

# Weekly Cell Guide

Leader's Copy

**Series** - 1 Peter  
**Topic** - Every Reason to Rejoice  
(1 Peter 4:12-19)

**Date** - 15-Nov-2020  
**Speaker** - Ps Dinah Lee

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## WELCOME [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

[Ice Breakers 1](#)

[Ice Breakers 2](#)

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## WORSHIP [15 min]

You may select songs like

1. O Happy Day
2. Reward

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## WORD [45 min]

### **Spiritual Objectives**

At the end of the sermon discussion, cell members will:

1. Understand that we can live a counter-cultural life as God's people, having good reasons to rejoice when we suffer for the name of Christ.
2. Take stock of the strength of our faith, in the various context of our lives.

### **Sermon Summary**

The following are the key points of the sermon:

1. We should expect persecution and not be surprised when we suffer for our faith.
2. When we share in the suffering of Jesus, it is likened to a badge of honour because our lives are like Christ.
3. It is better to suffer a little now as Christians than to suffer much more later in eternal torment for the ungodly.

### **Sermon Recap (Full Summary)**

#### **1. We have been prepared for suffering for the name of Christ (v 12)**

- Scripture tell us to expect persecution and not be surprised when we suffer for our faith. It is normal and we should take it in our stride.
- If we have not experienced it yet, we should be prepared that persecution for our faith is a distinct possibility.
- If we were reared on the health, wealth and prosperity gospel where we were told Christ came to take away your problems and make us rich, or we were taught that true

Christians do not suffer and do not go through hardships, we will be sorely disappointed.

- Christians, especially those who seeking to lead godly lives that resemble Jesus's, must expect to face resistance and hostility from a sinful world.
- Trials don't just purify our faith, they also prove the genuineness of our faith. Suffering for Christ purifies the church because *consumer Christians don't hang around when it costs them something to follow Christ*. If we never suffer for being a Christian, there is a high chance that we might just be blending too far into our culture. God has said that we will suffer when we live for Him.

*Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. - 1 John 3:13*

*Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. - 2 Timothy 3:12*

*And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. - Luke 8:13*

## 2. We get to share in His glory (vv 13-14)

- These verses introduces us to one of the many tensions of the Christian faith: namely, the tension of joy co-existing with suffering.
- Elsewhere in Scripture, we are also taught about rejoicing when suffering. James 1:2-3 and Hebrews 12:3-17 encourages us to think about how our character is being changed for godliness. Peter gives a different perspective on why we rejoice when we suffer for Christ.
- Suffering for Christ carries a blessing, and there are two ways in which we experience that blessing:
  - In the future: if we suffer with Jesus, we know that we will be glorified with Jesus when He returns and His glory is revealed. The degree to which we are willing to suffer for the name of Christ on earth will correspond to the degree of our joy in eternity.
  - In the present: Suffering for Christ carries an earthly blessing. Peter also said the 'Spirit of Glory and of God' rests on us in those moments when we are suffering for the name of Christ. (The reference is to the Shekinah glory of God that dwelt in the tabernacle and in the temple.) Some Biblical accounts include Stephen, in the New Testament. We can also read accounts of martyrs and find again and again their incredible peace and courage in the face of death. Perhaps some of us don't experience Jesus' presence in a notable way or we have yet to have any moments of great spiritual significance to reflect upon – if so, we should try taking a public stand for Jesus and talk about Jesus in school or at work, and discover how the Holy Spirit will carry us through in a way we have never experienced.
- Suffering for our faith is also a participation or fellowship in Christ's suffering. Having "fellowship" in the sufferings of Christ deepens our union with Jesus in a way that nothing else can.

*And if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. - Romans 8:17 (ESV)*

*“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” - Jesus in Matthew 5:10-12*

*Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the name. - Acts 5:41*

*But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. - Philippians 3:7-10*

### **3. We examine our lives to stay on course (vv. 15-18)**

- We should make sure that if we suffer, it is for nothing other than suffering as a Christian, living like Christ and speaking about Christ. Suffering for making bad life decisions is not something to rejoice in. Neither do we rejoice for suffering for our sinful or foolish ways.
- Verses 17-18 reframe the way we think about suffering in the Christian life. Right now God’s judgement has begun and it has begun with God’s household, the church. It is not a judgement to pay for our sin; Jesus has already done that. It is a purifying judgement to mature us and rid us of sin and proves the genuineness of our faith. It is a blessing judgement that results in greater eternal joy and greater earthly experience of God’s Holy Spirit. God is intentionally purifying and proving His church by judging it. That is why God promises us trials and suffering.
- Verse 17 says that judgment begins with the house of God. The Lord starts with His own children. Persecution forces us to decide where we stand and what we believe. The hands of the persecutors are the hands that God allows to turn up the heat so that we are purified by our trials. And if this is what God’s purifying judgement is like for the church that He loves, imagine what will happen to those who don’t obey God and die apart from Christ and face God’s full wrath.
- Hence, it is better to suffer a little now as Christians than to be the ungodly and suffer much more later (in eternal torment).

### **Conclusion**

Peter sums it all up in v19: *“Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.”*

That word for “commit” is actually a banking term. It means to deposit something for safekeeping. That is what we are to do with our lives when we go through times of suffering—deposit our lives in God’s bank for safe-keeping, trust Him to preserve us in the fire, and give ourselves to the Lord by continuing to do good.

Because we know that God is totally sovereign and that God is totally for us and that God is totally faithful—then not only can we move from fear and doubt in our sufferings for Christ, but we can move to faith and rejoice in them.

### **Discussion Questions**

- 1. How do you tend to respond when suffering happens in your life because of your faith in God? What are some emotions and questions which come to mind? [15 min]**

#### **Leaders' Notes**

*This is a relate question. Persecution for being a Christian often times brings along disappointment with God, discouragement, and fear. Often the first questions that come to people who suffer for the sake of the gospel are “Why me?” or “How can a good God allow bad things to happen to me when I’m doing good work?” – or they tend to be confronted with the lie that there is no purpose to their suffering, and that they should give up. Leaders can encourage members to share their perspective and experiences in reacting to trials, in order to reveal our personal theology of suffering which we may be unconsciously subscribing to, and how it may differ from what Scriptures actually teach (1 Peter 4:12).*

#### **Transition (Wrapping Up & Moving to The Next Question)**

We may be surprised by suffering, but God isn't. The Bible teaches us that persecution for our faith is guaranteed if we aspire to lead God-honouring lives. Therefore we should prepared to suffer well, by holding fast to the many reasons Scriptures give to rejoice in our sufferings for Christ.

- 2. In what ways can we be blessed as a result of suffering for Christ? Have you experienced such blessings personally in your life? [15 min]**

#### **Leaders' Notes**

*In times of persecution, we can remember that there are many rewards of blessing when we suffer persecution when doing His will. Many verses in the bible point to this – Romans 8:17 says that “we suffer with Him in order that we may be glorified with Him.” The Lord Jesus also said in Matthew 5:10-12, in reference to persecution for His sake, that we should “Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great.” We have the opportunity now of participating in that future glory, to the praise and splendour of Christ when He returns. Peter teaches to rejoice in suffering so that we will be able to rejoice and be glad when Jesus’ glory is revealed at his return. The positions of greatest glory next to Him are reserved for those who suffered immensely because they were like Him, and the degree of our earthly suffering for Christ corresponds to the degree of our eternal joy with Christ.*

*There is also a present earthly blessedness when we are persecuted for Christ. It doesn't mean we will become rich and wealthy, or that life will become easy. The blessing God promises is that a special measure of the glory of God and the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives in those times of suffering. When you are suffering for Christ, you will know the presence and power of God in an unprecedented way. Ultimately, no earthly suffering—as long as you're suffering for the sake of Jesus—can compromise your eternal destiny, living hope, and heavenly inheritance. In fact, it confirms our eternal*

*destiny. Earthly suffering purifies us (testing the genuineness of our faith) and prepares us to take hold of that blessing.*

### **Transition (Wrapping Up & Moving to The Next Question)**

Most people in the world react negatively to the idea of suffering for doing the right thing. But as Christians, we can endure suffering for righteousness's sake, by taking heart in the various blessings we can rejoice in, when we suffer with Jesus.

- 3. Read verse 19. What does it mean for us to entrust our souls to God in the midst of persecution? What does it look like when we have entrusted our souls to God entirely?** [15 min]

### **Leaders' Notes**

*This is a reflect question. Taking a stand for Christ will surely entail difficulties and inconvenience- this is why we have to be committed to withstand the trials that may come our way. Remember that in our suffering for the name of Jesus, we are entrusting ourselves to a faithful Creator, who is faithful to His own word, to His own promises, to His very nature of steadfast love and infinite mercy. We can count on Him to be faithful to finish the good work that He has started in us each, and to His commitment to love us entirely and perfectly. We will also find that when we have completely entrusted our souls to God, there is nothing left to fear.*

*The following are some practical application steps we can take to walk out our commitment:-*

- Take stock of the strength of my faith – especially in the context of following Christ in school/ work environment/ home.*
- Be bold in my faith to talk about Jesus in school/ at my work place.*
- Examine my readiness to stand out as a Christian in my various social circles, and to suffer for the name of Christ.*
- Identify and look for ways to support and pray for those who are facing harsh hostility for being a Christian.*

### **Closing**

We are called to live a counter-culture life as God's people, having good reasons to rejoice when we suffer for the name of Christ. Let us give thanks that God is able to redeem our suffering for His glory, and let us not waver from our commitment to serve God, even in times of persecution and suffering for our faith.

## **WORKS** [10 min]

Let's pray:

- Pray that we will:
  - Be willing to suffer for Christ should that moment comes
  - To fix our eyes on that which is eternal rather than temporal in the midst of persecution
- Pray for the pilot partial resumption of in-person gatherings
  - We continue to support and encourage one another in our church community through physical and virtual gatherings as we adjust to the new changes

- Wisdom for the leadership and staff to implement safe management measures and other changes for the in-person gatherings.

**Church Vision**

“A radiant disciple-making church catalysing Kingdom transformation in our communities and the nations.”

**Mission**

We exist to make disciples who behold Christ and reveal Him.