

Talk Sunday 24TH

Read 1 Peter 4 12-14 and 5 6-11

HELLO EVERYONE

Lord God would you fill my mouth as I speak, amen.

Well how incredibly apt is today's reading. When I first read it, I thought there is no need to say anything about it as it says it all but, as I am doing the talk, I delved deeper.

So the reading started in a beautiful way "dear friends" or "beloved". Peter knew what was next, he was going to talk about suffering and felt for his listeners.

1 Peter is an amazing book. We have just studied it at bible club and can be divided into 3 sections. First part is about the living hope we have in Christ, the second section teaches us to submit to God, honour Him and trust Him and third talks about Christ's suffering and our suffering and instructs us on "suffering well"

Suffering well? That's not easy is it?

Are we supposed to say "oooh, yipeee, I am so glad I have the symptoms of coronavirus what a great test that will be. Thank you so much Lord!!??

No I don't think so.

But there ARE four things that can help us "suffer well" and so be good witnesses to our faith.

1. EXPECT IT. The word of God is clear. "in this world you will have trouble". Society would like us to believe that we should strive for and expect hassle free lives and I suppose would all like that,wouldn't we? BUT, as Christians, we are not deluded in this way, we know we live in a fallen world so we should not be surprised or shocked when difficulties come our way. When Peter talks about the fiery trial, he was probably referring to a great fire in Rome that was started and kept going by Emperor Nero who was known to torture and persecute Christians but (as with much of the bible) what Peter says is very relevant, today. We ARE going through a fiery or intense ordeal.
2. Rejoice. God uses all things for good for those who trust Him. Let's remember He has a bigger agenda. That of our eternal glory. That is something keep rejoicing about even when the going gets tough. Let's rejoice that God is in ultimately sovereign and in control.
3. Evaluate. Let us try not to misunderstand where ordeals and suffering comes from. It can be a consequence of us, others or indeed, Nations turning their back on God but also, we can suffer insults because we are Christians and haven't turned our back on

God. Originally the term “Christian” was a derogatory term because it was associated with crucifixion which was the epitome of shame at that time. Even now, in this country, some people will roll their eyes when we profess to be a Christian.

However, it says in our reading God will bless us if we stand firm in our faith and will provide His spirit of glory which will rest on us, if we do. So that’s great, isn’t it?

4. Lastly Entrust ourselves into Gods hands. As our reading tells us “Cast all our anxieties on Him and trust that He will lift us up in due time”. Our word today says “resist the devil “who will try and convince us it is all doom and gloom. Stand firm it says for fellow believers, throughout the world are going through the same trial. (so true for us at this time). Trust that by His grace, after we have suffered a little while, He will restore us and make us strong firm and steadfast.

Well, I wouldn’t mind some of that. Wouldn’t you?

So, a quick recap

Let us suffer well by

Expecting it, not being shocked or surprised, Rejoicing and praising God always, Evaluating and not misunderstanding where it comes from and, above all, trusting God and casting all our anxieties on Him.

Father God Help us to cast all our anxieties on you because you care for us. Help us to trust you through this fiery ordeal. AMEN.