

Crossway Life Group, Week of January 20

See sermon notes on [CMC's webpage](#) for background information

Community

Take time to share and pray for each other's concerns and joys.

Scripture: 1 Peter 4:12-19 **Sermon: "Treated like Christ"**

Reading & Discussing the passage

- **Read 1 Peter 4:12-13.** It seems that Christians (including those Peter is addressing) are sometimes surprised when persecution comes. Why might persecution be surprising? And why does Peter remind Christians *not* to be surprised? **Read John 15:18-20.** How are Peter's instructions similar to Jesus' words?
- **Read 1 Peter 4:14-16.** What are some different reasons that people suffer in this world? Peter assures Christians that there is a special presence and special reward for those who suffer because of their faith in Christ. What are those special blessings? In what ways have you ever experienced these? Share about the circumstances and ways you experienced God in your suffering for being a Christian.
- **Read 1 Peter 4:17-19.** What is Peter's advice to Christians who are suffering? What does it mean to "commit ourselves to our faithful Creator"? What actions or attitudes would indicate that someone is doing that?
- **Read 1 Peter 1:6-7.** What encouragement do you find in Peter's perspective on suffering?
- Do you have any other questions about this passage or about the sermon?

The Big Idea

**Suffering for being a Christian shouldn't be surprising,
and it is cause for joy
and renewed strength for obeying Christ**

Reflection Questions

1. Where do you experience the threat of rejection because of obedience to and identification with Jesus Christ?
2. Where are you tempted not to be distinctive as a Christian?
3. What increases your courage to be distinctive as a Christian?
4. Given all the ways people can suffer, it is important to discern the cause of suffering. If a Christian friend asked for your help to make sense of their suffering, what kinds of questions might you ask to help them discern if their Christianity was the cause of their suffering?
5. When we or others are rejected because of being Christians...
 - ...how should we pray for ourselves or others?
 - ...what should we tell ourselves or others?

Growing in Cultural Understandings

Suffering for being a Christian is generally more likely the lower a person is in the social hierarchy. For example...being a Christian when Christianity isn't honored; being a minority; being a foreigner; being poorer or less educated; having a lower status job; being a woman; having a disability. Have you seen this to be true for yourself or for others? Think about the societies and cultures where you grew up and/or where you have lived. In what ways have those settings made it more or less likely for Christians to be persecuted? In what ways has your own identity (education, gender, social status, etc) made it more or less likely for you to be persecuted as a Christian? How might Peter's encouragement in suffering be particularly important for you?

Serving beyond ourselves

What are ways that your group can be for the benefit of people beyond yourselves? One specific strategy may be to pray for another group of people. And perhaps you could reach out to people in that group and ask them how you might pray.

1 Peter 4:7-11 - New International Version

¹² Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice inasmuch as 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 name. ¹⁷ For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" ¹⁹ So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

John 15:18-20 – New International Version

¹⁸ "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹ If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.

1 Peter 1:6-7 – New International Version

In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.