Intro: Progressing theme of suffering – walks readers through it

Vs. 12-13 – Do not be surprised: warning readers that they will be persecuted – not if, when

* CH 3: “if” for doing good – here: “when – suffering for nothing other than being Christian
* True Christian, following Christ, suffering is the norm – not exception
* Called to live counter-cultural lives – hallmark of God’s people since he chose Abraham
* When go against the grain, people don’t like it and get mad
  + “old fashioned” – get with the times
  + “Much of what goes on in the world depends on lies, pride, pleasure, and the desire to ‘get more’. A dedicated Christian builds his life on truth, humility, holiness, and the desire to glorify God.”
* When we truly embrace the Gospel, we re-orient our lives & believe/live differently – upsets those around us because it’s different

1 Cor. 1:8 – “For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing”

RC Sproul – “The world is telling the church to conform – they are really seeking approval”

* Can’t conform – that would be easier, we can’t abandon our convictions as some churches have.
* The more you truly live a God-honoring life, the more opposition you will face.
* Scares us – couple tendencies for Christians
  + Separate – only hang out with Christians like them
  + Don’t talk/say anything w/ conviction – blend in
* City on a hill – not meant to blend in

Rejoice when we suffer – even more counter-cultural

* Better identify w/Jesus
* Prelude of the joy that is to come at Christ’s return – Glory revealed

Don’t often connect suffering with glory – Peter does – woven throughout letter

* Strange connection in the Gospel – transforms suffering into glory – Jesus on cross

Vs. 14-16 – Suffering gives us an opportunity to Glorify Jesus’ name

* Stephen (1st martyr)
* Polycarp (2nd cent. Bishop of Smyrna)
  + Arrested for his faith and threatened with death if he did not recant. “Eighty and six years have I served him and He never did me any injury. How can I blaspheme my King and my savior?”
  + “I have respect for your age,” said the Roman officer. “Simply say, ‘away with the atheists!’ and be set free.” – By the atheists he meant the Christians who would not acknowledge that Caesar was lord.
  + The old man pointed to the crowd of Roman pagans surrounding him, and cried, “Away with the atheists!” He was burned at the stake and in his martyrdom brought glory to the name of Jesus Christ
* Careful of why we suffer
  + Dumb decisions – deserve to suffer
  + Peter is talking about being ready to suffer because of the Gospel
    - Encouragement
    - Stories of martyrs are important
* Jesus never promised his followers an easy life – warned of suffering

Vs. 17-18 – Reminder of future judgment – encouragement

* Importance of being on mission
* If God sends a ‘fiery trial’ on his own children, and they are saved ‘with difficulty’, what will happen to lost sinners when God’s fiery judgment falls?
* When a Christian suffers, he knows there will be future glory – not in vain
  + Xian – life is as hard as it gets
  + Non-Xian – as good as it gets
* Times of persecution are opportunities for us to glorify Jesus’ name

Vs. 19 – Secure in God

* Deposit for safekeeping
* Sometimes it is God’s will that we suffer
  + Some churches/theologies will tell you that as long as you’re in the will of God, you will be safe, happy, healthy and wealthy – heresy
  + Our Lord suffered IAW God’s will – greater good
  + You never know if your suffering will be the conduit by which God saves your neighbor

True Xian will suffer – world doesn’t understand why we live/believe

True Xian will use it as an opportunity to bring glory to Jesus’ name

Perpetua and Felicity