

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 33 (August 7-13, 2016)

Historians tell us that the Apostle Peter was crucified upside down after being forced to watch his wife being executed; therefore, as you might expect, he has much to say in his epistles about the suffering of Christians. We will spend the week studying his writings.

Sunday, August 7 (read 1 Peter 1:3-9)

These come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. (1 Peter 1:7)

Peter begins today's text by praising God for the permanence of His wonderful gift of salvation, purchased through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He reminds us that we are shielded by God's power until the time when Jesus returns for us (v. 3-5). We should rejoice in this knowledge, even as we continue to suffer in a fallen world under Satan's control (v. 6). The printed verse above tells us that God allows His children to go through trials so that their faith will be strengthened and refined, even better than pure gold. Through this faith, we love Him, even though we will not see His face until He is finished with His refining work down here (v. 8-9; see 1 John 3:1-3). You cannot adequately praise Him until you realize the cost and permanence of your salvation (v. 3-5).

Monday, August 8 (read 1 Peter 4:1-6)

But they will have to give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. (1 Peter 4:5)

As Christians, we may have already experienced the consequences of sin so much that we are ready to live for His will from now on (v. 1-2). The non-Christians will continue to follow the desires of their sinful, human bodies. They will think you are strange because you do not join them in their sinful lifestyles (v. 3-4). The printed verse reminds us that, without a Savior to take their punishment, they will have to give an account of their choices. Like Peter, I preach the gospel in order to give wayward sinners the good news of salvation through Jesus. Those who receive Him will never face judgment for their sins, because Jesus has already paid the price. Christians still struggle with a sin nature, but the **penalty** has been paid. Praise Him today for His wonderful gift!

Tuesday, August 9 (read 1 Peter 4:7-11)

The end of all things is near. Therefore, be clear-minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. (1 Peter 4:7)

Knowing that we are nearing the end of the Day of Grace, Peter warns that we should live differently from the rest of the world's citizens. Actually, we cannot even pray effectively when there is known sin in our lives (v. 7). The text also reminds us that we should love one another deeply from the heart (v. 8). Jesus says, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35). Peter says that this kind of love covers over a multitude of sins. Next we are commanded to offer hospitality **without grumbling** and to use our God-given gift packages to serve Him as we serve others (9-10). We must have confidence in the Word of God and quote it with the power it deserves (v. 11a). Be sure that you do all things through the power of the One who gives you strength so that He gets the glory (v. 11b)!

Wednesday, August 10 (read 1 Peter 4:12-14)

But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed. (1 Peter 4:13)

Now that you know that Satan is the god of this age, should you be surprised at the sufferings that you and your loved ones have experienced? Jesus certainly warns us that they will come to all His believers, just like they came to Him (John 16:33). He says in Matthew 5:11-12, "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." In today's text, Peter echoes the same message as he tells us to expect sufferings, persecutions and insults for the cause of Christ (v. 13-14). Both of them tell us to rejoice and celebrate the fact that we are His children!

Thursday, August 11 (read 1 Peter 4:15-19)

For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? (1 Peter 4:17)

We should expect sufferings, but they should never come because of our unbiblical action. Before chapter 4 begins, Peter has already taught us to obey the laws as we submit to the authority of government (1 Peter 2:13-17). Consequently, a Christian who suffers because he is a criminal has no right to blame God or the government He ordained (v. 15)! However, if it is God's will for you to suffer (v. 19), you must continue to walk in obedience to Him and trust what you cannot understand. Judgment begins with the family of God (v. 17), but it will be a judgment of **motives** and **attitudes**. Our sins have already been judged on Calvary, and Jesus has paid for them in full. The people who have rejected His plan of salvation will not stand a chance in **their** judgment (The Great White Throne Judgment, Revelation 20:11-15). Therefore, it is vital that we spend the rest of our days on earth witnessing to our unsaved acquaintances!

Friday, August 12 (read 2 Peter 2:1-3)

But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. (2 Peter 2:1a)

In these troublesome times, why has the Church failed to make a big difference? Great question! The infallible Word of God is designed to be "a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts" (2 Peter 1:19b). However, many preachers, in their **greed**, have discovered that you will give a lot more money to their ministries if they tell you what you want to hear. They will make up false testimonies to make you think that they have power to heal the sick by their touch (v. 3). They will teach that alternate lifestyles and meaningful relations are natural because "you are born that way," thus bringing the truth of the Scriptures into question. Of course, they will deny the powerful truth taught in 2 Peter 1:20-21. Read Acts 20:20, the theme of this ministry, and you will see why that concept is so important in these last days!

Saturday, August 13 (read 2 Peter 2:4-10a)

This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. (2 Peter 2:10a)

A judgment is coming for all who **reject** the teachings of the Word of God. Peter reminds his readers of the consequences in the past for those who ignored the Lord's commands (v. 4-6). How much worse will it be for **this** generation that has more Christian resources available to them than all previous ones combined? God knows how to rescue His children from the trials we face on this devil-controlled earth, but we must be willing to come to Him by the way of the cross! Things will go from bad to worse for nonbelievers (v. 9), because false teachers have led an entire generation into thinking that it's perfectly normal and acceptable to "follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and to despise authority" (10a). Now can you understand how a loving God can allow so much evil? "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9b).