

MARKS OF A TRUE IDENTITY IN EXILE // 1 PETER 4:12-19

1. We are loved beyond compare (v 12)

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;

Beloved (ἀγαπητός - agapetos) implies tenderness, compassion, affection, and care.

- What does love overcome? Everything, including suffering. It will come and we shouldn't think it strange or literally be "surprised or astonished."

- These **trials** (νύρωσις - puros - burning figures drawn from a refiner's fire) will come and we shouldn't be blindsided by them.

2. We are content beyond comprehension (v 13-14)

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. 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.

- Peter, who is backed up by James and Paul in regards to this issue, says here to **rejoice** because it's only to a certain extent or degree

- In the meantime while we wait for Christ's return, we know that we aren't alone in our earthly sufferings but that we **partake** (or share) in **Christ's sufferings**.

- Sharing in the sufferings of Christ is a gift (Phil 1:29). It is a privilege, because it means we have suffered for what is right.

- Peter gives us two words for **joy**...χαίρω - *chairo*, the usual word meaning "to be glad" and ἀγαλλιάω - *agalliao*, which means "overwhelming joy."

- We then see how this animosity is manifested as Peter sums it up in one word: **reproached** (ὀνειδίζω - *onedizo* - to denounce or heap insults upon).

- There's also an earthly benefit of suffering. Peter says **for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you**. There is supernatural relief or power to endure pain or hardship.

- **Rests** implies giving relief, providing refreshment, and intermission from toil. The Spirit, who is God, provides power to overcome anything.

3. We are distinct in conduct and in calling (v 15-16)

But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.

Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

- Peter has referenced conduct in this letter. We know that our conduct is to be honorable (2:12).

- For obvious reasons, we don't make Christ look good when we suffer for doing wrongly. Namely here, as **murderers or thieves** which were offenses punishable by death in ancient culture.

- Peter also throws out the word **evildoer**. This term is an all encompassing term for every crime without exception.

- But then he takes it up a notch and says we can't represent Christ as we should **as a busybody in other people's matters**. This term (allotriepiskopos) represents all sins, not just crimes. Uh oh!

- Knowing what we are NOT called to be, what is it that we ARE called to be **1**. Called to be holy; **2**. Called out of darkness; **3**. Called to suffer patiently; **4**. Called to forgive; **5**. Called to eternal glory

4. We are entrusted in God's care (v 17-19)

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?...Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

- One thing we need to realize is that suffering purifies and refines us as believers. This **judgment** on the **house of God** or the church is not for eternal condemnation but rather temporal reasons.

- Mal 4:1 speaks of the consuming fire (a different type of fire) for unbelievers that relates more to eternal consequence and judgment.

- But in the end, we are still saved. God never will leave us nor forsake us. Nothing will be able to snatch us from His hand. Nothing will separate us from His love.

- As a result of those promises, we can **commit** (παρatiθημι - paratiithemi - deposit for safekeeping) ourselves to Christ, knowing that we are in **God's will** if we suffer for His sake, that this is a **good** thing, to Him who is our **faithful Creator**.