

The Storms of Life, the Word and the Witness

Chapter 10 New Testament Audio Lesson #82



Objective: To understand more about suffering as well as about the role of the elder



Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

—1 Peter 4:12-13

To the elders among you....: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

—1 Peter 5:1-3

Peter could not read or write—he dictated his message—and he jumps around to several major subjects in one passage. The most difficult passage is where he says that Jesus ministered to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago in the days of Noah. Scholars do not know how to interpret this passage, and it remains a profound mystery.

Later, Peter urges his readers to be calm, self-controlled, hospitable, and loving to each other. We should be faithful stewards of our spiritual gifts, serving one another with them, acknowledging that God is the source of them and using them for His glory.

Peter says we should not be surprised by suffering; it is part of life. God permits trials and storms in our lives so we can be witnesses for Him. To cope with suffering, we process the trial through the Word and learn that we are partners with Jesus in His suffering. When we suffer, God will anoint us with the spirit of glory and of God. He will give us everything we need to endure. If we are suffering according to His will, we should keep on trusting God, because He will never fail.

In chapter 5, Peter speaks humbly to elders of the church as a fellow elder himself, reminding them that God is over them all. Peter called church leaders to be examples to their flocks, not flaunting their authority over them, but treating them as brothers equal under God.



1. True or False: We are not meant to understand everything in the Bible.
2. True or False: Our spiritual gifts are to be used to build up ourselves, rather than the body of believers.
3. True or False: We are called to share in Jesus's suffering.
4. True or False: Suffering often kills the desire to chase after sinful pleasures.

Choose all answers that apply.

5. Peter reminds us that Jesus is coming again soon. What are some of the things we should be doing until He returns?
 - a. Be afraid of the end times.
 - b. Listen to people who know for certain when Christ will come back.
 - c. Be calm, self-controlled people of prayer.
 - d. Do not worry about it. It probably will not happen anytime soon.
6. What should be your attitude about being hospitable toward others?
 - a. "I am too busy."
 - b. "No one is hospitable to me."
 - c. "I will do it but I do not want to."
 - d. "I am glad to serve Jesus and others this way."
7. What is the purpose of spiritual gifts?
 - a. To minister to each other in the Church
 - b. To show them off
 - c. To glorify God
 - d. To impress others

8. What were some of Peter's instructions to the believers who were suffering?
 - a. Avoid suffering at all costs.
 - b. Be surprised if you suffer for Jesus.
 - c. Rejoice that you share in Jesus' sufferings.
 - d. Be ashamed if you suffer because of Jesus' name.

9. How should we respond to suffering and difficulties?
 - a. Turn away from God for abandoning you.
 - b. Blame God for the hard times.
 - c. Become bitter because of your suffering.
 - d. View your trials through the Word of God.

10. What was Peter's advice to elders of the Church?
 - a. Run the church like a military operation.
 - b. Serve as shepherds and be examples.
 - c. Rule over the flock with discipline and strength.
 - d. Run the church like a business so it will be successful.

11. Why was Peter a good elder?
 - a. He was humble.
 - b. He was proud of his time with Jesus.
 - c. He reminded his readers that he was a good elder.
 - d. He served the flock, rather than being served.



Does it bother you when you do not understand a passage of Scripture? Why or why not? How do you usually respond? How do you think you should respond?

Are you currently going through a time of suffering? What have you learned through this study of 1 Peter that has helped you with your suffering?



Thank God for being with you in your suffering. Ask Him to remind you of what His Word says about suffering and the importance of turning to Him and His Word for comfort and strength. Thank Him for the way He grew Peter from an impulsive fisherman into a loving pastor, and ask Him to also grow you into the person He wants you to be. Ask Him to give you the courage to be a witness for Him wherever you go.



Going Deeper

1. What does the reality that Peter mentions about ten different subjects (in 3: 18-22) tell you about his writing style, and how do you apply what he teaches about water baptism? _____

2. How do you apply to your own life and to the church of which you are a part, the magnificent cluster of exhortations that Peter gives (in 4: 7-11) about having fervent love for one another, which covers a multitude of sins, and each one expressing the greatly varied grace of God by using the spiritual gifts given to them? _____

3. How do you explain and apply to your own life and ministry the teaching of Peter that we should not think it strange when we suffer, because we are called to suffer as we follow the example of our Lord Who suffered? _____

4. How do you apply to your own suffering the great promise of Peter (in 4: 13, 14) that you are a partaker of the suffering of your Lord, and His glory rests upon you in such a way that when He returns, you will be filled with great joy? _____

5. How do you explain and apply to your own life and ministry the extraordinary humility expressed by Peter in 5: 1-6, in that he did not consider himself a bishop over the other elders but as a fellow elder? _____

6. How do you teach and apply the sober warnings of Peter (in 5: 8, 9) about the destructive intent of Satan? _____

7. In what way is verse 10 of chapter 5 an overview of the three Peters that we meet in the New Testament? _____
