

Sunday, May 7

1. What's stirring in you through this series on 1 Peter? The words of Paul to "resident aliens" can be jarring, how do they feel thus far? What might the Holy Spirit be saying to you and to us through those stirrings and this series?
2. In the past, verse 18-23 have been used to justify and excuse things like slavery. It's clear however, that Peter's emphasis is not on the institution of slavery, as much as it is on the person of Jesus and the response/posture of Jesus' disciples as modeled by Jesus himself. What tension do you feel in these verses? How might the rest of scripture inform how we interpret them?
3. What stirs in you as you read Peter's words on Jesus suffering and abuse for your sake? (vs. 22-25)
4. In 3:1-7, we come across another text that has been used to oppress, mistreat, or disrespect children of God, specifically our sisters in Christ. This was not Peter's intent, nor is that the most faithful interpretation of this passage. Remembering the context of Peter's writing (to strangers in a strange land of strange customs), and remembering that Peter's goal is to encourage his audience to point to Christ in all things as the world watches, how might we read this text in a way that does in fact point to Christ, and doesn't simply end with "wives submit to your husbands?" How are these verses representative of Jesus' love for you?
5. Vs. 7 reminds us that BOTH husband and wife are called to a life of dying to self for the sake of Christ, and for the sake of showing the watching world a new way of being together. What does it look like for BOTH a husband and wife to see the other as "being built into a spiritual house?" (2:5)

Sunday, May 14

1. What does it mean to have "unity of spirit, sympathy, and love for one another?" How are you seeking that posture in your own life with others? How are you seeking that with those around you that might make that challenging? What do you need to assume that posture?
2. In a culture that is quick to rally around the idea of "an eye for an eye," what does this from Peter stir in you; "do not repay evil for evil, or abuse for abuse; but on the contrary repay with a blessing." (3:9)
3. What would it look like for the church to seek this posture? What would be the impact of that? What would the church have to give up or set aside?
4. Peter says that if we suffer for doing what is right, we are blessed. (3:14) What does that mean? How do we begin to understand this as Western Christians, who are quite insulated from suffering like this? What voices might we need to begin (or continue) to listen to?
5. One of the things we've talked about through this series is the fact that the church is being moved from the center of our culture to the margins. How does that influence how we read 3:15-16? What does it mean to share the hope we have in Jesus with gentleness and reverence? And for what purpose are we called to do so?

Sunday, May 21

1. What has been stirring in you over the last number of weeks as we've been engaging Peter's writing on suffering and suffering well?
2. In vs. 10, Peter says "...like good stewards of manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received." What's one way that you're practicing stewardship of the grace you've received? How might you lean into a deeper stewardship?
3. What stirs in you when you read this about suffering; "Rejoice insofar as you are sharing in Christ's suffering, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed?" Can you share a time when you've had the opportunity to rejoice amidst suffering? What might you need in order to rejoice in suffering, when our natural response likely will not be rejoicing?
4. Peter seems to once again make a distinction between suffering for "doing good" and "what is right for the name of Jesus" and suffering for "doing wrong." How do you know the difference between the two? Practically, how does that impact how we show up in hardship?
5. Chapter 4 ends with this, "...let those suffering in accordance with God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good." How does entrusting ourselves to God equip us for suffering? Are there things that keep you from entrusting yourselves fully to God?

Sunday, May 28

1. Today is Pentecost! How does the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to send another to his disciples (John 14:16) impact your ability to trust God amidst suffering like the suffering we've been talking about the last number of weeks?
2. Peter concludes his letter in part by encouraging his audience to "tend to the flock..." How is the Holy Spirit inviting you, and equipping you, to do that? What's one way that you might tend to the flock right where you are this week?
3. Verse 5 includes an encouragement to assume a posture of humility as we "deal with one another." What does that look like today in 2023? What makes it challenging to assume a posture of humility with one another?
4. Peter makes mention of our spiritual enemy (the devil, vs. 8) that prowls looking to devour. On this Pentecost, what is the Holy Spirit doing in you that allows you to resist the enemy?
5. We read the promise that "after we've suffered a little while, the God of grace...will restore us... (vs.10). This verse has been twisted to a message of prosperity that is often unhelpful to our brothers and sisters who continue to find themselves in places of long term suffering. It's thought that "a little while" could mean an entire physical life. Even if that's the case, and our "little while" is a whole life, how does the hope of resurrection in Christ sustain you? How do we avoid using this passage to discourage our brothers and sisters in hard places?