

The Unsurprising Suffering of Jesus' People. 1 Peter 4:12-19

Suffering – Distasteful and Unfashionable

Do you sense in yourself a reluctance this morning in to engage with a reading about fiery ordeals and suffering.

I can sense in myself an emotional reluctance to talk about suffering.

I mean, it's summer. We are all trying to relax and rest after a tough last few months, a tough last year

Trying to put anxiety about the future behind us and steal some moments of carefree happiness.

It's hardly the season for suffering.

But there are probably more than seasonal reasons for our reluctance. While no one likes suffering

More than most cultures ours is focused on the present. We see no point in suffering and make present happiness ultimate.

Suffering is a big turn off.

Our reluctance is deep seated, and recognizing that this morning is all the more reason to engage as God tells us in 1 Peter 4 that the suffering of believers is unsurprising and a cause for joy.

If we won't hear that – then our thinking about the Christian life will be distorted

We will be unprepared to persevere in living the life of trusting and obeying Jesus to the end

And will be ill equipped to love our not yet believing neighbours by bearing witness in this world that denies any purpose to suffering that loyalty to Jesus is worth suffering for.

And if you are not yet a believer listening in recognise that what you hear in 1 Peter about suffering is a direct challenge to one of the pillars of the secular world view embraced by so many Australians, the view that this life is all there is and is to be lived for pleasure.

But unsurprising 4:12

1 Peter 4: ¹² Dear friends, don't be surprised when the fiery ordeal comes among you to test you, as if something unusual were happening to you. ¹³

¹² Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. NIV

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though something strange were happening to you; NASB

What is the suffering Peter is speaking of

What is Peter referring to when he talks of the 'fiery ordeal that has come to test us'?

What does have in mind?

Some think that he is talking about some future persecution, more severe than what the believers in Asia Minor are experiencing already and CSB translation "when the fiery ordeal comes' can make it sound that way. He is writing, on this view, on the principle that forewarned is forearmed, to get them ready for something they have not yet but will soon experience.

[They then locate that fiery ordeal in the persecutions undertaken by Nero or the emperor Domitian
And make it relevant to us by seeing that specific ‘fiery ordeal’ as a type of a future great tribulation coming before the end]

But as in the NIV translation - “*the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you*” [and NASB] Peter is talking not of future, but present trials, of their present experience. He is referring to the suffering mentioned already in the letter – the various trials that have already caused them grief [1:6], the reality that they are being slandered by some as evildoers [2:12], been subjected to the ignorance of foolish people [2:15], the suffering for doing good of Christian slaves at the hands of crooked masters [2:20], the suffering for righteousness and doing good mentioned in chapter 3 [v. 14, 17], the slander of those offended by believers no longer sharing their lifestyle [4:4]. Peter does not want them, or us, to think that their present experience of suffering is surprising, unusual, not what they should have expected

He speaks about it as a ‘fiery ordeal’ not because it is more intense, but because this is the language of refining that he has already used in chapter 1 to speak of the purpose of their trials which have come

1 Peter 1: 6 You rejoice in this, even though now for a short time, if necessary, you suffer grief in various trials ⁷ so that the proven character of your faith—more valuable than gold which, though perishable, is refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

As gold is refined in the fire, so their faith is refined, proved genuine, by trials

And this language of refining by fire is itself drawn for Malachi to describe the effect of the coming of the Lord, the messenger of the covenant

Malachi 3: 2 But who can endure the day of his coming? And who will be able to stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire and like launderer’s bleach. ³ He will be like a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver. Then they will present offerings to the LORD in righteousness.

By this language of fiery ordeal Peter is reminding them that their suffering is purposeful, proving the genuineness of their faith, and hinting at its place in God’s great saving purpose and plan for the end, an idea he will return to and develop in verses 17-18.

This understanding of the fiery ordeal as present suffering they are already undergoing for being believers in Jesus is what we see in verses 13-16. There Peter makes clear what this suffering isn’t and what it is.

¹³ Instead, rejoice as you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may also rejoice with great joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are ridiculed for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵ Let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or a meddler. ¹⁶ But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God in having that name.

He makes it clear v. 15 that this fiery ordeal that tests is not suffering for doing wrong, just, deserved suffering, [a point already made when speaking to slaves about their suffering [2:20]]

Pause to get Peter’s point. It is unlikely any of the congregation were murderers or thieves, but mentioning these crimes makes his point clear. There are things that deserve punishment, and

people who do them can't complain or think they are hard done by when punished, things that are completely inconsistent with following Jesus.

Then Peter generalises the point by speaking of Evildoers. Evildoer is a general and comprehensive term for doing wrong. You shouldn't be suffering for doing any kind of wrong.

But with the last term, meddler, he is inviting the congregation to apply what he is saying to themselves and their own suffering.

A meddler is someone who, uninvited and unwelcome, interferes in the lives of others. And Christians, convinced we have truth and right, can indulge in that

A meddler can be someone who censures the behaviour of others, often outsiders to the church, on the basis of a claim to a higher morality, or someone who interferes with family relationships – of course in the name of promoting Christian obedience, or sows discontent and discord amongst people [Ellis in Jobes]. Meddlers deservedly provoke a hostile response, yet often when we are behaving in ways others would identify, if we listened to them, as meddling, we can deceive ourselves that the wrong we are doing is actually good

Including meddler is asking us to think hard about whether the suffering, the hard times, we are experiencing is really caused only by our being Christian, or whether our behaviour has rightly earned the condemnation of others

But if that deserved suffering is not what Peter includes in the 'fiery ordeal' what does he have in mind?

¹³ *Instead, rejoice as you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may also rejoice with great joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are ridiculed for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.*

Firstly, v. 13, it is suffering that is sharing in the suffering of Christ.

There is a uniqueness to Christ's suffering. Peter isn't suggesting that our suffering is in any way atoning, in any way deals with sin.

But Christ's suffering for doing good is, as Peter says in Chapter 2:20-21, an example left for us to follow.

¹ *Peter 2: ²⁰ For what credit is there if when you do wrong and are beaten, you endure it? But when you do what is good and suffer, if you endure it, this brings favor with God.*

²¹ *For you were called to this, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.*

Christ's suffering for doing God the Father's will at the hands of a humanity that rejects God's rule is the example of suffering for doing good all believers are to follow and we share in Christ's suffering when like Christ we suffer for being obedient to God.

That means we share in Christ's suffering when we suffer in the world that has rejected the Lord Jesus for faithfulness to the Lord Jesus, for God the Father's will is that we should believe in and obey His Son, His appointed King, the Lord Jesus, in all that He has commanded us. This is the good He calls us to.

When we suffer for following Christ, for being faithful to Christ in our confession and living, we share in Christ's suffering by suffering like Christ for doing what is good, experiencing what He experienced in the world for faithfulness to God His Father.

The fiery ordeal is the suffering believers experience for faithfulness to Christ, and verses 14 and 16 reinforce this understanding

v. 14 speaks of being ridiculed for the name of Christ, on the basis of our commitment to Jesus that identifies us with him

v. 16 of suffering as a Christian, for being a follower of Jesus, a Jesus loyalist. Christian is a name we are used to, but it was first used of believers in Jesus in Antioch [Acts 11:26] by those outside the church to make fun of the absurdity of believing that a crucified Jew was Lord. But Christians accepted that, glad to be known as being loyal to the crucified one.

Suffering 'as a Christian' could involve, as we see in Acts, both official and unofficial persecution, the actions of local authorities or local mobs. In Acts we see local authorities – harassing and imprisoning disciples in Jerusalem, even killing James, arresting and flogging Paul and Silas in Philippi

And the mob – stoning Paul in Lystra, attacking Jason's house in Thessalonica, rioting in Ephesus

SO the 'fiery ordeal' is the present suffering believers encounter for being faithful to Jesus, suffering for doing good in obedience to Jesus. And as we see in Acts and the epistles and revelation its expression could vary from verbal abuse and insult, mob violence, the destruction or loss of property, to the actions of local authorities putting believers in goal, harassing and intimidating them – right up to putting believers to death

But though varying from time to time and place to place it is what believers experience throughout the world and throughout this age, including today.

As Peter reminds his readers

1 Peter 5:9 Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world.

And Peter says they and we should not be surprised at this – and at first that is surprising

After all, Peter has spoken of believers as immensely privileged, God's own people, citizens of heaven

*1 Peter 2:9 But you are **a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.***

Isn't it surprising when the loyal citizens of a nation don't receive protection from their powerful ruler?

Peter has spoken of believers as a 'spiritual house' [2:4-5], a kind of new temple, and we know the temple was precious to God.

Isn't it surprising when God lets what is precious to Him be mistreated?

Believers call on God as Father. [1 Pet. 1:14-17]

Isn't it surprising that God let's His children suffer unjustly?

Why shouldn't they and we think it unusual? Think it even a contradiction of what we are promised in the gospel?

The answer is Jesus – Jesus' experience, and Jesus' teaching.

As Peter has reminded us throughout the letter and even here in verse 13 – Jesus Himself suffered, and He suffered to do God's will.

"For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit" [3:18] That suffering was not purposeless for Through that He suffering saved us and came to glory. Suffering for doing good was the way God fulfilled His good purposes for His Son exalting Him to 'the right hand of God with angels, authorities and powers subject to Him.'" 3:22

Suffering wasn't a denial of Jesus' sonship, but the expression of it.

His unjust suffering wasn't the denial of God's justice, but the establishment of it, not the contradiction of the promise, but the fulfilment of the promises concerning God's Son.

Why should believers think that their suffering will be any less instrumental in expressing their sonship and fulfilling God's promises for them?

And why think they will be any better treated by the world that is in rebellion against God than their Master was?

Jesus taught explicitly that His followers would suffer because they are His followers, identified with Him.

Consider John 15

John 15:¹⁸ "If the world hates you, understand that it hated me before it hated you.¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you.²⁰ Remember the word I spoke to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.²¹ But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they don't know the one who sent me.

Jesus tells us that as He was, so will we be in the world.

[And it is Jesus who first pronounced the blessing on His persecuted followers

Matthew 5:¹¹ "You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me.¹² Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.]

[cf. Matt. 24:9, 1 John 3:13]

Jesus suffered, and He taught His followers they would suffer, and What Jesus taught has been proven true throughout history.

Suffering for Christ may vary in intensity and expression from place to place and time to time, but it has always been there, even in Australia. Richard Johnson, the first Christian clergyman in the colony met official harassment from the Lieutenant Governor who delayed construction of a church and limited church services. When William Watson and Johann Handt, Anglican missionaries to the Wiradjuri in Wellington, NSW, opposed the sexual abuse of young aboriginal girls in the 1830, [and

removed them to the protection of their mission,] they were brought into direct conflict with some settlers. [Harris 64]

We shouldn't think it unusual, be surprised, by suffering.

But despite the example and clear teaching of Jesus, we, believers in the West, find ourselves surprised by the renewed prospect of suffering for following Jesus.

Whether because of our own entitled background, or our numbers, or our understanding of the historical contribution of Christianity to Australia; or whether we have been deceived by the false teaching that Christianity is the path to our personal fulfillment or a guarantor of our wealth and happiness

We think things are not as they should be when we meet opposition, when we are slandered, excluded, or face legal harassment for faithfulness to Scriptures views on gender and sexual expression.

Determined to think suffering unusual its prospect unsettles us,

And the day to day misrepresentation and criticism we meet, or the open contempt and determination to remove us from public life, gets us down and erodes our confidence, or makes us anxious or fearful about the future, or provokes our anger and hostility.

[Or surprised by its irrationality – because we have swallowed the modernist myth, forgotten that we are in a spiritual war]

Instead of being surprised, thinking such open hostility out of place, an anomaly — we should expect to suffer for doing good, to share in Christ's suffering by being faithful to Christ

And see our sharing in Christ's suffering the way our good God teaches us to see it – as a cause of joy, a sign of present blessedness, and an opportunity to honour God.

How God teaches us to see our suffering

¹³ Instead, rejoice as you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may also rejoice with great joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are ridiculed for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵ Let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or a meddler. ¹⁶ But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God in having that name.

v. 13 A cause of Joy

Believers respond to suffering for Christ with Joy for our suffering shows we belong to Jesus, that we are his in the world and so share His experience of the world.

In fact we are called to rejoice, for It is only those who are glad to follow Jesus even if it means suffering because they are convinced that He is Lord, convinced of His love and might and faithfulness, who are rejoicing in suffering for Christ as a sign of their belonging to Him, who will be exultantly joyful when their Saviour is revealed as He is to a world that has despised and rejected Him, revealed as the glorious Lord

v. 14 a sign of present blessedness

And we respond by reckoning ourselves blessed.

To be blessed is to be the one who enjoys God's favour in God's world, it is the person whose position is enviable, the person everyone should want to be – for God's favour is life and peace

Why reckon we are blessed – for no-one enjoys being ridiculed.

It is because being ridiculed for being identified with Jesus shows the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you, and that is to be truly blessed for the

Spirit is the Spirit of Christ,

The Spirit who will raise you to life to share in Christ's glory

the same Spirit that cries Abba Father in our hearts, assuring us we are God's loved child

We are blessed for our suffering shows we are God's children, who will share in the glory of God's Son.

And, v. 16, we see in suffering

v. 16 an opportunity to honour God, resisting shame.

¹⁶ *But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God in having that name.*

What does speaking ill of people, condemning them as wrongdoers, public abuse – meant to do.

It is meant to shame people, shame them into conformity with the social norm and

Shame is a powerful, internal emotional drive of behaviour

The persecution of Christians

Whether its criticism from family, friends, workplaces, or the punishments of the state

is meant to shame people into conformity with the world

And persecution can make us feel ashamed, because before we became believers we shared all the values or our persecutors, had been brought up with them, internalised them

Values like - Must put family loyalty above everything else

You can't betray the community or the family by not worshipping the community's, family's, gods –

This life is all there is to be lived for pleasure

Only an irrational fool or weakling believes in God

But to give way under the pressure of suffering to shame is to accept an unbeliever's values and assessment of Christ, to accept their verdict on Him and His commands

Instead of being ashamed we are to *glorify God in having that name.*

We are to Bring honour to God by being loyal to Jesus in our suffering.

Our continuing faithfulness to Jesus honours God

by saying His verdict on Jesus, His assessment of Jesus seen in raising Him from the dead, is right, - even if all the world denies it

Honours God by obeying the One He has made Lord and Christ, whom He commands all to obey

Honours God by keeping on trusting His Son to do all that He has promised, to raise us from the dead even if they kill us, to bring us to share in His glory even if they humiliate us

Where we are taught by God we

See that the fiery ordeal, sharing in Christ's sufferings in this world because we follow His example of trusting obedience to God by remaining faithful to Him

Is not a reason to doubt, or to be fearful, or to be angry and resentful

Is a cause of joy, a sign of blessing, an opportunity to glorify God

And you might think – that's easy to say now, as we sit together here

But why should I accept God's assessment when I am feeling the pain of being

excluded, ridiculed, being legally harassed, having my livelihood threatened or my reputation trashed

Only by remembering the one for whom we suffer, the Lord Jesus, who is our example of suffering for doing good.

Remembering that His suffering came from His love for us, and that in His suffering He has saved us

Remembering His might – that having suffered, He rose with all powers and authorities are subjected to Him

And knowing His love and might Remembering the graciousness and certainty of His promise – that He will raise us up to eternal life

By remembering and Knowing the work of His Spirit, assuring us of God's love, assuring us that GOD is our Father, assuring us of our eternal inheritance

And our trust in God's assessment will also be helped by understanding how the unsurprising experience of believers, the experience of the fiery ordeal that has come to test you, to refine and prove the genuineness of your faith, fits in God's plan

The suffering of believers in God's plan vv. 17-18 [Mal. 4:1-5, Ezekiel 9:1-6; Prov. 11:31 LXX]

1 Peter 4: ¹⁷ For the time has come for judgment to begin with God's household, and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who disobey the gospel of God?

¹⁸ And if a righteous person is saved with difficulty, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?

When looking at these verses it is helpful to remember Judgement is not condemnation.

It is the action of the judge

And God's household can also mean God's house, a way of talking about the temple.

Peter is saying that in these last days, the time when the end is near, the judge, God, begins the winding up everything by acting to purify His house, His temple, which in the New Testament – as Peter has taught in 1 Peter 2:5 [cf. 1 Cor. 3:16-17] – is His people.

Peter is applying Malachi 3 [Matt. 3:11 -baptise with the Holy Spirit and fire], a prophecy which speaks of the Lord's purifying His people v. 3 and so restoring the integrity of the covenant and the genuineness of their worship v. 4 before He acts to judge His enemies v. 5.

Malachi 3: "See, I am going to send my messenger, and he will clear the way before me. Then the Lord you seek will suddenly come to his temple, the Messenger of the covenant you delight in—see, he is coming," says the LORD of Armies. ² But who can endure the day of his coming? And who will be able to stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire and like launderer's bleach. ³ He will be like a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver. Then they will present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. ⁴ And the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will please the LORD as in days of old and years gone by.

⁵ *"I will come to you in judgment, and I will be ready to witness against sorcerers and adulterers; against those who swear falsely; against those who oppress the hired worker, the widow, and the fatherless; and against those who deny justice to the resident alien. They do not fear me," says the LORD of Armies.*

By this reference to the order of God's action revealed in Malachi Peter is making two points.

Firstly, The suffering of God's people is purposeful

It is the means by which the genuineness of their faith is proven, by which they honour God [can give God true worship] and are equipped to live with Him in the new heaven and earth

And secondly, that the continuing suffering of believers in Jesus is not an accident or oversight, but part of God's plan for the end, something that both precedes and warns of the final judgement.

It says in Malachi that after that refining of His people God will act in judgement against all who continue to defy Him.

And so just as our suffering should not surprise us we should also see that in God's plan the suffering the world, that is those who reject God's King Jesus by not obeying the gospel summons to repent and believe, the suffering the world imposes on His people is a sign, not of the world's victory or power, but of its coming condemnation

[Notice he says on 'those who disobey the gospel of God'

It is a reminder that the gospel comes as a royal summons.

Acts 17: ³⁰ "Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹ because he has set a day when he is going to judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead."

Ignoring the gospel is not neutral. It is rebellion]

And Peter reinforces his point, that the suffering of believers shows the dangerous position unbelievers are in, by quoting Prov. 11:31 – from the Greek version

¹⁸ And if a righteous person is saved with difficulty, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?

With difficulty is not saying it is difficult for God to save.

It is an observation about the trials God's people face as they journey to their goal

And that salvation requires perseverance, perseverance under trial.

Though we may forget this and think about being saved by Jesus in the same way we think about buying insurance – something that keeps us safe if we remember the annual instalments

Jesus has always been upfront about the difficulty, about the demand for wholehearted, persevering commitment that will cost.

In calling people to be his disciples he said

Luke 9:²³ Then he said to them all, "If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me will save it.

It has always been give up all, life itself, to follow and keep on following Jesus

[He is the one who has said that only those who persevere to the end will be saved [Matt. 24:13]]

And Paul, speaking to those who first believed through his first missionary journey, reminded them

Acts 14:²² strengthening the disciples by encouraging them to continue in the faith and by telling them, "It is necessary to go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God."

Peter's point in reminding his hearers of this is that there is no hope outside the faith in the Lord Jesus that perseveres through trials

And That if God's holiness requires people to have genuine, proven faith to be saved, there is no hope for those who persevere in rebelling against God.

Having told us

That the fiery ordeal, the suffering for being faithful to Jesus that believers are experiencing, is not unusual

But a Cause of joy, a sign of blessing, an opportunity to glorify God

A sign that God is carrying out His stated purpose to have a purified people for Himself, which precedes and makes certain the judgment of those who do not obey the gospel

Peter concludes by saying this time when God's people suffer for doing good is not a time for a rethink, but a time for perseverance

Conclusion v. 18. A time for perseverance

1 Peter 4: ¹⁹ So then, let those who suffer according to God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator while doing what is good.

NIV ¹⁹ So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

ESV ¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

Let those, he says, who suffer according to God's will – that is those who suffer like Jesus for doing the good God calls them to do, the good He calls us all to of obeying God by believing in and obeying Jesus –

Keep living like Jesus by entrusting their lives to God in or by continuing to do the good that has brought this suffering on them

The Lord Jesus, having said to God in the garden 'Not my will but yours be done', didn't come down from the cross as his persecutors demanded.

He stayed there, suffering to keep on doing God's will, and entrusted His soul, His life, to God

*Luke 23: ⁴⁶ And Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, **into your hands I entrust my spirit.**" Saying this, he breathed his last.*

In the same way Jesus' followers don't give up doing God's will when they suffer for it

They entrust their lives to the God they have come to trust in trusting Jesus

The faithful Creator

God – who always keeps His word. Who raised His Son from the dead, exalted Him over all, as He promised

The Creator – who is almighty, without rival or competitor in the whole creation

The Creator, who has the power of life in Himself, who can bring all that is from nothing by His word, who can give life to the dead

The faithful Creator who alone deserves to be entrusted with our lives, for He alone can return that life to us and will as He has promised

And we show that by keeping on doing good, keeping on pursuing His will for us, even if it means suffering, continuing to suffer for doing good.

Being faithful to Jesus in our confession of Him as Lord, living the holy, godly lives of God's children, speaking to all of the hope we have in Christ, a hope we testify to by our suffering with joy

For that suffering is not a sign that we are losers, should give up, that God has failed us.

It is His means to equip us for glory, to share in the glory of His true Son

The sign that we are blessed with the Spirit of God

Our opportunity to do what His children delight to do – give Him glory

We don't like thinking about suffering

But living in a world that rejects its Creator,

Knowing that God's purpose is that He has a people who honour Him by their genuine, proven, trust in Him

That we follow a Saviour who gave us the example of suffering for doing good

The Saviour who has saved us and triumphed through His faithful, obedient suffering

We should reckon suffering for being faithful to the Lord Jesus something we should expect

And be equipped to persevere in it by Thinking of it as God teaches us to think about it

A cause of joy that we can share in the sufferings of Christ and through them be assured we will share in His glory

A sign of blessedness

Not a cause for shame but an opportunity to glorify our heavenly Father

When you meet opposition for your faith

When you encounter ridicule for believing in Jesus

Is that how you are responding?