

The Forge of Fiery Trials

1 Peter 4

Foreword

Furnaces and forges are complete opposites. Furnaces burn and consume, forges soften, reshape, and purge.

Satan, like king Nebuchadnezzar with Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, would throw every child of God into a furnace to burn and destroy them if he could; but God will not permit it.

From Daniel 3, king Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace and declared he saw Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego unharmed, and a fourth person that looked like the Son of God. From this we can say that if God does allow Satan to cast us into a furnace, Jesus will be there with us, keeping us until we are delivered, either back to this life or into eternal life.

Peter encouraged first-century Christians as they endured persecution from both Jews and Romans. His words are so relevant to Christians in America, and around the world today.

The Mindset & Model of Christ Handling Suffering - 1 Peter 4:1-6

1. The forge affects us physically.
2. The forge purges our desire to sin.
3. The forge reshapes us into a person the world doesn't like.
4. The forge reshapes us to live according to God's principles.

The Method of Christians Coping with Persecution - 1 Peter 4:7-19

1. Be alert to the signs of the times and pray much. Prayer transforms fear into peace of mind.
2. Keep loving one another. Fear generates an impulse of hiding in seclusion and isolation.
3. Keep supporting one another. Don't begrudge those who are unprepared and needy.
4. Exercise God-given ministry gifts to the encouragement of others.
5. Compare your suffering for Christ to His suffering for you.
6. Handle the forge of fiery trials in a manner that would make Christ proud.
7. Grasp the concept that if you are suffering specifically because you are a Christian, it was permitted by God, and the Spirit of glory and of God will rest on you. In persecuting you they strike at God, but if you endure faithfully, God will be glorified through you. Be thankful the world recognizes you don't belong to them, you belong to God through Jesus Christ your Lord.
8. Stop sinning and suffering the pain it causes. If you're going to suffer, suffer for being good for God and following Christ.
9. If God permits you to suffer for your faith in Christ, commit the care and keeping of your soul to your faithful God.

Conclusion

Jesus admonished us in His sermon on the mount to fret not about tomorrow, but to let the things of tomorrow take care of themselves; tomorrow is in God's hands. Instead, He challenged us to dedicate ourselves each day to righteousness and promised God would take care of our every need until He gives us our eternal reward.