

1 Peter 2:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

Analysis

Peter distinguishes between deserved and undeserved suffering. "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently?" (poion gar kleos ei hamartanontes kai kolaphizomenoi hypomeneite). No credit for patiently enduring punishment you deserved. "But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God" (all' ei agathopoiountes kai paschontes hypomeneite, touto charis para theō). Undeserved suffering, patiently borne, finds divine approval. The key: suffering must be "when ye do well" (agathopoiountes)—for righteousness, not foolishness or sin. Suffering for Christ's sake brings divine commendation; suffering for stupidity brings no reward.

Historical Context

Peter guards against misunderstanding: not all suffering is virtuous. Criminals punished for crimes gain no spiritual credit by accepting sentence patiently. Only suffering for doing good—obeying God, maintaining integrity, refusing to compromise faith—merits divine approval. This distinction prevented Christians from embracing suffering masochistically or equating all hardship with persecution. Early church recognized difference between suffering for Christ (blessing) and suffering for foolishness (discipline). Martyrs were honored because they died for faith, not because they sought death recklessly.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How can you distinguish between suffering for righteousness (which God commands) and suffering due to your own sin or foolishness?
2. What does it mean practically to 'do well' and suffer for it, rather than suffering deserved consequences?

Interlinear Text

ποῖον γὰρ κλέος εἰ ἀμαρτάνοντες καὶ κολαφιζόμενοι
what For glory if for your faults and ye be buffeted
G4169 G1063 G2811 G1487 G264 G2532 G2852

ὑπομενεῖτε ἀλλ' εἰ ἀγαθοποιοῦντες καὶ πάσχοντες
for it ye take it patiently but if when ye do well and suffer
G5278 G235 G1487 G15 G2532 G3958

ὑπομενεῖτε τοῦτο χάρις παρὰ θεῷ
for it ye take it patiently this is acceptable with God
G5278 G5124 G5485 G3844 G2316

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 2:19 (References God): For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

Matthew 5:47 (Parallel theme): And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

Luke 6:32 (Parallel theme): For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

1 Peter 3:14 (Parallel theme): But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

1 Peter 3:17 (References God): For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

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