

1 PETER 4:14

¹⁴If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

Hope in the midst of persecution is a clear theme throughout the Book of 1 Peter. It's both an encouragement and a promise – suffering will give way to glory. It works through the past, present and future: Jesus has prevailed on the cross and in raising Him to life God the Father has overcome death. The Holy Spirit is with us in the here and now. Christ will return in glory. There is every reason for hope.

Here, Peter takes something considered by the contemporary world to be shameful – for the community he writes to, and for many people around the world today, it is being a Christian.

Jesus died whilst being mocked, insulted, and berated. He died in shame. Yet this is what He was born to do, the hour for which He came. For this death reveals the glory of God. God's glory seen in the humiliation of Christ, as God bears our sin and shares our pain. The glory of God is how He loves us. This shameful death transforms shame into victory, unholiness into holiness.

Life as a Christian isn't all suffering. It's experiencing the joy which the certainty of the hope brings, even in the darkest times. The promise of a world where everything will one day be made new.

When people see that hope being lived, incredible things can happen. The living God gives people a living hope.

As we live as Christians we experience God's blessings, even as we know humankind's suffering. St Paul talks about us sharing His sufferings, that we may enter into His glory. It is the depth of glory found in the unexpected places, in the darkest corners, in those who are rejected and abused. It is knowing that God considers us worth dying for, and that no experience of suffering or sorrow is able to overcome the capacity of God to bring life.

This is the work of the Holy Spirit. Whatever we are going through, the prayer, 'Come Holy Spirit' changes things. Pray most especially the Holy Spirit would so work in your five friends that they are able to enter into glory through the sufferings of Christ.

In the beauty, the magnificence, and the joy of our lives, as well as the suffering and the pain, is the glory of God who will come again.

May the Spirit of glory be upon you, and upon those you pray for, today and all your days.