

American Persecution

1 Peter 4:12-19 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. **13** But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. **14** If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. **15** If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. **16** However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. **17** For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? **18** And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" **19** So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

How to be strengthened by persecution rather than leveled by it:

1. _____

Verses 13-14; see also Matthew 5:11; Acts 5:41; 6:15; Romans 8:17; Colossians 3:4; 1 Peter 1:6, 8; 5:1

2. _____

Verse 15

3. _____

Verse 16; see also Mark 8:38

4. _____

Verses 17-18; see also Mark 9:49; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Hebrews 9:49

5. _____

Verse 19; see also Hebrews 10:23

Transformed by the Truth

Questions for Reflection & Discussion

1. What have you experienced in your Christian life that you would define as "persecution" based on Sunday's message?

2. Read 1 Peter 4:12-14. What are some good things about persecution? When have you experienced joy in the midst of persecution?

3. Read 1 Peter 4:15. What are some mistakes we might make in interacting with non-Christians that could result in deserved disrespect?

4. Read 1 Peter 4:17-18. What questions do these verses elicit? When and how do you believe God judges the members of His family?

5. Read 1 Peter 4:19. When have you been most tempted to quit following Jesus? What has kept you in the faith?
