

Fiery Trial: Suffering as a Christian

- *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 1Pet 4:12*
- *If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. 1Pet 4:14*
- *But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. 1Pet. 4:15-16*
- Would we consider it strange or a strange thing?

What is a Christian?

- Unwavering conviction that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God (Rom. 10:9-10).
- His absolute authority accepted and every word trusted. No doubt or question (Lk. 6:46)?
- Trust His promise: Holy Spirit perfectly led His apostles and prophets into all truth (Jn. 16:13).
- Every written word as accurate and perfect today as when first revealed. (Mt. 24:36; 1Pet. 1:22-25).
- If not a core conviction, we are Christians in name only. In the end, Jesus will deny us. (Mt. 7:21-23).
- We will never suffer as a Christian if we are not willing to stand and even die for these things.

Only Those who Stand will Suffer

- When science, politics, and current cultural norms agree with Scripture no conflict.
- Man's wisdom denies Scripture godly stand firm
 - Daniel with unclean food
 - Shadrach Meshach and Abednego and the idol.
- Genuine servants of God never compromise.
- There is a grave peril for us that is arising today:
 - “*in name only*” Christians who make all these compromises and convince the world they are genuine
- When we still stand it is not because we are Christians
- It is because, in their eyes, we are “fanatics” “narrow minded” and “bigots” harsh terms to create animosity

Baby Steps toward Suffering

- Science denies Scripture: Evolution
- God revealed how He created in 6 days Gen. 1
- Jesus confirmed God's account:
- “*But from the beginning of the creation, God ‘made them male and female.’*” (Mk. 10:6).
- When a vast segment of “in name only” Christians accept evolution and deny Scripture
- Yet a small minority stands on the Scripture
- Suffering as a Christian begins.
- This grave peril has led many to change the days of Genesis to ages ... leaving true Christians to look more and more foolish in the eyes of the world.

Stirrings and Shifting of Human Wisdom

- Still want the name Christian
- Want Jesus to be their Lord
- Want the comfort of eternal life
- BUT...
- Want to keep their status in world
- Don't want to suffer as a Christian
- A very seductive position has opened.
- Divide Jesus from the Scriptures
- Divide Jesus from the apostles and prophets.

The Change in Divorce

- *"Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' 32 But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery. Mt. 5:31-32*
- As fewer and fewer “in name only” Christians believe and practice this the more pressure we feel.
- Even the church is now divided into segments because of this.
- As this continues, those who trust Jesus words will be further and further marginalized

Role of Woman in Home and Church

- *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23
For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is
head of the church; ... Eph 5:22-23*
- *Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. 12
And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have
authority over a man, but to be in silence. 1 Tim. 2:11-12*
- As more and more “in name only” Christians
compromise and reject this the more outlandish it those
who still hold convictions we appear.
- Do we feel any discomfort? Unease? Wavering?

Homosexuality

- *For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. Rom 1:26-27*
- As more and more “*in name only*” Christians reject this teaching the more those who hold to it look narrow minded, bigoted, judgmental

A Perfect Storm is Coming

- Sometime in the future there may be a flashpoint.
- It might be one of the things we just considered.
- It might be all of them together.
- But at some point: A fiery Trial may come upon us.
- Preparations need to be made now to endure the terrible things that occur after such an event.

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When Not Guided by Scripture

- “*aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers*” (1Pet. 1:18).
- Traditions can span centuries, decades or being presently formed.
- **Jesus warning:** “*narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it*” (Mt. 7:13-14).
- We face the crossroads where human wisdom and divine guidance intersect. God revealed through Jeremiah that the divine truths in His word are “*the old paths, where the good way is.*”

God's Divine Word

- “*the old paths, where the good way is.*”
- To this day many respond
- *they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’* (Jer. 6:16-17).
- Every conflict we face centers here.
- Jesus words are now “*old paths, where the good way is*” and show “*the way leading to life.*”
- Those who say: “*we will not walk in it,*” to anything God has revealed in Scripture are still lost, wandering “*aimlessly,*” toward “*destruction*

We Must Stand in His Word

- “*If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*” (Jn. 8:31-32).
- *Whosoever goes onward and abides not in the teaching of Christ, has not God: he that abides in the teaching, the same has both the Father and the Son.* 2Jn. 9
- While some compromise and leave us (and God and the Son) behind we must understand the real nature of the choice.
- There is no compromise – only true Christians and “in name only” Christians.

Dividing and Conquering

- Some would separate the words of Jesus from those of the apostles.
- After Jesus' resurrection, He returned to heaven and “*My word*” had not yet been written.
- Jesus left this task to His apostles and prophets.
- He promised to send the Holy Spirit:
I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth. Jn. 16:13-14
- He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”* 14:26

How Apostles and Prophets Preached

- *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. ... 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 1 Cor 2:10-14*
- Everything the preached was under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

How Apostles and Prophets Wrote

- *how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), 5 which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: Eph 3:3-6*
- Everything they wrote was under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

There will always be Conflicts

- *But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen.” 1Cor. 1:27-28*
- Those things in Scriptures seen as foolish, weak, and base, test our faith in the wisdom of God.
- When those who call themselves Christians despise God’s word, it is a clear sign that they are wandering aimlessly away from the path that leads to life.

Walk by Faith ...

- *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil.* Pr. 3:5-7
- If someday we are forced to make this choice and face the fiery trials of a Christian, we need to be prepared
- These are the convictions that will keep us on the path that leads to life.