

Resilient Hope // Do Not Be Surprised

1 Peter 4:12-19, "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."

In light of our topic today, let's pause for a moment to remember Peter, the author of this letter and one of the original disciples of Jesus! Let's consider his own "fiery trials" behind his words today:

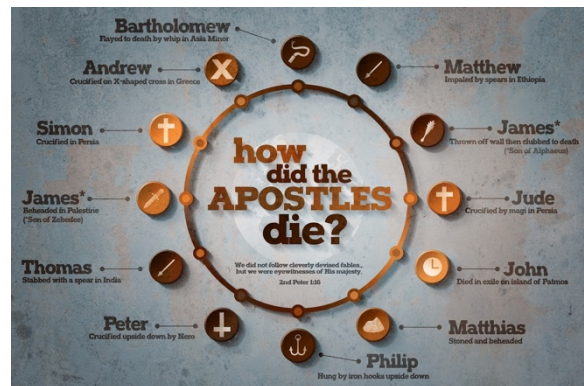
- **Mark 8:31-33**, "And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He said this plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But turning and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.'"
- **Luke 22:31-34**, "'Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.' Peter said to Him, 'Lord, I am ready to go with You both to prison and to death.' Jesus said, 'I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know Me.'"
- From his experience we get, in next chapter: "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." **1 Peter 5:8**

1) Surprised or Sober-Minded

- **1 Peter 4:12**, "Do not be surprised at the fiery trial...as though something strange were happening to you."
- The world, the flesh and the devil have been working against us since the day we were born.
 - **1 John 2:15-17**, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—

the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”

- Lust of the flesh: The desire to gratify fleshly desires that go against the ways of God: Gluttony, sexual impurity, drugs and alcohol, etc.
- Lust of the eyes: The consuming desire for material things like money, possessions, or things that appeal visually to us.
- Pride of life: The desire to bring attention to ourselves, to hold power, and to pursue prestige and public recognition. Seeking our own glory!
 - The enemy of our soul, the devil, uses all three, and more against us!
- The opposite of surprised, according to Peter in 5:8, is being sober-minded and watchful.
 - Means “clear-headed, alert and fully aware of your surroundings”
 - Sober-minded: Not being clouded by our emotions, desires or distractions; having objective perspective
 - Watchful: Paying attention, aware of threats, staying on guard
- Don’t be surprised: We often have unbiblical reference points as to what it means to live with “fiery trials” in this life as a disciple of Jesus.
 - First: We must reference our spiritual heritage...all of His disciples martyred but one (John, alienated from society to remove his influence)
 - Second: “I’m blessed therefore I expect the Lord to not allow any difficulties...”
 - Job
 - **Job 1:7-8**, The Lord said to Satan, “‘From where have you come?’ Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.’ And the Lord said to Satan, ‘Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?’”
 - Note: God never told Job about what was going on in the heavenlies!
 - Jesus
 - **Isaiah 53:3-5**, “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was



pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.”

- Third: “I am an overcomer!”
 - Yes, there is absolutely no question about that! However, what if most of your overcoming is actually meant for those coming behind you? Living with a Kingdom perspective and an eternal vantage point!
 - Hebrews 11, the great faith chapter has something to say to us on this...
 - Abel - Enoch - Noah - Abraham and Sarah - Isaac and Jacob - Moses
 - **Hebrews 11:13**, “These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.”
 - **Hebrews 11:32-38**, “And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— *of whom the world was not worthy*—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.”
 - What if there is something bigger in play, spiritually, through your “fiery trials” (like Job), or what if what Jesus is asking you to do is on behalf of future generations of His followers? We need to lift up our eyes!
 - Being sober-minded, rather than surprised, references these bigger matters surrounding our lives and God’s purposes!

2) Glorifying God

- **1 Peter 4:13-16, 19**, “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... Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good."

- Are we living and viewing our "fiery trials" through the lens of glorifying God?
- "To glorify God and enjoy Him forever."
- In the Old Testament, glory has to do with honoring and carrying God's reputation - who He really is, that His ways are always wise, how He has acted and moved on our behalf for generations...
 - **Exodus 34** - Moses, "show me your glory" and God reveals His character!
 - What does it mean to glorify God? God's character and ways displayed through our lives, so others see, honor, and pursue Him! His reputation revealed through us!
- Do we really understand that nothing can come our way - no fiery trial, no challenging circumstance, no attack from another - except that God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit have first approved it? Therefore, there is something in it for God to be glorified through our lives: godly character developed in us; God's character and ways revealed through us; a spiritual warrior forged within us; people's lives and societies transformed through us, etc.

3) Forged to Fight

- **1 Peter 5:8-9**, "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith..."
- How can we day-in-and-day-out live a life that is more sober-minded and watchful?
 - **Distort**
 - Genesis 3:7 - "Did God really say..."
 - Distort and disfigure God's character and ways in our hearts and minds
 - Resist: Know the character of God from scripture and your life experiences with Him!
 - **Distract**
 - Loss of focus, diversions, commotions, confusion (spiritual swirls), picking up offenses
 - Peter tried to sway Jesus from going to the cross - "get behind Me Satan" in Mark 8:31-33
 - Resist: Trust what God has said in His Word and to you; Obey what He has asked you to do!
 - **Discourage**
 - In 1 Kings 19 we see Elijah, after he had called fire down from heaven, hiding in a cave... "just take me out" kind of moment - after great moment!
 - Accuses us, pours it on after failures, despair, hopelessness

- Peter: "Your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking for someone to devour." Consider how Peter must have felt that night that he denied the Lord (wept bitterly) - he knows what he is talking about here!
- Resist: Step back and see the big picture! See afresh who God is: His love, His power, and His being with you always! 2 Kings - Elisha and chariots of fire. Also, the scene in Revelation 4-5. Worship, prayer, and being in the Word.
- **Deceive**
 - In Matthew 4:1-11, we see Jesus being tempted by the devil.
 - Lust of the flesh: "Turn stones into bread."
 - Lust of the eyes: "Showed him all the kingdoms of this world and their glory; worship me and I will give you all the kingdoms of this world."
 - Pride of life: "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down..."
 - Deception is a blend of falsehoods, mixed with a portion of truth, and aimed at our vulnerabilities.
 - If you were the devil, how would you take you out?
 - Resist: Living in the truth of scripture; walking in accountable relationships
- **Divide**
 - **John 13:35**, "By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
 - Satan attacks the unity of followers of Jesus by...
 - Separating relationships; operating independently
 - Satan cannot defeat a united church!
 - Resist: Maintain the unity of the Spirit; Live as agents of reconciliation (Eph. 4:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:16-18)

Distort - Distract - Discourage - Deceive - Divide