

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION – A LIVING HOPE – STUDY OF I PETER
Week 8 – Doctrine of Suffering

I Pet 1.6-7 - ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed¹

Central Bible Truth: We will suffer in this world

Purpose: Peter warns us that live in this world involves suffering and wants us to understand why, what it means and what the result of that suffering is

Why Does God Allow Suffering

1. As Christians suffering should be expected

- Don't be surprised – **4.12-16**

¹² Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵ If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. ¹⁶ However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name¹.

- Because Jesus suffered – **1.10-11, 2.4**

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.¹
⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—¹

- Because of Christ's Name – **John 15.21**

²¹ They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me.¹

- As a Christian it is our destiny – **I Peter 2.21-23, Phil 1.29, I Thes 3.3**

²¹ To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. ²² "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."²³ When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.¹

²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him,¹

³ so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them.¹

¹ The Holy Bible : New International Version. Grand Rapids : Zondervan, 1996, c1984

- All Christians will be persecuted – **John 16.33, 2 Tim 3.12**

³³ *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”¹*

¹² *In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,¹*

- We share in Christ’s sufferings so that we may share in His glory – **Rom 8.16-23**

¹⁶ *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children* ¹⁷ *Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.* ¹⁸ *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.* ¹⁹ *The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.* ²⁰ *For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope* ²¹ *that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.* ²² *We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.* ²³ *Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.¹*

2. Suffering brings us closer to and makes us like Christ – **4.12-13, 2 Cor 4.7-10, Phil 3.10, Heb 12.9,-10,**

⁷ *But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.* ⁸ *We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;* ⁹ *persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.* ¹⁰ *We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.¹*

¹⁰ *I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,¹*

⁹ *Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!* ¹⁰ *Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.¹*

3. Commendable before God – **2.19-20, Matt 5.10-12**

¹⁹ *For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God.* ²⁰ *But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.¹*

¹⁰ *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* ¹¹ *“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.* ¹² *Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.¹*

4. That your faith may be proved genuine and will be a lasting faith – Suffering brings about strength, steadfastness, and perseverance – which ultimately leads to a Living Hope- **1.7, 5.10, James 1.3-4, Rom 5.3-4**

⁷ *These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.¹*

¹⁰ *And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.¹*

³ *because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.* ⁴ *Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything ¹*

³ *Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope.¹*

5. Primary and powerful testimony

- Leads non-believers to glorify God – **2.12**

¹² *Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*¹

- Provides opportunity to give our testimony – **3.14, Phil 1.12-13**

¹⁴ *But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened."*¹⁵ *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.*¹

¹² *Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. ¹³ As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.*¹

6. Suffering brings you to a place of abundance and leads to the crown of life – **Psa 66.10-12, James 1.12, Rev 2.10**

¹⁰ *For you, O God, tested us; you refined us like silver. ¹¹ You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs. ¹² You let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance.*¹

¹² *Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him*¹

¹⁰ *Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.*¹

Conclusion:

Suffering will occur in this life and we should not be surprised –

- It is our calling and destiny
- It makes more like Christ
- Commendable before God
- Strengthens our faith
- It is a powerful testimony and eventually
- Brings us to a place of abundance and provides the crown of Life