**The Sufferings of a Christian (1 Peter 4:12-19)**

Like our forefathers, we are called to persevere in every situation. Greetings to you in the name of Jesus Christ as we get ready to talk about a spiritual aspect of the Armenian Genocide. It is true that we continue to commemorate, to demand, and to bring back to our minds through pictures and through reading and consuming historical data the sufferings of our forefathers in those eight years from 1915 to 1923. When we sound the voice of demand for justice, we are acting in accordance with the Scriptures. Yes, we all desire to see done what is right, true and just. Demanding justice, when it is done by submitting the issue into God’s hands, becomes a spiritual act. Today we are called to remain faithful by facing our deserts, difficulties and sufferings while submitted to God. The Apostle Peter says that this perseverance will be a blessing for us both in this life and especially at the Final Judgment. Again, just as our forefathers did, we are called to persevere in every situation. Let us speak, then, about perseverance in light of the Armenian Genocide.

For God, the suffering of a believer for faith is not a strange surprise. As we intimated above, the sufferings of both our Armenian forefathers in the Genocide and Christian forefathers in the early years of the Church were quite painful ordeals. Many today react negatively when we say to them that when a Christian suffers for their faith, they show their loyalty to Christ, instead of having their own comfort and things as idols. It was exactly that, which happened to our forefathers who went through the Genocide and those Christian martyrs that suffered for their faith in the Early Church. Peter says that suffering is not a strange experience for the believer. It should not be considered extraordinary that until today, in various ethnicities, there are those who turn to Christ and who lose their families, their possessions, their good reputation, their comfort, their lands, their jobs, and everything else. In the case of we Armenians, we lost our millennia-old communities all at once – and that loss on a mass scale weighed much more heavily on the consciences and hearts of our people. However, that experience did (still) result in fruit in many survivors. We see their progress today; we see their hope and forward motion.

However, today many only wish to have a physically comfortable life. They flee from every difficulty. They seek out every means to make life easy, so as to sustain their materialistic lifestyle undisturbed. But through all that, they (and we sometimes) forget that a century ago and twenty centuries ago, people put all that aside so that their faith, their Christian nation would continue to worship the Lord in the following centuries. Our Christian forefathers left us an inheritance. Our Genocide forefathers and mothers left us an inheritance. But what are we supposed to do in response to this? They died, and we are here…

The Bible says not to be shocked. We ought not to consider suffering as something strange for us. If Christ suffered, then we as Blood-bought believers may encounter similar difficulties. May those instances of suffering become opportunities to praise God – not because suffering itself is pleasant or that we do not feel the pain associated with it, but because we are on Christ’s path as were our forefathers. Besides; after every crucifixion there is a subsequent resurrection. If the latter doesn’t happen in this life, it will take place in the next.

May the sufferings of our forefathers remind us not only about their truth but also of the One Who Gives Meaning to suffering, Jesus, our Suffering, Crucified, and Risen Savior.

Yes, we don’t see justice yet for the Armenian Genocide in this world. However, spiritually we can already find our vindication in our Jesus-centered life. Come and let us renew our faith today, which our forefathers had toward God, and let us not be negatively affected when we encounter various fiery trials during our life-journey. For God, the suffering of a believer for faith is not a strange surprise. Like our forefathers, we are called to persevere in every situation.

May God grant us to see justice done on this earth, but even more than that, may He grant us a spirit of faithfulness and perseverance toward Him. May God bless the memory of our suffered martyrs. May God be praised for keeping them steadfast and from weakening resolve in the face of the enemy’s evil deeds and temptations.

May God keep you steadfast as He did them. Amen.