

PILGRIM HOME CHURCH

The smaller groups in our church community are inside our homes where we go deeper, build friendships, and walk out the Christian life with each other.

HOME CHURCH GUIDE

- + “Breaking the Ice” question (group facilitator)
- + **CHECK-INS:** Introduce, check-in
- + **CARE:** Needs in the group
- + **COMPASSION:** What is the group planning? Are you inviting your neighbours to join in?
- + **GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS** Church-wide, group-only
- + **DIG IN:** Discuss questions as a group
- + **END AND HOMEWORK:** Final questions, prayer huddles for personal requests. Consider breaking into small groups (huddles) of 2-4, by gender, if large enough.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Share a story of a time when you were in pain. What was the cause? Did it end? How did you act when you were in pain?
2. In what ways can suffering be a blessing?
3. It might have been a surprise to be early Christians to discover that even though Jesus the Messiah was raised from the dead, there was still a period of time of intense suffering for His people. Why do you think we may be surprised when we suffer? Why should it not surprise us?
4. Thinking of being insulted for following Jesus as a blessing seems strange. Peter gives the example of real criminals suffering because of wrongdoing (v15). Their suffering highlights their crime and shame for all. How does this contrast with what suffering means for a Christian(16)?
5. What can you do to develop a faith that will withstand pressure and persecution?
6. But for Jesus’ mercy and grace, we all are lost in our self-centred sinfulness. Judgment starts with “God’s house” first. How does this knowledge affect us? What do vv.17-18 indicate?
7. When we do good and bless others, even enemies (v19), we demonstrate our trust in God’s final word. In what areas of life do you struggle with this?
8. “Doing good” is first about showing your trust in God’s love, which has the final word. What is a clear, practical way you could show you are trusting your life to God by doing good?

PRAYER: “Pray that your attitude in suffering will not be surprise or resentment but trust in God and forgiveness toward others. If you are being mistreated for the name of Christ, ask God to help you see it as a blessing and profound joy that you are sharing the suffering of the Messiah (v. 13)” (NT Wright).

PRAYER REQUESTS:

DECEMBER 8 ADVENT 2 1 PETER 4:12-19

Persecution & Glory

1 Peter 4:12-19 (NET Bible)

¹² Dear friends, do not be astonished that a trial by fire is occurring among you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice in the degree that you have shared in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice and be glad. ¹⁴ If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory, who is the Spirit of God, rests on you. ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer or thief or criminal or as a troublemaker. ¹⁶ But if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but glorify God that you bear such a name. ¹⁷ For it is time for judgment to begin, starting with the house of God. And if it starts with us, what will be the fate of those who are disobedient to the gospel of God? ¹⁸ And if the righteous are barely saved, what will become of the ungodly and sinners? ¹⁹ So then let those who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator as they do good.

BIG IDEAS IN THE TEXT

THROUGH THE SCRIPTURE

1 Peter 4:12-19 - Two Final Thoughts about Suffering for Christ

1 *Peter* 4:12-16 - The Blessing of Suffering
Jesus in *Mark* 13:11, *Luke* 12:12, Paul in *Philippians* 3:10

1 *Peter* 4:12 Expect Suffering

1 *Peter* 4:13-14 Rejoice in Suffering-The Power of the Holy Spirit in Suffering

We tend to think of suffering and hard times as a sign of a curse, but here we learn something more.

1 *Peter* 4:15 Examine Yourself

Suffering because you're reaping consequences of sin and bad behaviours and attitudes is not "blessed" in any way.

Maybe they thought they "should be ashamed of themselves for believing something that so offended their society...In a culture where one's standing is based on honour or shame, shame is no doubt a major issue for Christians who offend their society by their beliefs or lifestyle. But Peter wants his readers to understand themselves on very different terms. He provides 'an alternative way of calculating honour within their alternative, liminal communities of faith'"((Bechtler 1998:203-4) Jobes 2005:290)).

1 *Peter* 4:17-18 - Suffering Now as Eschatological Judgement and Do Not Be Ashamed

There are several ways to read this, but what seems most consistent with Peter's use of the words is that "eschatological judgment, understood as the sorting out of humanity, begins with God's house, defined in 2:4-5 as those who come to Christ and are built as living stones into a spiritual house... Those who profess Christ are the first ones to be tested in God's judging action, and it occurs during their lives and throughout history" (Jobes, 293).

"One common human response to abuse, including undeserved abuse, is feeling shame and disgrace. But Peter declares that shame is not appropriate in this situation...Glorify God because you bear this[Christian/Christ-follower] name" (Walter, 141)

1 *Peter* 4:18 - Peter's point is "not that salvation is difficult for God to achieve, though the sufferings of Christ were certainly no easy means of atonement. The thought is that the world's response makes it difficult for Christians to remain faithful to Christ to the end" (Jobes, 294).

1 *Peter* 4:19 - Trust God, Even While Suffering. Keep Doing Good.

"'Doing good' is much more positive than that [rule-keeping, etc.]. It means bringing fresh goodness, fresh love, fresh kindness, fresh wisdom into the community, into the family, to the people we meet on the street" (Wright, 90).

FOLLOW UP

Sources: Others, The NIV Application Commentary, By Scot McKnight; Anchor Biblical Commentary, John Elliott; IVP NT Commentary, I. Howard Marshall; Life Lessons, Max Lucado; Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT, Karen H. Jobes; Daily Bible Study Bible Series, William Barclay; NIV Biblical Commentary, Norman Hillier; Believers Church Commentary, Erland Waltner; Story of God Bible Commentary, Dennis R. Edwards; Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians, Ben Witherington III; NICNT, Peter Davids; Life Applications Commentary.