

Arm Yourselves; 1 Peter 4:1-2

I. Suffering

- A. Suffering is something we tend to want to avoid
- B. Just like water that finds the easiest path down the mountain, so we tend to find the easiest path around any potential suffering
- C. 1 Peter 3:18 (ESV); For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

II. Choice

- A. Jesus chose suffering over the easy path
- B. The tests by the Pharisees
 - 1. Matthew 16:1 (ESV); And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven.
 - 2. This was right after Jesus fed the 5000 with two fishes and five loaves of bread
 - 3. Luke 10:25 (ESV); And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"
 - 4. This is the beginning of the story of the Samaritan who helps a Jew beaten by robbers
- C. The betrayal by one of His 12 apostles
 - 1. These are the 12 closest to him — the ones who have followed him and are convinced of his claim to be the Christ
 - 2. Matthew 26:14–16 (ESV); ¹⁴ Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and said, "What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?" And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶ And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.
 - 3. Matthew 26:21–25 (ESV); ²¹ And as they were eating, he said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." ²² And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, "Is it I, Lord?" ²³ He answered, "He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. ²⁴ The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born." ²⁵ Judas, who would betray him, answered, "Is it I, Rabbi?" He said to him, "You have said so."
 - 4. This is the Passover meal
 - 5. Right after this, beginning in the very next verse (26) Jesus gives them (and us) the Lord's Supper — Communion
 - 6. It is here that Jesus confounds the Pharisees time table and ensures God's timing is perfect
 - 7. The Pharisees wanted to wait until after the feast to arrest Him — but Jesus sends Judas out during the feast to get the authorities
 - 8. Matthew 26:3–5 (ESV); ³ Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, ⁴ and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. ⁵ But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."
 - 9. John 13:26–30 (ESV); ²⁶ Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷ Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." ²⁸ Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. ²⁹ Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰ So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.
 - 10. Jesus sent Judas out to fulfill God's plan — He chose suffering!
- D. Instead of looking for a way out of or around the suffering Jesus went through it!

III. Arm Yourselves

- A. 1 Peter 4:1–2 (ESV); ¹ Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ² so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.
- B. Suffering has some very significant results
- C. Romans 5:3–5 (ESV); ³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.
 - 1. Endurance — the capacity to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty, patience, endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, perseverance ¹
 - 2. Character — a test that promotes and validates the character of the one undergoing it. ²
 - 3. Hope — The expectation of Jesus’ return based on His resurrection
- D. James 1:2–4 (ESV); ² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
 - 1. Testing — the same word as ‘character’ in Romans 5:4 just in a different case (accusative)
 - 2. Steadfastness — The same word translated ‘endurance’ in Romans 5:4
 - 3. Perfect — meeting the highest standard ³
 - 4. Complete — being complete and meeting all expectations, with integrity, whole, complete, undamaged, intact, blameless ⁴
- E. 1 Peter 4:3–4 (ESV); ³ For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. ⁴ With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you;
- F. We can be so afraid of the opinions of those around us that we let ourselves forego the suffering and fall into temptation
- G. We can be so afraid of the pain and hate that comes along with righteous living that we give it up for fleeting pleasure
- H. We must think like Jesus did
- I. Philippians 2:5–8 (ESV); ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
- J. Jesus thought that suffering to the point of a humiliating death was better than anything this world could offer him
 - 1. Satan tried to offer him power and authority just as he did to Eve
 - 2. Genesis 3:4–5 (ESV); ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

¹ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1039.

² *Ibid*, 256.

³ *Ibid*, 995.

⁴ *Ibid*, 703.

IV. Think

- A. We must learn to embrace our suffering — not try to get out of it
- B. We must let God work and mold us through the fires of life
- C. It is through these fires that we can become more like His Son
- D. People are watching how we process our suffering — how we react to the trials of life
- E. Praising God in the midst of the storm is a testimony to the power and healing that He provides — others see this
- F. Arm yourselves with this kind of thinking!