

# The Backdrop Of Suffering

Dec 11 2022

## WORSHIP

Above All  
There Is None Like You  
King Of Heaven

## WELCOME

Take time to read  
1 Peter 3:13-22 then  
discuss how you  
understand the passage  
and what verses stand  
out in your reading  
and/or the message  
delivered last Sunday.

## WORD

### 1 Peter 3:13-14

But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened."

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect

The backdrop of Peter's first letter is the unrelenting suffering that resulted from the persecution that the followers of Jesus were facing day in and day out.

Peter made it clear that they will face threats and harm because they chose to put Jesus in the center of their lives. That, when they chose to do the right thing, they will face danger and persecution but encouraged them to respond fearlessly, to be brave and not be afraid (verses 13-14).

When trials, suffering and persecution come into our lives, it is not bad luck, it is on the contrary, the sovereign choice of our Lord who redeemed us. Therefore, we must choose to trust Him and surrender our lives to Jesus as Lord and let Him work in our lives in the way that He chooses to work because He is in charge. At that point we have two choices: (1) Lose our temper, strike at others around us and fight for our rights, or (2) Keep our hope in Jesus in the bottom of our heart and front of our mind. Both Peter and Paul tell us that as things become difficult, we should keep Jesus in the front of our minds because not only has God brought the suffering into our lives, He is also the only one who can provide us with hope in the midst of our mess. Keep Jesus as Lord of our life and recognize that nothing happens to us that is outside of His sovereign control.

And as we pass through the trials, cling unto the hope that Jesus gives, people around us are going to notice. That is the moment when we can say that everything in our life is because of Jesus (verses 15-16).

The truth is, we will face trials, pain, and sufferings. They are a part of life, it makes us then ask, which is better? To suffer because we did the wrong thing or suffer because we did the right thing. (verse 17). Choosing to do the right thing and suffering for that is always a good choice, because that is what Jesus did for us.

Peter's saying that Jesus suffered the agonies of the cross so that He could bring us to God. He suffered on the cross because that is the only way to bring us to God. We cannot

## WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

### Thanksgiving

Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

### Country and World

Repentance and salvation  
Peace in Ukraine and healing for those infected by the virus

### Church

CCF members would honour God & love God and make disciples.  
Core, pastors and leaders.  
Ministries and church worldwide

### Personal Concerns

Share your problems and concerns with your group and pray for one another.



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come to God by trying to be good enough. Jesus died to provide us with life and forgiveness. (verse 18) He did this so we can stop trying so hard, stop trusting our own self and trust Him instead, the finished work of Christ.

Luke 16:19-31 accounts the story of the rich man and a beggar named Lazarus. When Lazarus died he went to the place of comfort where Abraham was. The rich man also died and he went to the place of torment. In this passage, there are two parts of Hades, people like Lazarus who chose to believe in God and were living in comfort with Abraham; and people like the rich man who chose not to believe in God and we're now living in torment. It's important to understand that there is a great chasm that separates both places, no one can cross from one place to the other, but they could see, hear and recognize each other. People living in the place of comfort in Hades were not in heaven because they are not in the place where God's throne is. People living in the place of torment in Hades were not in hell because Hades is not the place mentioned in Revelation as the lake of fire. This is how it used to be before Jesus died. But in the cross when Jesus shouted, 'It is finished!' the perfect sacrifice was made and people in Hades in the place of comfort together with Abraham can leave and go to heaven to be with God. (Ephesians 4). This is the context when Peter cited 1 Peter 3 verses 19-20.

Peter talked to us about the water that destroyed the world in the days of Noah and the people who refused to believe God. That same water symbolizes same water that saves us (verses 21-22). Peter is not talking about water baptism, that same flood water of God's judgment saved Noah and his family and brought them to a safe place. Just like Jesus's death that became our ark of safety that floated above the wrath of God's judgment as He rose from the death and conquered death itself for us.

Just like in the story of the rich man on how he begged Abraham that someone would go to his brothers to tell them the truth - **our world is full of people who desperately need to hear from us.** We know from Jesus' teaching that hell is a real place and that only He can save them from going to that place of torment. We know from Peter's teaching that even in the midst of our trials and sufferings, we still have the privilege of sharing the good news to them so that they do not go to the place of torment. Even if they do not listen to us, that is not an excuse for us not to decide to tell them about Jesus. **Jesus has done all the work to save them, and all He is asking us to do is to tell them what He has done.**



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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is the story that Jesus tells us in Luke 16 about Lazarus and the rich man a parable or a story about something that really happened? How do we know which it is? What difference should knowing the truth about this make in our lives?
2. We learned in the message that there are two different kinds of people who lived in two different parts of Hades. What were the two different kinds of people, and where in Hades were they held captive?
3. We learned this week that between the moment when Jesus died and the moment he ascended to his Father, Jesus actually went to Hades. While there, Jesus spoke to the people who had believed and announced to them that His work was FINISHED. What did Jesus mean when he said His work was finished? Who else heard Jesus' announcement, and how did they likely feel when they heard it?
4. We learned that the rich man in the story begged Abraham to send Lazarus to tell his family the truth about God in hopes that they would become believers. What should we learn from this as it relates to our responsibility to share the Good News about Jesus with others?