

## 1 Peter 4:12-19 – Part D

**1Pe 4:14 (NKJV) If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.**

In our last message, we looked at the word “**reproached**” and saw that it is a present tense verb in the passive voice which simply means that someone else was actually reviling these early Christians constantly. It involved being slandered, slurred, insulted, having their character defamed, being falsely accused, being maligned, being slighted, and often physically beaten and even martyred. So, this is much more than someone simply not liking you, but it is the kind of defamation that comes from an actual hatred for you, and especially a hatred for your Christian beliefs and faith. Ultimately, this is a hatred of God, and therefore a hatred against anyone who identifies with Him.

The second thing that we saw was that this was a very specific kind of reproach that Peter is addressing. It is a reproach that is the direct by-product of you as a believer identifying with Jesus Christ. Do not miss that point. This is a reviling, an insulting, a defaming of your character, and a maligning of you personally because you publically and willingly identify with Jesus Christ and live your life as a fully devoted follower of Christ. The problem this creates is that if you are actually living your life in such a way that it is obvious and clearly recognizable, it will automatically create a conflict between you and those who are lost. They love sin, you hate it. Life is all about them and what they want, and your life is all about Jesus and what He wants. They want nothing to do with God and His so-called “religious morals and virtues, and for you His values have become your life. This conflict with the world is unavoidable and one that will not go away. Our Christian morality, values, and lifestyles will not be able to overcome it, and we need to be assured that we cannot legislate it away through laws. The more laws created against this hatred of God’s values, the more antagonistic and determined the world becomes. This is a social and cultural reality.

Now, this is not a subtle hatred or animosity on my part for those in the world that oppose and hate Christians – not at all. They are the mission field, they are the Great Commission. Jesus was very clear in [Matthew 5:43-45](#) when He said the following,

**Mt 5:43 (NKJV) "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' <sup>44</sup> But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.**

That entire teaching is such an oxymoron, not to the world and the lost, but to believers. We are so protective of ourselves and our own self-preservation that we have completely lost sight of some of the great truths of the New Testament. [Romans 12:14](#) and [Romans 12:17-21](#) say the following,

**Ro 12:14 (NKJV) Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.**

**Ro 12:17 (NKJV) Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. <sup>18</sup> If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. <sup>19</sup> Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. <sup>20</sup> Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink;**

***For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."*** <sup>21</sup> **Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**

So, none of this is a kind of restrained and understated bitterness against lost people who simply do what lost people do. Rather, this passage in [1 Peter 4](#) is simply an encouragement to each of us to develop a personal commitment and resolve to be a “**living sacrifice**”, to be a fully devoted follower of Christ, and to identify in our lives with Christ no matter what the cost may ultimately be to us personally. This time of conflict is coming for us in America. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we enjoyed great freedoms and protection by various laws. All of that is quickly disappearing, and as I have said before, we are only one election away from an almost total collapse of the Christian culture as we currently enjoy it. It is approaching at a very swift pace where Christian freedoms will be lost and discarded like trash being thrown into the dump, and for the most part there is not much that we can do to impede it or even slow it down. The enemy is working overtime. He is already here and his work is fully entrenched into the minds and lives of those who hate Jesus and all for which He stands and represents. The trials and the persecution and the suffering are probably much closer than we might expect. Listen to how Peter encouraged these Christians later on in the letter in [1 Peter 5:10](#) when he wrote,

**1Pe 5:10 (NKJV) But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.**

The nominal Christian in America has no idea what that means or what it will mean for their life in the future. We must have an eternal perspective on our Christian life, or we will quickly fall victim to our own need for protection and comfort and convenience and security. Listen very carefully. There is no protection from the world. If you think that there is, then you have not read your New Testament very well. In [John 15:18 and 20](#), Jesus said the following,

**Jn 15:18 (NKJV) "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated you*.**

**Jn 15:20 (NKJV) Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.**

There is no protection from the world's hatred for Christ. The political wars that are raging around us every day are ones that we as Christians will not win with our Christian morals, and they are at their deepest root level a hatred of God, a hatred of His demands on people's lives, and a deep hatred of Jesus personally. He is seen as an unnecessary nuisance, a constant irritation, and a pest to our narcissistic culture. Listen to how Paul encouraged the believers relative to this in [2 Corinthians 4:16-18](#),

**2Co 4:16 (NKJV) Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, <sup>18</sup> while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.**

I love that – “**we do not lose heart**”, we look “**at the things which are not seen**”. This is what it takes to be willing to suffer no matter what the cost. Why would Paul even say that? Simple. It is because it is very easy to lose heart, easy to faint in the face of adversity and hatred and pain. It is easy to lose your

faith and simply succumb to the pressures that the world and the enemy are placing on your life. I am convinced from the Word of God that just prior to the coming of Christ in the rapture of the church that there will be a great apostasy forthcoming from the cultural American church, a great falling away, a great defection from the faith simply to avoid a loss of all that we have gained in the world. I will prove this to you in our upcoming study on Eschatology and the End Times. The hatred and animosity and resentment and the physical losses will be too much for many to bear, and people in churches just like this one will fall away in droves to protect their sacred “American dream”. I am convinced that this will be the default reality for those many uncommitted professing believers who are more interested in their own personal interests and agendas than they are in suffering reproach for the name of Christ. Jesus will be the dividing line, and it will be clear who are the sheep and who are the goats.

So, the question that each of us have to answer at a deep and personal level is whether or not we are willing to “**suffer reproach for the name of Christ**” (v14). You have to answer that question because the reality of what is going to eventually happen is a biblical reality that cannot be ignored. My personal conviction is that the majority of American Christians are neither mentally, emotionally, or spiritually prepared for what is coming. Because of that spiritual reality, they will be both surprised at what is happening to them, and many will become angry at God Himself for even “allowing” these kinds of things to happen right here where we live – and that will contribute greatly to the falling away and the apostasy of which the Scriptures speak. Please appreciate that this kind of American spiritual cocoon and fragile spiritual bubble in which we have lived all of our lives may at best be short lived as we look to the future.

If I were to ask you the question “Are you spiritually prepared for the possibility in the foreseeable future of both suffering and even persecution for your Christian faith and for the name of Christ?”, how would you answer that question. This has absolutely nothing to do with the Coronavirus or the Black Lives Matter movement, or the left wing liberals – absolutely nothing to do with any of them. They did not even exist when the New Testament and its prophecies were written. I have studied Eschatology for literally years and I have a three semester course on it, as well as teaching on it here in this church. What I know for a fact is that no one knows when Jesus may return in the rapture of the church to remove the Bride of Christ from the earth and to prepare for His Second Coming. It may be this year or it may not be in our lifetime or in this century. However, what I do know biblically is that these are the “**last days**” in which we live. Peter spoke on the Day of Pentecost that according to the prophet Joel that they were living in the “**last days**”, so where does that put the American church? Unfortunately, there is no spiritual clock that we can look to for knowing the actual “when” and specific time that the rapture will occur. However, just to gain a degree of perspective, listen to how Jesus addressed His disciples in His Olivet discourse on the end times in [Matthew 24:3-14](#),

**Mt 24:3 (NKJV) Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"** <sup>4</sup> **And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you.** <sup>5</sup> **For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.** <sup>6</sup> **And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.** <sup>7</sup> **For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.** <sup>8</sup> **All these**

**are the beginning of sorrows. <sup>9</sup> Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. <sup>10</sup> And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. <sup>11</sup> Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. <sup>12</sup> And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. <sup>13</sup> But he who endures to the end shall be saved. <sup>14</sup> And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.**

Hermeneutically it is critical that we keep all of [Matthew 24 and 25](#) in its context. For the most part, what Jesus has said in the passage we just read and in the rest of these two chapters is written specifically addressing the fate of Israel. Prior to these events, the church will be raptured to be with Christ and to stand before the Judgement Seat of Christ for rewards and to enjoy the Marriage Supper of Lamb with Christ. However, everything that leads up to these two chapters and the unfolding of the Tribulation and the Great Tribulation of Revelation will fall directly on those believers who are faithful followers of Christ. There will be suffering and persecution of the church that sets the stage for the cataclysmic events of Revelation, and it is that for which we need to be prepared. Trust me, but you want to be prepared and not surprised when prior events to the Tribulation and the Great Tribulation begin to wage war on Christians. Once again, I am not a prophet or the son of a prophet, but I can assure you that the true church of the last days and the true and authentic believers who compose that true church WILL BE the target of great hatred and persecution. If we do not think this can happen to us, if we think that a Republican President and congress can prevent all of these thing from happening, then we have been sadly deceived. Nothing can stop the events of Revelation or all of the events that lead up to that time.

The truth of this passage, however, is embedded in the single word “**blessed**”. Hopefully it is an encouragement and not a discouragement to you, but the more you suffer, the more blessed you will become. Why is that? It is because when persecution arises for the words sake and for the name of Christ, “**the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you**”. This is not speaking of some future prophetic event – not at all. This is speaking directly of what God the Holy Spirit does in your life at the moment of your suffering and/or persecution to support you and to comfort you supernaturally in your battle for the “**sake of Christ**”. God blesses you with a unique and different measure of the Spirit’s presence in your life that you probably have never experienced. When Peter says that the Spirit of God “**rests on you**” in the midst of the suffering, the word ‘rests’ is a middle voice verb. What that means, and it could be translated this way, is that “**the Spirit of glory and of God (Himself) rests upon you**”. The middle voice emphasizes the personal and exclusive attention that the Holy Spirit takes on in His caring for you during your trial in being willing to suffer for Christ. It is a special and unique blessing from God for all who are “**reproached for the name of Christ**”. What is distinctive about this word “**blessed**” (*makarios*) is that what it is referring to is the reality that this work of the Holy Spirit is so strong at the moment of suffering and persecution that the believer who is suffering is fully satisfied with all that God is allowing in his or her life. Many believers seem to always be dissatisfied with what is happening in their life or with what happened to them. Remember what we addressed two messages ago – that complaining is the evidence of your dissatisfaction with what God is allowing into your life. Just let something uncomfortable, something unpleasant, something painful and distressing happen in our life, and almost without hesitation, we immediately begin complaining and questioning God.

Here the “**Comforter**”, the Holy Spirit is giving a supernatural comfort, a supernatural peace, a supernatural strength, and a supernatural assurance that is impossible to create on our own as a believer. The word “**rests**” that Peter chose means to give relief and to give refreshment from the toil and pain that life is inflicting on you.<sup>1</sup> This is something completely supernatural. It is seen in the life of Stephen as he was being stoned in [Acts 7](#). This is what it says of Stephen in [Acts 7:54-60](#),

Ac 7:54 (NKJV) **When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with *their* teeth. <sup>55</sup> But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, <sup>56</sup> and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" <sup>57</sup> Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; <sup>58</sup> and they cast *him* out of the city and stoned *him*. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. <sup>59</sup> And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God* and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." <sup>60</sup> Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.**

This is what we want to know – the last part of v14 – that on our part that Jesus is being glorified in our life. Nothing less – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are being magnified and worshipped and praised and exalted as we go through the worst of afflictions and trials. May God cause His Spirit to rest on us and help us to be spiritually, emotionally, and mentally prepared for what may actually befall us in the near future. I pray for God’s grace to sustain and keep you if that is the case.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

MacArthur, John. *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Peter*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Publishers, 2004.

<sup>1</sup> MacArthur, 253.