

DISCUSSION GUIDE

MYSTERY OF MERCY: A SERIES IN 1 PETER

May 7, 2023

MYSTERY OF MERCY- WEEK 4

This Discussion Guide is designed to help you **think more deeply** about the sermon and **engage with others** through thoughtful conversation, biblical exploration and **allow God to work** in your life as you apply what you discover.

➤ CONVERSATION STARTERS

What is your favorite recreational activity?

➤ EXPLORATION

The book of 1 Peter has two things that are important to note. First, it constantly points us to the faithfulness of God; his character, his work and his ways. And second, it gives specific and practical advice for how to live in this world as we follow Jesus, even in times of persecution.

1 Peter 4:1-2 (From your bible, read aloud)

Peter is telling us to “arm yourself”, which in this context simply means to equip or prepare yourself. The key here is to arm yourself with the “attitude of Christ.”

In Philippians 2:5-8, we have a beautiful description of this. “...have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being the very nature of God did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage...” Christ humbled himself and submitted himself to God even when it meant going to the cross.

Attitude - where we focus

Jesus focused on the will of God. We can do the same OR we can continue to keep focusing on our own preferences.

1 Peter 4:3-4 (From your bible, read aloud)

What is something you have sacrificed or layed aside because of your faith?

How did the people in your life react?

God’s word reminds us where our focus needs to be in order to have the attitude of Christ.

Colossians 3:2 (From your bible, read aloud)

1 Peter 1:13 (From your bible, read aloud)

Take a moment to think about where most of your mental energy goes. What do you spend most of your time thinking about? Where are your thoughts leading you? Toward the things of God? Or toward something else?

Share any insights you have with the group.

Action - what we do

1 Peter 4:8-11 (From your bible, read aloud)

Peter lists several things that we can do, but notice in verse 11 that we do these things **SO THAT** God may be

praised! This is not busy work, or simply things to check off a list. This is the way we get to participate in the work of God in the world. However, we may be prone to believe that what God is after in us are huge acts of glorious obedience.

We often want **“big, fast, and famous.”** But what God is after is usually **small, consistent, ordinary acts of love over months, years and decades.**

How have you seen this played out in your life or in others around you?

We are called to love one another deeply, offer hospitality (without grumbling), use the gifts God has given us to humbly serve others and to speak words of life. This is what happens when our Christ-like attitude moves into helpful action.

“It means bringing fresh goodness, fresh love, fresh kindness, fresh wisdom into the community, into the family, to the people we meet on the street.”

~NT Wright

Through our actions we are saying to God, “I trust you; I’ll do what you have called me to do; I’ll stay faithful even when I experience pain and suffering.”

2 Corinthians 4:7-9 (From your bible, read aloud)

The Japanese have an art form called Kintsugi. This is where a skilled craftsman takes broken pottery and carefully fits all the pieces back together. They use a lacquer that is dusted with gold or silver to hold the pieces in place. The broken pieces become a part of the history of the pottery, making it even more beautiful than it was before it was broken.

This is such a powerful metaphor for life. We all have brokenness. Whether it’s from our own choices or from circumstances beyond our control, God wants to lovingly mend us back together, piece by piece, making us even more beautiful and valuable than ever before.

“All suffering, all pain, all emptiness, all disappointment is seed: sow it in God and he will, finally, bring a crop of joy from it.” ~Eugene Petersen

What is an area of your life that God has healed or that still needs healing?

It is God who makes us whole. He restores us. It is through his life, death, and resurrection, that our life, brokenness, and restoration gives us the ability to tell *His* story better.

1 Peter 4:12-13 (From your bible, read aloud)

When our attitude is focused on God and we begin to willingly use the gifts God has given us to serve we enter into the process of spiritual formation. As we partner with God over days, weeks, months and years we begin to see that God has been shaping us to be more like Jesus along the way. It is God’s work in us through our willing participation that brings spiritual maturity.

What is one way you have grown more spiritually mature over the past year?

As we stand in confident assurance that God is with us, we can remain faithful under whatever ordeal God may allow. When suffering comes, we can still be filled with hope that God will one day make everything right.

“Hoping does not mean doing nothing. It is not fatalistic resignation. It means going about our assigned tasks, confident that God will provide the meaning and the conclusions.” ~Eugene Petersen

What is one thing you are hoping that God will do in you? What are you doing to partner with God as you wait?

> TAKE AWAY

Peter instructs us to pay attention to growing in these three areas:

- **Attitude - where we focus**
 - **On Jesus**
- **Action - what we do**
 - **Serve faithfully**
- **Assurance - who we are**
 - **Filled with hope**

Where do you need God to work in your life right now?

Take some time to pray together.