

**“Have the same mindset as Christ.”** After Christ was baptized, the Spirit filled him and drove him out into the wilderness. There in the wilderness Christ was tested and tempted. For forty days he did not eat. He repeatedly said “no” to his flesh and he was very, very hungry. In the midst of this suffering, Satan came to Christ and urged him to turn stones into bread—to use power to unnaturally make food for himself. Christ said “no” and **“Christ suffered in the flesh.”** Then Satan took Jesus to the top of the holy temple in the holy city and told him to jump down, for the Lord had promised to send his angels to protect him. Christ said “no” and **“Christ suffered in the flesh.”** Then Satan took Christ and showed him all the nations of Civilization, urging him to take power over them. Christ said “no” and **“Christ suffered in the flesh.”** Then later when Christ was being arrested, he refused to fight back and **“Christ suffered in the flesh.”** When Christ was being accused and attacked during his trials, he refused to say a word to defend himself and **“Christ suffered in the flesh.”** When Christ was being crucified, he embraced it and **“Christ suffered in the flesh.”**

The earliest Christian creeds and confessions of faith summarize the whole life of Christ with this single phrase: **“he suffered.”** Suffering is inevitable. It was even inevitable for Christ and we are not greater than him. We cannot avoid suffering in life, no matter how much we may want to. Life is going to hurt. There will be pain. There will be disappointment. There will be waiting. There will be suffering. We can either face it and embrace it and **“suffer according to the Creator’s will”** or we can try to fight it and run away from it, which will only compound, magnify, and increase our suffering. Suffering is part of the Lord’s judgment—his **good** judgment that is fixing, healing, and maturing all of his creation. This judgment is not just some future thing—it is here, **now**. Peter says, **“The Judgment has come and it is beginning with the Creator’s own people.”** We can either lean into the judgment of the Creator and pass through the suffering, or we can try to resist it, avoid it, and run from it and get swept away into eternal suffering.

Christ embraced suffering. He resisted the flesh which desires to avoid suffering. When we embrace suffering we are no longer living for **“the desires of men,”** but instead we are living for **“the Creator’s will.”** To embrace suffering is to reject self-indulgence. Peter urges us, **“The time for participating in the desires of the nations has passed.”** The world around us is being carried away in a **“flood of self-indulgence.”** In the world’s efforts to avoid and run away from suffering, it is drowning in fleeting pleasures and storing up even more suffering for itself. But if we resist the urges and desires of our flesh and embrace suffering **today**, the judgment of the Lord **today**, then we will rise above the **“flood of self-indulgence”** around us and be safe in the hands of our Creator, even as we suffer. As Peter put it, **“The one who suffers in the flesh has stopped being selfish.”**

Therefore, Peter urges us, **“Have the same mindset as Christ.”** What kind of mindset did Christ have? What was Christ’s attitude that led him to embrace suffering and not run away from it? As Christ lived his life in the flesh, he embraced suffering with faith, hope, and love. In **faith** he humbled himself, in **hope** he cast his worries on the Lord, and in **love** he served and forgave others, even his enemies who were hurting him. This mindset allowed Christ to find **joy** and **peace** in suffering.

The mindset of Christ starts with **faith**, which is humility. It is our arrogance that thinks we can avoid suffering and that we deserve to have no suffering in our lives. Faithful humility recognizes that suffering is a great teacher and that it helps to shape us into the image of the Lord. Therefore, Peter urges us, **“Clothe yourselves in humility.”** When we embrace the fact that we are but dust, mere clay in the potter’s hands, we can accept and embrace daily suffering.

Christ also faced suffering with the mindset of **hope**. Hope stops trying to control and fix everything. Hope places everything into our heavenly Father’s hands. Therefore Peter urges us, **“Cast all your worries and anxieties on the Lord.”** We must stop carrying and holding onto our fears, worries, anxieties, cares, and concerns. Instead, we must give them to the Lord in hope. We are not strong enough to carry worries and anxieties, but the Lord is. When we are unburdened of our worries and anxieties, when we hope in the Lord with our whole mind, heart, and soul, our suffering is light. But when we carry our worries and anxieties on our own—in hopelessness—our suffering becomes intolerable.

Finally, we must approach suffering with a mindset and attitude of **love**. Peter urges us, **“Above all, love each other.”** Love is our purpose in life. Love is our purpose in suffering. Love is what we have been called to and made for, from beginning to end.

**“Have the same mindset as Christ.”** Faith, hope, and love is the mindset with which Christ faced life—it is how he faced suffering head on. The only way that we can find this new attitude and mindset is through turning our whole attention to the Lord in prayer. Peter says, **“Be focused and self-controlled in prayer.”** When our eyes, minds, hearts, and souls are completely focused on the Lord, giving him our full attention, we are merged and united with him. Christ’s mindset becomes our mindset. Christ’s attitude becomes our attitude. We too can face life and its suffering with faith, hope, and love. And when we do so, we will not only endure suffering, we will find **joy** in suffering. Peter says, **“Rejoice as you have communion in the sufferings of Christ.”** Christ himself tells us we can find joy in suffering, **“Rejoice and be glad for your heavenly reward is great!”** And James writes, **“Face your troubles with all joy.”** There is no greater joy than doing our Father’s will and when we live the life that he desires for us—saying “no” to our flesh and “yes” to his will—we will suffer, we will suffer greatly. But there is **joy** in this suffering because our Father is with us, carrying us, walking with us, and giving us the strength to get through it.

**“Have the same mindset as Christ.”** What is your mindset as you approach life? What is your attitude as you face the inevitable suffering of life? Are you facing suffering with the mindset of faith, hope, and love? If you try to handle life and its troubles on your own, trying to fight them, resist them, and avoid them, you will make yourself miserable. But if you pursue faith and **humble** yourself, if you pursue hope and **cast your worries** upon the Lord, and if you pursue love and **serve** everyone around you, then you will be able to find **joy** in the midst of the inevitable and unavoidable suffering of life. The key to joy is **not** removing suffering, it is **not** having an easy life, it is **not** having life go your way. The key to joy is the **Lord**. The key to joy is having the same mindset and attitude as Christ. The key to joy is an attitude and mindset of faith, hope, and love. You can either suffer in the **long-term** by running from suffering today and indulging yourself and saying “yes” to your flesh. Or you can joyfully suffer **today** by saying “no” to your flesh and following the will of your heavenly Father. You will suffer either way. You can fight suffering and be miserable. Or you can embrace suffering and find joy in the midst of it. It all depends on your **mindset**, it all depends on your **attitude**. **“Have the same mindset as Christ”** and you will find joy today in all things, even in suffering. **Amen.**