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***Suffering and Grace***

**Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls**

***to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. 1Peter 4:19**

**LESSON: Introduction to the Lesson Series**

**THEME: While there are many ideas, concepts, themes and sub-themes, the closest any verse comes to summarizing the book of 1 Peter is found in 1Pe 4:19 *Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.***

**INTRODUCTION:** This lesson series is a study on how Christians need to be faithful to God in their lives, relying upon God’s grace for strength to endure the trials they will surely face on their way to glory. First we will consider the best way to approach any book of the Bible. It is essential that we have a commitment to properly interpret the Scriptures, then to make proper application to our lives. **(Much of this lesson series is taken directly from class notes of Dr. David Doran in a course taught at Northland Baptist Bible College in January of 2008.)**

1. ***Proper Biblical interpretation of any book or passage requires several key elements.***
	1. Some important basic questions and assumptions.
		1. How do we approach a book of the Bible so we honor the text?
		2. First we must study the whole book, get an overview, and then interpret the rest.
		3. Is the book written with a unifying theme? If so, we need to find that theme.
		4. What is the argument of the book? What case are they making? (this is most important!)
		5. How will we approach the interpretive issues of some of the passages?
		6. How can the book help us personally, practically, and pastorally?
	2. Common **pitfalls** we must avoid
		1. Making the text mean something which it does not say, i.e., failing to honor the grammatical principle of interpretation.
			1. The meaning of the text is found in the words as used by the author in a precise arrangement.
			2. Our focus, then, must be on semantics (word meaning) and syntax (word arrangement).
		2. Making the text mean something which it never meant, i.e., failing to honor the historical principle of interpretation.
			1. This means that we seek to understand the words as they were used at the time of writing.
			2. This means we seek to understand the meaning of the text within the cultural framework it reflects and addresses. We must be careful to remain controlled, however, by the text (and its biblical context). The author’s intent is communicated through the words of the text, and those words must hold authority over speculations about mental states and life situations.
		3. Making the text mean something which contradicts other Scripture, i.e., failing to honor the theological principle of interpretation.
			1. Our commitment to inspiration leads us inevitably to the processes of harmonization and correlation.
			2. We must find the delicate balance of letting each text speak clearly in its own voice while maintaining the unity of Scriptural truth.
	3. To properly understand a passage, the reader must always seek the answer to these two questions:
		1. What is the text talking about (subject)?
		2. What is the text saying about the subject (complement)?
			* 1. This is taken from Keith Willhite, “A Bullet Versus Buckshot: What Makes the Big Idea Work?” in The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching, p. 17.
2. ***Expositional Application***
	1. Identify basic background issues
		1. Who wrote it?
		2. Who received it?
		3. What is their relationship to each other?
		4. When was it written?
		5. Why was it written?
			1. What prompted it?
			2. What is its purpose? ie. Why did John write the gospel of John?
	2. Identify the author’s key terms.
		1. Repetition! What is central to the discussion? The terms give us the themes! Not just word count – but for example “faith, trust, promises, etc.
		2. Placement – clusters of a given word; pivot points (transition points); ie in Hebrews Christ is “better” but the theme is warnings about turning from Christ.
		3. Distinctiveness - Special terms
		4. Theological significance - “load bearing words”
	3. Identify and trace the author’s argument.
		1. The argument is built on its propositions - simply a statement –
		2. The order in which it is developed
		3. The relation of the parts to one another
	4. Identify the Assertions and Imperatives.
		1. Assertions answer an implied question.
		2. Imperatives help indicate the author’s intention.
3. ***Conclusions***
	1. As we consider Peter’s epistles, we approach them with an attitude of, “Lord, teach me from your Word exactly what you want me to know!”
	2. Secondly, we humbly pray for God to enable us to fulfill His will in our lives once He enlightens our eyes and teaches us from His Word. We want to be “doers of the Word, and not hearers only!”

***Finding the Theme of 1 Peter***

1. What are the key terms for Peter? (Not necessarily in order of importance!)
	1. Repetition
		1. Faith—1:5, 7, 8 (believe), 9, 21 (faith, believers); 2:6, 7; 5:9
		2. Hope—1:3, 13, 21; 3:5, 15
		3. “revelation of Jesus Christ”—1:7, 13; cf. “revealed in the last time” (1:5); “in the day of visitation” (2:12); “revelation of His glory” (4:13); “the end of all things is near” (4:7); “when the Chief Shepherd appears” (5:4);
		4. Aliens—1:1; 2:11; cf. “time of your stay on earth” (1:17); “rest of the time in the flesh” (4:2); “for a little while” (5:10)
		5. Salvation—1:5, 9, 10; 2:2
		6. Glory—1:7, 8, 11, 21, 24; 4:13, 14; 5:1, 4, 10; cf. glorify—2:12; 4:11, 16
		7. Lusts—1:14; 2:11; 4:2, 3
		8. Called—1:15; 2:9, 21; 3:9; 5:10
		9. Chosen—1:1; 2:4, 9; cf. 2:8 “were also appointed”
		10. Precious—1:7; 2:4, 7; 3:4
		11. Will of God—2:15; 3:17; 4:2, 6, 19; 5:2 (?)
		12. Suffering—1:11; 2:19, 20, 21, 23; 3:14, 17; 4:1 (2xs); 4:13, 15, 16, 19; 5:1, 9, 10.
		13. Obedient/disobedient—1:2, 14, 22; 2:8; 3:1, 6; 4:17
		14. Submit/submission—2:13, 18; 3:1, 5; 5:5
		15. Humility—3:8; 5:5, 6
		16. Judge—1:17; 2:23; 4:5, 6, 17
		17. Love—1:8, 22; 4:8
		18. Fear—1:17; 2:17, 18; 3:2, 6, 14, 16
	2. Placement
		1. Clusters—indicate the possibility of a sub-theme (or the main theme if in a pivotal place)
			1. Hope—1:3, 13, 21; 3:5, 15
			2. Submit/submission—2:13, 18; 3:1, 5; 5:5
		2. Pivot points—placement at pivotal points in the argument may indicate special significance
			1. Chosen (1:1; 2:9) and mercy (1:3; 2:10) seem to serve as *inclusio* markers.
			2. Beloved (2:11; 4:12) and the doxologies (4:11; 5:11) also seem to be boundary markers.
		3. Distributed throughout—recurring words or concepts can give a sense of unity to the whole document
			1. Suffering—1:11; 2:19, 20, 21, 23; 3:14, 17; 4:1 (2xs); 4:13, 15, 16, 19; 5:1, 9, 10. Cf. sufferings and glories of Christ (1:11; 4:13; 5:1)
			2. “revelation of Jesus Christ”—1:7, 13; cf. “revealed in the last time” (1:5); “in the day of visitation” (2:12); “when his glory shall be revealed” (4:13); “the end of all things is at hand” (4:7); “when the Chief Shepherd shall appear” (5:4)
			3. Aliens—1:1; 2:11; cf. “time of your sojourning here” (1:17); “rest of his time in the flesh” (4:2); “after that ye have suffered a while” (5:10)
2. What are the main topics in Peter’s argument?
	1. Suffering, 1:11; 2:19, 20, 21, 23; 3:14, 17; 4:1 (2xs), 13, 5, 16, 19; 5:1, 9, 10
	2. God’s will, 2:15; 3:17; 4:2, 19; cf. 4:15-17; 5:10; 1:7. This ties in with emphasis on God’s sovereignty in His call (1:15; 2:9; 2:21; 3:9; 5:10) and choice of them (1:1; 2:9).
	3. Hope/trust
		1. Faith, 1:5, 7, 8, 9, 21; 2:6, 7; 5:9
		2. Hope, 1:3, 13, 21; 3:5, 15
		3. Glory—1:7, 8, 11, 21, 24; 4:13, 14; 5:1, 4, 10; cf. glorify—2:12; 4:11, 16
		4. Humility/submission, 2:13, 18; 3:1, 5, 8; 5:3, 5, 6
	4. Doing what is right
		1. Holiness, 1:15-16, 22; 2:12; 3:15; 4:2 ff., cf. 2:24
		2. Service/love, 1:22; 4:8, 9, 10-11
		3. Obedient/disobedient—1:2, 14, 22; 2:8; 3:1, 6; 4:17
3. What does Peter want his readers to do?
	1. Do right/good conduct, 1:15, 17; 2:12, 14, 15, 20; 3:1, 2, 6, 16, 17; 4:19
	2. Hope in God, 1:3, 7-9, 13, 21; 2:6, 23; 3:6, 9, 15; 4:13, 19; 5:4, 10 (cf. all texts which point to end times).
	3. Stand firm in God’s grace, 5:9, 14
4. What question(s) is Peter answering?

Who -what -why -where -when -how

* 1. Possibilities: Why does suffering happen? Why should believers respond properly? How should believers live in the face of suffering?

* 1. Proposed: Primary question: How should believers live (respond) in the view of suffering?

**Theme: 1Since it is inevitable that Christ’s followers will suffer 2on their way to glory, they must 3stand firm in God’s grace 4by living righteous lives that are 5empowered by faith and hope in God.**

1. 2:21; 4:12, 17; 5:10
2. 1:7; 2:12 (?); 4:13-14; 5:4; 5:10; cf. 1:11; 4:13; 5:1
3. 5:12; cf. 5:9
4. 1:14-16; 2:11-12; 2:20; 3:13-14; 3:17; 4:1-5; 4:15, 19
5. 1:5, 9; 1:13; 2:6-7; 4:19 (cf. 2:23); 5:9; cf. hope 1:3, 13, 21; 3:5, 15

Theme is subject and compliment – not just the subject

1 Peter 4:19 comes the closest to a summary or theme statement (cf. 3:6). Note how we are following the example of Jesus in 1 Pet 2:21-23. Note this same thing is in chapter 1 and chapter 5. We are to have a Christ-centered faith-filled endurance! Every thing else in the book serves this purpose.