

The Prattmont Church of Christ is just what the name suggests, a church that belongs to Christ. We are not a denomination; we are simply a group of Christians trying very hard to practice the teachings of our Head, Jesus Christ. The New Testament offers a complete pattern for what each local church should be like—its organization, its worship, its work, etc. We are committed to following that pattern. We cordially invite you to attend our services. We would also welcome any comments or questions about this bulletin.

TIMES OF SERVICES:

Sunday
 Bible Study.....9:00 A.M.
 Worship.....10:00 A.M.
 Training Class.....5:00 P.M.
 Worship.....6:00 P.M.

Wednesday:
 Bible Study.....7:00 P.M.



Weekly Bulletin
 March 24 , 2019

**First Peter: A Textbook on Suffering
 (Part 1)**

by Bryan Gibson

Some folks suffer because they do wrong. There is nothing commendable about that (4:15; 2:20). Other folks suffer because they do right. That is commendable, especially in the eyes of God (2:19-20; 3:14a). The obvious conclusion: "...it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil" (3:17).

It may be better, but it's not easy! It's not easy to be thought of as strange or ignorant, to get ridiculed and insulted, to endure false accusations, to be excluded from the "in crowd," to maybe even face the threat of death. The people to whom Peter wrote his first epistle—that's what they were facing, and here's what he said to help them (and us) endure. We'll divide this up into a series of do's and don'ts, just to make the points as clear as

Contact Information

	Mailing Address	P.O. Box 680872 Prattville, AL 36067
	Phone Numbers	(334) 365-5887 (334) 868-0801
	E-Mail Address Web Address	prattmont@gmail.com prattmontchurchofchrist.org

possible (the don'ts here in part 1, and the do's next week in part 2).

Don't be surprised by suffering, as if was some "strange thing" (4:12). Elsewhere, Paul wrote that "all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12). We may as well get used to it; it will happen.

Don't be discouraged by it, and don't let it wear us down, because it only lasts "a little while" (1:6)—especially when we contrast it with eternity.

Don't be ashamed of it, or embarrassed by it; instead glorify God for it (4:16; 2:6). The folks who are saying and doing these things to us—they're the only ones who should be ashamed (3:16). Never ever be ashamed of suffering for Christ.

Don't be afraid of those who persecute us—it's not like they can do us any **lasting** harm (3:13-16). They killed the Christ, and look how things turned out for Him (3:18, 22). Noah and his family—no doubt they suffered for the stand they took, but they were the ones standing on dry ground when the flood ended (3:18-22).

Don't retaliate—do not return "evil for evil, or reviling for reviling" (3:9). Follow the example of Christ (2:21), "who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously" (2:23).

Don't think we're the only ones—brethren near and far are suffering the same things, perhaps even worse (5:9).

Don't try to fit in with the world to avoid this suffering—that's the very thing the devil wants us to do (5:8). This world is not our home, so let's not behave like it is. "As sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (2:11). Don't live any longer "for the lusts of men, but for the will of God" (4:2). Cast our lot with the people of this world, and that's when we'll be in real trouble, because "they will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead" (4:5). And it won't be pretty, because rest assured, their suffering will last more than just "a little while."

Partner Up

In religious service, sincerity alone is not enough. It needs a partner, and that partner is truth. "Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in **sincerity** and **truth**" (Joshua 24:14). "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of **sincerity** and **truth**" (1 Cor. 5:8).

