

Discussion Guide

Week of November 24, 2013

1 Peter 3:8-22

Passage Overview: When we come to a passage like 1 Peter 3:8-22, it is easy to become overwhelmed by the apparent difficulty and complexity of some of its verses. The ideas move along fairly smoothly until v18, and then we plunge into deep water—with Christ preaching to the spirits in prison, disobedience in the days of Noah, and salvation through baptism with a good conscience. The complexities, it must be remembered, are ours. This is one of those times when we realize that what we bring with us to the Bible doesn't always mesh with the thought-world of the author and his readers. This is often because we don't know the Old Testament as well or think of it the way that they did.

Understanding God's Word—Read 1 Peter 3:8-22.

- Read vv9-12. When responding to mistreatment or insult, what should they not do? do instead? What reasons or motivations does Peter provide for this sort of behavior?
- Read vv13-16. Peter's readers may have had reason to fear mistreatment and even persecution, but following on from v12, why should they not fear?
- Read vv17-22. What is the immediate reason Peter gives as to why it is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil?

Living and Applying God's Word

- How is the suffering of Christ . . . (a) similar to ours? (b) different from ours?
- What was achieved by Christ's sufferings? What happened after his sufferings? How is Noah a further example of salvation occurring in the midst of judgment and difficulty?
- Given that some parts of vv18-22 are hard to understand, try to summarize how they encourage us to persevere in doing good and to endure suffering?

Turning to God in Faith and Repentance

- Of the five commands in v8, which do you have the most difficulty with? What can you do about it?
- When are you tempted to respond to those who mistreat or defraud you with insult and evil?
- How can you prepare yourself to give an answer to those who ask you to explain your hope in Christ?
- Read Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:38-42. How is it similar to what Peter is saying?
- Are there situations in your life where doing good will lead to suffering?
 - How do you naturally react in these situations?
 - How does this passage challenge you?

Prayer: Thank God for Jesus, who suffered for sins—the righteous for the unrighteous—to bring us to God. Ask God to continue to give you wisdom in understanding the trickier parts of the Bible. Pray for those who are suffering; ask God to arm them with the same way of thinking as Christ so that they will persevere in doing good and endure until the end. Then pray for one another.

Announcements

- Starting Pointe (Dec 6-8)—three-session class that is a prerequisite for church membership; contact Robert to sign-up
- Baptism Sunday (Dec 8)—email Wayne if you are a follower of Jesus and haven't been baptized
- Youth Ski Retreat (Jan 2-5)—not just limited to youth! Contact Will for more info.