

If you have limited time to prepare, this 3-step outline is a helpful tool for leading a small group discussion:

1. Read the text from Sunday's message.
2. What did you find most helpful/confusing/new/ that you did not understand from the message?
3. What were your big takeaways? How will you put these into practice in your life?

Getting Started

- Share how you are balancing fear and joy in your life during this season.
- In what ways is our culture similar/different to that of the early church when Rome, under Nero, was so hostile toward believers? Which direction are things trending in our day?

Discussion

- Read 1 Peter 1:6-12

⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, ¹¹ inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

- There are three paragraphs in 1 Peter 1:3-12. Summarize the main point in each paragraph?
 - 1:3-5
 - 1:6-9
 - 1:10-12

Rejoice represents a verb (*agalliaō*) which is not used by secular Greek writers, and which always in the New Testament signifies a deep spiritual joy, a rejoicing in God or in what he has done. Mary uses it in the Magnificat: 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit *rejoices* in God my Savior' (Luke 1:46–47). Believers who have suffered will '*rejoice* and be glad when [Christ's] glory is revealed' (1 Pet. 4:13). The Philippian jailer '*rejoiced* with all his household' that he had believed in God (Acts 16:34). This kind of joy could be called 'the joy of salvation' for it is always a spiritually prompted joy.

Grudem, W. A. (1988). 1 Peter: an introduction and commentary

- Discuss how it is possible for the Christians to be joyful in the face of fear, uncertainty and doubt. What helps you restore an attitude of joy when the fears and burdens of life weigh you down?

The Christian life is not all joy, however, for Peter adds *though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials*. These believers are rejoicing *even though* they may suffer grief. Peter makes the circumstances leading to such grief very general indeed. First, he says not that all his readers are suffering or have suffered, but that they *may have to suffer* grief in various trials (Gk. text, more literally: 'if it is necessary').

- What may be the purpose of these “*necessary*” trials? Consider also James 1:2-4, Romans 5:1-5, and 1 Peter 4:12-13.

Peter thus shows simultaneous grief and joy to be normal in the Christian life. Grief arises because of many difficulties encountered in this fallen world, but faith looks to the unseen reality beyond this present brief existence and rejoices.

- What can you do this week to not deny the reality of fear and anxiety and not just focus on the “dot” of our current circumstances, but rather focus our eyes on Jesus and the future blessing of our eternal home (1:8-9)?

The process described in verse 9 is the entire process of growth in the Christian life, the process of appropriating in one's own life more and more of the blessings of salvation. This process happens, Peter says, as Christians continually believe in Christ and continually rejoice because of that personal trust in him. Such day by day faith and joy produces an unexpected benefit: continual growth toward Christian maturity. - Grudem, W. A. (1988). 1 Peter: an introduction and commentary

Optional Study: 1 Peter 1:10-12

- Why do you think Peter included this paragraph speaking about how the prophets and angels are focused on the gospel, the current church-age, and the future of God's kingdom?
- Based on 2 Peter 1:16-21 and 2 Timothy 3:10-17, how were the scriptures written and why can we trust in them?
- The OT prophets predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories to follow. In this sense the predictions of the sufferings of the Messiah begin with the prediction of the 'seed' of the woman who would be bruised in the heel by the serpent (Gen. 3:15), and continue through much of the Old Testament writings.

Take some time to look up these references and allow them to deepen your experience of joy in your salvation.

- Suffering of the Messiah: Psalm 22:1, 7–8, 18; 34:19–20; 69:21; Isaiah 50:6; 52:14–15; 53:1–12; Zechariah 12:10; 13:7, etc.).
- The Messiah's subsequent glory is predicted in Psalm 2; 16:10; 22:22; 45:7; 110:1, 4; Isaiah 9:6; 40:3–5, 9–11; 42:1–4; 61:1–3; Jeremiah 33:14–15; Ezekiel 34:23; Daniel 7:13–14; Malachi 3:1–3, etc.
- And the 'glories' of the Messiah's people are seen in Isaiah 51:11; 60:1–22; 62:2–5; Jeremiah 31:31–34; Daniel 7:18, 27; Hosea 2:23; Joel 2:28–32; Amos 9:13–15; Habakkuk 2:14; Zephaniah 3:14–20; Zechariah 14, etc.

Prayer

This week whenever you sense growing fear, anxiety, anger, or a wide range of emotions that may shift your eyes away from Jesus, cry out, “Help Jesus!” and take hold of His hand to lift you out of the waves of life, just as He did for Peter.