

Concerning The Fiery Trials

1 Peter 4:12-19

MEMORY VERSE

1 PETER 4:19

“Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Two light 12” balls and masking tape.

Masking tape, 24” pieces of yarn (in 2-4 different colors) to make a necklace for each child and two 3’-4’ pieces of rope.

As many envelopes as the number of children in your class and paper.

ATTENTION GETTER!

Keep The Ball Rolling

Have two light 12” balls for this “test.” With masking tape, put a starting line and a finish line on the floor about eight feet apart (please make sure to remove the masking tape from the floor after your activity). Have one end of each line touch the same wall. Tell the kids they will have a partner to help them get the ball to the finish line, and his name is “Mr. Wall.”

Next, instruct the children how they are to roll the ball along the wall, standing up, from start to finish, without using any hands. This is done by pressing the ball between their stomach and the wall, then by turning round and round from front to back the ball should roll along the wall. Start another child “rolling” when one is about halfway done.

When everyone is done, ask how hard it was, and if it was fun. Then ask them if the ball fell down, who moved, you or the wall? How is the wall like God? God never moves away from us; He is always with us. **God is faithful when we are going through a tough time.**

LESSON TIME!

In today's lesson we are going to learn about suffering. Serving God isn't always easy: there may be times that are very difficult. We are going to learn why we can expect to suffer and how to respond to the suffering. We are also going to learn about different reasons why we suffer. And finally we will learn to trust God when we suffer. **God is faithful when we are going through a tough time.**

1 PETER 4:12

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;

God does not want us to be surprised when we suffer persecution or go through a trial. As a Christian we have taken a position as a follower of Jesus Christ. This means we are on God's side and that makes us different from people who don't believe in Jesus. If we are on God's side, then who is on the other side against God? There are two groups that are against God.

First there is Satan and his demons. The Bible teaches us that Satan was once an angel in heaven that served God and obeyed Him. Then one day Satan decided he no longer wanted to obey God. Instead, he decided he wanted to be God. So he rebelled against God and one third (one out of three) of the angels decided to follow Satan as their god. So they too rebelled against God. Now Satan and his angels (now called demons) are at war with God. They are sworn enemies of God.

The Bible tells us that there is a spiritual battle happening between God and Satan. But we know that Jesus has won the battle against Satan when He died on the cross. But Satan still fights against God and His people. He doesn't want us to be effective in serving the Lord. Satan hates those of us that have accepted Jesus into our hearts. He hates us because through Jesus we have become God's children.

Now we shouldn't be surprised if Satan and his demons try to make us suffer and sin. We do not need to be afraid or have fear because God is on our side. Greater is God who is with us than Satan could ever be. He will keep us (Romans 8:31-39). Jesus said, "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33b).

The second group that is against God is the people that have not decided to accept Jesus and become Christians. The Bible tells us that sometimes these are the people that try to make Christians suffer. They might laugh at you or try to be mean because you are a Christian.

The Bible tells us that Cain hated his brother Abel, and he killed him because Abel was righteous before God. Cain was a religious man who offered a sacrifice before God. Yet Cain was in rebellion against God and did not want to be obedient to God. He hated his brother Abel because his brother was obedient to God.

In the same way we can expect people to hate us for the simple reason that we are followers of Jesus. They might not know why they hate us, but they will persecute us and do all kinds of evil things against us (John 15:18-25). The reason they do evil against us is because of Jesus. But “If God is for us, who can be against us.” God is on our side to help us. **God is faithful when we are going through a tough time.** So let’s not be surprised when Satan or the world tries to make us suffer. We know why they hate us.

Mountain Bridge

Using masking tape, make a path across the center of your room (one strip) with a large circle at each end; it will look like a large barbell (please make sure to remove the masking tape from the floor after your activity). Make yarn “necklaces” in two to four different colors. Pass them out at random to all of the children. Put a three to four foot length of rope in each circle.

Let the kids all stand in one circle while you instruct them. The children are all supposed to go across the “mountain bridge” represented by the tapeline. In the tape circles they are “safe,” but if they step off the tapeline at any time they are falling down the mountain and any other kid can throw them the end of a life-saving rope...unless they are wearing a certain colored necklace! The kids who have that color necklace, which cannot be helped, are out of the game. Play several times, alternating the color of necklace that cannot be helped so everyone gets a chance to know how it feels to not receive help.

If just walking across is too easy, have them try it walking backward, or heel to toe, or made a few breaks in the “bridge” which must be hopped over. After the game ask the kids how it felt to be in need of help and not be able to get it. Remind them **God is faithful when we are going through a tough time.** He will always throw us a line for help.

1 PETER 4:13, 14

but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.

The Bible teaches Christians to be happy and rejoice when we suffer for Jesus (James 1:2-4; Acts 5:41). Why should we be happy or rejoice when we suffer and are persecuted for our faith in Jesus? (Ask kids to answer.)

Jesus suffered for us and it is a privilege to suffer for Him (John 16). Second, because God's glory is revealed in us (1 Peter 1:7,8). God transforms our suffering into glory (John 16:20-22). Thirdly, suffering for Jesus is a blessing. We are blessed by the Holy Spirit and by God. God and His Spirit rest on us (verse 14).

John 16:21 is a good illustration of why we can rejoice in suffering. When a woman is in pain because of labor (having a baby) she can be very happy. Because she knows in a little while she will get to see her new baby. Even though the pain is great, she is rejoicing on the inside. The same is true for us as Christians. Even though we may suffer greatly, we can rejoice because one day we will see Jesus and be in heaven forever. All the pain and suffering will be over in just a little while. So rejoice! (See also Romans 8:17; 2 Timothy 3:11.)_ **God is faithful when we are going through a tough time.**

1 PETER 4:15-18

But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.

Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

We are not supposed to rejoice in sufferings that are the result of our own sin. God does not receive any glory from the pain we face because of our sins. God wants us to examine our lives to see if we are suffering because of rebellion or our own selfishness. We can ask God to show us all the areas in our lives where we are not pleasing Him.

The Holy Spirit will do this for us (Hebrews 4:12). The Bible says that God is like a Good Father; He disciplines those He loves (Hebrews 12:5-11).

If you are a child of God you can expect God to discipline you when you are doing wrong. The Bible says, "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23b). If you are always getting away with your sins and never seem to get caught, perhaps you haven't given your heart to God. Take a few minutes and make sure you have accepted Jesus as your Savior and Lord.

1 PETER 4:19

Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

In order to do our best when we face suffering, we need to depend on our relationship with God. We need to commit our souls to Him in doing good. God will be there for us in the middle of the toughest times. He promises that He "will never leave us or forsake us." We need to be committed to a relationship with God. Trusting God, who is the Creator of the universe. He can surely take care of us, even in the darkest of times. **God is faithful when we are going through a tough time.**

So we learn that as a Christian we can have times of difficulty and trial. We will suffer as Christians. But we also know that Jesus had overcome this world and no matter what we are going through God will be faithful to help us. We can get through any trial with the help of Jesus. Let's always remember to look to Him, our faithful Creator, when we need help.

God is With Me

Make an envelope for each child or let them decorate an envelope. Then pass out slips of paper with this part of Joshua 1:5 written on them: God says, "I will not leave you nor forsake you." Have them put these in their envelopes as a reminder that **God is faithful when we are going through a tough time.**

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to trust in the Lord no matter how difficult that things may seem. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.