

The Gift of Persecution

1 Peter 1:3-5 (ESV)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 Peter 1:21 (ESV)

who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Romans 5:1-5 (ESV)

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

1 Peter 4:12-16 (ESV)

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.¹³ But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.¹⁴ If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian,

2 Timothy 3:12 (ESV)

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted
let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

Big Idea

Our persecution is actually a gift because it offers us an opportunity to show others the surprising generosity and love of Jesus, which is fueled by our hope in His return and victory over evil. 1 Peter is hopeful that our imitation of Jesus and demonstration of His upside-down kingdom will give power to our words as we bear witness to God's mercy and show others the beautiful truth about Jesus.

1 Peter 1:6-7 (ESV)

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in (your - AMP) praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

James 1:2-4 (ESV)

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

James 1:5-9 (ESV)

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

James 1:12 (ESV)

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

Hebrews 5:8 (ESV)

Although he was a son (who had never been disobedient to the Father – AMP), he learned obedience through what he suffered.

1 Peter 2:19-24 (ESV)

For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if

when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. ²¹ For to this you have been **called**, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, **but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.** ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

Are you willing to follow Christ and be wounded so that others can be healed – Forgiveness is necessary!

1 Peter 1:13-15 (ESV)

Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, ¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct

Closing Prayer