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**A Study in 1 Peter  
Suffering, Sinning, and Serving**

**Four Corners Church  
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In this world, suffering is not optional. You can suffer and sin, or you can suffer and serve.

**1 Peter 4:1-2** *<sup>1</sup> 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, <sup>2</sup> so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.*

**1. ARM YOURSELF LIKE JESUS (1 Peter 4:1-2)**

- Arm yourselves. That's military language.
  - o Before suffering ever attacks your emotions, you need to prepare your mind.
  - o Suffering does not mean God has abandoned you.
- Arm yourself with this truth: This hurts, but this is not the end.
  - o God is not confused. God has not lost control.
  - o Jesus died, rose, reigns, and is coming again – He gets the final word.
- Two ways to live: Human passions or the will of God.
- Christian maturity means increasingly saying: "God, Your will matters more than my appetite."
- Where is my obedience currently costing me something?

**1 Peter 4:3-6** *<sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; <sup>5</sup> but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. <sup>6</sup> 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.*

**2. DON'T WASTE YOUR SUFFERING BY RETURNING TO YOUR SIN**

- Peter's message is simple: You have spent enough time living the old way.
- Sin often becomes most tempting when we are hurting. Pain looks for medication.
  - o Ask: Where do I run when I am hurting?
  - o Whatever we consistently run to for comfort can become a functional savior.
- Peter says: "They are surprised when you do not join them..."

- Following Jesus should make us different.
- We are not called to run away from lost people.
- We are called to run away from lost living.
- When people malign you remember: “They will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”
  - You do not have to become consumed by revenge or despair.
  - God sees. God knows. God judges justly.
  - I do not have to become evil because someone did evil to me.

**1 Peter 4:7-11** <sup>7</sup> *The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.* <sup>8</sup> *Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.* <sup>9</sup> *Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.* <sup>10</sup> *As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: "whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

### **3. DON'T WASTE YOUR SUFFERING BY LIVING FOR YOURSELF**

- Keep Your Head “Be self-controlled and sober-minded...”
  - History is moving toward the return of Jesus.
  - Eternity is imminent.
- Keep Praying “...for the sake of your prayers.”
  - Suffering reminds us that we were never truly in control.
  - Prayer says, “God, I need You.”
- Keep Loving “Above all, keep loving one another earnestly...”
  - Love does not excuse evil or cover up abuse.
  - But love also does not gossip or collect ammunition.
  - Love seeks restoration.
- Keep Showing Hospitality “To one another without grumbling.”
- Keep Using Your Gift “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another...”
  - Words: teaching, encouragement, prayer, leadership, counsel
  - Works: serving, giving, organizing, helping, hospitality, mercy

### **THREE QUESTIONS TO TAKE HOME**

1. What is suffering producing in me?
2. What sin am I tempted to use as medication?  
Name it. Bring it into the light.
3. Who can I serve even while I am suffering?  
You do not have to wait until everything is fixed before God can use you.  
Some of your greatest ministry may come while you are still limping.