



## Mess. 20: Arm Yourself With the Mind of Christ for Suffering

Scripture Reading: 1 Peter 4:1-11

Link to this live on the IVPT Channel

<https://youtu.be/yPI0urvod1k?si=wuDzpQJ6f-VFiRLf>

Offering Center

<http://institutovidaparatos.org.br/central-de-ofertas/>

May I pray for you?

<https://www.lifeforallministry.org/mayiprayforyou>



Word ministered by brother **Pedro Dong** and transmitted by the Instituto Vida para Todos, directly from **São Paulo, SP**, on **10/20/2024**. Text not reviewed by the author.

We encourage you to watch the full message on the IVPT YouTube channel.

1. The apostle Peter was greatly used in the generation of the church from the day of Pentecost onward. He began to boldly proclaim the gospel in Jerusalem with the other 11 disciples. Peter was used to spread the gospel throughout the region of Judea, but some converts from the sect of the Pharisees and the leadership of Judaism did not accept setting aside the law of Moses. This created pressure within the church to reconcile the Gospel of Christ with the practices of the Old Testament. From then on, Peter is no longer mentioned in the book of Acts.

2. When Paul, on his third journey, went to Jerusalem, there were already thousands of converted Jews. However, many were still zealous for the law of Moses, and none of the apostles were present. Peter appears again only in his epistles: the first, written in Babylon, while the second letter was probably written in Rome.

**1 Pet 3:13-16; John 15:18-19; 17:13-16; Rom 7; Isa 66:1-2; Luke 18:9-14**

3. As long as the Jewish Christians lived among foreign nations, there was always discomfort, just as Jesus had said, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:18-19). **Because we are not of the world, we have different lives and habits. Therefore, we are subject to discrimination and calumnies.** The converted Jews suffered prejudice because they were Christians and foreigners where they lived.

4. **Brothers and sisters, it is good to be discriminated against because we live a joyful life that the world cannot.** We are hopeful, happy, and peaceful people. This can draw the attention of people who want to better understand why we are doing so well. **In these moments, the best thing to do is to offer a prayer, do immersion together with that person, and invite them to a church meeting: "Come and see!" By experiencing the church life, with immersion in the word and the war cries, people will receive the life of God.**

5. Christians generally understand that the sole purpose of Jesus' work on the cross was to redeem us. In fact, that was one of the reasons, **but the ultimate goal of redemption is to lead us to God and connect us to Him.** Thus, we begin to live by the life of God, through the word that is provided to us. Unfortunately, many Christians still do not understand that the fall of man occurred

because he chose to have the power to discern between good and evil. Obviously, everyone wants to have this discernment so that they can live good and not do evil. Romans 7 shows us that Satan was very shrewd, because he offered man this discernment that man desires. **However, man, by himself, does not have the ability to do good, because sin began to dwell in him when he disobeyed God:** “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me” (Romans 7:18-20).

6. Christians, in general, continue to try to do good to please God, with thoughts like: I need to be a good Christian, preach the gospel, read the Bible, I can't drink... This is to remain in the same principle of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **A true Christian is one who has been led and connected to God and recognizes that, in his natural capacity, he cannot do any good; but that he needs His life and nature to do His will and live a life that pleases Him.** The best way to be connected to God is through the word.

7. “Thus says the Lord: ‘Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist,’ says the Lord. ‘But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word’” (Isaiah 66:1-2). We want to build a place for God to rest, but what kind of house can we build for the Almighty God? **God wants to dwell in those who have a poor and contrite spirit, that is, in those who do not trust in their ability to discern good from evil, and who do not feel capable of pleasing God.**

8. God does not dwell in the hearts of those who consider themselves righteous and despise others (Luke 18:9-14). **Let us always keep our spirit humble and dependent on the Lord.** Those who realize that they have nothing cling to and love the word with reverence. God wants to dwell in these hearts. **At the end of 20 centuries of church history, the Lord is seeing some with this condition, and we hope that all among us will be like this.**

**1 Pet 4:1-11; 1:6-9; Rom 8; 12:2; Col 3:1-4; 1 Cor 6:17; Matt 25:31-46; Rev 20:11-15; 1 Pet 2:12-21; 3:13-17**

9. The apostle Peter wrote his letters to Jewish believers who were living in the dispersion among Gentile nations. They were suffering discrimination and persecution for being Jews and Christians. Peter encourages them by showing them that **sufferings are necessary to prove their faith, just as gold is refined by fire, in order to achieve the salvation of their souls:** “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:6-7).

10. Peter had fled when the soldiers came to arrest Jesus, and he denied the Lord three times, even though he said he would not do it. Peter realized that, in his natural man, he was incapable of loving or serving and could even deny Jesus. **In his epistle, Peter shows how this natural man, after gaining the life of God through regeneration, gained new hope.** To reach this stage, he had to go through several trials. As natural men, we all need transformation: everything that the old man has taken possession of within us needs to be purified, and this happens through trials. **When we go through situations of pressure, God can remove more impurities from us and the value of our faith increases.**

11. Since trials are necessary, we need to be prepared for suffering, that is, **we need to arm ourselves with the same mindset as Christ when He suffered in the flesh. This means that we must prepare ourselves in our soul, and the mind is the leading part of the soul. If we direct**

**it toward the flesh, it results in death, but if we direct it toward the Spirit, we have life and peace:** “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Romans 8:5-6). **The children of God must always set their minds on the spirit, to be guided by the Spirit of God. That is why we need to immerse ourselves in the Word: in this way we place our minds on the Word, which then governs us.**

**12.** The transformation of the soul also begins with the mind: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2). **As we enter the word, it influences us and renews our mind.**

**13.** If we want to live in the spiritual reality of Christ's resurrection, living in the heavenly realm where Christ lives seated at the right hand of God, we need to set our minds on things above, seeking things that are above (Col 3:1-4). **Likewise, in the matter of suffering, victory begins in thought, having the same mind as Christ when He suffered, that is, setting our minds on the Spirit to unite with Christ.**

**14.** “But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him” (1 Cor. 6:17). **When we set our minds on the Spirit, we are united to Christ, and thus the sufferings of Christ will help us to bear our sufferings.** He who is armed for suffering is prepared, even if it does not come.

**15.** “For he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin” (1 Peter 4:1) may give the idea of asceticism. However, the meaning is: when we go through suffering, it is natural for us to turn to the Lord and reflect a little on our lives. **Sufferings make us return to the Lord to be enlightened and seek God's will.** They certainly cool the passions of the flesh and lead men to reflect, while prosperity and comfort heat the passions. **Sufferings encourage us, in the time we have left in the flesh, to live “no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God”** (1 Peter 4:2).

**16.** In the past, many of the Jews, before they were converted, acted like the Gentiles, living in lasciviousness (unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lewdness, debauchery), lusts (sensuality), drunkenness (binging on wine), orgies (carousing), drunkenness (drinking parties), and detestable idolatries (1 Peter 4:3). When they left this vein way of life, the Gentiles, their former friends, began to be estranged from them, because they no longer agreed with them in the same excess of debauchery, so they began to slander them (1 Peter 4:4).

**17.** Excessive debauchery can be understood as a torrent, a tide, that drags people towards complete moral degradation. **The change in the lives of those who have believed bothers those who follow their old and vain way of life, because the light begins to expose their darkness.** The weapon they use to defend themselves is to resort to defamation and slander.

**18.** Those who live a life of debauchery “will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead” (1 Pet. 4:5). It is important for everyone to know that nothing will go unpunished. All the unbelievers who are alive at the second coming of the Lord Jesus will be judged before the Millennium (Matt. 25:31-46). And all the dead will be judged after the Millennium at the great white throne (Rev. 20:11-15). The judgment of believers has already begun at the house of God in this age (1 Pet. 4:17). **It is better for us to be judged today, because we are warned whenever we are out of line, so that we will be approved when Jesus returns.**

**19.** In Revelation, John was invited to go up to heaven to see that there is a throne there and someone is sitting on it (Revelation 4:1-2). **We need to live our lives aware that there is someone**

on the throne. We need to always act according to the Lord's leading, always depending on God.

20. The gospel was also preached to the dead, "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit" (1 Peter 4:6). It seems strange to say that the gospel was preached to the dead, but from the context it refers to believers who, at the time of Peter's letter, had died because they were persecuted and tested by God as part of the judgment of His house, the church.

21. On the one hand, those who suffer for the sake of righteousness **receive the guidance and care of the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.** (1 Pet. 2:25). On the other hand, **their sufferings are part of the judgment of God's government over His church, for the purpose of testing their faith, with a view to final approval, the salvation of the soul** (1 Pet 1:7-9).

**1 Pet 4:7-10; Col 3:14; 1 John 4:8; 1:1; Eph 4:15-16; James 5:20; Prov 10:12**

22. "But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers" (1 Peter 4:7). **After our trip to Africa, the coming of the Lord became more concrete for us.** Brother Dong's dream of preaching the gospel of the kingdom on that continent is being consolidated. We saw how the brothers and sisters there are loving the word, which is working great miracles in their midst. **They confessed that they were living a routine and traditional life, but from the moment the Spirit led them to practice colporting, GPC, and House of Teens, their lives became agitated.** It was confirmed to us that the coming of the Lord is very close! **Therefore, we must increasingly live a sober and judicious life to bring the Lord back. Our money, energy, and time should be for this purpose.**

23. There is time to do God's will: **Christ to head up all things.** We still live under the count of time, because God has not yet managed to fulfill this. **Our struggle must be to make Christ head us up, the church, first.** We are at the end of the church age, and in the last seven years someone will arise who will be able to bring order to the world situation and will allow the construction of the temple in Israel. In the last three and a half years the great tribulation will come. **However, the overcomers will be raptured first because they will have done God's will. We have only a few years to finish everything that the saints of these 20 centuries have already done. Now it is our turn!** At the end of the great tribulation, Christ will return and begin the millennium age. The millennium will still be within time, because only the overcomers will enjoy it. **Once the millennium is over, we will arrive at the New Jerusalem, when the count of time will end, and eternity will resume.**

24. Therefore, in today's time we must be discerning, which in Greek means having a sound mind, good sense (the ability to judge correctly and in a balanced way), and sober (having a healthy mind, moderate, controlled) to dedicate ourselves to prayer. This is in accordance with what Jesus said to the disciples, **"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak"** (Matthew 26:41). Immersing ourselves in the word and in the church life will always protect us.

25. "And above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins'" (1 Peter 4:8). **We are not called to live an individual Christian life. Peter specifies that we are living stones for building; the main element for building is the love of God, for God is love.** (1 John 4:8). Love is the bond, the only element that unites us, connects us and ties us together perfectly (Col 3:14). **Love unites us with God and with each other perfectly.**

26. Love is the very essence of God; it is the very nature of God's life. When we receive the Word of life, eternal life itself provides us with love in the fellowship of life (1 John 1:1). The intensity of love among brothers and sisters depends on the intensity of the circulation of life through the

apostle's word. **The natural man does not possess such love for edification, so it is crucial that we circulate the word of life within us.**

27. And so, speaking the truth in love, we grow up into Christ, who is the Head, from whom the whole body, joined together and knit together by the joints and the cooperation of each member, causes its own growth in love (Eph 4:15-16). **There is no way for us to be together and consolidated without love.** In a building, what holds all the necessary materials together into a solid block is cement and water. We are these loose building materials, but with cement and water (love), we are united into something solid and unique. Only the church in Philadelphia has this characteristic: intense love for one another, that is, sincere brotherly love.

**1 Pet 4:9-10; Eph 4:7,11-12; Rom 12:5-6; 1 Cor 12:14-27**

28. "Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:9-10). **The members of the body of Christ have received different gifts according to the grace given to each one (Rom. 12:5-6), to carry out their function for the edification of the body of Christ.** (Eph 4:11-12).

29. There are many members, but one body of Christ; we are, individually, members of this body. God has arranged the members, placing each one of them in the body, as it pleased Him (1 Cor 12:14,18,20,25-27). **He Himself has placed us in the right place, let us not complain or keep longing for a different function.**

30. Let us be hospitable, welcoming one another without complaining. **Our home is to serve the Lord and serve our brothers and sisters. Let us open it to establish family groups to shepherd and feed our new brothers and sisters and each other.** God has given His church so many riches in His Word. **Let us dispense them as good stewards of God's manifold grace to one another, for the edification of the church.**

**1 Pet 4:11; Acts 2:42; Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 14:4b; 2 Cor 3:5-6**

31. "If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 4:11). In the church we speak according to the oracles of God (utterance, divine oracle), that is, according to the word of God spoken by the apostles. **This is yet another confirmation that the church follows the same principles as the early church: they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and in the fellowship of that teaching** (Acts 2:42). They did not speak by their own eloquence or wisdom, but followed the "oracle of God," that is, what God spoke through the apostles.

32. Paul also speaks about the gift of prophecy, which is according to the proportion of faith (Romans 12:6). In the explanatory note of the Bible in the Recovery Version it is said that: "To prophesy is to speak for God and manifest God in speaking, under His direct revelation. Prophesying can include prediction, but it is not the main aspect of the prophecy mentioned here. Prophesying brings God's revelation so that the church, the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 14:4b), may be edified. These three—prophecy, teaching, and exhortation—are related to each other. The one who prophesies speaks from what he has received as direct revelation from God. The one who teaches instructs others, not based on direct revelation, but on what the prophet has spoken. The one who exhorts does so according to direct speech under God's revelation and teaching that is according to that revelation. **These three types of speech are for the edification of the body. They minister the supply of life to the saints, that they may grow together by the word of God.**"

33. If anyone serves, "let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever"

(1 Peter 4:11). **Nothing should be done by the strength of man; our sufficiency comes from God, for we are ministers of a new covenant, of the Holy Spirit** (2 Cor 3:5-6). **Everything comes from God, and we must follow closely, ruminare, and practice the word. All glory be to God, for to Him belongs the glory and the dominion forever and ever. He is the One who rules over all!**