

IT'S TO BE EXPECTED

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TEXT: 1 PETER 4:12-19

INTRODUCTION

Chippie the parakeet never saw it coming. One second he was peacefully perched in his cage. The next he was sucked in, washed up, and blown over.

The problems began when Chippie's owner decided to clean Chippie's cage with a vacuum cleaner. She removed the attachment from the end of the hose and stuck it in the cage. The phone rang, and she turned to pick it up. She'd barely said "hello" when "sssopp!" Chippie got sucked in.

The bird owner gasped, put down the phone, turned off the vacuum, and opened the bag. There was Chippie -- still alive, but stunned.

Since the bird was covered with dust and soot, she grabbed him and raced to the bathroom, turned on the faucet, and held Chippie under the running water. Then, realizing that Chippie was soaked and shivering, she did what any compassionate bird owner would do . . . she reached for the hair dryer and blasted the pet with hot air.

Poor Chippie never knew what hit him.

A few days after the trauma, the reporter who'd initially written about the event contacted Chippie's owner to see how the bird was recovering. "Well," she replied, "Chippie doesn't sing much anymore -- he just sits and stares."

It's hard not to see why. Sucked in, washed up, and blown over . . . That's enough to steal the song from the stoutest heart. -Max Lucado, [In the Eye of the Storm](#), Word Publishing, 1991, p. 11.

I. TRIALS AREN'T UNUSUAL FOR ANYONE (vv.12-13).

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.

13 But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

A. SERVING CHRIST DOES NOT EXCLUDE US FROM TRIALS (v.12).

"I believe Christians walk a mental tightrope and are in constant danger of falling in one of two directions. On this subject, errors in thinking can have tragic results. The first error comes when we attribute all suffering to God, seeing it as his punishment for human mistakes; the second error does just the opposite, assuming that life with God will never include suffering." – [Philip Yancey, Where Is God When It Hurts?](#)

B. SERVING CHRIST DOES NOT EXCLUDE US FROM SUFFERING, BUT RATHER GIVES US AN OPPORTUNITY TO KNOW HIM BETTER (v.13).

II. SUFFERING FOR CHRIST BRINGS A BLESSING (vv.14-16).

14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.

16 However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.

A. IN THIS INSTANCE, AN INSULT IS A COMPLIMENT (v.14).

B. THE TYPE OF SUFFERING WE ENCOUNTER WILL PRODUCE ITS OWN UNIQUE WORK (vv.15-16).

“As I have said, the Bible consistently changes the questions we bring to the problem of pain. It rarely, or ambiguously, answers the backward-looking question “Why?” Instead, it raises the very different, forward-looking question, “To what end?” We are not put on earth merely to satisfy our desires, to pursue life, liberty, and happiness. We are here to be changed, to be made more like God in order to prepare us for a lifetime with him. And that process may be served by the mysterious pattern of all creation: pleasure sometimes emerges against a background of pain, evil may be transformed into good, and suffering may produce something of value.” – [Philip Yancey, Where Is God When It Hurts?](#)

III. IT IS TO BE EXPECTED THAT WE WOULD BE TESTED (vv.17-19).

17 For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And, “If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” 19 So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

A. THE CHARACTER OF ALL WILL BE REVEALED THROUGH TRIALS.

B. THE UNGODLY MUST STRUGGLE ON THEIR OWN.

C. THOSE WHO SUFFER FOR GOD CAN CALL UPON THE LORD.

Someone asked C.S. Lewis, "Why do the righteous suffer?" "Why not?" he replied. "They're the only ones who can take it."

CONCLUSION

On the subject of suffering, Andrew Murray wrote,

First, He brought me here, it is by His will I am in this strait place: in that fact I will rest.

Next, He will keep me here in His love, and give me grace to behave as His child.

Then, He will make the trial a blessing, teaching me the lessons He intends me to learn, and working in me the grace He means to bestow.

Last, In His good time He can bring me out again--how and when He knows.

Let me say I am here, (1) By God's appointment, (2) In His keeping, (3) Under His training, (4) For His time.

[Andrew Murray](#), quoted in [Though the Mountains Shake](#), by Amy Carmichael, p. 12.