



Links Players

Suffering - Suffering for Righteousness

Now, who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed...For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. (1 Peter 3:13-17)

No matter your age, you'll probably agree that golf has undergone more than a few changes in our short lifetime. In 1979, TaylorMade introduced the "Pittsburg Persimmon," a metal driver that eventually revolutionized the game—a persimmon wood, though beautiful, was bound to the "dustbin of history."

However, some changes cause more than a few to wince. When the USGA changed how we "drop the ball," the back-and-forth banter accelerated. The new rule states, "The ball must be dropped straight down from knee height..." Unless you have abnormally long arms, you will have to crouch to reach "knee height." It looks awkward!

Change in our sport is one thing; change in our shared cultural lives is another. To suggest that American culture is undergoing sweeping changes is an understatement, not to mention the speed with which these cultural shifts are happening. These changes have people asking, "What is driving all this?"

The shorthand version is this: America has been sawing off the cultural limb from the tree of a Christian worldview for the better part of sixty years. Said more plainly, large swaths of American culture and its institutions have "exchanged the Creator for the creature" and "exchanged the truth for the lie" (Romans 1: 25).

As for the cultural outcomes of snubbing our Creator, America has yet to see the mayhem from such a disastrous decision.

When George Orwell said, "The further society drifts from truth, the more it will hate those who speak it," he was, even if unknowingly, repeating what our Savior warned us about, "...because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you (John 15:18-19).

Suffering due to standing for righteousness in the wide-ranging categories of sexual ethics, the institution of marriage, medical ethics, gender debates, and biblical justice—to name a few—is not something that merely happens in the future; it's happening now.

It's no secret that throughout the church's history, many have suffered

greatly for their loyalty to Jesus Christ. When Christians read Scripture, it's obvious that suffering for righteousness is the norm, especially when we understand that they lived in a pagan society.

For over two centuries, followers of Christ have enjoyed relative peace because Christian principles have largely shaped Western culture. Those days are rapidly waning.

Many scholars argue we have entered a "post-Christian" era. Some scholars convincingly demonstrate that we are not moving toward a secular society; rather, we are returning to a pagan culture.

If we have spent all the Christian capital on which American culture has depended, expect to see the rise of a polytheistic, pagan, and morally perverted culture increasingly hostile toward Christians.

On the other hand, hopefully, our American culture will, like the Prodigal Son, recognize the consequences of its insanity, humble itself, and return home to the Father's loving arms.

Prayer: Jesus! Strengthen us for whatever lies ahead.

READING - 1 Peter 3:8-18

1. Since golf is a sport where the player calls a rules violation upon himself, discuss those moments when you were confronted with "suffering for doing what's right," e.g., "You caused the ball to move, and no one saw it but you."

2. After reading 1 Peter 3:8-18, list and discuss some of Christians' responses regarding slander, mistreatment, and suffering.

3. Application: Discuss ways you are already involved or could be involved in the larger community around you where you are endeavoring to influence it with Christian values.
