

occupied with suffering

EXILES | 1 PETER 4:12-19 | DECEMBER 19/20, 2015 | PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

"So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good." (1 Peter 4:19)

The Christ-centered Perspective on our Suffering (1 Peter 4:12-13)

Unsurprised by suffering

The joy of participation in Christ's sufferings

The glory to be revealed

The Christ-centered Reason for our Suffering (1 Peter 4:14-16)

The Holy Spirit in our suffering

The wrong reasons for suffering

The right reasons for suffering

The Final Judgment and our Suffering (1 Peter 4:17-18)

Judgment and God's house

Judgment and those outside God's house

The Practical Approach to our Suffering (1 Peter 4:19)

According to God's will

Relying on God's faithfulness

Continuing to do good

1. Have you ever personally experienced or heard about someone else suffering for their faith? What happened?
2. "Exiles" continues as we look at 1 Peter 4:12-19. Begin your study in prayer, asking God to speak into your life, and then read that passage aloud.
3. In this letter, Peter returns again and again to the theme of suffering as a Christian. In 1 Peter 4:12-13, what sort of attitude does Peter encourage his readers to have about their suffering?
4. It may sound odd to encourage someone to rejoice in the midst of suffering. In verse 13, what reason does Peter give for the joy we can have in suffering now?
5. With verses 14-16, Peter turns his attention to the practical reasons that we may suffer at the hands of others. If we are Christians, what does he say is the right reason for suffering and what is the wrong reason for suffering?
6. In some ways, Peter is challenging believers to persevere for our faith, even in the midst of suffering. While most of us do not face threats of death for our faith, we still may suffer in some ways for our faith. What does it look like for you to persevere as a Christian in your everyday life?
7. In verses 17-18, Peter unfolds an interesting idea that the judgment of God upon the world actually begins with God's people. Comparing what you read in these verses with what he wrote earlier in 1 Peter 2:1-10, why do you think this might be the case?
8. Peter suggests that the suffering to come upon "those who do not obey the gospel of God" (4:17) is worse than what the believers were experiencing presently. What does the Scripture say about this idea? What do you think Peter is talking about?
9. 1 Peter 4:19 returns to some themes from throughout Peter's letter: suffering, God's faithfulness, and doing good. Why would Peter summarize this section on suffering for Christ in this way?
10. What is one specific thing you sense God is speaking to you through this study? If you are with a small group, discuss that with one another and pray about what you share together. If you are studying on your own, write it down, pray about it, and share this with someone during the next few days.

[Next week: We conclude our "Exiles" series by looking at 1 Peter 5:1-14. Take some time to read the passage ahead of time and reflect on what God is saying to you.]