

## Life Link

### Title: "Worldly Living is Easy, Godly Living Is Hard"

#### Big Idea:

#### **Introductory Illustration:**

#### **Read Sermon Text:**

**1 Peter 4:12-19** (Suffering for God's Glory) Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 14 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. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. 17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. NKJV

#### **1. Living Worldly (vs. 12-13)**

**1 Peter 4:12-13** Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. NKJV

- a. Peter is fully aware of the trials that Christians must and will endure. He is forewarning believers that life is not going to be easy. The early day Christians faced percussion in ever part of the world. Before his conversion Saul of Tarsus hunted out and captured Christian to return them to Jerusalem (Acts 9:1-3). In the name of God Saul believe that Christianity stood in the way of serving God and they were a threat to the Jewish faith and practice.

Later own Nero, emperor of Rome (AD 15 through AD 68) set Rome on fire and blamed the Christians living there and as retribution he (Nero) persecuted then including dipping Christians i tar and tying them to poles and setting them on fire as street light for Rome.

Today Christians around the world are facing persecution in the modern day world. According to [wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian\\_martyrs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_martyrs)

**Illustration:** It is claimed that 100,000 Christians die annually for their faith.<sup>[21][22]</sup> The recent attack in Kenya is an example. As reported by CNN, "Joel Ayora, who was on the campus and witnessed the attack, said gunmen burst into a Christian service. Taking hostages from the service, they then 'proceeded to the hostels, shooting

anybody they came across except their fellows, the Muslims.' The attackers separated students by religion, allowing Muslims to leave and keeping an unknown number of Christians hostage, Agence France-Presse reported."

- b. Peter reminds those he loves that living for Christ is not an easy life and there will be difficult times ahead and they must not be surprised that we as Christians maybe called to suffer just as Christ suffered, and we can expect that we are called to partake in that suffering.
- c. Jesus faces persecution, insults, and physical abuse the question is why. The only answer I am able to provide is Satan is trying to destroy the influence of God in the world. He (satan) will use ever possible means to encourage people to turn away from God and His Son Jesus Christ.

**Matt 10:22** And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. NKJV

**Matt 24:9** "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. NKJV

**Mark 13:13** And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. NKJV

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

- d. The difficulties we may face in this world will not destroy the believe to follow Jesus but will strengthen our resolve to follow Jesus. Suffering will only serve to build our faith as we face the trials that befall Christians. Persecution will strengthen our faith just as it in the early days of the Church. The early day church in the face of persecution the early day Church prospered and grew. Growth is painful and necessary and anything that does not grow is dying.

### **Text Illustration:**

Perhaps an analogy will best clarify this. As Christians we may be compared with a reservoir for producing electrical power, like one of those you see when you drive down the canyon. When we accept Christ, construction of our reservoir is complete. We now have the potential to be useful and to affect lives. But until the flood gates are opened and the cascading river waters pour through, no power is realized. So it is when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit. We open our lives to God and the Holy Spirit pours into us and through us. It is then we become most effective in God's service. As with the reservoir, this power-generating experience is not intended to be a one-time occurrence. It is to be an ongoing process. When our spiritual power runs low, we need to return to the Source and let the blessed Holy Spirit pour into us again, bringing fresh power. This happened to the early followers of Jesus. Peter and John they had already been baptized in the Spirit; but later on, when persecution arose, they needed a new surge of spiritual power; so they prayed to the Lord once again and "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 4:31).

(David Schaal Christian Life Fellowship, Sermon Central)

## 2. Living Godly (vs. 14-17)

**1 Peter 4:14-17** 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. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. 17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? NKJV

- a. One of the indicators of a Christian's life is the difficulty of living in the world today. The Christian's life is like a person driving the wrong direction and a one way street. The Christian will face certain opposition in life when they live for Jesus but, Peter states in verse 14, ""you are blessed". He is not implying that we should enjoy the persecution we face but we must endure till the end. It is said that the early day Christians when placed in the arena in Rome and faced will animals, or used as human targets for Rome soldiers or even ran down by racing chariots. Were singing praise to God as they died. While we may never be called to endure the same or even worse Christians must be willing travel the right direction in a wrong way world.
- b. Non-Christians, people without Jesus will only curse God and His Son, however the believer will glorify the Father and the Son with our willingness to face the trials of life whatever they may be. Some may be called to die for Christ, some suffer for Christ and all are called to live for Christ.

### **Paul said in Phil 1:20-21**

"according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain". NKJV

### **Text Illustration:**

Charles Swindoll gives us some interesting advice when he states: When you live in darkness, you not only have no ray of light, you don't even know where home is. That is the way it is for the majority in the world. Some folks are born, raised, and die in cultures that have never seen their first flashlight of hope. Imagine it! When the truth of that hits me, I find myself a little impatient with Christians who do nothing but shine lights for themselves. They even have what we might call flashlight parties where they just shine the light on each other. Lots of light! Too much light to be hoarded! Jesus says to shine for the world. Shine your light into the darkness; that's where it is really needed. Spend less time in your own little well-lighted all Christian world and more time there in the darkness (63)! ([Michael McCartney](#) Christian Hills Church: Sermon Central)

### 3. Living Eternally (vs. 18-19)

1 Peter 4:18-19 Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. NKJV

- a. Believers will face persecution to what extent only God knows but regardless of the amount of suffering it will bring us to even closer to God as we experience some of the suffering that Jesus suffered for us. 2 Timothy tells us that we should not be ashamed of the suffering we experience as a believer of Christ. However Peter reminds us that suffering that comes about as a result of wrong doing has no profit in the kingdom of God. Many today believe and live as if the things we do that are unlawful are acceptable to God. But the Christian must live his or her life above board and reproach. Consequences of our wrong doing are just payment for that wrong doing.
- b. When we suffer for the cause of Christ we identify with Him and that identification brings us into a closer relationship with Jesus and glorifies God.

**2 Tim 1:12** For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day. NKJV

- c. God is able to keep our commitment until the day in which we will join with Him in eternity. When a person goes through persecution it demonstrates our resolve to stay faithful to Jesus. Look at the just the twelve disciples. They were willing and able to face the persecution of the world because they believed and committed to following Jesus no matter what the world did to them. Paul was beheaded, Peter was crucified upside down because he believed himself unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as Jesus, Bartholomew; usually identified with Nathanael. Thought by some to have been skinned alive, then beheaded. "James ". Stoned at age 90, then clubbed to death. Each of these men were so committed to following Jesus that they paid the ultimate price for their faith. How committed are we as followers of Jesus. We we be willing to die for Jesus.

**Text Illustration:** A.W. Tozer says that people who are crucified with Christ have three distinct marks:

1. They are facing only one direction,
2. They can never turn back, and
3. They no longer have plans of their own.

**Text Illustration:** John Sutherland Bonnell, the great preacher of a generation ago, has suggested five questions which are useful in evaluating Christian effectiveness and commitment. Look Closely at them to judge your strengths and weaknesses as a disciple of Christ.

1. Does my life witness each day to the power of the risen Christ?
2. Does my faith in Christ affect the quality of my daily living, so that there adheres to it a nobility and moral strength?

3. Is there anything in my life that reminds men and women of the Master to whom I have pledged my allegiance?
4. Is there any discernible difference at all in my life as contrasted with the lives of those who never acknowledged Jesus as Lord and Savior? (See Matthew 5:46-48)
5. Do I manifest in the midst of this fevered generation a serenity of spirit which reveals that the peace of God is dwelling in my heart?

(Quoted in the Elmcree News, Elmcree Baptist Church, Abilene, Texas, Vol. 20, No. 7, 2/27/91)

**Conclusion:** The fiery trial which we face are not a prerequisite to being a Christian but, are going to happen as we follow Jesus. The world hated Him therefore they will hate you. When we face the trials of our faith we can identify in a small part what Jesus went through for us. As we face those difficult times it is a testimony of our sincerity and solidarity with Jesus. There is no shame in suffering for Jesus but, as a wrong doer we are punished for our actions we are getting our deserved punishment. A follower of Jesus our commitment to Jesus will be kept until that day when God the Father will bring us to Him. Either through translation of this physical life at the return of Jesus or the end of our days.

**1 Thessalonians 4:16-17** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. NKJV