

Discussion Guide

1 Peter 4:12-19

Opening Prayer

Guided Prayer: Pray asking for the Holy Spirit's guidance in understanding and applying the truths discussed.

Recap

Recap of the Sermon and Summary of the Text

In 1 Peter 4:12-19, Peter addresses the reality of suffering for being a Christian and encourages believers not to be surprised by the fiery trials they face. He reminds them that such suffering is a participation in Christ's sufferings and is a cause for rejoicing because it means they will also share in His glory when it is revealed. Peter distinguishes between suffering for doing good and suffering for doing evil, urging believers to ensure that their suffering is a result of their Christian witness rather than wrongdoing. He calls Christians to commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good, even in the face of persecution.

Understanding the Text

1. **Expectation of Trials:** What does Peter mean when he says not to be surprised by the "fiery ordeal" that has come upon believers?
2. **Sharing in Christ's Sufferings:** How does Peter describe the relationship between a believer's sufferings and Christ's sufferings?
3. **Rejoicing in Suffering:** Why does Peter say believers should rejoice in their sufferings?
4. **Distinguishing Suffering:** How does Peter differentiate between suffering for being a Christian and suffering for doing wrong?
5. **Judgment and the Household of God:** What does Peter mean by saying that judgment begins with God's household?

Practical Application

1. **Facing Trials:** Reflect on a time when you faced a difficult situation because of your faith. How did you respond, and how can you apply Peter's teachings to that situation?
2. **Finding Joy in Suffering:** What are practical ways you can find joy amid suffering?
3. **Maintaining Integrity:** How can you ensure that your suffering is for righteous reasons and not because of wrongdoing?
4. **Supporting Each Other:** How can you support fellow believers who are currently experiencing trials or persecution for their faith?
5. **Commitment to God:** What steps can you take to commit yourself more fully to God and continue doing good, even in the face of opposition?
6. **Witnessing Through Suffering:** How can your response to suffering serve as a witness to non-believers about the hope and strength found in Christ?
7. **Prayer in Persecution:** How can you incorporate prayer for strength and perseverance in your life, especially during times of suffering?
8. **Encouraging Perseverance:** How can you encourage others in our church to persevere in their faith despite challenges?

God Has More to Say

1 Peter 4:12-19 addresses the theme of suffering for being a Christian, encouraging believers not to be surprised by trials, but to rejoice in participating in Christ's sufferings, and to entrust themselves to God while continuing to do good. Here are related biblical passages that illuminate these themes:

1. **Matthew 5:10-12:** In the Beatitudes, Jesus teaches that those who are persecuted because of righteousness are blessed, and He encourages them to rejoice and be glad, because great is their reward in heaven.
2. **John 15:18-20:** Jesus tells His disciples that if the world hates them, they should remember that it hated Him first. He warns that if they persecuted Him, they will also persecute His followers.
3. **Acts 5:41:** After being flogged for preaching about Jesus, the apostles rejoice because they have been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for His name, demonstrating the attitude Peter encourages in his letter.
4. **Romans 8:17-18:** Paul writes that if we share in Christ's sufferings, we will also share in His glory, and he considers that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.
5. **2 Timothy 3:12:** Paul states that everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, affirming the inevitability of suffering for believers.
6. **James 1:2-4:** James advises believers to consider it pure joy whenever they face trials of many kinds because the testing of their faith produces perseverance, ultimately leading to spiritual maturity.
7. **1 Peter 1:6-7:** Earlier in his letter, Peter speaks about rejoicing amid various trials because they prove the genuineness of faith, which is of greater worth than gold and results in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.
8. **Hebrews 12:3-11:** This passage encourages believers to endure hardship as discipline from God, which is intended for their good, to share in His holiness, and to produce a harvest of righteousness and peace.
9. **Philippians 1:29:** Paul explains that it has been granted to believers not only to believe in Christ but also to suffer for Him, emphasizing that suffering is a part of the Christian calling.
10. **2 Corinthians 1:5-7:** Paul writes about the overflow of Christ's sufferings into the lives of believers, but also the overflow of comfort, highlighting the sharing in both suffering and consolation.
11. **1 Peter 2:20-23:** Peter advises that if believers suffer for doing good and endure it, this is commendable before God. He points to Christ as an example, who suffered unjustly but entrusted Himself to God who judges justly.
12. **Revelation 2:10:** Jesus encourages the church in Smyrna to not be afraid of what they are about to suffer. He promises the crown of life to those who are faithful, even to the point of death.

Prayer - End with prayer, focusing on specific requests related to the sermon's themes, personal struggles, and applications.