



Series: Resurrection People (Part 3)

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INTRODUCTION

There are 3 kinds of people in this world: those who are suffering, those who have just come out of it, and those who are about to enter a period of suffering but do not yet know it. What does the bible say about suffering, and how do we as Christians handle our suffering as resurrection people in a Good Friday world?

DISCUSSION

1. Everyone goes through suffering at some point in their lives, and each person has a different way of dealing with it.
 - a. The fatalist ENDURE suffering like they have no choice
 - b. Some nonchalantly accept and EMBRACE it as a part of life
 - c. The avoiders ESCAPE from suffering that they deem as meaningless
 - d. The philosophical ones try to EXPLAIN and make sense of it
 - e. Some go through suffering and EXPECT NOTHING - after being numb from persistent suffering, they cease to expect that God will move
 - f. Some believe that they are ENTITLED to the good life, and maybe they just need to have more faith; if they believe it enough, God must remove all suffering from their lives

Do you identify with any of the above reactions? There's no right or wrong answer; feel free to share as much or as little as you're comfortable. (If appropriate, explore what has shaped your response to suffering: past experiences, upbringing, or beliefs about God.)

2. Read 1 Peter 1:3-7. There is a better way to face our suffering: Because Christ has risen, we can ENDURE EXPECTANTLY. In vs 3, we read that God has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrected power of Jesus Christ. When Jesus died on the cross, He ushered in a new era, a new paradigm in which man is now reconciled to the Father. Jesus bridged the chasm that once divided God and man through His death and resurrection. We now have this hope (vs 4) of an inheritance in heaven that is eternal.
 - a. Despite living in this new beginning in Christ, we still face pain and suffering. Instead of accepting our circumstances, we are to contend with evil and injustice. Do we still expect God to intervene: to break into our reality with His presence and purpose? Do we believe that He is still working in us? (For deeper reflection: What disappointments or unanswered prayers might have shaped your expectations of God?)
 - b. If we truly endure expectantly, believing God is still at work, then it should shape how we live and how we respond to others.
 - i. What do you think living in the reality of God's kingdom on earth looks like in your home and in your community? (Optional: Where might God be inviting you to step out in faith right now, even in the midst of difficulty?)
 - ii. How would you use your spiritual gifts to bless others?
 - iii. Who in your life needs the hope of Christ? What does it look like for you to pray for them with faith and perseverance?
 - c. Peter now helps us understand *why* we can endure expectantly, even in suffering. In verses 6-7, why does God allow believers to go through trials? (For deeper reflection: How does this challenge or affirm your current understanding of suffering?)
 - d. What does the metaphor of gold being refined by fire teach us about suffering and the genuineness of our faith? (Optional: What "impurities" might God be revealing or refining in this season?)
 - e. Why do you think Peter emphasises that trials are "for a little while"? (For deeper reflection: What helps you hold on to an eternal perspective when present suffering feels overwhelming?)

WHAT WILL YOU DO

We contend, we trust, and we hold on.

We contend, through prayer, God's word, and faith, against anything that challenges God's rule and reign. We trust that God is sovereign and is still working miracles in our midst. When we face suffering, we know that we have an inheritance in heaven that will never perish or diminish. We hold on to God's faithful promises, knowing that trials and suffering only serve to refine and purify, until only Christ may be seen in us.

MEMORY VERSE

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 praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ. - 1 Peter 1:7