

CHARLES WESLEY

Majestic (Not fast)

1. And can it be that I should gain An in - t'rest in the
 2. He left His Fa - ther's throne a - bove, So free, so in - fi -
 3. No con-dem-na - tion now I dread, I am my Lord's and

Sav - iour's blood? Died He for me, who caused His pain? For me, who
 nite His grace! Emp - tied Him - self of all but love, And bled for
 He is mine; A - live in Him, my liv - ing Head, And clothed in

CHORUS

Him to death pur - sued?
 A - dam's help - less race? A - maz - ing love! How can it be
 right - eous - ness di - vine.

That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me? A - maz - ing love! How
 A - maz - ing love!

rit.
 can it be That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
 How can it be That Thou, my God,

CCF Study Notes
 Tuesday 7 AM Study
 5 December 2006
 1 Peter 4

Before beginning to read from 1 Peter, let us spend time in prayer, considering how we ought to live in these trying times. Let us ask God to help us do the following:

1. **Live** for God and not for the lusts of men,
2. **Remember** that we are not what we once were,
3. **Keep** us from giving way to peer pressure,
4. **Warn** worldly people that they will be required to account for their lives,
5. **Make us watchful**, prayerful, loving, hospitable, sharing God's gifts,
6. Help us to **rejoice** in partaking of Christ's sufferings, and
7. **Judge and discipline** us as His own household.

We have looked first at the teaching concerning who we are and where we are headed. Then we saw the implications for how we are to act within the various relationships of life – to authorities, masters, spouses, brethren, and outsiders. Now we turn our gaze inward, to our attitudes in suffering and serving and our thinking concerning suffering and discipline.

(4:1-2) Chapter three ended with a discourse on the importance of Christ's suffering, that it was vital to the ministry He performed. We are reminded that He suffered for us in the flesh. He knew pain and suffering and want and need, just as we know these things. Jesus embraced all of these as a part of His work on earth, His obedience to the Father. Peter applies these ideas by calling us to have the same attitude toward suffering. Our suffering is not a sign of failure, nor a sign that God somehow despises us. Suffering for righteousness is a badge of honor that shows we belong to God. Rather than turning to sin because we are punished for righteousness, we need to turn from sin because we have been honored to share in Christ's sufferings. What an honor! Because we are God's children and are privileged to share in His sufferings we must no longer live for the lusts of men. We are not to be driven by the desire to make our mark on the world. The will of God is to be our guide – even if God's will brings suffering to our lives as it did for Jesus.

(4:3) We once were those who “went with the flow.” Our lifetime was spent in worldly ways, doing the “will of the Gentiles,” following the crowds. What exactly are these worldly ways? Lewdness degrades our bodies, and sometimes comes when persecution makes us feel dirty. Revelries are an attempt to escape reality by drowning our pain in pleasure. Lusts can entrap those who feel they have lost everything. Drunkenness focusses on dulling the pain by dulling the mind and removing inhibitions. Revelries use brief excesses of pleasure to dull pain. Drinking parties seek an earthly fellowship based on sensual pleasure and lowered inhibitions – sometimes in response to the isolation that accompanies persecution. Idolatry is something people engage in when they feel that God is far off – as when people blame God for suffering or conclude that God hates them. Wrong attitudes toward suffering often take us back into sinful behaviors we have grown out of.

(4:4) The world cannot comprehend why we no longer join with them in the things they enjoy most. They have never known fellowship with God or with His people and cannot fathom the depth of love between Christians. All the unbeliever knows is that we are no longer running with their crowd. We don't waste our lives and wealth and bodies as they do. We are outsiders. We are different from them. We are perceived as a threat because our righteousness makes them feel guilty. So they speak evil of us. As we understand what is happening we can have a right attitude toward unbelievers. We can respond in right ways to suffering.

(4:5-6) We could respond with vengeance toward those who persecute us. That is not what Jesus did. We must do what Jesus did. Jesus warned those who persecuted Him that they would one day be called to account for their actions. Jesus spoke often of judgment and of hell. Jesus did this to warn them. Jesus knew that the day would come when He would judge the living and the dead. When we were dead in our sins the gospel was preached to us, that we might die to sin and live for God by the Holy Spirit. This is the essence of a right attitude toward suffering: we suffer because we have died to sin and are to respond as those who are alive in the Spirit. Our temptation is to respond in kind.

(4:7-11) Our personal lives should demonstrate this new life all the more since the end of all things is near. Prayer is a serious business, a means by which we watch for and avoid traps. The focus is on our attitude in prayer. Fervent love for one another is to be our top priority in life. This love is to

recognize, yet cover the sins of others. We are to be interceding for those who have fallen into sin. Our attitude in loving each other is not to be harsh and judgmental, but compassionate. Gifts are given so that we can serve each other. We are to have the attitude of a steward, who strives to make the most of everything for the benefit of his master. Those who have the speaking gifts should bring God's word, not their own ideas. Those who serve should serve in God's strength lest they become tired or frustrated. The bottom line is that everything we do should be done for God's glory and not our own. For Jesus Christ is to be glorified in all things since to Him belong glory and dominion forever. So be it! When considering dominion theology, which suggests that we need to take worldly dominion as Christians. The glory and dominion belongs to Christ. This is the attitude which is to underlie all of our behavior.

(4:12-16) Having dealt with our attitudes we turn to our thinking about trials. We are not to think these things odd, but are to rejoice over them. How can we rejoice over suffering? The answer is that we can rejoice that we are permitted to partake of Christ's suffering, suffering for His name's sake. We know that such suffering has eternal rejoicing as its reward – even as it did for Christ. When we use the name of Jesus we often suffer reproach. The name of Jesus is not socially acceptable. Yet such reproach is turned into blessing when the Spirit of God rests upon us. Our ministry is to glorify Christ. Their work is to blaspheme Christ. But we must be careful. When we suffer for our own sins we bring no glory to Christ. Sometimes we fall into the trap of thinking that the end justifies the means. Then we suffer justly and bring shame to the name of Jesus.

(4:17-19) God disciplines His children. We need to understand and accept that discipline as well. There is nothing shameful about it. When we suffer discipline at God's hand we are being treated as His children. If we suffer discipline from a loving Father, imagine how they will suffer under God's wrath, who have rejected God's grace and crucified His Son again. And so we reach the summary of things: When we suffer according to God's will we are to entrust our souls to God. Why? We trust God because He is our faithful Creator and Father.

P.S. Recordings and notes for these studies are available at <http://www.jstoker.name>. A podcast is available at <http://feeds.feedburner.com/CCF-T-Podcast>.

