

HOW TO STAY COOL WHEN THE HEAT'S ON

1 Peter 1:13

Struggle over title. It seems more appropriate to talk about
"How to stay warm when it's cold outside."

Peter writes to suffering saints.

Seeks to encourage us by pointing out what God's done for us.

In Christ we have a living hope; an incorruptible inheritance.

What we have in Him can never be taken away from us.

It's kept for us in heaven—by God Himself!

We don't have to worry about losing it! No one can snatch us out of His hand!

That living hope ought to produce practical change in our life.

That transformation affects both attitudes and lifestyle.

Peter deals first in 1:13 with our attitude:

A proper attitude in the midst of suffering.

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to live in a totalitarian regime, where all your actions and even your thoughts are controlled?

Have you wondered what it would be like as a slave, controlled by a master?

That's what these brethren are going through.

Ben Patterson helps put our suffering into perspective, when we compare it to theirs. He lists what *our* "suffering" looks like. We need God's grace even in our minor sufferings. He says: "let me tell you a few of my recurring irritants:

- Climbing into shower, getting all wet, only to discover the shampoo is gone.
- Being 8th in line in supermarket check-out stand, listening to person up front carry on a leisurely conversation with the checker.
- Toothpaste tubes squeezed from the middle.

Some go through real suffering, perhaps now, through painful experiences.

Peter doesn't take them lightly. He knows what it's like.

Peter writes to **saints suffering because of their faith.**

Those suffering need encouragement.

He brings 2 key words together: "*suffer*" and "*glory*".

Shows relationship between present suffering and future glory

GOD USES SUFFERING TO PREPARE US FOR GLORY.

God will be glorified and we'll participate in His victory.

**HOPE ENABLES US TO BE VICTORIOUS IN SUFFERING
1:3-2:10**

Presentation of our future hope 1:3-5

While most despair in face of such affliction, God's children have cause to rejoice. We have a living hope. 1:3

Our hope *lives*; it's based on Christ's *completed* work, NOT our own.

It's ***guaranteed*** by the resurrection of Christ.

It promises an inheritance which can't be damaged or taken away. 1:4-5

Purpose of present suffering 1:6-9

We rejoice while suffering because we understand purpose for suffering.

Suffering proves reality of our faith and produces praise to God.

Problem of past prophets 1:10-12

Prophets never understood suffering to obtain glory, especially for Messiah.

PRACTICE OF OUR HOPE 1:13-2:10

What *practical* results should our hope produce in times of suffering?

Since we've been chosen by God as set apart, cleansed people... **1:2**

Since we have a living hope because of Christ's work for us ...

1:3

Since we have an incorruptible inheritance in Him ... 1:4

Since we're protected by God's power ... 1:5

Spurgeon (*another sermon I wish I had preached*):

"God Himself surrounds you as with a wall of fire.

Until omnipotence can be vanquished, until immutability can be changed ...

until the immortal God can die ...

... not one of His chosen people shall be destroyed.

"Kept by the power of God," what power can destroy us? . . .

"Kept by the power of God," shall I tremble?

If the power of God keeps me, shall I "reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man?"

If the power of God keeps me, shall I be hopeless?

Shall I speak like one that has no hereafter to rejoice in?

It cannot be so: If God doth keep us we will keep our hope even to the end.

Since suffering leads to glory, (1:6-9)

Since all these things are true, we ought not let suffering get us down. God has given us too much in Christ, for this momentary, temporary, bit of suffering we're going through to get the best of us.

God has a plan. He's in charge.

God won't fail us, so we must examine our attitude and walk by faith in Him! "TRUST ME!", He says.

PROPER ATTITUDES 1:13

WE OUGHT TO DEMONSTRATE THE HOPE GOD HAS GIVEN US BY PROPER ATTITUDES IN SUFFERING

Only one command here: "**FIX YOUR HOPE TOTALLY ON THE BLESSINGS THAT ARE TO BE OURS AT THE LORD'S RETURN.**"

This is the opposite of our natural response:

We want to fight back. We want to work it out ourselves.
That's because we see things from a *man-centered* perspective.

God says, "Trust ME!" This is for your good.

"You'll never understand what I'm doing now."

"Based on my promises, expect me to do great things for you;
live now in the light of that hope."

First attitude: WE SHOULD BE READY FOR ACTION

1:13a *"Therefore [based on our living hope...], Prepare your minds for action."*

Previous to hope (at least logically) we're to prepare our minds for action.

Preliminary to other two attitude steps:

"Having girded up the loins of your mind for action"

(After you've done that, *then, while continuing to be spiritually alert* (pres. ptcp.), expect eagerly)

Men wore long flowing robes which hindered fast progress or physical activity. Around waist they wore a broad belt or "girdle." When physical activity was necessary, they would bend over, pull up their tunic from the back hem, bring it up between their legs and tuck it under their belt in front.

All obstacles should be removed from our minds, as the soldier tied his tunic up with his belt so it wouldn't hinder him in battle, or worker would bind it up so it didn't interfere with work.

Like **warning** issued to people who work around machinery not to wear long sleeves, or at least ensure they're kept out of the way—roll up your sleeves, or take off your jacket, before going to work.

We're to "roll up the sleeves" of our minds.

We're to prepare our minds for what we're about to go through.

Calvin: "Peter intimates that our minds are entangled by passing cares of the world and by vain desires, so that they rise not upward to God."

We must learn to disentangle ourselves from the world;
gird up our minds so we don't get entangled by it.

We're to be ready to watch God work; prepared to obey Him.

"Garbage in; garbage out."

If we fill our minds with man-centered thoughts and self-pity,
that's all we'll have to face coming conflicts.

If we prepare ourselves by focusing on God's point of view,
man-centered perspective will be "tucked away," unhindered,
out of view.

If we prepare our minds for battle in prayer,
we'll be ready to deal with things that come up.

Spurgeon: "It seems to me that there never was text more appropriate for any day than this one. It begins with *"girding up the loins of your mind."* These are days of great looseness; everywhere I see great laxity of doctrinal belief, and gross carelessness in religious practice. Christian people are doing what their forefathers would have loathed. Multitudes of professors are little different from worldlings. Men's religion seems to hang loosely about them, as if it did not fit them: the wonder is that it does not drop from them. Men are so little braced up as to conscientious conviction and vigorous resolve, that they easily go to pieces if assailed by error or temptation... *"Gird up the loins of your mind,"* brace yourselves up; pull yourselves together; be firm, consistent, determined."

Second attitude: WE SHOULD BE SOBER 1:13b

"Be self-controlled"

Literally refers to abstinence from wine or strong drink.

Barclay: "They must become intoxicated neither with intoxicating liquor nor with intoxicating thoughts; they must preserve a

balanced judgment. It's easy to be carried away with the next sudden enthusiasm; to become intoxicated with the latest fashion and the newest craze. Peter is appealing to them to maintain the essential steadiness of the man who knows what he believes."

Grudem: "...forbids any kind of mental 'addiction which inhibits spiritual alertness, or any laziness of mind which lulls Christians into sin ... Christians can lose their spiritual concentration through 'mental intoxication' with the things of this world ... We might well consider dangers of such inherently 'good' things as career, possessions, recreation, reputation, friendships, scholarships, or authority."

Spurgeon: "These are equally days in which it is necessary to say *"be sober."* We are always having some new fad or another brought out to infatuate the unstable.... It cannot be wise to stagger all over the road in this fashion."

"To be sober means to have a calm, clear head, to judge things after the rule of right, and not according to the rule of the mob. Be not influenced by those who cry loudest in the street, or by those who beat the biggest drum."

We must preserve a sound, balanced judgment.

3rd attitude: WE SHOULD FIX OUR HOPE ON GOD'S GRACE 1:13c

"Set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed."

Many things are happening in our world that could give us cause for fear.

God's children should be set apart by our trust in God.
We're to make a definitive, one-time commitment, to hope.

*"Fix your hope completely on the grace
to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed."*

Have an expectant attitude, consciously concentrating on God's grace and on Christ's coming, rather than on our present sufferings.

Grudem: This is more than a "wish for it" or "dream about it" kind of hope. It conveys sense of strong expectation, strong enough to *act* on the basis of it.

We're to be characterized by hope.

I hear many who are negative, pessimistic, judgmental, fatalistic.

—An inappropriate response for people expecting the Lord's return! We ought to have an *optimistic* mind set.

Barclay: "It is the great characteristic of the Christian that he lives in hope; because he lives in hope he can endure the trials of the present. Anyone can endure struggle and effort, if he is certain that it's all leading somewhere. *That's why the athlete accepts his training and the student his study.*"

Ben Patterson: *"When we're suffering, often our first response is anger, fear or bitterness. Devastated by a series of personal crises, **Sean Coxe** spent his last \$300 to visit his father in Florida. Feeling helpless and alone, he wanted to be with the man who had so often put life's disasters in perspective when he was a child. Perhaps he could now. On the last evening, the 2 men stood at the end of a jetty and watched the sun set ... Coxe was seething with bitterness. He said, 'You know, Dad, if we could take all the great moments in our life and put them back-to-back, they wouldn't last 20 minutes.' Keeping his eyes fixed on the setting sun, his dad responded, 'Yup.'" Stunned, Coxe turned to him. His father looked steadily into his eyes and added softly, '**Precious, aren't they?**'"* With that perspective we can express gratitude even from the depths of sorrow.

Cedar: "Hope is a uniquely Christian word. It had little meaning except for wishful thinking until the resurrection of Christ. Through faith in Him we have a living hope. Victory is assured!" Therefore, we anxiously await His appearance.

Whatever we may be going through, He's coming again.

He'll right all wrongs. Our faithfulness will be amply repaid by the just Judge

... But let your hope be all in grace.

Do not hope in yourself or in your works....

He will never deal with you upon the ground of merit; that door is shut;

He has begun with you in grace, and He will go on with you in grace."

Therefore, we can hang in there!

This isn't an empty, false hope.

It is a sure hope because it is based on His appearance, which is sure.

Cedar: "Life with Christ is an endless hope, without Him a hopeless end."

These 3 attitudes deliver us from despair in affliction.

Suffering is the road to glory; to prepare us for even greater glory.

Application – THREE DANGERS WHEN THE HEAT'S ON

1. **Danger of becoming enmeshed in affairs of this world.**

2. **Danger of losing our heads;** caught up in faddish doctrines or ideas.

3. **Danger of giving up in despair.**

For all of these Peter says "**Keep your head screwed on straight.**"

Sign: *"If you can keep a level head in all this confusion, you just don't understand the situation!"*

That's not Peter's answer. He tells us how to keep a level head – How to keep our head screwed on straight:

1. **"Roll up your sleeves!"**

Prepare your mind to face whatever God may bring your way.

2. **"Plant your feet on solid ground!"**

Don't get infatuated with trendy idea. Get solid foundation in God's Word

3. **"Never give up!"**

Keep your eyes focused on God; wait for the coming of His Son, whose coming will bring along all the benefits we've been waiting for.

Spurgeon's conclusion: "I should like you to act as an American—Colonel Davenport—did on a certain occasion. One day, a thick darkness came over the United States. Now and then in London we have dreadfully dark days for which we can scarcely account, but this was quite an experience for the New Englanders, and caused a terrible sensation. So exceedingly black was it that the barn-door fowls went to roost in the middle of the day. The darkness grew worse, and the people trembled in their houses, declaring that the end of the world was coming. They were all excited and alarmed. One of the houses of the legislature was adjourned under the belief that the Day of Judgment was come. The other house was sitting and the blackness was so intense that everybody was awed. A motion was made that they should break up as the end of the world had certainly arrived. Davenport objected, saying, 'Judgment is either approaching, or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for adjourning; if it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I wish, therefore, that candles be brought.' Brethren, **it is dark**; but whatever is going to happen, or whatever is not going to happen, let us be found girded, sober, and hopeful. In these dark political times, these dark religious times, **I call for candles; for we mean to go on working. Amen.**"

HOW SHOULD WE ACT

WHEN THE HEAT'S ON GOD'S PEOPLE TODAY?

Times are dark! I call for candles!

Having prepared your minds for action,

*while maintaining sound, balanced judgment,
fix your hope totally on the grace Jesus will bring when He
comes again!*