

Lifegroups/Personal reflection

Reading: 1 Peter 4.12-19 - Tests and trials



Focus In

Just as Jesus warned us to expect that being a Christian would not be easy, now Peter tells them that they shouldn't be surprised at the fiery ordeals that they face. Instead they should be glad that they have an opportunity to share in the suffering of Christ. The Apostle Paul also refers to us sharing in Christ's suffering (2 Corinthians 1.5). Suffering for doing wrong is one thing, but suffering as a Christian is something else.

Those who suffer in God's will should put their trust in the Lord, not be ashamed, but praise God that we own the name of Christ. Suffering for Christ is almost a badge of honour, a sign that his Spirit is in us. Persecution refines and helps us put the rest of life into perspective.

Discussion Starters

.What might it mean for us to share in the suffering of Christ today? Can you give examples of this?

.To rejoice in the trials seems to be a tall order! What do you see as positives that might come out of trials and tribulations as Christians?

.What might this mean for someone in a Country where persecution is rife? North Korea or Pakistan for example. Think about how it is for them.

.The word 'commit' at verse 19 is the same word used by Jesus on the Cross: Into your hands I commit my spirit' (Luke 23.46).What is it like in practice to commit ourselves to God even in the face of suffering?

Prayer time

Please pray for needs that are known to you but especially also pray for Christians facing persecution around the World.