

Suffering as Exiles

1 Peter 4:12-19

- Why do we experience suffering?
 - God allows it to _____ us.

 - It _____ those who are truly His.

- How should we respond when we suffer?
 - Make sure we are suffering _____.

 - We _____.

 - We continue to _____ ourselves and do good.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER REFLECTION:

1. Sunday Matt reminded us that if we are Christians we will suffer in some ways for our faith. Have you ever experienced hardship because of your faith? As our culture continues to shift, how might following Christ require us to make decisions that will be costly?

2. 1 Peter 4:12 and 19 tell us that God sometimes *will*s our suffering. Did you grow up in a church that taught you that hardship will come because of your faith, that it is God's will to test you? How does this theological idea differ from the prosperity gospel that is often promoted today?

3. Peter was careful to distinguish between suffering for doing evil and suffering for doing good. Matt talked specifically about being a meddler (another man's overseer) as a particular error of many Christians. Do you think this is/has been true of you? Do you need to seek forgiveness from anyone as a result?

4. Peter commands us to rejoice in the midst of our suffering. This seems like a contradiction of ideas. How do you define joy? How can you remain joyful and even express that joy while you are suffering?

5. Verse 19 calls us to entrust ourselves to our faithful Creator and keep doing good. How has God shown Himself faithful to you in your past hardships? How should His faithfulness in the past produce trust in the future?