

ALIENATED

THE GOSPEL IN A POST-CHRISTIAN WORLD



Scripture

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. ¹⁷ For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ And

*“If the righteous is scarcely saved,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”*

¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. (1 Peter 4:12-19 ESV)

Outline

Big Idea: Rejoice in the testing of your faith

Point 1. Being known as a Christian is not a bad thing

Point 2. God judges Christians first, so be sure of the faith you hold

Point 3. God allows us to suffer to strengthen our faith

Discussion Questions

Icebreaker: How have you experienced opposition or hardship for your Christian faith this past week? What did you do in that situation or circumstance?

Point 1: Being known as a Christian is not a bad thing

- How does verse 12 challenge the idea that being persecuted for one's faith is a negative experience? What are some potential benefits of being known as a Christian in a hostile environment?
- How can we maintain our joy and peace in the face of persecution or opposition? What are some practical strategies for finding strength and encouragement during difficult times?
- How can we view persecution or hardship as an opportunity to witness to others about our faith?

Point 2: God judges Christians first, so be sure of the faith you hold

- Verse 16 says, "Let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good." How can we find strength and hope in suffering?
- Verse 17 says, "It is time for judgment to begin with the household of God." What does this mean, and why is it important for Christians to examine their own faith critically?

Point 3: God allows us to suffer to strengthen our faith

- In the midst of suffering, how can you practically live out verse 19? What do you need to remember or do to live this out?
- What does it mean to "suffer according to God's will"? How can we discern whether our suffering is aligned with God's purpose?

Application Questions:

- What can we do to prepare ourselves mentally and emotionally for potential challenges we may face as Christians?
- Is there something this week you are walking through—hardship, suffering, persecution—where we can walk with you through it? How can we pray for you or encourage you?

Your Prayer

Write out a three-sentence prayer based off this passage.