

## Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map

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1 Peter 4:12-19

September 11, 2016

### Blessed are those prepared for fiery trials with rejoicing.

How would you prepare for persecution? Plan your survival bunker - equipped with food, water, tools, generator, and ammunition? Read up on the horrors of the persecution of Christians in the early church, 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> Century? Or let Peter equip you with these words - with Jesus' words?

### Blessed are those prepared for fiery trials with rejoicing.

#### ❖ *Rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ*

- ***It is finished!*** makes it clear - not participating in payment for sins!
- It all becomes clear when you **clearly understand Jesus' mission.**
  - ♦ Jesus came to rescue people from sin! **Consequence** and **captivity.**
  - ♦ God wants to be our Lord/Master. Sin is the master/lord of sinners.
    - Jesus' death on the cross paid for all sin - freeing us from sin's claim
    - The good news: Guilt paid - sins forgiven - new life in Jesus - breaks into the heart of sinners, ends its reign - enter God's kingdom/reign
    - Faith in Christ gives birth to a new person - new purpose/perspective
    - Where Christ reigns - we grow Christ-like in views, hopes, living
  - ♦ The more we are like Christ, the more his enemies treat us like Christ
    - Jesus was despised by those who saw him and his teachings to be a threat to their beliefs, way of life, culture, mindset, and power
    - <sup>19</sup> ***This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.***
    - <sup>20</sup> ***Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.*** John 3
    - People living in darkness seek to hide or put out Christ's light.
- ♦ Every Child of Light should expect this and not be surprised.
- That's where the rejoicing comes in!
  - ♦ Persecution comes when the Light is shining through you.
  - ♦ This confirms the Spirit is working in & through you - you're in Christ!
  - ♦ ***Fiery trial*** = God is testing you to purify, strengthen, mature you.
  - ♦ <sup>8</sup> ***Though He was God's Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered. <sup>9</sup> After He was perfected (mature/fully complete), He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him,...*** Hebrews 5 HCSB
  - ♦ We don't rejoice because we look to suffer. We rejoice because when the heat is turned up on us because we are in Christ - the proof is in. We belong to God, his glory is ours - the place of no suffering and full life!

#### ❖ Prepared for fiery trials through the Word of Christ.

- The fact - Jesus prepared his disciples from the start - it's no surprise!
  - ♦ <sup>11</sup> ***"You are blessed when they insult and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of Me. <sup>12</sup> Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*** Matthew 5
  - ♦ ***"If anyone wants to be My follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. <sup>35</sup> For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of Me and the gospel will save it.*** Mk 8
- God's word prepares us to be a target for some - a blessing/draw to others
  - ♦ Liberated from sinful thinking and sinful pleasure - we stand out
  - ♦ Opening our eyes to the Light of Christ, hope, peace, joy, love, life....
  - ♦ It's a living and active word - working resurrection in us.
  - ♦ *Aroma of death to the perishing, of life to those being saved* 2 Cor 2:16
- Let Jesus prepare you for trials - training you to rejoice:
  - ♦ Know the word! Study together. Study personally.
  - ♦ Worship: hear and put it on your lips, tongue - train to rejoice!
  - ♦ Don't run the race alone. Community of faithful, Pastor partner
  - ♦ Train together to commit ourselves to our Creator - confident of his saving care - keep on living Christ-like together.

15 years ago none of us were prepared for the attack on our nation with 4 of our own commercial airplanes. If we would have listened to Bin Laden's *words of hatred and death* we wouldn't have been surprised. It taught us to listen and prepare.

But in a different and better way Jesus' *words of life* - words that free us from hatred and hell - equip us to live a life rejoicing - even prepare us for the fiery trials God's enemies will hurl at us. *Blessed are those who hear Jesus' words and put them into practice.* Clearly

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