

The Prattmont Church of Christ is just what the name suggests, a church that belongs to Christ. We are not a denomination; we are simply a group of Christians trying very hard to practice the teachings of our Head, Jesus Christ. The New Testament offers a complete pattern for what each local church should be like—its organization, its worship, its work, etc. We are committed to following that pattern. We cordially invite you to attend our services. We would also welcome any comments or questions about this bulletin.

TIMES OF SERVICES:

Sunday

Bible Classes.....9 A.M.
 Worship 10:00 A.M.
 Worship/Bible Study..5 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 P.M.



Weekly Bulletin
 February 12, 2023

**The First Epistle of Peter:
 A Textbook on Suffering (Part 1)**


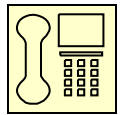

by Bryan Gibson

Note: Perhaps this will serve as a companion study to the one we're presently doing in 1 Peter on Sunday mornings.

Some folks suffer because they do wrong. There is nothing commendable about that (4:15; 2:20). Other folks suffer because they do right. That is commendable, especially in the eyes of God (2:19-20; 3:14a). The obvious conclusion: "...it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil" (3:17).

It may be better, but it's not easy! It's not easy to be thought of as strange or ignorant, to get ridiculed and insulted, to endure false accusations, to be excluded from the "in crowd," to maybe even face the threat of death. The people to whom Peter wrote his first epistle—that's what they were facing, and here's what he said to help them (and us) endure. We'll divide this up into

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a series of do's and don'ts, just to make the points as clear as possible. We'll cover the don'ts this week, and then Lord willing, the do's next week.

Don't be surprised by suffering, as if some "strange thing" (4:12). Elsewhere, Paul wrote that "all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12). Get used to it; it will happen.

Don't be discouraged by it, and don't let it wear you down, because it only lasts "a little while" (1:6)—especially when you contrast it with eternity.

Don't be ashamed of it, or embarrassed by it; instead glorify God for it (4:16; 2:6). The folks who are saying and doing these things to you—they're the only ones who should be ashamed (3:16).

Don't be afraid of those who persecute you—it's not like they can do you any **lasting** harm (3:13-16). They killed the Christ, and look how things turned out for Him (3:18, 22). Noah and his family—no doubt they suffered for the stand they took, but they were the ones standing on dry ground when the flood ended (3:18-22).

Don't retaliate—do not return "evil for evil, or reviling for reviling" (3:9). Follow the example of Christ (2:21), "who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously" (2:23).

Don't think you're the only one—brethren near and far are suffering the same things, perhaps even worse (5:9).

Don't try to fit in with the world to avoid this suffering—that's the very thing the devil wants you to do (5:8). This world is not your home, so don't behave like it is. "...as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (2:11). Don't live any longer "for the lusts of men, but for the will of God" (4:2). Cast your lot with the people of this world, and that's when you'll be in real trouble, because "they will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead" (4:5). And it won't be pretty, because rest assured, their suffering will last more than just "a little while."

