

Living Here, Longing for Home: Hello Trouble

1 Peter 4:12-19

Read 1 Peter 4:12-19 together:

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" Therefore, let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

Notice Peter's use of "name" in this context. Let's consider a very quick survey of how "name" is used throughout the Bible. Read Ps. 8:1 and Ps. 115:1.

? How do you think the Psalmist defined "name" in these verses? Did he define "name" as simply the "handle" or "reference" we use for God?

? What do you think "name" means in these verses?

Names were very significant to the ancient Israelites. A person's name was not simply a "handle", but rather it described the character of the person. Remember Naomi when she returned to Israel after losing her husband and both her sons. She said, "Call me Mara [bitter] for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me."

Read the following New Testament passages: Jn. 1:12; Mt. 6:9; 2 Thess. 1:12; 1 Cor. 6:11; Mt. 28:19; and Phill. 2:9-11.

? After reading these verses, do you see "the name" in a different light? How should we think of the "name" of Jesus?

Peter's references to "the name" in this passage certainly ought to make a strong impression on us. As Christ-followers, we have claimed the name of Jesus for the salvation of our souls! We pray in the name of Jesus. We witness for the name of Jesus. We have named and identified with the Savior of the world and His name is Jesus.

Peter warns us in this passage, once again, that persecution is coming to all who claim and display the name of Jesus. Peter's message could not be any more applicable and relevant than it is today! It is not a matter of if those

who name Jesus will be persecuted, but when! When we stand under the name of Jesus Christ, when we proclaim His message, and we defend His reputation, we will be persecuted. The following are three (3) reasons why we know we will face that persecution.

His Name is THE Way

Jesus made it very clear that the only way to the Heavenly Father was through Himself (Jn. 14:6). That was Jesus' claim! Earlier in his life, Peter was asked if he would leave Jesus as so many other disciples had. In Jn. 6:68 Peter replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

- ? How does the world respond to this claim of exclusivity?
- ? What does the world say? What does pluralism, relativism, and humanism claim?

The Living Church can't get so distracted by concerns about the church gathering or closures, restrictions, or taxes that we forget that we are the tip of the spear. God has chosen the Living Church to be in the world, but not of the world. Expect persecution, but cling to the Name!

His Name is the Truth

Our world wants us to believe that truth is a social construct. It wants us to believe that gender is a choice, rather than a gift assigned by God Himself to every human being. This goes so much deeper than politics! But what does all this have to do with His Name?

- ? Read Col. 1:16,17. What do these verses tell us about Jesus?

Jesus is the creator of everything; He is the designer of everything, and He is the cohesive core of all truth.

When you stand for the Name, you are telling the world that there is a moral absolute. That moral absolute applies to all of life: morals, ethics, gender identification, law, justice, sexuality, justice, truth, and honesty.

We live here, we long for home. While we live here, we must stand for the Name!

His Name is Life

We can't miss that Peter is speaking of persecution because we stand for the Name of Jesus Christ. This is not about suffering for our sins. Peter is speaking to us who will suffer persecution for our stand for Christ.

- ? What response from us does Peter call for (v 13)?
- ? How can we do that? How do we cultivate an attitude of joy/rejoicing when we suffer?
- ? Read v 14. What does Peter tell us when we are insulted for Christ?
- ? What do you think Peter means when he says the Spirit of glory and God rests on us?

Every generation believes they are living in the worst, craziest, most dangerous time. Remember Peter said in 4:7 that the end is near. Yes, it is different today than it was in Peter's day. Because of the speed and pervasiveness of communication, there is a blending of worldwide culture through technology, media, and economics.

The living Church must continue to stand! The Living church must continue to defend the truth. The Living Church must continue to love.

In order to stand, we must kneel! In order to defend, we must depend! In order to love, we must be loved!