

# Brynmawr Family Church Sermon

Suffering for Christ (An exposition of 1Peter 4:12 – 19)  
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2009

**1. 'Don't think it strange' (v12)– i.e. be ready, prepared, not caught off guard. But don't look for it – seasons.**

- We will be persecuted (all godly) – 2Tim 3:12  
'Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution'.
- Moving forward, not asleep, apathetic, on missions etc.
- Paul's hardships- 2Cor 11:23–30  
'Are they ministers of Christ – I speak as a fool – I am more, in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils amongst false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness – besides the other things, what comes upon me daily; my deep concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation? If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity.  
**Stoned to death- Acts 14:19-20**  
'Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. However when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.'
- All nations will hate you- Matt 24:9  
'Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake'  
– Antichrist- Rev 13:7–10  
'It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If anyone has an ear, let him hear. He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.'  
– Daniel 7:21–22,25  
'“I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.'  
'He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.'
- Now church persecuted more than any other time.

**2. 'Rejoice' (v13) –**

- Philippians 3:1;4:4 (3 x 'rejoice')  
'Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.'  
'Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!'
- Mat 5:12  
'Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they

- persecuted the prophets who were before you.'
- The joy of the Lord is our strength (they wept when Ezra read the law, but were commanded to rejoice due to the significance of the day- it should be the same when we suffer for Christ)- Neh 8:10  
'Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."
- Apostles beaten but rejoiced worthy to suffer. Acts 5:40–42  
'And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.'
- Col 1:2–4  
'I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church'
- Acts 16:23-26- Philippians – Jail – praying – midnight - + singing hymns in stocks – earthquake  
'And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed'
- Paul speaks to the Church that was born through this incident of suffering and encourages them that suffering for Christ is a gift- Php 1:29  
'For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.'
- Therefore we are to see suffering for Christ as a gift of grace also.

### 3. We 'partake in Christ's Suffering' (v13)

- Philippians 3:8–11  
'Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.'
- Col 1:24  
'I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,'
- Rom 8:17  
'and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.'
- The dragon tries to persecute Christ by persecuting His body, the Church- Rev 12:13,17  
'Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child.'  
'And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.'
- If persecute master, then also followers- Mat 10:24-25  
"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the

master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household! "

- We have been baptised into Christ. Baptism is about identification. We identify both with Christ's sufferings and glorification. Rom 6:3-5, 8:16-17  
'Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so, we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, then we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.'  
'The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.'

#### **4. Our reward (v13) 'when his glory is revealed you also may be glad with exceeding joy'**

- Great is our reward in heaven- Matt 5:10-12  
'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in Heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.'
- Those who are wise shall shine- Dan 12:2-3  
'And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars for ever and ever.'
- Our inheritance never perishes or spoils- 1Pe 1:4  
'to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,'
- We are to set our hope fully on the coming grace-1Pe 1:13  
'Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;'
- This life is temporary. Coming glory will far outweigh our suffering- 2Co 4:16-5:8  
'Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.'
- Suffering in this present time is not worth comparing to the coming glory- Rom 8:18  
'For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.'
- Example of Jesus, who endured suffering for the reward- Heb 12:2-3  
'looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand

of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

#### 5. 'Let Him not be ashamed' (v16)

- Christ blasphemed by them but glorified by you. Therefore don't be ashamed.
- Satan aims at chinks in our armour (our imperfections), but does it *because* of the banner we stand under (Christ)
- He is trying to get you to shut your mouth. Therefore don't give up- e.g. evangelism etc. -be bolder like the apostles after persecution- Act 5:42 'and daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.'

#### 6. 'Commit their souls to God' (v19). Our trust must be in God when we suffer.

- Jesus did it when He suffered- Lk 23:46  
'Father into your hands I commit my spirit'.
- Confidence. Not in selves but in God. Paul at one time was burdened beyond measure and above strength, so he despaired, even of life, but still trusted God- 2Co 1:8  
'for we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us, you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.'
- Don't fear when persecuted; this will prove that God is on your side- Php 1:28  
'and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.'
- Jesus kept His mouth shut when He suffered- Is 53:7  
'He was oppressed and he was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth'  
1Pe 2:20-23 'For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps "WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH"; 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;'