



- I. Ice breaker: Talk about a time you may have been away from home to a place where you didn't feel like you fit in and where you might have felt lost, afraid or lonely?
- II. Read today's scripture out loud, slowly, either in unison or using a designated reader and move into scripture quiet reflection. (3 minutes)

¹² Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice in as much as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵ If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. ¹⁶ However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. ¹⁷ 1 Peter 4:12-17

III. **Scripture quiet reflection:** (5-10 minutes)

This is a time to personally reflect on this week's scripture. Have a paper and pen available.

1. Read. Read through the passage silently.

2. Reflect. Notice any words or phrases that particularly draw your attention and stand out to you.

How do these words/phrases speak directly to you and your present situation? Write your insights.

3. Respond. As God has spoken to you in the Scripture, respond back to God in prayer. What do you want to say to God? What else does God want to say to you?

IV. **Sermon and Scripture Application Discussion. (20-30 minutes)**

1. As you reflectively engaged the Scriptures, what stood out to you from these passages?
2. One of the key themes of 1 Peter is that those who suffer as Christians will be exalted. What is your knee-jerk response to this theme? Discuss together what emotions and thoughts this triggers for you.
3. Our speaker for today, Rob A told an amazing story of a group of Afghan people applying for government issued ID cards and using a word for "follower of Christ" in the required question about religious affiliations. Their request was eventually approved by the government with their religion identifying them as a "follower of Christ" on their ID. This had never happened before. There is an old Afghan proverb that says if something happens once it will happen again like a dry riverbed that eventually is filled with water again. Soon after those applying for Government issued ID with Christian affiliation received approval.... the government collapsed.
 - The recipients of Peter's letter (1Peter) were believers in Asia Minor/Turkey in AD 50's and 60's who were going through persecution and no longer wanted to participate in civil idol worship.



Many lost their homes, families, and inheritance. The audience Peter was addressing were primarily Gentiles who were suffering for their faith in Christ. There are many parallel Christian experiences of sufferings Peter addressed with those in modern day Afghanistan.

- Rob A gave a brief modern history of the growth of Christianity in Afghanistan and how growth has always been tied to suffering of the people. Would you take some time now as a group to pray for the people in Afghanistan, those who are being relocated throughout the world and those who remain? Please pray that more people from Afghanistan would come to know the Lord and the faith of Christian Afghans would be resilient and strengthened despite all of the suffering they endure.

4. Read together Jesus words from His sermon on the Mount. Just as Jesus experienced opposition and persecution, his disciples can expect the same. Why do you think Peter says: Do not be surprised by this?

³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Matthew 5:2-12

5. Name some other examples in both the Old and New Testaments of people who suffered for their faith? What do we learn from their suffering?
6. Peter encourages the church: "But rejoice in as much as you participate in the sufferings of Christ". It seems like an oxymoron to rejoice while suffering.



- What reason do we as believers have to rejoice when we are suffering?
 - What motivation do we as believers have to rejoice when suffering?
 - What is one or more possible outcomes in God's kingdom when suffering is endured with faith?
 - What positive outcome can suffering have on our characters when suffering is endured with faith?
 - What negative outcome can suffering have on our character when suffering is not endured with faith?
7. This letter is written by the apostle who denied Christ three times and had to be restored to fellowship with God. Why do Peter's words have particular poignancy and urgency given his own history of denial?
- How does Peter encourage you to trust God more fully when undergoing trials and suffering?
 - We may not suffer in our faith as those in Afghanistan or those that Peter was writing to encourage. How can the church stand with our brothers and sisters who are persecuted because of their faith in Christ?
 - How is God calling *you* to stand with those who are suffering because of their faith?

THE 7 RHYTHMS OF ROOTED



Daily
Devotion



Prayer



Repentance



Sacrificial
Generosity



Serve the
Community



Share Your
Story



Worship