

“If Anyone Suffers ...”

1 Pet. 4:15,16

Introduction:

- A. Suffering is part of every person's earthly life.
 - 1. Has world's attention: Politicians, newsmen, sociologists, theologians, etc.
 - 2. Has useful place in our lives.
 - a. Makes us humble. (2 Cor. 12:7-10).
 - b. Makes heaven attractive. (Rev. 21:4).
 - 3. Has various forms: mental and physical. (Cf. Mt. 5:11; Mt. 23:37).
- B. Suffering was part of Jesus' earthly life.
 - 1. A model sufferer (1 Pet. 2:21)
 - 2. A patient sufferer (1 Pet. 2:22,23).
 - 3. An innocent sufferer. (cf. Lk. 23:41).
- C. Suffering of two types discussed by the Apostle Peter:

Discussion:

I. Unavoidable Suffering. (4:12).

- A. Christians could not avoid tribulation of fall of Jerusalem. (4:7,12,17-17; Mt. 24:1-2; 14-21).
- B. Christians are not always responsible for their suffering. (cf. Jno. 9:2; Job 22:5).
 - 1. Disease, death, disasters, slander, mistreatment, etc. may not be because of personal faults.
 - 2. Disease, death, etc. upon all because of sin in the world. (1 Cor. 15:22; Heb. 9:27).
 - 3. Disease, death, etc. are no reason to charge God foolishly. (Job. 1:25).

II. Avoidable Suffering.

- A. One can avoid suffering for his faults. (2:20; 4:15).
 - 1. No virtue in suffering as “murderer...busybody” (cf. John 21:20-22).
 - 2. No merit in crying “persecution”, “brutality”, etc if caught doing wrong.
- B. One can avoid suffering as a Christian - but should not. (4:17; cf. Heb. 11:35).
 - 1. John could have avoided death by being soft on sin. (Mt. 14:1-12).
 - 2. Stephen could have avoided stoning by ignoring Jews' sins. (Acts 7).
 - 3. Paul could have avoided hardships by compromise. (Acts 20:20,27).
 - 4. We can avoid slurs, criticism, mal-treatment by softening stand for right.
 - a. A wife married to husband who abuses her because of her faithfulness to Lord.
 - b. A worker working around worldlings can avoid much by compromise.
- C. One can avoid the blessings of suffering for Christ. (Matt. 5:11,12; Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17)
- D. One can avoid heaven by trying to avoid suffering, if not careful. (2 Tim. 3:12; 2 Pet. 2:9).

Conclusion:

- A. Let's seek to avoid suffering as evildoers, but not as Christians.
- B. Let's seek heaven above all else - will make suffering seem light.
- C. Let us *be* Christians so we can *suffer as* Christians - become one now.

Part every person's life ☉ World's attention: Politicians, news, sociologists, theologians ☉ Useful - humble (2 Cor 12:7-10) ☉ Heaven attractive (Rv 21:4) ☉ Forms: mental & physical. ☉ **Part of Lord's life** ☉ Model (1 Pt 2:21) ☉ Patient (1 Pt 2:22,23) ☉ Innocent (cf. Lk 23:41) ☉ **Two types discussed by Peter:**

Unavoidable Suffering (4:12)

Could not avoid trib. fall of Jeru. (4:7,12, 17-19; Mt. 24) ☉ **Not always responsible** (cf. Jn 9:2; Job 22:5) ☉ Disease death, disaster, slander, mistreatment ☉ Sin in world (1 Cor. 15:22; Heb 9:27) ☉ No reason to charge God foolishly (Job. 1:25).

Avoidable Suffering.

For faults (2:20; 4:15) ☉ No virtue in suffering as "murderer", "busybody" (cf. Jn 21:20-22). ☉ No virtue in crying "persecution," "brutal", etc. if caught ☉ **As a Christian (4:17; Heb 11:35)** ☉ John could avoid (Mt 14:1-12) ☉ Stephen could avoid (Acts 7) ☉ Paul could avoid hardships (Acts 20:20,27) ☉ We can avoid slurs, criticism, mal-treatment by softening stand for right ☉ Wife married to abusive husband ☉ Worker working around worldlings. ☉ **Can avoid blessings of suffering** (Mt. 5:11,12; Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17) ☉ **Can avoid heaven by avoiding some suffering** (2 Tim. 3:12; 2 Pet. 2:9)

Let's seek to avoid suffering for evil, not as Christians ☉ Let's seek heaven above all else — will make sufferings light. ☉ Let's become Christians so we can suffer as Ch.