

This week we are continuing our study in 1 Peter. In this section of our text, Peter looks at how we should respond in the midst of suffering. When we suffer for the cause of Christ our response will be much different than if we suffer because of poor choices.

Sermon Outline:

1 Peter 4:12-19 (Suffering as a Christian)

There are multiple types of suffering that are found throughout scripture but this week we discussed four categories specifically:

- 1) Privileged or 1st world suffering
- 2) Suffering because we live in a world that's broken because of sin
- 3) Suffering for our faith
- 4) Suffering because of the consequences to our decisions and actions

The responses to suffering will often depend of what type of suffering we are experiencing. This can be tough to figure out sometimes but "solving for x" is a necessary step. This is best done through a consistent Bible reading and prayer life combined with a loving and trusted community around you. We can try to figure this out ourselves but this can be difficult.

Once we figure out why we are suffering we are in a much better position to determine how to make the best out of the suffering as well as finding ways to shorten or end unnecessary suffering in our life.

Suggested Discussion Questions:

- Can you think of a time that you got really upset over something but later in hindsight realized it was a bit of a 1st world problem?
- Why do you think that we so often are surprised when suffering happens in our lives? Is there one type of suffering that is more likely to be a surprise?
- In The Message translation it mentions suffering because of our faith as "a spiritual refining process". Share a time that you suffered through any of the four types of suffering but didn't realize it's value until after the fact?
- Peter tells us to rejoice in our suffering. We can do this knowing that God is in control, has a plan and will always be with us. Why is this still so hard to do even if we believe all of these things? How can we counter this doubt in God in the midst of our suffering?
- Have you ever been insulted for the name of Christ? How? How did you respond? Would you respond differently in the future?
- If you were suffering because of the consequences to your choices what type of person would you allow to point this out to you? Do you have any of these people in your life?
- Why do you think it's often difficult to determine what type of suffering we're in, while we're in it?
- SUGGESTION: Pray for the countries around the world that suffer severe persecution because of their faith in Jesus Christ

Additional Reading / Devotions:

- Romans 5:1-5
- James 1:2-4