

LORD, WHY ME?

I PETER 4:12-16

Introduction:

- A. Most of the time we react predictably when we find ourselves faced with suffering.
 - 1. First, we question God, Why me?
 - 2. Why not you? If God needs those who suffer, why not you?
 - 3. Second, we act as though God has stabbed us in the back.
 - 4. The easy way out. (clipping)

CERTIFICATE OF MARTYRDOM

Long-suffering saints may at last claim recognition.

If they have had three tragic events in their life, they're eligible for a "Certificate of Martyrdom" from the Church of World Peace in Denver, Colorado.

The martyrdom certificate contains these words: "The suffering you have had to endure at the hands of life has been almost more than any one person can bear. Rarely has such a noble soul been forced to put up with such undeserved agony. In recognition of your extraordinary plight, the Church of World Peace hereby awards this Certificate of Martyrdom. Your name shall remain in the Church Archives in perpetuity."

Yes, there is a \$5 fee. One wonders whether parting with the sum will qualify as one of the tragic events -- or only mark one as the proverbial fool soon parted from his money.

- B. Peter teaches these readers to take such suffering that comes from the conviction we possess in stride. v12
 - 1. strange = novel, astonishing.
 - 2. "brethren, do not be astonished that a test of fire is being applied to you."
 - 3. "as though this was some abnormal experience."

I. THE TRUE ATTITUDE TOWARD SUFFERING. V13,14

- A. It is a way of being Christ like.
 - 1. "you are sharing what Christ suffered; so rejoice in it."
 - 2. What would a non-suffering Jesus have been?
 - a. Heb. 2:17-18.
- B. It prepares us for Christ's coming.
 - 1. "that when the times comes for the manifestation of His glory, you may be triumphantly happy."
 - 2. What can be said by the child of God who has lived so neutrally as to be untouched by suffering?

- C. It brings true happiness to God's people. v15
 - 1. "If you are suffering abuse because you bear the name of Christ" count yourselves blessed.
 - a. Sounds totally impossible.
 - b. think of the martyr dying and a traitor dying.
 - 2. "because the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth upon you."
 - a. There is the spirit of the world and sin.
 - b. Let His Spirit rest upon us!

II. NOT ALL SUFFERING IS CAUSED BY BEING CHRISTIAN! V15

- A. Criminals suffer also.
 - 1. murderer = slayer of others, a life-taker.
 - 2. thief = one who steal by fraud or in secret.
 - 3. evildoer = a doer of evil things.
 - 4. busybody = an inspector or observer of other peoples affairs, prying into the affairs of others.
 - a. Aunt Bess.
- B. We should shun evil and mind our own business.
 - 1. When do you get into trouble? When you do wrong!
 - 2. Mind your own business!

III. HOWEVER, IF YOU SUFFER AS A CHRISTIAN, DON'T BE ASHAMED.

- A. ashamed = to have the feeling which comes from doing a dishonourable deed, feeling shame.
 - 1. Don't be laden with guilt because you take your stand for right and you are made to suffer for it.
 - 2. "but let Him glorify God on this behalf."
- B. Remember, "suffer as a Christian."
 - 1. Not an evil doer.