

**Canceled**  
**A Roadmap for Living In Exile**  
**1 Peter 4:12-19**  
**How to Experience Victory In Persecution**

**Introduction:** We've talked about mindset on a handful of occasions throughout our study of First Peter. A person's mindset totally determines how they experience life. Even if everything is going well, if you have the wrong mindset, your experience will still be negative.

We've all been there; everything in the world was going great, yet you were still miserable, frustrated, and angry because your mindset reinterpreted everything into something negative. Interestingly, whenever we come out of that mindset we feel like idiots, mostly because we wasted an easy opportunity to experience joy! It's in these instances that we rightly feel foolish because it takes a lot of emotional effort and energy to stay miserable, frustrated and angry when everything around us is going great! Seriously, it's hard work to constantly twist up the facts about your situation to justify your negativity when there's no real reason to be negative.

On the other hand, when life becomes a hurricane, the effort switches. All the negative emotions you feel when your life has become a dumpster fire no longer have to be conjured up, rationalized or enforced; they understandably come totally natural. It's natural to be angry, depressed or frustrated when your life is being tossed around like a piece of paper in a tornado! It's especially hard to experience positive emotions when your life is a mess because of the unjust treatment of others. When you are under attack for no good reason, then there is no need to explain why you feel all kinds of negative emotions.

Now here's where our passage comes in to play. This is not a road map to get people to treat you right, but rather a road map on how to experience victory even if you're standing in a dumpster fire you had nothing to do with creating and don't deserve. Listen to what Peter writes,

**12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. 17 For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" 19 Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. (1 Peter 4:12-19)**

**Proposition: 1 Peter 4:12-19 gives us 5 characteristics of a winning mindset, that is, the kind of mindset that experiences victory in persecution.**

**The first characteristic of a winning mindset is that ...**

**(1) A winning mindset understands persecution should be anticipated if you follow Christ. (4:12)**

**A. 12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.**

**B.** We are going to come back to the first word of this passage when we wrap this thing up, but for now just note that Peter starts this entire conversation with a fact about who they are – BELOVED.

**C.** However, the more important phrase for us to focus our attention on at this time is “fiery trial.” What exactly is Peter talking about?

**1.** Well, Peter doesn’t give us a specific description of what the “fiery trial” is, but the term “fiery” certainly gives us an unmistakable image of its severity. Fiery most certainly implies something that is painful and hard. Therefore, Peter is not talking about the steady drip of the normal day to day types of aggravations and hurdles we experience simply by existing in this life, but rather, those trials that are uniquely harsher, more difficult and more fearful than anything else. The things that are fire to us!

**2.** But there is something more specific here. “Fiery” describes the experience but “trial” defines its purpose. Peter makes it very clear that the trial is meant “to test you”, but why? Real quickly, the Bible speaks of two purposes of trials.

**a.** One purpose of a trial is to prove genuineness, and as such, demonstrate if our faith in Christ is real or not! Earlier in Peter’s letter he wrote,

**1) 6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 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 honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:6-7)**

**2)** Likewise, James wrote,

**3) 12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of**

**life, which God has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)**

b. Another purpose of a “fiery trial” is to strengthen. When you see the word “fiery” associated with “trial,” one can’t miss the image of the refiner’s fire. It is this fire that melts down precious metal to remove impurities and as such, make it more valuable and useful than ever before. Look at God’s Word,

1) **9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Corinthians 12:9)**

2) **2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. (James 1:2-3)**

D. Now we could dig down on that subject for a while, but the purpose of 1 Peter 4:12 is not to discuss the purpose of the fiery trial, but rather our mindset towards the fiery trial! He tells them not to be shocked as if something strange is happening to them, that is, that something is happening to them that doesn’t happen to other believers.

1. Recently I watched a documentary on how African Lions hunt for food. They take down animals massively bigger than themselves in order to feed the entire pride. I even watched one pride successfully kill an elephant! There’s a lot that goes into it, but the most important part is they have to get their prey separated from its herd. No matter if it’s an elephant, a water buffalo or a gazelle, the key is for the lions to get their prey isolated and alone.
2. Why am I bringing that up?
3. “The fiery trial” Peter is speaking of is certainly unique to our experience in that it’s not something we usually find ourselves in, but rather it comes upon us as something new and alien to our life. However, when it does show up in our life it is vital that I don’t buy in to the mindset that nobody else has to deal with it; that somehow its new to humanity; and I’m the only one going through it! It’s vital that I don’t buy into the lie that the circumstances of my life are uniquely more painful and difficult than anybody else’s, and as such, the mountain I’m climbing is uncharted territory!
4. Specifically, Peter is referring to suffering that results from your testimony of faith in Christ, and it is this testimony that Jesus all but guaranteed we would all suffer some sort of persecution! Listen to the words of Christ,

- a. **24 "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. (Matthew 10:24-25)**
  - b. **33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)**
  - c. Later, the apostle John summed it up this way,
  - d. **13 Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. (1 John 3:13)**
5. The Bible is very clear that at some level we will suffer consequences in this world for following Jesus. Some more than others, but all will suffer. In addition, life is hard and brings unearned suffering even when it has nothing to do with loving Jesus! But the moment I start thinking I'm alone in persecution or any kind of unjust treatment, then I'm just like the animal that allows itself to be cut off from its herd when they are attacked by Lions. When I single myself out and believe the lie that I'm the only one who is experiencing whatever the negative things are that I'm experiencing; that somehow, I've been dealt a hand that nobody else ever gets dealt; then I isolate myself for the attack of Satan. Satan wants us to have the mindset that we are alone in suffering so that we will act like we are alone in our suffering! Satan wants us to believe that God is picking on us by treating us differently than everybody else. Satan wants us to be self-absorbed and bitter at God; and what better way to do that than to believe the harsh circumstances of our life are unique to ourselves!
6. Please don't underestimate the power of that lie. Its normal to feel like nobody knows what you're experiencing. Its normal to feel like no one else has ever had to deal with something like you're going through; however, the problem comes whenever you and I start agreeing with that feeling, as in believing that feeling is true! When you and I start believing the lie that nobody else knows what it's like to be in our shoes; that nobody else has been through what we're going through, then we have just set ourselves up for disaster; we have just given Satan our throat!

**The second characteristic of a winning mindset is that ...**

**(2) A winning mindset believes the reward for faithfulness is worth it. (4:13)**

- A. **13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.**
- B. The word “rejoice,” and the word “suffering” don’t naturally go together! Who in their right mind would rejoice about what is fundamentally not rejoiceable – suffering! Suffering, by definition, is the opposite of enjoyment! But nonetheless, Peter is telling them to rejoice in the suffering that is related to Christ.
- C. Now here’s the interesting part, did you catch why? Peter tells them to rejoice, specifically in the suffering that relates to Christ, because if they do, they will be able to rejoice and be glad when He returns. Specifically, they will be able to rejoice and be glad about a specific aspect of His return – His glory! Now what does that mean?
- D. Well, when Christ returns, His power, majesty, authority, righteousness, and holiness will be fully revealed, that is, everything, that makes Him stand out above all the Universe will be clearly seen and fully acknowledged. As such, when the world sees the glory of who He is, every knee will bow and every tongue will confesses that He alone is Lord (Philippians 2:9-11)!
- E. The Glory of who He is, is so incredible, amazing and praiseworthy, that John appealed to us to be sure we live in a way that we are not embarrassed at Christ’s coming. He wrote,
- F. **28 And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. (1 John 2:28)**
- G. John was looking at the glory of His return from the perspective of how not to be ashamed, Peter however is looking at it from the perspective of how to look forward to it! Peter says if you and I have a mindset that continues to joyfully love Jesus, love others, and tell them about Jesus, no matter how much pain they inflict on you for doing so, then you will have every reason to rejoice at the revealing of His Glory, as opposed to being ashamed! Listen to some other passages on this very subject,
1. **16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Romans 8:16-17)**
  2. **8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, 9 for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! 10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may**

**obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. 11 The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; 12 if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; 13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful--for he cannot deny himself. (2 Timothy 2:8-13)**

- H. I don't have time to go into all the details of what's being taught in these passages, but the expectation of Christ's return is that He will rule the earth and as such He will be glorified by all the earth. However, it is also clear that all who suffer with Him, in the sense of laboring with Him in this life, will rule with Him, and thus share in His glory. Therefore, instead of standing in fear of His glory because we are about to be judged for refusing to repent and believe in Him; or standing in shame from His glory because we refused to labor or suffer with Him; we will instead get to share in HIS glory by reigning with Him!
- I. And that's where the rubber hits the road! When you are suffering for the sake of loving and obeying Jesus; whether that's suffering the loss of not fulfilling one of your own desires or suffering persecution from those who hate Jesus; either way, you and I have to believe that suffering for Christ's sake is worth it because what we will get at Christ's return is better than anything we could possibly get from this world!

**The third characteristic of a winning mindset is that ...**

**(3) A winning mindset views persecution as approval. (4:14)**

- A. **14 If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.**
- B. This one should be pretty easy to figure out. You know that feeling you get when somebody recognizes you? As a father I love it when somebody comes up to me and says, "Hey, aren't you Ari, Ada and Remi's dad?" I love it because I love my kids and thus, I'm proud to be identified with them. It's the same thing when somebody comes up to me and says, "Hey, aren't you Keri's husband?" I love my wife and therefore I'm proud to be identified with her. Again, it's the same thing when somebody comes up to me and says, "Hey, aren't you the pastor of Venture Church?" I love the church God has called me to shepherd and therefore I'm proud when somebody identifies me with it!
- C. In the same way, Peter is saying, if people persecute you out of their hatred for Christ and His Gospel, then know it's because they see Christ and His Gospel alive and well in you! "**the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.**"
- D. If you love Jesus, you will be proud when people accuse you of it!

**The fourth characteristic of a winning mindset is that ...**

**(4) A winning mindset refuses to do things that deserve to be punished by society! (4:15)**

- A. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.**
- B.** Now it's interesting that Peter follows murderer, thief, and evildoer with meddler! He just escalated meddler into some vile company! I love what Spurgeon had to say about this,
- C.** **"A curious mixture ... is it not? A murderer is classed with "a meddler." But, really, people of this latter sort are very obnoxious. There are some who seem as if they cannot mind their own business. I have heard that it is for two reasons: first, because they have not any business to mind, and, secondly, they have no mind at all with which to mind their business." (Charles Spurgeon)<sup>1</sup>**
- D.** Meddlers insert themselves into situations they're not wanted. They do this by either literally butting their way into the situation, or indirectly involving themselves in the situation by talking about it (AKA gossiping about it) even though they have nothing to do with it. A meddler moves into situations for their own glory as opposed to the actual benefit of those in the situation. A meddler is typically a control freak who believes they are wiser than others and thus they are justified when they insert themselves into situations where they are not wanted or even needed!
- E.** And here's what's interesting; people respond to a meddler the same way they respond to a murderer, a thief, or an evildoer. They cancel them! They rightly don't allow them to be a part of society anymore. Their suffering is totally justified.
- F.** Therefore, Peter is telling the people in these churches to be sure they don't suffer for doing something that ethically deserves to suffer! Don't give society a truly justifiable reason for canceling you and therefore don't rationalize any of those behaviors in your mind!

**The fifth characteristic of a winning mindset is that ...**

**(5) A winning mindset trusts the justice of God. (4:16-19)**

- A. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.**

---

<sup>1</sup> Spurgeon, C. (2014). [\*Spurgeon Commentary: 1 Peter\*](#). (E. Ritzema & J. Strong, Eds.) (1 Pe 4:15). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

1. I love the contrast here. He begins this part of the passage by telling them to reject any temptation they have for feeling shame in how they are being canceled by family and friends for loving Jesus. Because of their faith in Christ, many were no longer welcomed by some of the people they love. That's significant. It's not only the loss of a relationship you value, but there is also a measure of embarrassment when word gets out that the people you love and want to be loved by, no longer love you.
  2. Being rejected by others is literally being shamed by them, but Peter says don't let it stick. No matter how much you are shamed by others, refuse to accept it; refuse to put it on; refuse to agree with it; but instead, let the fact that Christ claimed you be your glory! You were rejected by family and friends, and as such, you lost the glory of their acceptance; but you were invited to be a child of God, and as such, you have been given a glory greater than any one on this earth could ever give you! Its why Peter wrote this in chapter two,
  3. **9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Peter 2:9-10)**
  4. Peter then applies a different contrast; he writes,
- B. 17 For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"**
1. This contrast is vivid. Peter is saying those of us who are children of God, that is, we are "saved," are only so by His grace! Even though we have committed to follow Jesus, we fail miserably, and as such, stand in constant need of the conviction of the Holy Spirit and even the disciplinary hand of God to right us back to Him! Therefore, it can be said that even the most righteous follower of Christ is still in desperate need of God's Grace; that is the most righteous follower of Christ, by His own actions and merits, stands within a hair's width of the wrath of God!
  2. In 1741 Jonathan Edwards preached what has become one of the most famous sermons in the history of the church. In it he said, **"if God should let you go, you would immediately sink, and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf; and your healthy constitution, and your own care and prudence, and best contrivance, and all your righteousness, would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell,**



**than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock.” (Jonathan Edwards)<sup>2</sup>**

3. The point I’m making is that if you and I who are saved, stand so closely to the eternal damnation of God; and, furthermore, if you and I who are eternally loved children of God are disciplined by God, how much more will those who reject Christ and persecute His church be held accountable! Listen to God’s Word,

4. **5 This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering-- 6 since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels 8 in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, 10 when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. (2 Thessalonians 1:5-10)**

5. So, what practical purpose does this truth do for me now? This is all about what Christ is going to do in the future. Well, Peter writes,

**C. 19 Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.**

1. Peter says, entrust yourself and justice to your Creator. Don’t look for the government, the church or even yourself as the answer, but rather go straight to the one who uses earth as His footstool!

2. And listen, entrusting yourself to Him is not telling Him what He needs to do for you to trust Him, but rather surrendering your life and future to Him because you do trust Him!

3. So, even if you are suffering now; and even if it’s terrible and unjust suffering (a fiery trial!), you need to trust that the justice of God will not be avoided! Just as you trust God’s Word that says Christ’s death justly satisfies His wrath on our sin, you need to trust God’s Word that clearly teaches He will bring justice on all who persecute His church and He will glorify all those who suffer with Him! You need to let Him handle it, and as such stay focused on the task He has commissioned us with accomplishing. He will deal with the injustice of how His church was treated, and He will deal with it in a way

---

<sup>2</sup> [http://instruct.westvalley.edu/kelly/History17a\\_on\\_campus/Readings/Edwards.htm](http://instruct.westvalley.edu/kelly/History17a_on_campus/Readings/Edwards.htm)

that is incomparable to anything you and I could do, therefore, we need not MEDDLE in what Christ alone can fully and justly do Himself, and instead stay focused on what He has actually invited us to do with Him! Love and obey God, love one another, and tell others about Jesus!

4. In addition, you and I have no idea if the person persecuting us is eventually going to repent, believe and be saved by the same measure of Grace that rescued us from the wrath of God! It was the work of Christ to unjustly suffer to save sinners, therefore, as you and I unjustly suffer for loving Christ and others as He loves us; as we unjustly suffer for living the moral lives Christ told us to live; as we unjustly suffer for humbly sharing the story of Jesus with others; we need to know that we are suffering for the same reason Christ suffered; we need to know that we are suffering with HIM and for HIM and thus impacting others in the same type of way His suffering IMPACTED US!!
5. When we suffer with Him, our suffering says the glory we get from God for being faithful to God is eternally better than any glory we can get on this earth, and thus, as we do that it, heads turn to try and understand the glory that drives us! When people see us with joy in any suffering, but especially in persecution, they have good reason to believe the Gospel of Christ is true, and thus, good reason to repent and follow Him. Heads are turned when people see the church continuing to do good for others even as they are persecuted by those they are doing the good for (once again, doing exactly what Christ did for us!).
6. So listen, putting this together, if our suffering with Christ advances the work of Christ to others; if we are going to be rewarded with His glory for suffering with Him and His work; AND finally, if Christ is going to hold all accountable who in causing that suffering refused to repent and believe in the one we were willing to suffer for; then we have no reason whatsoever to not entrust our current and future status to Him. No matter what happens in my life, He's got this!

**But here's the key for all this to happen; and it takes us back to the very first word of this passage.**

**Challenge: Do you believe you are "beloved"? - "12 Beloved, do not be surprised ..."**

It's not just persecution that can leave us feeling that we are not loved, but life itself. Life mocks us, it spits at us, it attacks us!! From every side, life will tempt you to walk away from loving God, and loving others, and living faithfully to the Lord. Therefore, at the core, the most important thing is to never stop believing that you are loved by the Creator of the universe, and if loved by Him, you have no reason to fear!! Its why the most important thing we could ever know, believe, and constantly strive to know more is His LOVE for us!

Its why Paul prayed this for the Church in Ephesus,

**14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith--that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**  
(Ephesians 3:14-19)