

Connect Group Discussion Guide – 7/23/2023

1 Peter 2-3:8-22 The Life and Letters of Peter – Suffering for Doing Good

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQvR0S5fB8AzraGYts4eQfg> (Posted on Monday)

Audio Only: On Spotify or Apple Podcasts: Connection Point Podcast

Opening discussion: What does it mean to be persecuted? Have you been persecuted?

Highlights

- Peter was a real person who was really changed by Jesus.
- **1 Peter 3:8** “Finally....”
 - 1 Peter 1:3-4a, new birth, LIVING Hope
 - 1 Peter 2:13 Submit yourselves
 - 1 Peter 2:21 You were called by God to suffer because Christ suffered and we are to grow to become like Him
- **1 Peter 3:8** “all of you....”
 - Not just slaves or wives or husbands: specific message to a specific people
 - To everyone in the churches in Asia Minor – Turkey
 - The population centers in that area were Rome (Italy), Athens (Greece), Jerusalem (Israel), Antioch (Syria), plus all along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.
 - These churches were isolated from all that by the Taurus Mountains
 - The Christian faith is only 30 years old; they have no one to turn to except other small pockets of Christ followers in their region.
 - They are beginning to experience persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire: harassment, arrest, removal from families and businesses.
 - So Peter is telling them, I know you’re isolated, you’re not sure what you’re doing as Christians, but stick together, love God and love each other and you’ll make it.
- **1 Peter 3:9** When you are persecuted or wronged by someone, don’t retaliate (evil for evil), but love well and be a blessing to those who wrong us (blessing for evil).
 - **What is your gut reaction when someone does you wrong?**
- **1 Peter 3:13-14** If you are doing good, loving well, following Jesus, living morally good, etc., chances are you’re not going to be harmed at the hand of someone else.
 - But if you are, how bad could it be, since you ARE following Jesus?
 - **Have you ever asked God, “how can you do this to me? I’m living right and I’m living for you...why are you making me suffer?”**
 - Don’t fear those who are persecuting you, instead...
- **1 Peter 3:15a** Revere Christ as holy, as set apart as different.
 - **When you have experienced suffering even when you were “doing good”, what was your response?**
 - **Retaliation? Revenge?**
 - **Substitute drugs, alcohol, sex, or anything else to remove the pain?**
 - **Harm yourself to supersede the pain?**
 - **Something else?**
 - When you choose to revere Christ as holy, it prepares you to keep Him first in your heart even while you are going through hardship.
- **1 Peter 3:15b** Peter says to always be prepared.
 - This does not mean having the right words to say (to give an answer)
 - It means living a life that honors Jesus as Lord – becoming an Everyday Disciple.

- Then we will have an answer to give that is OUR STORY of how Jesus is changing our life.
- **1 Peter 3:17** Suffering is Unavoidable. We WILL experience suffering at some point in our lives – even when we are doing good. And when we do it's better that we suffer for doing good, than suffering for doing bad. God honors that and blesses it.
 - Suffering wasn't supposed to be part of us
 - **See Genesis 3:16-19** Suffering is a result of sin; before sin there was no suffering in the Garden
 - **See Revelation 21:1-5** When Jesus returns and establishes the New City (the New Garden) there will no longer be suffering
 - In the here and now there is suffering. Our citizenship is in Heaven – with God in the Garden and New Garden. As foreigners here on earth we have suffering.
 - God sometimes allows us to go through suffering (even when we're doing the "right" things) and sometimes we don't have to .
 - It's how we respond that really matters – always respond with blessing and you will always be prepared.
 - With Good – God's way
 - With Evil – your way.
- **1 Peter 3:18** Jesus is our perfect example of suffering for doing good.
 - He wasn't fearful of those who threatened (arrested) Him.
 - He suffered – to the point of death and repaid that evil – His torture – with a blessing – our salvation.
- **1 Peter 3:20-21** God provided a way to **save** humanity when He chose to destroy most of His creation and start over – the ark.
 - God provided a way to **save** humanity from our sinful nature that separates us from Him – Jesus.
 - He waited patiently for Noah to finish the ark so his family could get on and be saved and He waits patiently for all of us to say yes to His invitation to follow Him.
 - Since the flood, water has been a symbol of salvation
 - Baptism is a symbol of an individual's salvation
 - **Have you been baptized? If not, what is stopping you. Baptism service August 20th at the Iverson's pond. Use our app to express interest.**
- **Three takeaways:**
 - Suffering is Unavoidable. **Do you believe this. Why or why not?**
 - Always be prepared to share how Jesus is changing your life. **How is Jesus changing your life.**
 - If you are following Jesus and have not been baptized, **why not?**