

Peter's Series #8**1 Peter 4:1-11**

1. When you became a Christian, what changed in your life? (see 1 Peter 4:3-5)

2. How can we "arm ourselves with the same way of thinking" and follow Christ's example to live for the will of God? (1 Peter 4:1-4)

3. Read 1 Peter 4:6. Why did Peter mention about the preaching of the Gospel to the dead? (see notes below)

4. "The end of the world is coming soon. Therefore, be earnest and disciplined in your prayers." (1 Peter 4:7, NLT). If you've attended a Prayer & Worship night in 2024, share how the experience was. If you have not, share how you can make adjustments to your schedule to attend the next one (see attached for the Prayer & Worship Night schedule for 2024).

5. In light of the "end of all things," how then should we live? (1 Peter 4:7-11).

6. From these verses (1 Peter 4:7-11), can you choose one thing to put into practice this week? (e.g. showing hospitality, serve in an area of your gift, etc.).

7. Are you currently serving in a ministry at HVMC? Share your reasons for serving (or not serving). As the Holy Spirit prompts you, express your interest to serve at bit.ly/HVMCServe.

Notes on 1 Peter 4:6

(Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, Vol. 17. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988)

For the gospel was preached to Christians who have died to save them from eternal judgment (4:6)

In fact, it is the fate of believers who have now died to which Peter now turns. His readers may have wondered about the benefits of being a Christian for those believers who had already died. This may have included some who died as a direct result of persecution, but the text does not allow us to limit its application to such; it simply speaks of 'the dead'.

He says, For this is why the gospel was preached even to the dead. The word this refers back to the subject of the previous sentence, the final judgment. In other words, 'It was because of the coming final judgment that the gospel was preached, even to those who believed in Christ and then later died.' In this way the dead means 'those who are now dead' (when Peter was writing), though when the gospel was preached to them they were still living on the earth. The NIV has 'those who are now dead'. The fact that they died should not trouble the minds of those left alive, for, short of the second coming of Christ, the gospel was never intended to save people from physical death. All people, both Christians and non-Christians, still have to die physically (and this is the apparent meaning of judged in the flesh like men). But even though they are judged in the flesh like men (the judgment of death which came with the sin of Adam still affects them as it does all men), the gospel of Christ was preached to them so that they might live in the spirit like God. It was with respect to the final judgment ('for this reason', referring to v. 5) that the gospel was preached, and it will save them from final condemnation.

The expressions like men and like God are legitimate translations, but it is also possible to translate them 'according to men' and 'according to God' (NIV), i.e. 'according to the way men are judged generally' and 'according to the way God lives, in the spiritual realm'. There is not much difference between the views, for in both cases the expressions refer to physical death and to continuing spiritual life. (However, this translation may not be used to justify the sense 'in the opinion of men' and 'in the opinion or evaluation of God', for the Greek *kata* with accusative cannot take that specific sense of the English 'according to'.)

Since spirit is without the definite article in the Greek text, it could be translated 'in the spiritual realm.' We are assured here that believers who have died are none the less living and enjoying blessings in the unseen 'spiritual' and eternal realm, which is characterized by the Holy Spirit's activity.

On this interpretation, the word dead means 'believers who have died' here in verse 6, but 'all people who have died' in verse 5. Alford objects strongly to this, saying that if the same word can mean two different things so close together, then 'exegesis has no longer any fixed rule, and Scripture may be made to prove anything' (p. 374). But he himself takes 'judge' (*krinō*) in verse 5 to refer to final judgment, yet in verse 6 he says that *krinō* means something different, namely,

physical death. There is no fixed rule in any language that when a word is used twice in close succession it must be used in the same sense both times. It is best simply to choose from the possible senses the one that best fits the context in each case. Moreover, in this case the senses 'all who have died (physically)' and 'believers who have died (physically)' are not far apart, and the transition in thought in the readers' minds would not be difficult.

Some have argued that the gospel was preached even to the dead in this verse means 'to those who are spiritually dead, or unbelievers'. But this is unconvincing because it allows no meaning to the word 'even', and does not fit the past tense of 'was preached' (preaching to the 'spiritually dead' was still happening when Peter was writing; it was not something confined to the past).

One other common view has been that this verse means that the gospel was preached to people after they died, giving them a 'second chance' to repent and believe the gospel. But such a meaning does not fit the context: what kind of warning would it be to say that God is ready to judge people for wickedness (v. 5) and then add that it really does not matter much what they do in this life for there will be a second chance for them to be saved after they die? Moreover, it could hardly encourage Peter's persecuted readers to persevere as Christians in the hard path of obedience if the easy road of debauchery could all be renounced and forgiven after they died. Finally, the entire missionary activity of the early church, as well as some specific texts of the New Testament (Luke 16:26; Heb. 9:26–28; Matt. 25:10–13), argues against such a view.

Questions raised through Mentimeter for Conversation on 28 April 2024

1. How to increase our faith during sufferings?

Answer:

There are no other suggestions than what is commonly suggested from the spiritual/biblical perspective regarding suffering, such as:

- 1) Continue to trust the Lord in all circumstances (refer to Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Peter 5:7).
 - 2) Study biblical figures who experienced suffering and reflect on the outcomes of their stories.
 - 3) Learn from contemporary individuals who have experienced suffering in their lives, including Christian friends, and observe how they cope with their situations.
 - 4) Stay engaged in the believer's community by remaining steadfast in fellowship and actively participating or getting involved in ministry if possible (refer to Hebrews 10:24-25).
 - 5) give thanks in all circumstances (Ephesians 5:20).
2. How do I minister to a person who is suffering with compassion? Just saying trust God's sovereignty seems like belittling the suffering.

Answer:

Showing empathy and being present with someone who is suffering are effective ways to demonstrate compassion. The less we talk, the better when we are with people experiencing hardship. Showing love and genuine concern is another way to support those going through difficult times.

3. How do we accept suffering of people due to wars or illness?

Answer:

We begin with the premise that we inhabit a sinful and fallen world where suffering, whether due to injustice, war, or natural causes like diseases, is inevitable. Often, war and illness are circumstances beyond our control. Therefore, we must concentrate on what we can control, such as maintaining a healthy lifestyle and contributing to world peace. However, it's important to note that even with these efforts, there is no guarantee of a world free from suffering.

4. How do you know that suffering is God orchestrated?

Answer:

"God tempts no one", that is the word of God spoken by James (James 1:13) that suggests that suffering is not orchestrated by God. Instead God uses suffering for His purpose. Joseph's suffering did not come from God but from his brothers. Yet God used the evil intention of Joseph's brothers for His divine purpose (Genesis 37:12-36; 50:20).

Joseph's story is in line with Paul's admonition to the church in Rome. He said, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28, ESV).

5. Do we mirror our sufferings in Christ's sufferings on the cross?

Answer:

Enduring suffering for the sake of Christ isn't merely a trial but a profound blessing, according to the Bible (1 Peter 4:13-14). This suffering allows us to share in Christ's own suffering, as Paul expressed his desire to know Him intimately, including the fellowship of His suffering (Philippians 3:10). Paul esteemed this fellowship above all else (Philippians 3:7-8).

Moreover, such suffering shapes our character, leading to enduring hope through the Holy Spirit's power (Romans 5:3-5). These trials refine and strengthen us, transforming us into vessels of hope and perseverance.

In the spiritual sense, when we suffer for Christ's sake, our suffering reflects His own. Yet, in a literal sense, none of us can claim to have endured suffering equivalent to Christ's. He, being sinless, was condemned as a sinner and criminal, ultimately leading to His crucifixion.

6. As a Christian, I know why suffering is part of even a purposeful life. However how do we address questions like "is it my sin that caused my suffering?" without being patronising to others?

Answer:

Not all sufferings stem from our personal wrongdoing, yet they are intertwined with the broader consequences of sin in our world. The disobedience of Adam and Eve, as recounted in Genesis 3, ushered humanity and creation into a state of total depravity. Consequently, every aspect of human inclination tends toward sin.

This realization leads us to understand that suffering may afflict us even in the absence of personal sin. Both Peter (1 Peter 4:1) and Jesus (Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23; 14:27; John 16:33) cautioned that adherence to God's standards might provoke worldly judgment and consequent suffering.

Considering that suffering can occur irrespective of personal sin, how much more so when sin is committed? Numerous examples abound. For instance, excessive indulgence in unhealthy food can lead to obesity-related diseases.

7. How can I continue to support my friend who suffered a loss of a child and my friend seem stuck in the suffering after 4 years?

8. How do you comfort and share the love of God with a non-Christian who is suffering extreme physical illness?

9. How to suffer well?

Answer to Questions 7 - 9:

Refer to the answer of question no.1

UPDATED PRAYER AND WORSHIP NIGHT SCHEDULE



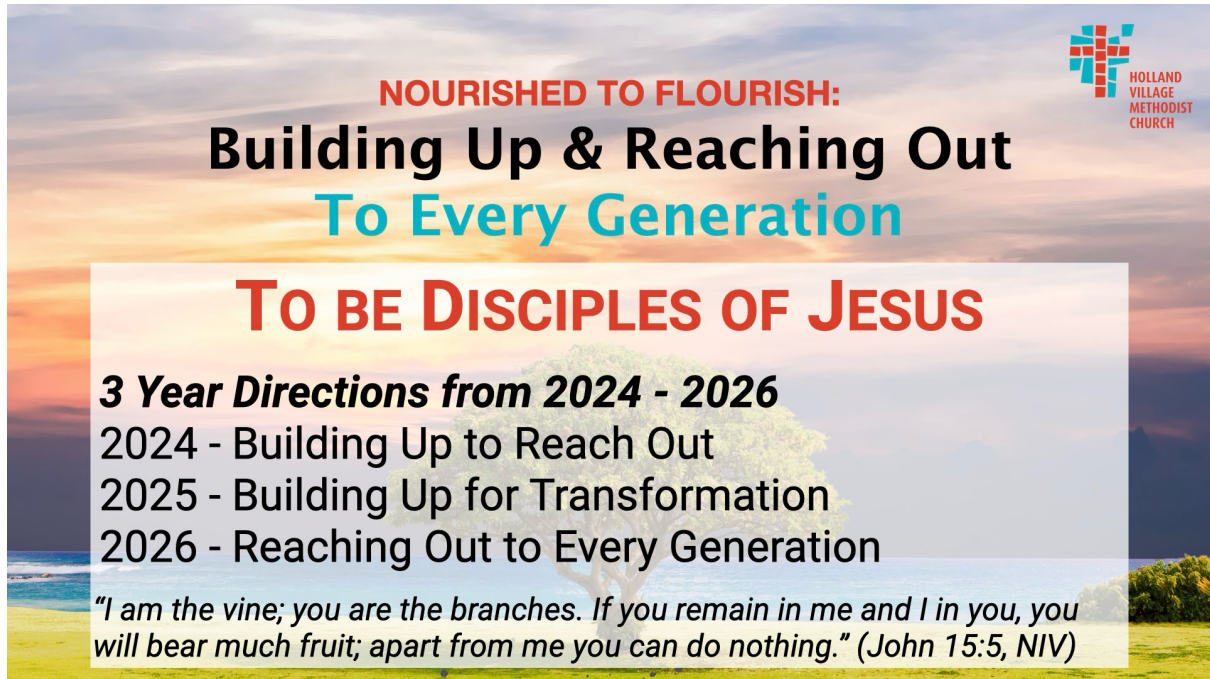
 HOLLAND
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Prayer & Worship Nights 2024

7.30pm - 9.00pm, *Fridays*

16 Feb	23 Aug	Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints. (Eph 6:18)
22 Mar	27 Sep	
26 Apr	25 Oct	
31 May	29 Nov	
26 Jul		

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3 Year Directions from 2024 - 2026
2024 - Building Up to Reach Out
2025 - Building Up for Transformation
2026 - Reaching Out to Every Generation

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5, NIV)



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