great power against sin? Do you desire to increase in holiness? Let your eye be on Christ all the time. Set your heart on him. Let it dwell in him and be still with him. When any kind of sin threatens to prevail, go to Christ, and tell him about the attack and your inability to resist it. Ask him to defeat it. If your heart inclines toward sin, lay this before Christ. His beams of love will eat out the fire of those sinful desires. Do you want your pride, passions, love of the world, and self-love to be killed? Seek the virtue of Christ's death, and it will be so. Seek to imitate his spirit, the spirit of meekness and humility and divine love. Look on Christ, and he will draw your heart toward heaven and unite it to himself and make it like himself. Is this not the one thing you desire?" [Robert Leighton, 1 Peter, 180-81]

Is this your desire? Honestly? It is natural for the believer to desire these things because it is in keeping with his new nature. Just like it's natural for us to breathe. God made us that way. If a body has no desire to breathe, it's what? Dead. If you have no desire within you to defeat love of the world, pride, self-love -- sin - you are spiritually dead. Repent and come to JC who alone can forgive you and grant you peace with God.