



TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- Pastor Doug noted C. S. Lewis' experience when facing trials: *"By God's grace I succeed for a day or two to be consciously dependent on God... But the moment the trial is withdrawn, my whole attention leaps back to my 'toys'."* How have you observed that principle at work in **your** life?

- Read **James 1:2-4**, and notice that.....

Which of these perspectives appear to you to be **uniquely** Christian? Explain.

*Trials are common among God's people.
Trials come in "various" categories.
Trials put our faith to the test.
Without trials, there could be no maturity.*

- Tell us about a way you've matured as a result of going through a trial. Be concrete and specific.
- Read the first two paragraphs of the wikipedia article called "Prosperity Theology" and then discuss how the belief that the Christian life **should be** trouble-free is actually a subtle form of that heresy.

How can we discern if "prosperity theology" has subtly infected **our** Christian belief and behavior?

- Peter cautions us to distinguish between unjust (innocent) suffering and suffering as a result of our sin (1 Peter 4:14-16). Read Luke 23:39-41. **Why** is it so difficult to do what that second criminal did?

Contrast the **brief** "fiery ordeal" that second criminal experienced as he honestly evaluated his suffering, with the **eternal** "fiery ordeal" which the first criminal **still** is experiencing. How can this observation help us "rejoice in our suffering" **now**, and "rejoice with exultation" **at Christ's return** (1 Peter 4:13)?

- What righteous suffering have you experienced?
As a group, rejoice in it now (see Acts 5:40-41).

*Need help trusting God in difficult trials?
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Application-Challenge

- Adopt a biblical view of suffering—it refines faith and purifies character.
- Be willing to suffer for your faith. Refuse to cave in to cultural pressures.
- Be courageous. Entrust yourself to God in doing what is right.



Sermon Summary Key Text: 1 Peter 4:12-19

When life is going well we push God to the periphery, but when trials come, we become aware of how much we need Him. Suffering under trials and persecution is a major theme of 1 Peter. He wrote this letter to Christians who were going through trials, many of which were undeserved, unfair and unexpected. Today we are going to take a closer look at these fiery trials, and find that insight that Peter gives us to help us navigate these tough times.

The book of James provides some additional perspective on the trials we face. It is similar to Peter in that it is addressed to “dispersed” Christians who are strangers and aliens in a foreign land. (James 1:2-4) From these verses we learn a great deal about trials:

- Trials are common among God’s people. Notice James says “when,” **not** “if.”
- Trials come in various categories.
- Trials put our faith to the test—they tend to drive us back to the core of our beliefs.

Without trials, there could be no maturity. God often uses them to grow us and yield His intended result. I believe that our text today refers to the kinds of trials that linger and take their toll. 1 Peter 4 addresses the “fiery ordeal” that his readers are facing. He may be speaking metaphorically, or he may be speaking literally about the Roman emperor Nero who blamed Christians for the burning of Rome, and subsequently burned some Christians alive as living torches to light the imperial gardens at night. Regardless of Peter’s specific meaning, in verses 12 and 13 he instructs us on how we should react during periods of struggle.

Oftentimes our initial response to trial involves surprise and shock, but if we view life as a classroom with God as our instructor, tests and trials should come as no surprise, although they may be unwelcome, especially when pursuing a curriculum of Christlikeness. So our reaction should go beyond merely not being surprised to actually rejoicing. (James 1:2) James gives us two reasons why we should be joyful in trials:

- A proper response to trials results in greater Christlike character. (James 1:3)
- God promises a future reward to those who persevere under trials. (James 1:12)

Finally, Peter provides some important things to remember as we face trials lest we become overwhelmed. Trials provide an opportunity to draw upon God’s great power. (1 Peter 4:14) The power of the Holy Spirit is readily available to Believers and can carry us through trials. Sometimes our suffering is deserved and shameful. (1 Peter 4:15) There are times our trials are justified, and we must reap the consequences of sin. We should never be ashamed when we suffer as a result of following Christ. (1 Peter 4:16) When we are mocked or persecuted for our faith, we should rejoice that God considers us worthy to suffer for Him as Jesus suffered for us. Suffering is usually timely and necessary. (1 Peter 4:17) In some cases suffering may be judgment for sin, but in others God uses it to refine our faith in Christ and enhance our character. There is no comparison between what we suffer now and what the unrighteous will suffer later. (1 Peter 4:18)

Peter concludes this section by telling us on whom we must rely during times of trial, by reminding us to entrust or deposit ourselves into God’s safekeeping just as Jesus deposited his soul into the care of his Father as he died on the cross—the ultimate trial. As C.S. Lewis noted, trials are not an elective in the Christian life; they are a required course. When trials **come**, it’s important to remember that God is faithful and he will not allow you to be tested beyond what you are able to endure. When trials **stay**, it’s important that you take refuge in God as you seek to honor Him and others in your responses.

Talking To Others About This Week’s Message

If a neighbor or friend at work asked you, “*What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?*”, how would you summarize the most important elements of this week’s sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? Can you explain it in **plain language** anyone could understand?



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Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

"Five Question Bible Study" (see page below) is a simple way to study any passage.
Let's use it to learn more about honoring God amid trials...

Monday— Ephesians 1:11 & Lamentations 3:32-33, 37-38

Tuesday— Isaiah 40:26 & Daniel 4:35

Wednesday— Romans 5:1-6

Thursday— Psalm 121:3-4

Friday— 2 Corinthians 1:2-5

Saturday— ***In preparation for worshipping your risen Lord tomorrow with your church family,*** study 1 Peter 5:1-4.

Need blank copies for doing more
"Five Question Bible Study"?
e-mail: Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]