

RELATED SCRIPTURES

STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 4.16.23

2 Timothy 3:12-15 | Philippians 3:8-11 | John 17:20-23

SUMMARY

The book of 1 Peter, written by the apostle Peter, is a letter to Christian converts who had fled Jerusalem from—often unimaginable—persecution. The Roman emperor expelled these converts from their homeland, so Peter refers to them as “exiles.” Peter’s first reminder is that though they are suffering and persecuted pilgrims, they ought not forget who they are. These sufferers are God’s chosen children, and because they are his children, they are subject to his refining *sanctification*. Peter’s opening remarks underscore the link between being a child of God and suffering as a means of sanctification. (Sanctification is the gradual process that all Christians go through whereby they die to their sin and, more and more, live unto righteousness; we are slowly but surely being made to be like Jesus.) In other words, Peter makes the case that their suffering and persecution aren’t just an unfortunate byproduct of a fallen world but a means of growth for the Christian. In and through suffering, the Christian is made to be like Christ, whose ministry was marked by his suffering. Peter’s subsequent remarks (v. 2) conclude with “Grace to you and peace be multiplied.” The “grace and peace” salutation was a standard first-century Christian greeting combining elements of Gentile (grace) and Jewish (peace) cultures. But his prayer is that it would be multiplied, which doesn’t only mean this multiplication be realized as a church growing numerically, but that God’s grace and peace would be multiplied in their hearts to endure the persecution they face. This was Peter’s prayer for the dispersed people of God in the first century, but it remains valid for Christians of all ages—we endure suffering and trials because God has made us his own. He will grow us to the point of completion through every circumstance we face in life.

GROUP QUESTIONS

From the sermon or your direct reading of 1 Peter 1:1-2, share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you.

Why might it be difficult for Christians to embrace suffering as a means of growth and sanctification?
Can you recall a time when suffering produced a strengthened faith?

Consider Peter’s journey, from a disciple who betrayed the Savior to an apostle encouraging the Church to endure suffering (as he was ultimately martyred too). What does this teach us about Jesus followers?
What does it teach us about God?

If there’s one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today’s themes in what you bring before God.