



October 27, 2024

**Be
Be: Ready**

Big Idea: Being persecuted for following Jesus refines, gives purpose, and deepens intimacy with Jesus.

Overview: Peter continues to write to a persecuted and suffering minority. It is because of their alignment with Jesus that they face insults, ridicule, persecution, and even death. It is well documented within the first few centuries of church history, that Jesus followers faced disproportionate and targeted persecution. How do the early church leaders help the church through the difficulties of such suffering? 1 Peter 4 gives us a window into how Peter, who will also die for his faith shortly after this letter is written, guides this ancient church through such trying circumstances. Peter reframes their suffering by pointing them to the suffering of Christ, and how through this identification, rejoicing, blessing and acceptance can come. We live in much different circumstances now, but there are many parallels and challenges for the Western church to learn and lean into in our modern world.

Life Group Objectives:

Remember why you exist as a group! Life Groups are to:

1. Reflect on this past week's message and passage or dig into the series you are going through as a group. We desire for you to have the Bible play a key role in your time together.
2. Share openly and authentically about your life: what is the good that needs to be celebrated? What is the challenge that needs encouragement and prayer?
3. Pray together and provide encouragement for other group members. How can you build one another up this week?
4. This could be a great week to encourage one another (Hebrews 3:13). How can you take a few minutes to speak life into other group members?

Conversation starters:

- What was the highlight of this week's sermon for you? What got you thinking?
- Have you ever faced a challenging situation that tested your faith? How did you respond?

Learning from God's Word: Bible Study Discussion

Read Scripture: 1 Peter 4:12-19

Questions for Discussion:

A 5 Point Guide for Christian Suffering. Suffering is:

- 1. Not a surprise vs. 12**
 - Peter says to not be surprised by the fiery trial. How do you respond when trials, persecution, and suffering come? Are you surprised?
 - Read Luke 6:26. What do you think Jesus is saying here? How do we connect this to the unsurprising trials Peter is reminding us of?
- 2. Identification with Christ vs. 13**
 - How does Christ's persecution and suffering help us to understand, endure, and find joy in our own trials?
 - In our modern world, what does it look like "to participate in the sufferings of Christ?"
- 3. Blessed vs. 14**

- Peter claims that through trials we can be “blessed,” we can “rejoice,” and that we can “praise God.” How is this possible when we are in the middle of trials, persecution and suffering?
 - What trial, persecution, or suffering are you currently facing? How can this Life Group support you?
- 4. Refinement vs. 17**
- Peter tells this persecuted group of Christians that judgement in the fiery trial first starts with Christians. It is through the purifying fire that believers are refined, purified and are “saved” (vs. 18). How does persecution and suffering purify and refine us?
- 5. Possible because of God’s character vs. 19**
- What does “doing good” look like during trials? What opportunity do you have right now, during your challenge, to seek the good of others?
 - Why does Peter tell us to commit to our “faithful Creator.” What is He saying about God in the middle of our challenges?

Listening to God:

- How has God been present in our discussion so far? What themes have emerged?
- In our strategic plan, we dream of every Life Group serving one of our missional partners atleast twice a year. How can you engage in this as a group?

Prayer Prompts and Application:

- What is the role of community and Life Groups when someone walks through persecution and trials? What can your group commit to?

For a fantastic resource on this topic, check out Tim Keller’s *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering* [here](#).