

“Life is Not Fair”

My mother often told me, “Life isn’t fair, Jud.” I didn’t enjoy hearing it. I wanted to be whatever I wanted to be. I practiced my basketball skills and yet I wasn’t nearly as good as the other boys. I practiced drumming, but my classmate was ten times better and received the offer to play the trap set for the middle school jazz band. I wanted my reward for hard work. Yet, she kept saying, “Life isn’t fair, Jud.”

I’ve thought about that refrain recently because I found myself griping about life. I read about crimes committed by people in politics and think, “Wait, if I did those same things, I’d go to jail immediately.” I read about men pretending to be women and participating in women’s sports and think, “Where is the line now drawn?” We must lament about injustice and not turn our backs on things that aren’t right. Lament is part of our political witness.

Another part of our political witness is learning how to suffer well. Peter acknowledges and laments the “flood of debauchery” from the surrounding culture (1 Pet. 4:4). The world makes it difficult for Christians to remain faithful to Christ to the end. But the posture of the Christian in this situation is to be the same as that of Christ during his trials—committing their lives and their vindication to God. We are “saved with difficulty” (1 Pet. 4:18). Persevering through trials is difficult. But Peter tells the church not to be surprised at the fiery ordeal (1 Pet. 4:12). This is the new normal for Christians. But how do they suffer well in this new normal?

Peter tells the church to suffer well by rejoicing in their future hope. “No surprise” at suffering should give way to continuous joy (vv. 12–13). In the second half of verse 13, he gives the reason for the command: “so that at the revelation of his glory” (i.e., at the second coming) “you may rejoice with much exultation.” Christ is over all, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. He will vindicate his faithful people.

So, instead of anxiety and frustration that life isn't fair, Christians learn how to suffer well. We suffer well when we rejoice in our future hope, Christ's return to vindicate His people. As our Lord Jesus promised, "*Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you*" (Matt. 5:11-12).

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