

**Life Group Notes**

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

**Speaker:** Andy McCullough

**Title:** 1 Peter: Thirteen Truths for Sufferers

**Passage:** 1 Peter 4: 12-19

1. Suffering should not be a surprise. "As if a stranger were walking with you." The words surprise and strange in this verse come from the same word (xeno-). Suffering should not be a stranger.
2. Suffering is fiery. It burns. Burns hurt when they happen and hurt for a long time afterwards too.
3. Suffering is a trial. Not like a court trial where you are found guilty or innocent. Not like a driving test where you either pass or fail. More like 1.7, "the tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire." Or the proverb, "the crucible for silver, the furnace for gold, but the lord tests the heart."
4. Suffering is sharing something with Jesus. If you are suffering, it forges your bond with Jesus. You get him better. And you feel known and understood by him better.
5. Suffering leads to glory. "When his glory is revealed" means at the end of time – after you die. What if we over-rate our few years on earth, and under-rate the real thing? If you only think about this life, chronic suffering can often seem meaningless. Not always – sometimes its redemptive power brings about good during our few years on earth. But for suffering's true redemptive power, we have to look beyond the grave.
6. Suffering leads to joy and gladness. For those who suffer life-long with various sufferings, at the advent of Jesus Christ and the wiping away of all tears, there will be joy – deep, loud, rich, and there will be *gladness*, relief, laughter, clinking glasses, the sharing of stories.
7. Insults are blessings. An insult is suffering inflicted through words by another person. When they speak badly, Christ is speaking well (blessing: *eulogia* - good words)
8. Spirit rests on you. "Rests on you" is a lovely phrase because there is no activity in it.
9. There is no shame in suffering as a Christian (the word Christian only appears 3 times in the Bible and it is always an insult – "name calling"). People mean it as an insult, and we take it as a compliment!
10. Suffering puts things in perspective. Essentially, rejoice that you are going through this as a person of faith (a member of the household of God), with the grace of God at work in your situation, rather than as an outsider to the faith – who are exposed to these fires without any of the redemptive, comforting, hopeful truths that we have talked about.
11. Suffering is not meaningless. "Suffer according to God's will" means that God does have purpose in this. I don't understand how, but somehow this, too, is within the sovereign purposes of God for good and for his glory.
12. Sufferer, entrust your soul to God. Soul: implies immortality and post-death vindication. Entrust your weary soul, your heavy soul, your wounded soul, your old soul, your tears-drenched soul, your bitter soul – entrust it to God.
13. Sufferer, somehow keep doing good.

**Questions:**

1. Would you call yourself a sufferer? Do you want to share some of your story with the group?
2. Is there anything in this passage that is unexpected, or difficult to understand?
3. How does suffering build one's relationship with Jesus?
4. What are the challenges to building church community when some people have suffered lots and others have not really suffered? How can we overcome these challenges?
5. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the sufferer?
6. What do you think "entrust your soul to the faithful creator" means, and what difference does it make?
7. Pray for one another.