

Christian Living in Today's Culture

Finding Answers in 1 Peter



Mike Taylor

www.TaylorNotes.Info

PART 6: RESPONDING TO CULTURAL HOSTILITIES

1 Peter 3:13—4:6



About 200 million Christians around the world face the continual threat of harassment, torture and even death because of their faith in Jesus Christ. It is believed that more Christians were martyred in the 20th century than in the previous nineteen centuries combined! Why does an all-powerful, all-loving God allow such evil and suffering?

A. Responding to hostile intimidations (3:13-15A ESV)

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy...

B. Responding to hostile arguments (3:15B-17 ESV)

...always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

C. Responding like Jesus (3:18-4:6 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, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him. 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, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but

for the will of God. 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. With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

D. Five ways that good can come out of suffering

1. It can [glorify God](#) (John 9:1-3)

Suffering can provide an opportunity for God to display his glory-- to make evident his mercy, faithfulness, power and love in the midst of painful circumstances (John. 9:1-3).

2. It can [strengthen your faith](#) (1 Peter 1:6-7; Job 13:15)

Suffering can also allow us to give proof of the genuineness of our faith, and even serve to strengthen our faith (1 Pet. 1:6-7).

As in the case of Job, our faithfulness in trial shows that we serve Him not merely for the benefits He offers, but for the love of God Himself (Job 13:15).

3. It can [strengthen his church](#) (1 Corinthians 12:26; Galatians 6:2; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

Severe trial also provides an opportunity for believers to demonstrate their love for one another as members of the body of Christ who "bear one another's burdens" (1 Cor. 12:26; Gal. 6:2).

As we are comforted by God in affliction, so we are better able to comfort others (2 Cor. 1:3-4).

4. It can [make you hungrier for God](#) (2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Psalm 119:71)

Suffering also plays a key role in developing godly virtues, and in deterring us from sin. Paul recognized that his "thorn in the flesh" served to keep him from boasting, and promoted true humility and dependence on God (2 Cor. 12:7-9).

The psalmist recognized that his affliction had increased his determination to follow God's will (Ps. 119:71).

Even Jesus "learned obedience from the things He suffered" (Heb. 5:8). As a man He learned by experience the value of submitting to the will of God, even when it was the most difficult thing in the world to do.

5. It can [make you hungrier for heaven](#) (Philippians 3:20-21; Romans 8:23-24; Revelation 21:4)

Finally, evil and suffering can awaken in us a greater hunger for heaven, and for that time when God's purposes for these experiences will have been finally fulfilled, when pain and sorrow shall be no more (Phil. 3:20-21; Rom. 8:23-24; Rev. 21:4).

"Suffering can make you better or it can make you bitter."

N. L. Geisler