

ST ARMANDS KEY LUTHERAN CHURCH
SARASOTA, FLORIDA

COME, JOIN THE CONVERSATION
ON
PETER AND THE FIRST EPISTLE THAT BEARS HIS NAME

CONVERSATION STUDY PLAN #12 for Thursday –January 29, 2015

“One Final Look at Peter’s 1st Epistle”

1 Peter 4:12 –5:14

AN OPENING PRAYER SPOKEN RESPONSIVELY:

Leader: Lord Jesus, we thank you for the Apostle, Peter! He was a great man; he loved you so very much; he left everything to follow you. In your name he healed the sick; he cast out demons; he preached the Kingdom. For three and one-half faithful years he stood beside you. When Roman soldiers came to take you away, he stood up for you; when others deserted you, he followed you all the way into the temple courtyard.

- ***JESUS, WE CONFESS THAT WE WOULD HAVE NEVER MADE IT THAT FAR.***

Leader: Over many sessions we have studied the message of a single epistle. May we have benefitted by learning of Peter’s great and fervent love for you; not, just as a disciple but as a brave apostolic messenger of the Good News. From Peter’s writings help us to realize how often we deny you; how we reject you in so many areas of life; in so many ways; at so many different times.

- ***WHEN WE ARE TOO BUSY TO PRAY, WE DENY THAT YOU ARE THE SOURCE OF OUR LIVES;***
- ***WHEN WE NEGLECT YOUR WORD, WE DENY THAT YOU ARE COMPETENT TO CORRECTLY GUIDE US;***
- ***WHEN WE WORRY, WE DENY THAT YOU ARE LORD OF OUR INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES;***
- ***WHEN WE COMPLAIN ABOUT OUR OWN HARDSHIPS, PAIN AND SUFFERING, WE TOO OFTEN NEGLECT TO REMEMBER THE REALITY OF CHRIST’S SUFFERING ON OUR BEHALF;***

- **WHEN WE TURN OUR COLLECTIVE HEADS AWAY FROM THE HUNGRY, THE DISENFRANCHISED, THE HOMELESS; AND, FROM THOSE BEING OPENLY PERSECUTED IN OTHER PARTS OF OUR WORLD BECAUSE OF THEIR FAITH IN YOU, WE DENY THAT YOU ARE A GOD OF MERCY, WHO HAS PUT US HERE TO BE YOUR HANDS AND YOUR FEET ON THIS EARTH.**

Leader: Forgive us, Lord Jesus, for all those quiet ways, known only to you, in which we continue to deny you. Send your Holy Spirit into our lives so that as we experience fellowship and conversation together, we may for one final session, be duly inspired by the life that Peter lived and the 'Good News' that he taught and preached. May we, too, find opportunities to proclaim that message with our words, our hands, our lives!

- **AMEN**

THE MUTUAL SHARING OF PEACE BETWEEN GOD'S PEOPLE

A LOOK AT OUR OBJECTIVES FOR THIS SESSION:

1. to more clearly understand what it means to suffer and rejoice for the Faith;
2. to learn from Peter what should and what should not motivate church leaders in their work;
3. to gain deeper insight into the early Church and interactions between its recognized leaders.

THE FIERY ORDEAL 1ST PETER 4:12-19

[Common English Bible Translation (CEB)]

¹² **Dear friends, don't be surprised about the fiery trials that have come among you to test you. These are not strange happenings. ¹³ Instead, rejoice as you share Christ's suffering. You share his suffering now so that you may also have overwhelming joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are mocked because of Christ's name, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory—indeed, the Spirit of God—rests on you.**

¹⁵ **Now none of you should suffer as a murderer or thief or evildoer or rebel. ¹⁶ But don't be ashamed if you suffer as one who belongs to Christ. Rather, honor God as you bear Christ's name. Give honor to God, ¹⁷ because it's time for judgment to begin with God's own household. But if judgment starts with us, what will happen to those who refuse to believe God's good news? ¹⁸ If the righteous are barely rescued, what will happen to the godless and sinful? ¹⁹ So then, those who suffer because they follow God's will should commit their lives to a trustworthy creator by doing what is right.**

[New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)]

¹² **Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you**

are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. ¹⁵But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker. ¹⁶ Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this name. ¹⁷For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God; if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸And “If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinners?” ¹⁹Therefore, let those suffering in accordance with God’s will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good.

[The Message (MSG)]

¹²⁻¹³ Friends, when life gets really difficult, don’t jump to the conclusion that God isn’t on the job. Instead, be glad that you are in the very thick of what Christ experienced. This is a spiritual refining process, with glory just around the corner. ¹⁴⁻¹⁶ If you’re abused because of Christ, count yourself fortunate. It’s the Spirit of God and his glory in you that brought you to the notice of others. If they’re on you because you broke the law or disturbed the peace, that’s a different matter. But if it’s because you’re a Christian, don’t give it a second thought. Be proud of the distinguished status reflected in that name! ¹⁷⁻¹⁹ It’s judgment time for God’s own family. We’re first in line. If it starts with us, think what it’s going to be like for those who refuse God’s Message!

[The Amplified Bible (AMP)]

¹² Beloved, do not be amazed and bewildered at the fiery ordeal which is taking place to test your quality, as though something strange (unusual and alien to you and your position) were befalling you. ¹³ But insofar as you are sharing Christ’s sufferings, rejoice, so that when His glory [full of radiance and splendor] is revealed, you may also rejoice with triumph [exultantly]. ¹⁴ If you are censured and suffer abuse [because you bear] the name of Christ, blessed [are you—happy, fortunate, to be envied, with life-joy, and satisfaction in God’s favor and salvation, regardless of your outward condition], because the Spirit of glory, the Spirit of God, is resting upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or any sort of criminal, or as a mischief-maker (a meddler) in the affairs of others [infringing on their rights]. ¹⁶ But if [one is ill-treated and suffers] as a Christian [which he is contemptuously called], let him not be ashamed, but give glory to God that he is [deemed worthy to suffer] in this name. ¹⁷ For the time [has arrived] for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will [be] the end of those who do not respect or believe or obey the good news (the Gospel) of God? ¹⁸ And if the righteous are barely saved, what will become of the godless and wicked? ¹⁹ Therefore, those who are ill-treated and suffer in accordance with God’s will must do right and commit their souls [in charge as a deposit] to the One Who created [them] and will never fail [them].

COMMENTARY ON THE FIERY ORDEAL 1st PETER 4:12-19

Verse 12 – two of the four above cited biblical translations use the term **“Beloved”** the other two: **“Friends.”** The tender word **“beloved”** is much preferred and is clearly designed to ease the pain and shock of those words that follow immediately thereafter. Two commands, one negative, and one positive, demand a deeper level of commitment from Peter’s readers. The demands are that (1) they **not be surprised** by their mistreatment and (2) that they **rejoice** in the midst of their suffering. Neither command is easy to obey; therefore Peter softens the blow of the double command by this tender word of address.

The command **“not to be surprised”** stands in opposition to the comment, studied last week, in 1st Peter 4:4, that the reader’s unchristian neighbors will be surprised at the new righteous behavior of their converted neighbors. In other words, Peter asks his readers to surprise their neighbors by withdrawing from sinful behaviors, but to not be surprised by the persecution or pressure that will then be inflicted by those same neighbors.

- a) The verb here translated **“surprised”** has the same root as the word **“strange.”** It is our natural reaction to consider anything painful as strange and unusual and therefore as unacceptable.
- b) From his background as a Jew, Peter had a different perspective; he was drawing upon a tradition of Scriptural writings to understand persecution. The resources of Jewish tradition gave Peter insights and understandings that his Gentile readers did not share.
- c) A **fiery ordeal** is what his readers were facing. The word here used was fairly common in N.T. times and had a variety of meanings: it meant **“burning”** or the action of **“fire”** such as used in cooking; it was descriptive of the process to purify metals; it was used to describe the destruction of a city by fire. It was also used figuratively – as it is here – to describe a fierce testing of people.
- d) There is no evidence that Peter’s first readers were actually being tortured by fire; this would only become a common form of persecution later in Christian history.
- e) It is possible that Peter here had in mind the words of Proverbs 27:21 - **“The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, so a person is tested by being praised.”**
- f) Let it be said that the pressures which sometimes weigh down our lives, and which sometimes cause us to whine and complain, are miniscule when compared to the ability of our spiritual ancestors who stood up to persecution and suffering!

Verse 13 – the command to **“rejoice”** is not meant to imply that there be a masochistic enjoyment of suffering – such as that practiced by some (*past and present*) in the name of the Christian faith. Rather, the readers are to rejoice to the degree that they share the sufferings of Christ. Peter was not appealing to his readers to actively seek persecution. But if and when it came they should rejoice that suffering gave them an opportunity to become partners with Christ in pain. There is no hint that Peter believed that suffering would atone for sin as the death of Christ did. What he saw was that suffering made it possible for his readers to enter into union with Christ more fully than they could without suffering.

- a) This is a common theme that is also seen in St. Paul’s writings: (i.e. Romans 8:17 – **“But if we are children, we are also heirs. We are God’s heirs and fellow heirs with Christ, if we really suffer with him so that we can also be glorified with him.”**

Verse 14 – is clearly built on the beatitude in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount recorded in **Matthew 5:11** - *“Happy are you when people insult you and harass you and speak all kinds of bad and false things about you, all because of me.”*

Verse 15 – Suffering is only a source of blessing to the degree that the believer is united to Christ in his unjust suffering. Peter speaks with clarity that some people deserve to suffer and their suffering brings no blessing, and is no cause for rejoicing. He demands that none of his readers suffer for being **“a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even a meddler.**

- a) Interestingly, the word **“meddler”** is found only here in the New Testament. Some translations use words like: **rebel, mischief-maker, busybody** (KJV).
- b) Most recent biblical commentators agree that Peter was warning his readers against setting themselves up as public judges of pagan society.
- c) Compared to previous historical eras, the Roman Empire was tolerant of a wide variety of religious, philosophical, and personal viewpoints. In return the Romans expected that other groups and persons would mind their own business. Remember that earlier in this epistle Peter had urged his readers to cooperate with governmental authorities!
- d) Persecution generally happened when some group/person became so obnoxious in pushing their viewpoint that it upset the balance of Roman tolerance.

Verse 16 – returns to the thought of vss. 12-14, with the additional point that suffering enables the believer to **glorify God** by bearing His Name!

Verse 17 – introduces another reason for suffering; it is the sign of God’s **judgment** that begins with God’s people. Peter is again drawing on his knowledge of the Old Testament:

- a) **Jeremiah 25:29** – Here, the ancient prophet warned that God would begin the judgment of the world by first judging His own people in Jerusalem: **“Look! I’m bringing disaster upon the city that bears my name; how then will you escape unpunished? You will not! I’m summoning the sword against everyone on earth, declares the Lord of heavenly forces.”**
- b) **Ezekiel 9:3-6** – The command is that a mark be put on those who grieve over the disobedience of God’s people; executioners were then commanded to pass through the city and kill everyone who did not have the mark: **“the glory of Israel’s God rose from above the winged creatures where he had been and moved toward the temple’s threshold. The Lord called to the man who was dressed in linen with the writing case at his side: ⁴ Go through the city, through Jerusalem, and mark the foreheads of those who sigh and groan because of all the detestable practices that have been conducted in it. ⁵ To the others he said in my hearing: Go through the city after him, and attack. Spare no one! Be merciless! ⁶ Kill them all, old men, young men and women, babies and mothers. Only don’t touch anyone who has the mark. Begin at my sanctuary. So they began with the men, the elders in front of the temple.”**

Verse 19 – this passage makes two important points:

- a) Those who are suffering should **entrust their lives to a faithful God**. Peter’s confidence continues to shine through; he clearly believed that God was still in control of human history!
- b) Peter’s readers are urged to **do good**. God’s purpose may be accomplished despite us. However, there is no reason we cannot share in that purpose.

AN APPEAL TO THE ELDERS – 1ST PETER 5:1-5

[Common English Bible (CEB)]

Therefore, I have a request for the elders among you. (I ask this as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ’s sufferings, and as one who shares in the glory that is about to be revealed.) I urge the elders: ² Like shepherds, tend the flock of God among you. Watch over it. Don’t shepherd because you must, but do it voluntarily for God. Don’t shepherd greedily, but do it eagerly. ³ Don’t shepherd by ruling over those entrusted to your care, but become examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive an unfading crown of glory. ⁵ In the same way, I urge you who are younger: accept the authority of the elders. And everyone, clothe yourselves with humility toward each other. God stands against the proud, but he gives favor to the humble.

NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION (NRSV)

Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you ² to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. ³ Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away. ⁵ In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

[The Message (MSG)]

¹⁻³ I have a special concern for you church leaders. I know what it’s like to be a leader, in on Christ’s sufferings as well as the coming glory. Here’s my concern: that you care for God’s flock with all the diligence of a shepherd. Not because you have to, but because you want to please God. Not calculating what you can get out of it, but acting spontaneously. Not bossily telling others what to do, but tenderly showing them the way. ⁴⁻⁵ When God, who is the best shepherd of all, comes out in the open with his rule, he’ll see that you’ve done it right and commend you lavishly. And you who are younger must follow your leaders. But all of you, leaders and followers alike, are to be down to earth with each other, for— God has had it with the proud, But takes delight in just plain people.

[Amplified Bible (AMP)]

I warn and counsel the elders among you (the pastors and spiritual guides of the church) **as a fellow elder and as an eyewitness** [called to testify] **of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a sharer in the glory** (the honor and splendor) **that is to be revealed** (disclosed, unfolded): ² **Tend** (nurture, guard, guide, and fold) **the flock of God that is** [your responsibility], **not by coercion or constraint, but willingly; not dishonorably motivated by the advantages and profits** [belonging to the office], **but eagerly and cheerfully;** ³ **Not domineering** [as arrogant, dictatorial, and overbearing persons] **over those in your charge, but being examples** (patterns and models of Christian living) **to the flock** (the congregation). ⁴ **And** [then] **when the Chief Shepherd is revealed, you will win the conqueror's crown of glory.** ⁵ **Likewise, you who are younger and of lesser rank, be subject to the elders** (the ministers and spiritual guides of the church)—[giving them due respect and yielding to their counsel]. **Clothe** (apron) **yourselves, all of you, with humility** [as the garb of a servant, so that its covering cannot possibly be stripped from you, with freedom from pride and arrogance] **toward one another. For God sets Himself against the proud** (the insolent, the overbearing, the disdainful, the presumptuous, the boastful)—[and He opposes, frustrates, and defeats them], **but gives grace** (favor, blessing) **to the humble.**

COMMENTARY ON THE APPEAL TO ELDERS – 1st PETER 5:1-5

In this section, Peter turns from general instructions to all of his readers and delivers specific words to the church leadership. His overriding concern seems to be that the church to stay together! That those in charge will exercise Christ-like leadership and that all others will accept that leadership. In-fighting in the church over authority will quickly destroy the desire to bear up under sufferings together. Such in-fighting destroys churches regardless of the kind of pressure the church faces.

Verse 1 – Peter identifies himself in 3 ways:

- 1) *...a fellow-elder*
- 2) *...a witness of the sufferings of Christ*
- 3) *...one who shares in the glory to be revealed*

Verse 2 – a call on the elders to *shepherd the flock of God that is among you*.

- a) *Psalm 23* provided the O. T. background for Jesus' claim to be **the Good Shepherd**; leadership in the church of Jesus Christ can never improve on the model provided by Christ himself.
- b) The power of this model can be seen by the fact that the title *"pastor"* has been the most persistent way of referring to Christian leaders down to the present day.
- c) It is your facilitator's opinion that rejecting pastoral and shepherding imagery in favor of modern management-style language will not survive the test of time!
- d) Good leadership in the church has always been a challenge; in times of persecution and pressure it was tempting for leaders to hold back and downplay their role, lest they be condemned to death;

- e) In times of no persecution some persons were attracted to church leadership for the wrong reasons.
- f) The motivation for pastoral leadership should not be compulsion, financial gain, or the opportunity to exercise authority.
- g) It has been said by some that a group usually gets the leadership that it deserves!

Verse 5 – Peter’s final prescription is for the exercise of **humility**. Compared to Christ, none of us has room for any other attitude. Only if we respond to each other in humility will the church have a chance to be, in fact, the body of Christ in the world!

THE FINAL EXHORTATION – 1st PETER 5:6-11

[Common English Bible (CEB)]

Therefore, humble yourselves under God’s power so that he may raise you up in the last day. ⁷ Throw all your anxiety onto him, because he cares about you. ⁸ Be clearheaded. Keep alert. Your accuser, the devil, is on the prowl like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith. Do so in the knowledge that your fellow believers are enduring the same suffering throughout the world. ¹⁰ After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, the one who called you into his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will himself restore, empower, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹ To him be power forever and always. Amen.

[New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)]

⁶ Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. ⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. ⁸ Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. ¹⁰ And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹ To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

[The Message (MSG)]

⁶⁻⁷ So be content with who you are, and don’t put on airs. God’s strong hand is on you; he’ll promote you at the right time. Live carefree before God; he is most careful with you. ⁸⁻¹¹ Keep a cool head. Stay alert. The Devil is poised to pounce, and would like nothing better than to catch you napping. Keep your guard up. You’re not the only ones plunged into these hard times. It’s the same with Christians all over the world. So keep a firm grip on the faith. The suffering won’t last forever. It won’t be long before this generous God who has great plans for us in Christ—eternal and glorious plans they are!—will have you put together and on your feet for good. He gets the last word; yes, he does.

[Amplified Bible (AMP)]

⁶ **Therefore humble yourselves** [demote, lower yourselves in your own estimation] **under the mighty hand of God, that in due time He may exalt you,** ⁷ **Casting the whole of your care** [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all] **on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully.** ⁸ **Be well balanced** (temperate, sober of mind), **be vigilant and cautious at all times; for that enemy of yours, the devil, roams around like a lion roaring** [in fierce hunger], **seeking someone to seize upon and devour.** ⁹ **Withstand him; be firm in faith** [against his onset—rooted, established, strong, immovable, and determined], **knowing that the same** (identical) **sufferings are appointed to your brotherhood** (the whole body of Christians) **throughout the world.** ¹⁰ **And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace** [Who imparts all blessing and favor], **Who has called you to His** [own] **eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will Himself complete and make you what you ought to be, establish and ground you securely, and strengthen, and settle you.** ¹¹ **To Him be the dominion** (power, authority, rule) **forever and ever. Amen** (so be it).

COMMENTARY ON THE FINAL EXHORTATION – 1st PETER 5:6-11

Verse 6 - In this section the subject returns to suffering. Effectively this verse begins where the preceding one ended, with an emphasis on **humility**. Humility had been the climax of instruction given to the elders. The contrast between humbling oneself and being exalted by God parallels the contrast between being united with Christ's suffering and united with His glory that is to be revealed.

- a) The Greek word {**kairos**} for **"due time"** means a strategic time and was probably used with the 2nd coming of Christ in mind.

Verse 7 – The terms **"you"** and **"yours"** are written in the 2nd person plural. Peter is not calling for individuals to cast their burdens on Christ; rather, he is instructing the churches to cast their shared concerns and worries on the Lord. In the context of this epistle, that shared concern would be persecution. It is the concern that the whole body of believers not be destroyed and no witness for Christ left in the world.

Verse 8 – begins with two quick commands:

- 1) **"..discipline yourselves"** – best translation is **"be clear-headed;"** ...be free from mental confusion; such a clear-thinking state allows us to - - -
- 2) **"..keep alert"** for the devil. It is evident that Peter saw Satan operating through the persecutors of his readers. Peter urges that they actively **"resist him, steadfast in your faith."** This language reflects the general understanding in early Christianity that believers were to envision themselves as soldiers in a courageous battle against evil.

Verses 9-11 – In these remarks the analogy of the soldier continues with Peter's comment that brothers and sisters are suffering throughout the world. The battle between Christ and evil is joined throughout the Christian world. Steadfastness in our portion of the battle helps those fighting on different fronts. The promise of vs. 10 is that the suffering is temporary, that God is gracious, that God called us into this battle, and he will **"restore, support, strengthen and**

establish us.” That is a sufficient promise to encourage us to remain faithful and to entrust ourselves to our faithful God.

CLOSING SALUTATIONS – 1st PETER 5:12-14

[Common English Bible (CEB)]

¹² **I have written and sent these few lines to you by Silvanus. I consider him to be a faithful brother. In these lines I have urged and affirmed that this is the genuine grace of God. Stand firm in it.** ¹³ **The fellow-elect church in Babylon greets you, and so does my son Mark.** ¹⁴ **Greet each other with the kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ.**

[New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)]

¹² **Through Silvanus, whom I consider a faithful brother, I have written this short letter to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.** ¹³ **Your sister church in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings; and so does my son Mark.** ¹⁴ **Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.**

[The Message (MSG)]

¹² **I’m sending this brief letter to you by Silas, a most dependable brother. I have the highest regard for him. I’ve written as urgently and accurately as I know how. This is God’s generous truth; embrace it with both arms!** ¹³⁻¹⁴ **The church in exile here with me—but not for a moment forgotten by God—wants to be remembered to you. Mark, who is like a son to me, says hello. Give holy embraces all around! Peace to you—to all who walk in Christ’s ways.**

[Amplified Bible (AMP)]

¹² **By Silvanus, a true (loyal, consistent, incorruptible) brother, as I consider him, I have written briefly to you, to counsel and urge and stimulate [you] and to declare [to you] that this is the true [account of the] grace (the undeserved favor) of God. Be steadfast and persevere in it.** ¹³ **She [your sister church here] in Babylon, [who is] elect (chosen) with [yourselves], sends you greetings, and [so does] my son (disciple) Mark.** ¹⁴ **Salute one another with a kiss of love [the symbol of mutual affection]. To all of you that are in Christ Jesus (the Messiah), may there be peace (every kind of peace and blessing, especially peace with God, and freedom from fears, agitating passions, and moral conflicts). Amen (so be it).**

BRIEF COMMENTARY on PETER’S CLOSING SALUTATIONS

- 1) Peter closes his letter with an announcement that **Silvanus** (*Silas*) has been his scribe (*amanuensis*) to write the letter. Remember and don’t think it strange that Silas was also a companion of St. Paul; understand from our beginning sessions the situation and conditions from which the writing took place!
- 2) **Babylon** is almost universally recognized as a code name for Rome.

- 3) The church at Rome **sends you greetings** along with **Mark**. Several other N.T. writings connect Mark as being in Rome during Paul's final days and thereafter, with Peter.
- 4) It is most appropriate that Peter's final words in this letter about holiness and suffering are **peace to all of you who are in Christ**. *The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, is fully capable of guarding us and enabling us to stand up to whatever pressure may come our way!*

FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION and/or REFLECTION @ HOME

1. Identify new insights that you have gained from any of the passages reviewed today. Why are they significant?
2. Considering 1st Peter 4:19, when we suffer for God's Will, what should we do? What does this mean?
3. How do Christians partake in Jesus' suffering?
4. How can we have joy in our suffering?
5. Why is humility needed in a local church?
6. What should and should not motivate church leaders in their work?

DISMISSAL

CONVERSATIONS NEXT WEEK: February 5, 2015

An Overview of The Minor Prophets

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