

1 Peter 3:13–4:6

What We Are To Be

As Peter wrote this letter he knew that greater persecution was coming to the Church and with it there would be suffering brought upon Christians for their faith in Christ. Peter calls for the Church to hold fast in their faith and to endure despite the suffering that would come. In this text, there are five encouragements to how the Christian is called to live in the face of suffering.

1. BE RESOLUTE IN SPITE OF SUFFERING (3:13-14)

¹³ And who will harm you if you are *deeply committed* to what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness, you are blessed. *Do not fear* what they fear or be disturbed,

2. BE READY IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING (3:15)

¹⁵ but *honor the Messiah as Lord* in your hearts. *Always be ready to give a defense* to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

3. BE RESPECTFUL WHILE DEALING WITH SUFFERING (3:16)

¹⁶ However, *do this with gentleness and respect*, keeping your conscience clear, so that when you are accused, those who denounce your Christian life will be put to shame.

4. BE RIGHT ALTHOUGH IT MEANS SUFFERING (3:17-22)

¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for *doing good*, if that should be God's will, than *for doing evil*. ¹⁸ For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring you to God, after being put to death in the fleshly realm but made alive in the spiritual realm. ¹⁹ In that state He also went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison ²⁰ who in the past were disobedient, when God patiently waited in the days of Noah while an ark was being prepared. In it a few—that is, eight people —were saved through water. ²¹ Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. ²² Now that He has gone into heaven, He is at God's right hand with angels, authorities, and powers subject to Him.

5. BE RESOLVED EVEN WHEN SUFFERING (4:1-6)

4 Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, *equip yourselves also with the same resolve* — because the one who suffered in the flesh has finished with sin — ² in order to live the remaining time in the flesh, no longer for human desires, but for God’s will. ³ For there has already been enough time spent in doing what the pagans choose to do: carrying on in unrestrained behavior, evil desires, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and lawless idolatry. ⁴ So they are surprised that you don’t plunge with them into the same flood of wild living—and they slander you. ⁵ They will give an account to the One who stands ready to judge the living and the dead. ⁶ For this reason the gospel was also preached to those who are now dead, so that, although they might be judged by men in the fleshly realm, they might live by God in the spiritual realm.

As Jesus was with His disciples on the mountainside in what is known today as the ***Sermon on the Mount***, He spoke these words to His disciples and I would like to leave them with you as we close.

Matthew 5:11–12 (HCSB)

¹¹ “You are blessed when they insult and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of Me. ¹² Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.