

Fitting In

- Why do people often want to “fit in” with (or be accepted by) others?
- What are ways that people sometimes don’t fit in?
- What might we tell ourselves or others when we don’t “fit in”?
- What should you tell ourselves or others when we or they are rejected because of being Christians?

Treated like Christ

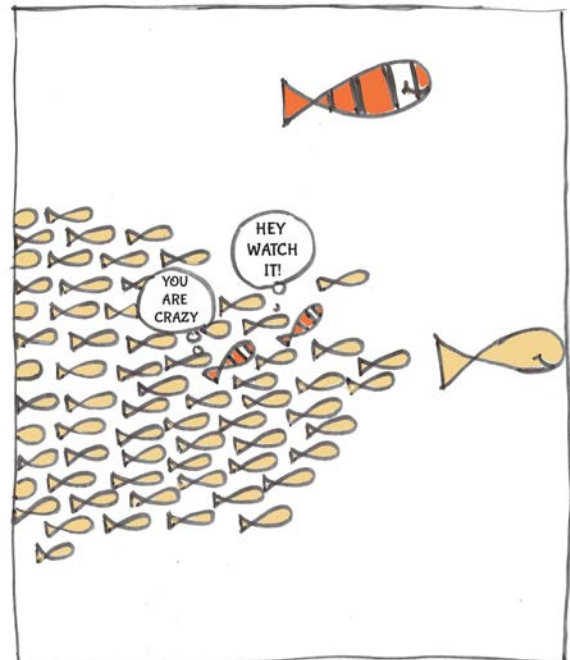
1 Peter 4:12-19

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A Brief History of Time

<u>Creation</u>	<u>Fall</u>	<u>Redemption</u>	<u>Restoration</u>
Genesis 1–2	Genesis 3–11	Genesis 12– Revelation 20	Revelation 21–22

Wheat and weeds grow together, separated “at the harvest” *Matthew 13*

Fish caught in a net together, then separated after they are gathered

Sheep and goats graze together, separated at the end *Matthew 25:31–46*

“The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous”

Matthew 13:48

Final judgment: “Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.” *Revelation 20:15*

Peter

- One of Jesus’ Apostles: seemingly the leader among the apostles
- First main church leader in Jerusalem
- Peter and persecution
 - Denied even knowing Jesus when a servant girl questioned him *John 18*
 - Jesus predicted Peter would suffer, and then glorify God by how he would die as a martyr *John 21*
 - Preached, then was arrested, threatened, and released *Acts 4*
 - Preached, then was arrested, and miraculously released *Acts 5*
 - Preached, then was arrested, beaten, and released *Acts 5*
 - Preached, then was arrested, and miraculously released *Acts 12*
 - Crucified by Emperor Nero (upside down) *Church tradition*

Peter

- We have two letters he wrote to Christians
- First letter...
 - “To God’s elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia...”
 - ‘Exiles’ who were living away from their heavenly home
 - ‘Exiles’ who were living away from their earthly homes
- Purpose of 1 Peter (Peter’s first letter)
 - That people would stand firm in Christianity in spite of the difficulties it brought to be a Christian (persecution)

- We don’t all experience persecution to the same degree
 - Being poorly treated because you are a Christian
- Suffering for being a Christian is more likely the lower you are 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

1 Peter 4:12-19

12-13: Suffering should bring joy (now and later), not surprise

14-16:

17-18:

19:

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Jesus said, “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 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. 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.” *John 15:18-20*

Paul said, “In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” *2 Timothy 3:12*

1 Peter 4:12-19

- 12-13: Suffering should bring joy (now and later), not surprise
- 14-16: • Following a different king will bring conflict
- 17-18: • Christians (and other people) suffer in many ways
- 19: • Peter's focus: social rejection for obeying Jesus and being identified with Him
- Peter's descriptions of the suffering: soft persecution
 - Insults, threats, malicious talk, slander
 - Would end if people stopped obeying Jesus, or stopped being visibly connected with Jesus
 - Jesus & Peter (& many others) experienced far worse
 - The principles are the same, whether great or small
 - Fiery ordeal: perhaps "purifying fire"
 - Suffering now points to joy when Jesus returns

1 Peter 4:12-19

- 12-13: Suffering should bring joy (now and later), not surprise
- 14-16: Only suffering "as a Christian" guarantees joy
- 17-18: • Spirit of glory and of God rests upon sufferers
- 19: • A special presence, and a special reward
- No joy in suffering for being illegal, immoral, rude, arrogant, judgmental, or wrong
 - So discern clearly the cause of the suffering
 - Suffering rightly brings praise to God
 - Jesus described "the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God." *John 21:19*

1 Peter 4:12-19

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17-18: Suffering is part of God’s sorting & purifying people

- 19:
- So society’s rejection of us can be a good sign
 - The job of white blood cells: fight foreign materials
 - When rejected **BECAUSE** of being connected with **CHRIST**, it confirms your identity **IN CHRIST**
 - If suffering is a part of the process in our being saved (for Jesus and for us), how much worse it will eventually be for those who are not being saved!
 - “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God” *Acts 14:22*

1 Peter 4:12-19

12-13: Suffering should bring joy (now and later), not surprise

14-16: Only suffering “as a Christian” guarantees joy

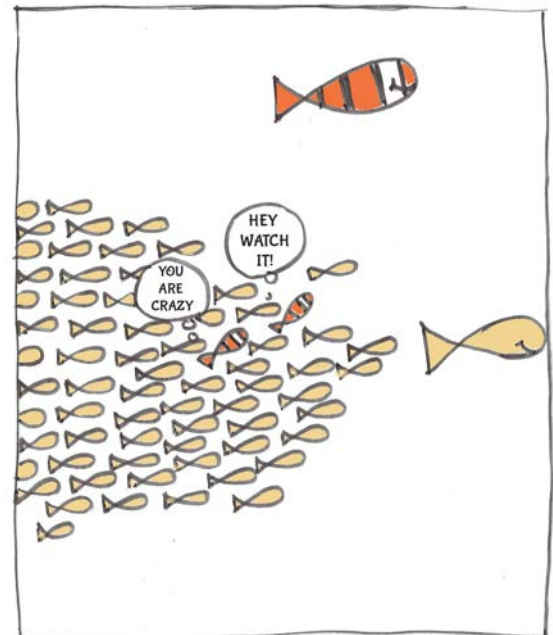
17-18: Suffering is part of God’s sorting & purifying people

- 19: Sufferers: entrust yourselves to your faithful Creator
- Obeying Christ is an expression of trust in Him
 - Boldly identifying oneself with Jesus is declaring His worth
 - Be just like Jesus: “When they hurled their insults at Jesus, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, **he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.**” *1 Peter 2:23*

The Big Idea

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

- When you choose not to join in improper talk or entertainment,
and people isolate you for it
- When you hold to biblical values,
and people judge you for it
- When you speak up for the oppressed and powerless because of Jesus,
and people treat you like them
- When you love your enemy,
and your friends don't approve
- When you are identified as a Christian,
and your family shames you
- And the list goes on...



Application

- **Have the courage to be distinctive as a Christian**
 - “Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.” *Luke 6:26*
 - “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.” *Matthew 5:13*
 - It is very easy to be conformed to the world *Romans 12:1-2*
 - **In our actions and words, boldly and wisely follow Jesus**

Application

- **Have the courage to be distinctive as a Christian**
- **Be distinctive as a Christ-follower**
 - In love
 - Not proud, harsh, judgmental, meddler
 - With gentleness and respect and submission
 - In Christ
 - Speaking God’s words (especially the Gospel)
 - In the strength God provides
 - “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 Peter 2:12*

Application

- **Have the courage to be distinctive as a Christian**
- **Be distinctive as a Christ-follower**
- **Rejoice in being connected with Christ**
 - “The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been **counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name**. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, **they never stopped teaching and proclaiming** the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.” *Acts 5:41-42*
 - Be assured of future joy with Jesus: when He comes in glory!
 - Future joy becomes present joy by faith
 - Rejoice in the presence of the Holy Spirit in suffering now

Application

- **Have the courage to be distinctive as a Christian**
- **Be distinctive as a Christ-follower**
- **Rejoice in being connected with Christ**
- **Stand with those who are persecuted**
 - Learn from them
 - Encourage them
 - Pray for them
 - Ask them how we should pray, rather than assuming
 - It is good to pray for relief from trouble
 - It is even better to pray for perseverance, joy, and boldness, as well as God’s peace and presence by the Holy Spirit

The Big Idea

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

“These trials 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.”

1 Peter 1:7