***All Things New:*** New-Life Lessons from the Apostle Peter’s First Letter

**New Community: Suffering and Glory**

Or, The Method of the Master in the Lessons of Life

1 Peter 4:12-19

The Bible is full of ironies, paradoxes, strange twists and incongruities. But most of them revolve around one question: If a good and loving God is in control, then why is evil allowed so often to triumph? The believer can know the answer to that question, because he IS part of the answer. Had evil not triumphed for a little while over Jesus, we would still be in our sins. The Cross, then, is a pattern of temporary suffering for eternal good, a reminder that when Jesus calls us, it is a call to come and die. Therefore. . .

***Stop with the surprise already!*** *v. 12*

Peter is very direct, “Don’t be surprised! Suffering and persecution are to be expected.” Dealing with life means changing our expectations to match reality and God’s will rather than changing reality to match my will. God has a plan or He doesn’t. God is sovereign or He isn’t. You can’t have it both ways, and the constant questioning of God we often do partakes more of insolence and arrogance than honest doubt. A brief review of Israel’s history will help here as much as anything. Deut. 32

***Remember that in suffering for Jesus you are suffering with Him, and will share in His glory.***  vv. 13, 14

“If we suffer with Him we also will reign with Him.” Romans 8:17. “Through many tribulations we must enter the Kingdom of God.” Acts 14:21, 22. “All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” 2 Timothy 3:12. e*tc., etc.* God encounters evil not merely to eliminate it, but to allow His people to profit from it, and bring glory to His power, wisdom, and grace through Jesus. If you think your plan is better, then you are mistaken. Romans 5:1-11

***But be sure your suffering is not self-inflicted, lest you finally partake in the judgment of the unrepentant.*** vv. 15-19

Believers in Jesus will never be condemned, but they can heap up much heartache through failure to obey and hardness of heart. Judgment is coming. Let your sins be judged in Jesus, live for Him, and all will be well. 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12

***Applying Truth to Life: Getting real in your day-to-day.***

*Let God, be God.* He is good, righteous, and sovereign. All will one day recognize this, but it is your privilege to enjoy it now.

*Adjust your expectations.*  There is a war between good and evil happening all around you. Stop living as if battle noise is strange.

*Embrace righteous suffering.* We must never seek suffering, but when we encounter it, we must neither hide nor deny it. The world has fallen; God’s plan has not.

*Give thank*s. God is not only a “faithful Creator,” but our Heavenly Father, who gives us all things in Himself.