



river west church

Suffering, Trust and Doing Good

1 Peter 4:12-19

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Here is the harsh reality: everyone suffers. There are no exceptions. Human experience has confirmed this truth billions of times over, every year, for thousands of years. Even so, oddly, we are still surprised when suffering comes to our door.

Maybe this is denial - an elaborate defense mechanism of the human psyche. Maybe this is how we cope.

For Christians, the experience of suffering is especially complicated. This is because our faith in Christ has ignited our hearts and minds with a dazzling view of God. God is good; God is love; God is indefinitely powerful. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of sin. He knows us, walks with us, and answers prayer. But how can we reconcile these truths with our experience of personal suffering? What should we think about God? What should we think about ourselves? Why does God allow suffering? Why does God allow Christians to suffer? Or DOES He? Is suffering simply the result of personal sin, or a lack of true faith? What's going on here?

When Peter wrote his first letter, he wrote to Christians who desperately needed answers to these questions. We need answers too. As Christians, we need a "theology" of suffering.

1 Peter 4:12-19 gives us a lot to build on as we tackle this issue. Today we will pay special attention to verse 12, where we are told not to be "surprised by suffering", and verse 19, where we are told to entrust our lives to God while continuing to "do good" - no matter what!