



Sunday School Member's Guide Summer 2022

Second Baptist Church
1 Peter, 2 Peter, and Jude

Summer Schedule

June 5, 2022..... Living as Strangers
June 12, 2022..... Holiness in Unlikely Places
June 19, 2022..... Hope No Matter What
June 26, 2022..... Glorifying God Through Suffering
July 3, 2022..... Take Your Stand
July 10, 2022..... The Theology of Promise
July 17, 2022..... Patience and Repentance
July 24, 2022..... Holiness and Love
July 31, 2022..... What is Spiritual Growth?
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August 14, 2022..... Sound the Alarm
August 21, 2022..... When God Calls Us to Swim Upstream
August 28, 2022..... Change

Second Baptist Church

Purpose: Living Out the Call of God

Living as Strangers

1 Peter 1:1-12

6/5/2022

MAIN POINT

By God's design, we are strangers in this world. When we embrace what it means to live out of place, we live according to the life God has called us to.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Have you ever traveled to a place where you did not speak the native language? If so, where?

What was your experience like as you tried to do basic things, such as order food or find a desired destination?

As we'll see in our passage, the Bible speaks of Christians as strangers or foreigners in this world. What is one tension you have experienced lately living as a Christian in this world?

Traveling abroad has a way of upsetting our sense of equilibrium. Time zones change. The language is different. Currency must be exchanged. Basic tasks we do every day at home are foreign and more complicated. We lose our sense of what it means to be at home.

As Christians, we should feel this way all the time. Our true citizenship is in heaven. We are strangers in a strange land. Peter called us strangers and temporary residents (1 Pet. 2:11). John warned about love of the world (1 John 2:15). Paul was deserted by Demas who "loved this present world" (2 Tim. 4:9). The teaching of the New Testament is clear—we must be careful to see the world as a place we are traveling through, not one we are at home in. Our true citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20).

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Have a volunteer read 1 Peter 1:1-2.

What do you know about Peter from the Gospels and the Book of Acts? What was Peter like? What made him worthy to be an apostle?

Peter's unique experiences, failures, triumphs, and suffering as a follower of Christ equipped him to speak timely words of encouragement to Christians in Asia Minor who were living under the threat of increased persecution. More important than his past experiences, Peter had been chosen by God to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, which gave him authority to deliver God's truth.

How did Peter describe the members of the churches from various communities in Asia Minor in verse 1? Why do you think he described them this way?

Do you think of yourself as a "temporary resident" (v. 1)? Why or why not? How might your perspective and priorities need to change for you to begin seeing yourself this way?

Christians in this world are strangers in a strange land. We have been chosen by God to live as foreigners in this life. We are not our own—He has picked us and set us apart for His holy purposes. We are exiles—we do not ultimately belong to this world, nor do we "fit" in it. We live in a world that is corrupted by sin, a world that increasingly does not understand us, yet God has appointed us to live in this world as strangers for His glory.

Have a volunteer read 1 Peter 1:3-9.

What does it mean to have received a living hope, and how did Jesus' resurrection deliver it to us? How should we live now in light of this hope?

Everyone who believes in Jesus as the resurrected Lord and Savior is born again. This faith secures for us an eternal and unshakable future hope and confirms our purpose in the present. Because of what Christ has done for us, we are free from living for the pleasures of the moment and can focus our lives on glorifying God by advancing Christ's kingdom. Unlike those around us, our lives are now dependent upon what we receive from Christ rather than on what we receive from the world.

How does our new birth enable to us to live in any circumstance with joy and hope?

How can we rejoice in the midst of various trials? What would Peter have us focus on in the midst of suffering?

Peter referred to his readers as "temporary residents" and "strangers" (1:1; 2:11). They were looked down upon by others in society and were constantly pressured to compromise their faith. In the midst of difficulties, Peter called upon his readers to rejoice in the salvation that was theirs in Christ, a salvation that entailed an "imperishable" and "undefiled" inheritance. Suffering would produce two results. First, it would demonstrate the genuineness of these believers' faith. Secondly, persecution would result in praise, glory, and honor. God will crown His people who are faithful through persecution with all the honor heaven can bestow.

Have a volunteer read 1 Peter 1:10-12.

What do we know about the salvation Peter spoke of in verse 10 (see vv. 3-9)?

What did Peter say these prophets searched and inquired carefully for? Why do you think Christians in Asia Minor needed this reminder? Why do we need this reminder?

How does our devotion to God's Word make us seem strange to the culture we live in?

Living as a stranger is rooted in a trust in God's Word, which perhaps is the quality that makes us the most strange. The focus of the prophecies of the Old Testament was the "grace" that is ours in Christ. The fact that the prophets were indwelt with the Spirit of Christ as they foretold the coming, suffering, and glory of Christ tells us something very important about the Old Testament and the Bible as a whole: All of Scripture tells one unified story of salvation by grace through faith in Christ. The Old Testament constantly points us forward to the coming Messiah who would forgive, cleanse, and restore sinners to a right relationship with God. The New Testament demonstrates how Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of these promises.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Do you live as a stranger in this world, or as someone who is far too comfortable? How should your relationship with the world change if it truly isn't your home?

How can we keep one another focused on what is most important in this regard?

How does feeling strange and out of place drive us to our mission?

PRAYER

Praise God for redeeming you through His Son. Pray that we would be faithful to God's calling as we live as strangers in a strange land. Ask that God would protect you from being too comfortable in this world through your increasing dependence on His Word.

COMMENTARY

1 Peter 1:1-12

1:1-2 Peter identified himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ. The apostles were Christ's divinely ordained, directly commissioned, authoritative representatives in the early church. The recipients to whom Peter wrote were the temporary residents dispersed. The term "temporary residents" (v. 1; 2:11) refers to people living in a region that is not their permanent place of residence—in this case, the five Roman provinces located in what is now modern Turkey. Heaven is the true home of believers. The "Dispersion" means a "scattering" and usually refers to God's people scattered outside of their homeland. Divine foreknowledge is the basis on which a believer is chosen (i.e., "elect"). It is more than just God's prior knowledge of everything; it also includes His predetermination. Set apart by the Spirit is the means by which being "chosen" is made a reality.

The phrase for obedience and for sprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ describes the aim and purpose of election (Ex 24:3-8). Christians were chosen by God to have a covenant relationship with Him that is characterized by obedience; Christ's blood brings believers into this relationship.

1:3-12 This section begins with praise to God for the privileges He has bestowed on believers. Peter encouraged his readers by reminding them that through the resurrection of Christ, God had caused them to be born again. The result of this new birth is that they have acquired an eternal inheritance reserved in heaven. Believers will be delivered to heaven, their eternal home, through their faith in the gospel.

1:3-5 Peter informed his readers that God rebirthed them to an inheritance that will never perish, be defiled, or fade—indeed a sure salvation.

1:6-9 Peter further encouraged his readers with the fact that Christians can rejoice in this imperishable inheritance and sure salvation, though they are tested by persecution and suffering while in this world.

1:10-12 The OT people of God did not specifically know Christ or the gospel, but they did believe the promises of God that pointed to Christ (Heb 11:13). Peter conveyed to his readers that the good news of salvation that the prophets sought and looked forward to had now been revealed. Salvation in Christ is so great and the blessings so tremendous that angels desire to look into these things. The gospel excites their interest so much that they want to study it intently.

Second Baptist Church

Purpose: Living Out the Call of God

Holiness in Unlikely Places

1 Peter 2:11-25

6/12/2022

MAIN POINT

God calls Christians to live godly lives in every circumstance. Knowing Jesus changes the way we relate to other Christians and how we submit to authorities.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What comes to mind when you consider the topic of “submission to authority”? Why is submission a difficult topic for many of us?

Have you ever considered submission as an expression of holiness? Why or why not?

As Christians, what do you think our responsibility is to government officials who we always agree with?

In a culture that emphasizes “personal fulfillment” above all things, the topic of submission isn’t necessarily popular, but it’s important. Simply put, submission is the recognition of God’s authority over our lives. When we follow Jesus as Lord, He becomes our final authority. God has established the family, the government and the church, and He has the authority to instruct us how to live in these institutions. The apostle Peter wanted believers to submit willingly. Yet, his words were not communicated as options to be considered but as commands to be obeyed. God’s people are to submit fully to His desires for them. God wants us to trust Him because all governments and authorities are ultimately appointed and controlled by Him.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Have a volunteer read 1 Peter 2:11-12.

Glance back at verse 11. How did Peter refer to Christians in this passage?

Why did Peter make the case for Christians to act honorably?

Can you think of a time when you witnessed Christians acting honorably and winning the respect of non-believers? If so, what happened?

In verse 11 Peter referred to Christ followers as “strangers and temporary residents.” This label reminds us that as Christians we are temporary residents in this world and should maintain a degree of detachment from by abstaining from specific behaviors. Verse 12 makes it clear that the early church was under intense scrutiny and criticism. False accusations and rumors abounded and Christians were being accused of being disloyal to Caesar. Peter commanded his readers to live honorably as temporary residents on this earth so that even hostile Gentiles might come to glorify God.

Have a volunteer read 1 Peter 2:13-17.

What reasons does this text give for obeying and respecting authority? Refer to Romans 13:3-5 for additional reasons.

How might a faithful track record of submitting to authority “silence the ignorance of foolish people”?

Look back at verse 17. How did Peter command believers to respond to authorities? How did he command believers to respond to God? What is the difference?

Peter commanded his audience to submit to and honor the governing authorities in their lives, but also communicated that the Christian’s relationship to God must differ from his or her relationship with the state. In other words, we are to honor the emperor, but we are to fear God (v.17). The original recipients of 1 Peter faced severe persecution due to their faith and enjoyed far less personal freedom than we do. Yet they were commanded to submit to the governing authorities who ignored their persecution. Thus, before we determine to disobey the governing authorities in our lives, we must make sure that disobeying this governing authority would not mean disobeying God. We may be called to disobey authorities in some instances, but only in the case that to obey would mean a conflict with obedience to God. We should verify that our primary motives are to glorify God and seek the welfare of others. Protecting our personal freedoms and desires are not biblical reasons to defy the government. We must also remember Paul’s command in Romans 12:18, “so far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”

Have a volunteer read 1 Peter 2:18-25.

The slavery Peter referred to was not racially driven. People were sold into slavery for economic reasons rather than for issues of race. Often times a man was a slave because he incurred a large amount of debt and couldn’t pay it off. However, there were others who were born as slaves. The New Testament consistently counsels Christians who were slaves to obey and submit to their earthly masters. The apostle Paul even asked Philemon to receive back Onesimus, a runaway slave who had become a Christian. In doing so, he also asked Onesimus to return to his position as a slave (Philemon 16). The practice of slavery was a well-entrenched part of the culture of the first century, and the Bible contains no direct command or call to abolish slavery. However, the implications of the gospel, especially the ethic of love, stand clearly in opposition to slavery. In

Christ, social and class distinctions, are not to exist (Gal 3:28; Col 3:11). In the first century, some masters treated their slaves with respect, while others were cruel. In either event, it's crucial to note that slavery in the first century (or during any era) was not just.

Glance back at verse 18. Who did Peter challenge slaves to submit to? Does this surprise you? Why or why not?

How does it bring favor when we suffer unjustly (v. 19)? How might suffering provide us opportunities for spiritual growth (1 Peter 1:6-9)?

The word “unjust” is actually better translated “evil” or “crooked.” The idea behind Peter’s command to slaves in 2:18 is that slaves were to live lives marked by obedience to their masters whether their masters were fair or not. Peter didn’t give this charge because he was unsympathetic to the plight of slaves or because he thought slavery was just. Peter gave this charge because he was concerned with helping Christians, slave or free, to live faithfully for Christ. Peter’s motivation was to help all people, in all circumstances, embrace and live out their role for Christ’s kingdom. In other words, a slave suffering under an unfair master had a unique opportunity to proclaim Christ by persevering in doing good in the face of injustice.

Life isn’t fair, so we face unfair circumstances all the time. It’s tempting to look at Peter’s teaching on slavery and think it doesn’t apply to us because we are not slaves. But this text does apply to modern day believers, because we are called to proclaim the gospel in everything we do. Unfair circumstances provide a unique opportunity to proclaim the gospel. The gospel is a message about true freedom—freedom from the wrath of God and freedom to delight in Jesus.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

In light of this lesson, what should submission to authorities look like for you?

In what sense is submission an expression of holiness? How did Jesus model this for us?

What principles can we apply to our workplace from Peter’s instructions to Christian slaves?

PRAYER

Praise God for calling you to a life of holiness. Confess what a privilege it is to live with God who loves you and calls you to Himself. Pray for the courage and clarity to live for God in the most unlikely of places.

COMMENTARY

1 Peter 2:11-25

2:11-12 Peter commanded his readers to live honorably as holy strangers and exiles so that even hostile Gentile residents of the earth might come to glorify God.

2:13-17 Peter exhorted his readers to be subordinate and respectful to every human authority because of the Lord. He commanded them to submit to governmental and civil authority, acting as free people. The foolish people refers to the Gentiles mentioned in v. 12.

2:18-25 Peter charged household slaves to submit to their masters by doing good, even though they might suffer unjustly. Such behavior brings favor with God. While doing so they are to remember the example of Christ, who suffered unjustly while submitting to God's will. The phrase by his wounds (cp. Is 53:5) refers to the death of Christ and not to the flogging he suffered at the hands of Roman soldiers (Jn 19:1). By his death believers are healed spiritually.

Second Baptist Church

Purpose: Living Out the Call of God

hope no matter what

1 peter 3:8-17

6/19/2022

MAIN POINT

God's design is for believers to have a steady hope that influences their relationships. This hope should impact their lifestyle, so that they respond with gentleness and respect to those who cause them to wrongly suffer.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is hope? What is the difference between biblical hope and mere positive thinking?

Do you find times when hope is easier/more abundant or harder/scarcer? Explain.

Do circumstances impact hope? What does it say about hope if hope is dependent on circumstances?

Henry Ford, the great automation pioneer and automotive industry titan, observed, "Whether you think you can, or you think you can't—you're right." To his thinking, circumstances were irrelevant. One's success within any situation was not determined by the circumstances of the situation, but the approach of the individual within the circumstances.

Peter's audience was already familiar with persecution for their Christian faith. For some, such circumstances might excuse a waning hope. Not for Peter, and not for Peter's audience—if they would only heed Peter's words.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 Peter 3:8-9.

Some Bible students understand verse 8 to relate to relationships within the church and verse 9 to address those outside the church. That might or might not have been Peter's intention, but it is worth considering.

What five characteristics did Peter identify in verse 8 that should characterize Christians' relationships with one another? What is the significance of each one? How do these qualities contribute to hope in believers?

What word or short phrase would you use to describe the image Peter painted in verse 9 of Christians' relationships with those outside the church? Explain your choice. How would relating to non-Christians in this manner contribute to hope within believers?

What does the corresponding nature of "giving a blessing...that you may inherit a blessing" tell you about a Christ follower's hope?

God never intended believers to be lone rangers, operating by themselves through the course of life. His design from the garden of Eden was for His people to serve in partnership with one another. When we live in harmony with other believers and with the lost, we nurture our individual hope as well as the hope of brothers and sisters in Christ to whom we relate. As we give a blessing of hope in the way we relate to others, we will find that we inherit a blessing of hope as well.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 Peter 3:10-12.

Peter drew from Psalm 34:12-16 for this section of verses, though he used third person language while the psalmist used second person. Review the verses in the psalm now and compare them to Peter's. As with the previous section of verses and the verses from Psalm 34, Peter's adaptation does not include the word "hope," but we certainly see the concept in the opening half of verse 10.

What do these verses tell you about the lifestyle Peter envisioned for his audience?

How would such a lifestyle be important for people facing persecution?

How can such a lifestyle contribute to a sense of hope for obedient followers of the Lord?

Oftentimes, our sense of hope is compromised when we allow our relationships to deteriorate or when we engage in other lifestyle manners we know betray our faith and calling. Peter held up a God-honoring lifestyle as a requisite for the hope we all seek.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 Peter 3:13-17.

Peter pulled no punches with those who would read or hear his letter. What ironies or seeming paradoxes do you find in his words?

Peter told those who were already suffering, or soon would be, to be prepared to share hope. What does that mean? How do you do that?

If you were one of the thousands of contemporary believers presently living under persecution, how might Peter's words in these verses make your hope more resolute?

Peter acknowledged that those who do good should not suffer or experience harm for doing so. Yet his concern was not really whether authorities lined up with what should or shouldn't be. Rather, his concern was whether believers aligned themselves with what should be, and whether they were prepared to give a "defense" (apologia, from which we get the English "apology," a reasoned, explanatory argument) for their hope. And even that defense Peter expected to be given "with gentleness and respect." Peter was more concerned with the behavior of believers in the midst of suffering than with the legality or legitimacy of the suffering.

Believers will suffer, be it mildly or severely. But our hope need not disappear when suffering comes. Let us strive to put to shame the world behind our suffering by the loving humility we demonstrate, responding with blessing rather than evil, and always be prepared to share the "reason for the hope that is in you."

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What does it mean for your hope that "the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are open to their prayer"?

Are you suffering in some manner for doing "what is good"? Explain. How well does your response to that suffering measure up to the standard Peter laid out for Christ followers?

How does your hope impact the way you live on a daily basis, regardless of the favorableness of your circumstances?

PRAYER

Lead group members to ask God to help them see where their hope is, and whether it wanes and waxes with the circumstances around them. Thank God that His design is for us to have a hope that remains constant without regard to changing conditions. Ask Him to help adults prepare to share that hope with one another and with those responsible for whatever suffering they might be experiencing.

COMMENTARY

1 peter 3:8-17

3:8-12 In climactic fashion, Peter commanded Christians (“temporary residents,” 1:1) not to return evil for evil so they could receive God’s blessing. The apostle’s teaching here (v. 9) reflects that of Christ elsewhere (Mt 5:43-44; Lk 6:27-28).

3:13-4:19 Believers are commanded in this section to distinguish themselves by doing good, even when faced with pagan hostility, because God will vindicate the righteous.

3:13-17 Believers are commanded to suffer only for the doing of good and not for evil among those who call this world their home.

Second Baptist Church

Purpose: Living Out the Call of God

Glorifying God Through Suffering

1 Peter 4:1-11

6/26/2022

MAIN POINT

As Christians, we are temporary residents in this world and are to look to Christ as our example in suffering. Since Jesus suffered, we must also be prepared to suffer.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Describe the worst storm you have personally ever experienced. What were some of your fears and thoughts during that time?

What do you do to prepare for a storm in life? How does your preparation give you confidence as you prepare yourself for the storm?

On April 27, 2011 an enormous system of EF-4 tornadoes, some of which were a mile and a half in width, broke in Birmingham and Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The storm left a path of destruction more than 80 miles long and caused an estimated 2.4 billion dollars worth of damage. Obviously a tornado is an unexpected occurrence, but thankfully word was spread through a variety of news channels and people were able to prepare themselves for the storm. Wisely, the manager of a local restaurant took all of his employees into the walk-in freezer for safety. While the restaurant was destroyed, the life of every employee was saved because of the manager's preparation. As Christians, we will encounter trials. Yet it is in our preparation for trials and the way that we live during hardships that people will see the beauty of our Savior.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Have a volunteer read 1 Peter 4:1-6.

How does taking on the attitude of Jesus Christ allow us to suffer "well"? How did Jesus respond when He suffered unjustly?

How has the suffering of Christ refined us? How does it lead us to live differently?

Practically speaking, what does it look like for the Christian to suffer well?

The goal of the Christian life is to be transformed into the image of Christ. While it's true our sanctification process won't be complete until we get to heaven, the longer we follow Jesus, the more we become like Him. As we recognize this, we must also understand that Jesus suffered more than any person who has ever lived. Isaiah 53 refers to Jesus as "despised and rejected" and a "man of suffering" (v. 3). The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus are the catalyst for our sanctification. In the remaining time we have left on earth, we live in the power of the Holy Spirit and for the glory of Christ.

What motivation did Peter give to continue to live for God, even when it was difficult?

In what ways have God's people suffered for their faith throughout history?

What enables Christians to rejoice in the midst of trials?

How does the way we live separate Christians from non-Christians? What does it look like to stand against ungodly living while still being open to people who are lost in sin?

Unbelievers might think it's strange when you don't live the way they do and don't join them in their "unrestrained behavior" (v. 3). But this provides opportunity and reason to proclaim the gospel. In the past, we too were lost and in desperate need of salvation. All people will one day come face-to-face with the Judge of the earth and must give an account for their lives. In light of this sober truth, we live differently, not so we can pat ourselves on the back, but so we can lead people to see the hope and salvation we have found in Jesus Christ. Unbelievers will see this hope through our service if we have a Christ-exalting ethic.

Have a volunteer read 1 Peter 4:7-11.

How did Peter instruct his audience to spend their time waiting? Specifically, how did Peter tell his readers to relate to each other?

Do you enjoy extending hospitality? Why is it hard to show hospitality at times? Why is it important?

Peter understood that Jesus' return is imminent; believers, therefore, are to live with a sense of urgency and purpose, especially in how they relate to others. Peter taught that the essential priority is to extend this distinctive love to everyone, but especially to other Christians (v. 8).

Hospitality is about extending kindness to others by serving them. In Peter's day, hospitality was much more than a form of courtesy—it was a vital ministry, but apparently it led to complaining. Peter explained that believers were to be hospitable without complaint. Even if guests overstayed and took advantage of their hosts, the hosts were to be patient and kind.

What did Peter mean when he said there are various gifts (v. 10)? Why are all gifts necessary?

What are we denying the church if we do not use our gifts? What are we denying ourselves when we refuse to serve?

There are various gifts, and each one is necessary if the church is to function in the way that God intends. For the church to function properly, we need to understand that every member matters greatly to God. If we refuse to use our gifts to serve the body of Christ, we deny the church the ability to minister in specific ways. God provides all the resources to build His church, and by His grace, we are one of those resources. He will give us the strength we need to represent Him well, both through our gifts and our service to Him.

As Christians, we can't allow suffering to derail us. Instead of allowing suffering to stop you in your tracks, allow suffering to lead you to greater levels of trust and faith in Christ. The type of suffering Peter wrote about was not suffering because of our own sin or because of the sin of the world (natural disasters, poverty, health), but suffering because of our relationship with Jesus. In order to suffer well, we must recognize that how we live matters. God has called us to a standard of holiness that we should embrace for the good of our own souls.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Have you ever been called to suffer because of your faith? What were the circumstances? Where did you find strength in the midst of suffering?

How do we see the beauty and gift of Christian community through our suffering?

How might God take the way we respond to suffering and use it to help others see His glory and purpose in our lives?

PRAYER

Pray that God will give you the grace to suffer well for His name. Ask that God will show you His character and His grace in those moments when you are called to share in the sufferings of Christ.

COMMENTARY

1 Peter 4:1-11

4:1-6 Peter commanded believers as temporary residents who looked to Christ as their example to suffer and separate themselves from the practices of those who slandered them. God will condemn the slanderers and vindicate believers in heaven's court.

4:5 The living and the dead means anyone who has ever lived, or people of all generations.

4:6 Those who are now dead seems to refer to deceased believers in Christ. When they were alive, the gospel was preached to them. While on earth they were judged by men in the fleshly realm, or condemned and martyred on account of the gospel. But they now live by God in the spiritual realm, heaven.

4:7-11 Peter commanded believers to maintain their unity while doing everything to God's glory.

4:8 The phrase love covers a multitude of sins means that love repeatedly forgives (Pr 10:12).

4:9 When being persecuted, it is easy to snipe and complain even at other believers; thus Peter's command to be hospitable to one another.

4:10 The words based on the gift each one has received refer to a spiritual gift. Spiritual gifts are divine endowments that God entrusts to believers as stewards.

4:11 Christians should manage and use their spiritual gifts to God's glory, just as God intends.

Second Baptist Church

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Glorifying God Through Suffering

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Do you enjoy extending hospitality? Why is it hard to show hospitality at times? Why is it important?

Peter understood that Jesus' return is imminent; believers, therefore, are to live with a sense of urgency and purpose, especially in how they relate to others. Peter taught that the essential priority is to extend this distinctive love to everyone, but especially to other Christians (v. 8).

Hospitality is about extending kindness to others by serving them. In Peter's day, hospitality was much more than a form of courtesy—it was a vital ministry, but apparently it led to complaining. Peter explained that believers were to be hospitable without complaint. Even if guests overstayed and took advantage of their hosts, the hosts were to be patient and kind.

What did Peter mean when he said there are various gifts (v. 10)? Why are all gifts necessary?

What are we denying the church if we do not use our gifts? What are we denying ourselves when we refuse to serve?

There are various gifts, and each one is necessary if the church is to function in the way that God intends. For the church to function properly, we need to understand that every member matters greatly to God. If we refuse to use our gifts to serve the body of Christ, we deny the church the ability to minister in specific ways. God provides all the resources to build His church, and by His grace, we are one of those resources. He will give us the strength we need to represent Him well, both through our gifts and our service to Him.

As Christians, we can't allow suffering to derail us. Instead of allowing suffering to stop you in your tracks, allow suffering to lead you to greater levels of trust and faith in Christ. The type of suffering Peter wrote about was not suffering because of our own sin or because of the sin of the world (natural disasters, poverty, health), but suffering because of our relationship with Jesus. In order to suffer well, we must recognize that how we live matters. God has called us to a standard of holiness that we should embrace for the good of our own souls.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Have you ever been called to suffer because of your faith? What were the circumstances? Where did you find strength in the midst of suffering?

How do we see the beauty and gift of Christian community through our suffering?

How might God take the way we respond to suffering and use it to help others see His glory and purpose in our lives?

PRAYER

Pray that God will give you the grace to suffer well for His name. Ask that God will show you His character and His grace in those moments when you are called to share in the sufferings of Christ.

COMMENTARY

1 Peter 4:1-11

4:1-6 Peter commanded believers as temporary residents who looked to Christ as their example to suffer and separate themselves from the practices of those who slandered them. God will condemn the slanderers and vindicate believers in heaven's court.

4:5 The living and the dead means anyone who has ever lived, or people of all generations.

4:6 Those who are now dead seems to refer to deceased believers in Christ. When they were alive, the gospel was preached to them. While on earth they were judged by men in the fleshly realm, or condemned and martyred on account of the gospel. But they now live by God in the spiritual realm, heaven.

4:7-11 Peter commanded believers to maintain their unity while doing everything to God's glory.

4:8 The phrase love covers a multitude of sins means that love repeatedly forgives (Pr 10:12).

4:9 When being persecuted, it is easy to snipe and complain even at other believers; thus Peter's command to be hospitable to one another.

4:10 The words based on the gift each one has received refer to a spiritual gift. Spiritual gifts are divine endowments that God entrusts to believers as stewards.

4:11 Christians should manage and use their spiritual gifts to God's glory, just as God intends.

Second Baptist Church

Purpose: Living Out the Call of God

the theology of promise

2 Peter 1:3-4

7/10/2022

MAIN POINT

Our God keeps His promises.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Do you remember the first time you broke a promise? What was the context?

What kind of impact did your broken promise have? Were there any repercussions?

How do you feel when someone breaks a promise with you?

Do you think people view promises differently than God? Explain.

Nowadays people do not seem to treat promises with much gravity. We break our promises for a variety of reasons: fear, selfishness, pride, or perhaps we simply forget our oaths. However, as we see in today's video session, promises are sacred. Not only are promises important to God, but as John MacDonald says, "the entire motif of the Bible is promises."

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Have a volunteer read 2 Peter 1:3-4.

According to this passage, what kinds of things has God given us?

As you look back at your life up to this point, what has God "multiplied in your life" and given to you?

After reading these verses, in what ways do you think God's promises are different from our promises?

As James MacDonald explains, a promise is God's way of relating to us. God does not owe us His promises. There is nothing we can do to earn His extravagant promises. Rather, God has graciously given us these life-giving promises for His glory and for our good.

What are some other verses that come to mind when you think about God's promises?

What is your approach to God's promises? Do you cross your fingers and hope that they come true, or do you have confidence in God's promises and trust that He will come through?

Have three volunteers read Psalm 119:40, Joshua 21:45, and 1 Kings 8:56.

What can we learn about the nature of God's promises from these verses?

What do you love about God's promises?

In what ways have you tried the promises of God?

God does not simply make promises that are easy. He makes promises that are hard (consider the cross). But however difficult or painful a promise may be, He is also always faithful to see His promises through (consider the empty tomb). God's promises to us are not empty oaths. He gives His promises to us knowing full well that we will need them some day, and with that in mind we must be willing to lean on His promises, hold onto His promises, and rest in His promises. To put it another way, we must be willing to test God's promises, to allow them into our lives and put them into practice.

Have a volunteer read 2 Corinthians 1:20.

In what ways are you currently relying on your own strength rather than leaning on Christ?

What current problem in your life is keeping you distracted and preventing you from celebrating the good news of God's promises?

Christ is God's promise to us, His promise of salvation. God's promises are experienced in Christ and, as we see in this verse, God's promises are achieved through Christ. They find their yes in Him. That being true, it follows that the fulfillment of God's promises lives inside you, and His name is Jesus. We must stop striving in our own strength, even if we're striving towards the promises of God, because God's promises only find their yes in Christ.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What is one area or relationship in your life in which you struggle to keep your promises?

In what ways do you understand promises differently now that you are a Christian?

How do you think God wants us responding to His promises?

PRAYER

Thank God for the extravagance and goodness of His promises. Take a moment and pray for those in your life who need to hear and believe the promises of God.

COMMENTARY

2 peter 1:3-4

1:3-4. Peter next reminded his readers of the resources they had through knowing Christ. He provides believers everything they need for life and godliness. Life is eternal life, whereas godliness is godly living; the latter cannot be obtained without the former. The divine call of believers served as a foundation for Peter's appeal for godly living. Christ calls to Himself those whom God has saved, and this calling is brought about by His own glory and goodness. Christ's glory and goodness combine and seem to refer to the moral excellence of Christ. By these—by Christ's glory and goodness—He has given us very great and precious promises. The content of these great promises includes sharing in the divine nature. Peter did not mean that believers become gods or that they share in the divine nature of God in every way. He meant that they participate in God's moral excellence and will one day be morally perfected. Participation in the divine nature is possible only after escaping the corruption in the world because of evil desires. Jesus Christ offers the only way of escape from the rebellion of this evil world system that is opposed to and alienated from God.

psalm 119:40

119:33-40 This section focuses on God's reward for obedience. The pursuit of material gain leads to sin, but life is found in the ways of the Lord. On with all my heart, compare Dt 6:5.

joshua 21:45

21:45 The conclusion that everything was fulfilled shows how God kept His promises and how all the enemies of Israel that they fought against were defeated. Israel did not drive out all the inhabitants of the land, but this was not God's responsibility. He kept His part of the covenant.

1 kings 8:56

8:54-56 In his role as the spiritual representative of the people, Solomon had prayed in a posture of humble obeisance before God. This role as the spiritual intermediary between the people and God continued when Solomon stood, turned to the people, and blessed them by announcing, May the Lord be praised .

2 corinthians 1:20

1:20 Every one of God's promises in Scripture is fulfilled directly or indirectly in Him (Rm 1:2; Eph 2:12). Amen means "so be it" or "this is true." God's glory is displayed in Christ as well as in believers' confession of Him.

Second Baptist Church

Purpose: Living Out the Call of God

Patience and repentance

Romans 2:1-8; 2 Peter 3:8-13

7/17/2022

MAIN POINT

God's patience leads people to repentance.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is your least favorite thing to wait for? Why?

Are some things better when you have to wait for them? Why or why not?

We live in an age of instant gratification. We expect to get music, movies, news, and information instantly. We expect timely service when we go out to eat and will not return to restaurants that don't give it to us. We live in a culture that struggles to value patience, and yet deep down we know that some of the best things in life are better with time. Holidays would not be as joyful if we could make them arrive on any day of the year, food would not taste as good if we were never forced to wait for it, and our relationships would not be as deep if we never had to wait to be reunited with the ones we love. While we live in a culture that values neither the Lord nor patience, today we will see that God's patience demonstrates His deep love for those who do not yet know Him.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Have a volunteer read Romans 2:1-3.

Why do you think we are so prone to judge others in their sin when we are trusting in our own righteousness?

What do we communicate about ourselves when we judge other people for their sins? What do we communicate about God?

Glance back at Romans 1:18-32. What do we learn about the world and the people in it from Romans 1-2?

After giving a detailed description of human sinfulness (1:18-32), Paul was amazed that some people thought they were free to judge another. Paul's message was clear. We are not free to judge others for their sins, because we too are sinners, guilty of committing the very sins we condemn. Paul focused on the sin of self-righteousness that deceives us into thinking we have the moral standing to pronounce judgment on others. The real issue for Paul was that the judges who self-righteously condemn others do the same things. Sin is remarkably equalizing. It makes beggars of us all—from the best to the worst of us. We all need something we cannot give ourselves. The truth about the world we live in is that it is a broken world full of sinners who cannot plead ignorance. We are all without excuse. The truth is that we deserve judgment.

Have a volunteer read Romans 2:4-8.

Given Paul's description of the world and of the human heart up to this point in Romans, why might people misunderstand the God's purpose in being patient with the world?

What does Paul mean by saying people can presume on the riches of God? Have you been guilty of that before? What led you to change?

Why is God patient with us? How have you experienced God's kindness, restraint, and patience?

The apostle made clear that if God had not yet brought judgment on some, such delay was an example of His great kindness, restraint, and patience. Kindness refers to God's benevolent actions toward people (see Ex. 33:19; Dan. 9:18). God was also showing restraint—that is, He was allowing for possible repentance, but only for a time. God does not abolish punishment all together, but He will suspend it temporarily (see 2 Pet. 3:9). Finally, God was patient, longing to see people come to repentance. While God thus shows the riches of His kindness in that He holds back deserved judgment, it is the height of conceit that people sin all the more blatantly, rather than turn to Him in repentance.

What are the standards by which God will judge people?

What kind of behavior characterizes those with eternal life?

Paul was not teaching how to be made right with God. He was talking about how God evaluates whether faith in Him is real. All works are the actions of people responding to one of two opposing sources: the domain of darkness and the kingdom of the Son (see Col. 1:13). Every deed has a signature that links it unmistakably to either the work of self or the work of God.

Have a volunteer Read 2 Peter 3:8-13.

Why isn't God slow to fulfill His promises? How did Peter describe God's sense of time?

Why has God delayed Christ's return even to this day?

The second coming's seeming delay actually demonstrated God's compassion. He was allowing people the opportunity to experience His salvation. Peter declared that God does not want any to

perish (come to ultimate ruin), but all to come to repentance—to turn from sin and turn to Him in faith. Not everyone will accept His offer of saving grace, but His overriding desire is that all people do so. God delights to receive people into His kingdom and plans to continue celebrating with them into eternity.

How can Peter’s description of the cataclysmic events related to Christ’s return encourage believers to passionately pursue the character of Christ?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How might a deeper awareness of God’s patient love help us combat the pride in our hearts that distracts us from Him?

How might remembering that God’s patience leads people to repentance help you cultivate patience in your heart?

What can you do to be more consistently aware of the kindness and patience God has shown you? How might such an awareness change the way you relate to the lost people God has placed in your life?

PRAYER

Close in prayer, thanking God for the kindness and patience He has shown us through His offer of salvation. Pray that the truths of this week’s study would compel you and your group members to share the gospel with people in their lives this week.

COMMENTARY

Romans 2:1-8

2:1-2. Note the transition Paul makes between discussing the unrighteousness of the Gentiles (people in general; 1:18-32) and the unrighteousness of the Jews (2:17–3:8). The last thing he mentions in 1:32 is that people’s minds are so depraved that they, in a manner of speaking, boast about their sin. Not only do they sin willingly (knowing they will be judged for it); they encourage and approve of others doing the same. It would be hard to describe boastful, sinful arrogance much more plainly. Yet there is another kind of boasting that is just as sinful: the kind that the Jews were guilty of. They boasted in and bragged about their privileged relationship to God (2:17). Mentioning the concept of “boasting” at least thirty times in his epistles, Paul never yielded to the temptation to boast in himself. Rather, he knew that, like the guilty tax-gatherer who stood in stark contrast to the boastful Pharisee in Jesus’ parable (Luke 18:9-14), there was only one thing that he would ever be able to boast in—the mercy and grace of God (1 Cor. 1:31; 13:4; 2 Cor. 1:12; 10:17; 11:30; 12:5, 9; Gal. 6:14; Eph. 2:9).

2:3. The answer to the question that begins with do you really think is obviously no and naturally follows the previously agreed to premise. People who sin deserve condemnation for their sin and will not escape God's judgment. The moral equation is set and unbending. Sin brings judgment. That those who condemn others also do such things should lead to the obvious conclusion they too are under condemnation.

2:4. In fact, the audience Paul had in mind thought they would escape judgment. God's character includes many qualities that are designed to give people a chance for salvation. God demonstrates His kindness to all people, everywhere and every day. His restraint is a divine tolerance in which He temporarily suspends the immediate punishment of sin. His patience is an attitude of allowing people multiple opportunities to understand and embrace His truth. Instead of taking advantage of these qualities to turn to God, these people despise them; that is, they hold them in contempt. The main expression of such contempt is not taking the opportunity for repentance. This word literally means "a change of mind." Instead of accepting God's truth, the Jews continued to hold on to misguided notions of personal righteousness. They made gods in their own images, which was, ironically, the very idolatry they condemned.

2:5. Consistent resistance of truth produces a callousness in the mind and soul that Paul described as hardness. Those who regularly reject God's message become less open to hearing it. They are unrepentant and risk becoming deaf to God's call. This truth should produce in Christians a sense of urgency to gently press on unbelievers their need to respond positively to the gospel. When unbelievers resist the opportunity for repentance, they are storing up wrath for themselves instead of taking advantage of the great storehouse of God's kindness. The judgment in this verse is in the future, at the consummation of history, and is different from the wrath that is revealed presently against sin (see Rom. 1:18). Paul's point was that our actions have eternal consequences.

2:6. Repay is normally used in regard to a debt. God will give to all what they deserve, a judgment that fits precisely the deeds they have performed. However, Paul did not intend to violate the truth that salvation is by faith apart from the law (a point made clear in 3:21-22). Careful attention to its context shows the present verse does not teach salvation by works. Paul was addressing Jewish readers who believed in a judgment based on works. He would agree up to a point; but as he soon would make clear, the only way we can do God's will is through Jesus Christ. Faith is not divorced from real life. It is made clear by how a person lives, by his or her works. Anyone who clings to the notion of good works leading to salvation apart from faith is lost. However, good works as a result of faith is the proof of real faith.

2:7. This verse and the next contrast two sets of people. The first group is composed of those who pursue honorable and eternal qualities such as glory, honor and immortality. These qualities are God-oriented. They are not an end to themselves and do not represent an effort at self-glorification. Patiently describes those who persist even in the face of extreme difficulty. Their eyes are fixed on God; they are open to His truth and they consistently turn away from sinful behavior. They have received eternal life, and their good works prove it.

2:8. People who reject the gospel also are described with three terms. To be self-seeking is the exact opposite of the denial of self that Jesus demanded. The word describes someone who

attempts to purchase favor by self-promotion and gifts. It indicates a selfish ambition. Our self-help culture actually does more harm by being self-seeking. Those who disobey the truth are people who prefer their version of truth to God's truth. Again, this is a real form of idolatry. Obeying unrighteousness is the natural result of disobeying the truth. God's judgment on such people is wrath and indignation, two words similar in meaning that indicate God's rejection. As earlier, Paul's point was not that people who consistently do good works can earn salvation but the good works that matter can be produced only by a life of faith. Paul would make this abundantly clear later, but in the present context he had in mind those who trust in good works alone. They, in fact, were not as good as they assumed; and their good works were actually attempts at self-justification.

2 Peter 3:8-13

3:8. What seems like a delay makes the Lord's return no less certain. Peter noted that God views time differently than human beings do. Christ will return in accordance with the divine timetable, not ours. "Dear friends" recalls the recipients of the letter (1:1).

3:9. According to Peter, the Lord has not yet returned because He is patient with you, not wanting any to perish. "You" is variously interpreted as a reference to the letter's Christian recipients (identified in 1:1) or more broadly as "all people." In chapter 1, "you" and "your" both refer back to the recipients identified in 1:1. Peter's later use of "dear friends" seems also to point back to those identified in 1:1.

3:10. God's patience toward sinners is not inexhaustible. The Day of the Lord will be sudden and will catch many people unprepared, as when a burglar sneaks in and robs a house.

3:11-14. Peter insisted that the anticipation of the Lord's return and its accompanying events of judgment should rouse Christians to holy living. Evil will be completely destroyed when Christ returns, and righteousness will permanently dwell in the new heavens and new earth (Isa. 32:16).

3:15-16. Peter notes that the teaching in Paul's letters said that the Lord's patience provided opportunities for salvation (Rom. 2:4). Peter grouped Paul's letters together with the rest of the Scriptures. This reference does not necessarily mean that Paul's letters were already circulating as a complete collection. Peter may simply have been referring to the Pauline letters that were widely known and accepted as Scripture at the time he wrote 2 Peter. In any event, Peter clearly affirms the God-given authority of Paul's writings.

3:17-18. Since Peter's readers had now been warned about the false teachers in their midst, he instructed them to be on their guard and to not be led astray. He also encouraged them to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. He closed with a doxology in which he ascribed glory to Christ both now and forever.

Second Baptist Church

Purpose: Living Out the Call of God

holiness and love

2 peter 3:11-12; 1 corinthians 13:4-7

7/24/2022

MAIN POINT

God sets us apart in holiness and teaches us to practice Christlike love.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

In what ways have you seen love incorrectly portrayed in popular culture?

In what ways have you seen culture's portrayal of love damage people's perceptions about romance and intimacy with the Lord and with others?

Love: We see posts about it on Instagram and Facebook all the time. Love is often the focal point in our favorite films and books. However, the kind of love portrayed in popular culture often ignores the role of holiness. Love without holiness robs love of its meaning and purity. As believers we must demonstrate Christlike love in our relationships with God, His people, and all humanity while also remaining set apart as holy.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Have a volunteer read Colossians 3:12.

Is God's holiness and love at odds with one another? Why or why not?

Have you ever feared the holiness of God? If so, explain.

How does God make us holy?

God's holiness is a wonderful yet dreadful fact. In our sinful human condition we find His holiness alarming. However, God is love, and God took great pains to reach us with His love. Holiness causes us to fear God, while His compassion and love draw us close. These attributes exist in the same magnificent person, Jesus Christ. The clearest example of God's holiness and love is what Jesus did at Calvary. Not only is God holy and loving, but He also expects holiness

and love from us as well. The mind of Christ will manifest both characteristics: In Christ we are holy and in Christ we are love. We are in a process of perfecting that holiness and love, and each day the Spirit helps us along.

Have three volunteers read Isaiah 52:11, 2 Peter 3:11-12, and Psalm 111:1-9.

What are the characteristics of holiness?

How would you define purity and godliness?

What words from Psalm 111:1-9 are related to holiness and love?

Purity is one of the most striking attributes of holiness. Jesus' purity was the result of His love for the Father, and He was so pure that even His enemies had to acknowledge it! Also characteristic of holiness are godliness and gloriousness. In all Jesus did, He practiced a loving exaltation of His Father, proving Himself to be godly and bringing glory to the Father. Holiness not only has a certain character but it also maintains a certain behavior. It separates itself from the world. The word "holy" actually means set apart. Closely related to holiness are the words "dedication" and "sanctification." The word "dedicate" means to set something aside for one use only. In the case of holiness, we set ourselves aside for God. To sanctify is to render holy. At salvation we are sanctified, we are holy, but the Bible also speaks of it as a process. Therefore, we are holy at salvation, but we also grow in holiness.

Have a volunteer read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

In what ways does this description of love contrast itself with the world's definition of love?

Why is it important that we understand love as a verb and not simply a noun?

1 Corinthians 13 is often referred to as "the love chapter" of the Bible. Verses 4-7 describe 15 characteristics of love, and in the Greek all 15 characteristics are verbs. As shown below, each of these characteristics of love produces a measure of holiness.

Love suffers long. Jesus was remarkably long-suffering and patient with the disciples; they were slow to comprehend His mind and He had to wait on their comprehension of His character and intentions. The real root in Jesus' long-suffering was the fact that He maintained holy relationships.

Love is kind. Jesus' kindness demonstrated holiness of purpose. All of Christ's intentions were holy and loving.

Love does not envy. Jesus owned nothing, and He did not seek material things. Not envying is an indication of a holy heart. Envy is unholy. Self-denial for right purposes can be holy.

Love does not brag. Love does not brag because it is more other-conscious than self-conscious. Love cannot brag because its speech is holy.

Love is not arrogant. Jesus' life was lived in lowly service to others. Love actively seeks holy service.

Love does not act unbecomingly. Jesus had the ability to use His powers flamboyantly, but instead He chose to teach from the Scriptures, spread the news of the Kingdom, and perform miracles that would glorify His Father.

Love is not provoked. Jesus continued walking with Judas, despite knowing that Judas would betray Him. The Lord never demonstrated spite toward His betrayer, not even at His arrest. Love is not easily angered, because it has a holy temperament.

Love does not take into account a wrong. Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him, and their unbelief continued throughout His ministry. Yet Scripture tells us that Jesus made a special, private resurrection appearance to His unbelieving brother James to bring him to faith. Jesus did not take into account the wrongs of His half-brothers.

Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness. Love cannot rejoice when it finds evil in control. Jesus' conscience was holy and He regularly drove out unrighteousness from around Him. The kind of divine love God wants us to have is holy.

Love rejoices in the truth. Jesus always delighted when people recognized the truth about His person and works.

Love bears all things. The disciples had ups and downs in their faithfulness to the Lord, but Jesus continually rewarded them each time they demonstrated insight and growth. Love does not come and go. Love has a holy stability.

Love believes all things. Jesus saw potential in people we might be tempted to write off. Often we give our attention to high and mighty people. Jesus, however, did not choose as the world did. Jesus had holy values and enormous faith in those He chose.

Love hopes all things. Love is not always required to think the best of a person's current condition, because love has holy expectations. Love sees the full development of its own cultivation and knows that God's work in the individual will one day be completed.

Love endures all things. The greatest example of endurance in all the Bible is the fact that the mighty power of God did not interfere with Jesus' finishing work on the cross. Jesus finished what He began. All these characteristics listed complement one another, and the deeper we get into the mind of Christ, the more we see wholeness and unity.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What motivates you to carry out actions of love?

What is one thing you can do to develop the fruits of holy love in your life?

PRAYER

Thank God for the overwhelming, incomprehensible love that He has lavished on us. Ask Him to work through you to reveal His love to others, no matter the cost.

COMMENTARY

Colossians 3:12

3:12 After commanding believers to “put away” worldly behaviors, Paul offered a series of positive commands to put on or to “clothe yourselves” (Rm 13:14) with behavior fitted for God’s people. The adjectives chosen (Isa 43:20; 65:9; Rm 8:33; 2Tim 2:10; Titus 1:1; 1Pe 1:1; 2:4,6,9), holy (Mk 1:24; Lk 4:34; Jn 6:69; 1Pe 2:9), and loved (Mt 3:17; Eph 1:6; 1Th 1:4; 2Th 2:13) were all applied to Israel, Jesus, and the church. The five virtues are just the opposite of the vices listed in verses 5 and 8.

Isaiah 52:11

52:11 The priests (who carry the vessels of the Lord) are now encouraged to leave, presumably from Babylonian captivity (48:20-22). Ezekiel 1:5-11 recounts the return of the temple vessels under the leadership of Sheshbazzar. This oracle exhorts the priests not to defile themselves ritually because they are going back to a Zion that is not stained by impurity (v. 1).

2 Peter 3:11-12

3:11-14 Peter insisted that the anticipation of the Lord’s return and its accompanying events of judgment should rouse Christians to holy living. Evil will be completely destroyed when Christ returns, and righteousness will permanently dwell in the new heavens and a new earth (cp. Isa 32:16).

Psalms 111:1-9

111:1 The psalmist praised the Lord both privately and publicly.

111:5 Food is from the Hebrew word for “prey” (tereph), possibly implying provision in the wilderness (Ex. 16; Num. 11:31-32; Job 24:5).

111:6 The two lines of verse 6 form the center of the psalm, with 10 lines on either side. To give the inheritance of the nations reinforces the Lord’s gift of land to Israel during the conquest of Canaan. The Lord handed over the heritage inhabited by other nations to His chosen people.

111:9 Redemption (Hb. padah) denotes the exchange of a payment price for liberation (Dt. 7:8; Isa. 35:10; 50:2; 51:11) and it occurs in this noun form only three other times (Ex. 8:23

“distinction”; Ps. 130:7; Isa. 50:2). The phrase His name is... awe-inspiring (lit. “to be feared”) implies a covenantal relationship (68:35; 89:7; 99:3; Ex. 34:10; Dt. 7:21; 28:58).

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

13:4-5 Paul personifies love in order to show its daily character and choices.

13-5- 6a The Corinthians would have recognized these faults as taking place among them.

13:6b Contrary to common perception, love is not marked by tolerance for error.

13:7 Love endures in this age with a sure expectation of better things to come in the next.

Second Baptist Church

Purpose: Living Out the Call of God

What is Spiritual Growth?

2 Peter 3:10-18

7/31/2022

MAIN POINT

All of God's children should continue growing and developing spiritually in Christ.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What are some things that take a long time to realize or wait for, but that are worth the wait when you finally receive the "fruit" or benefit? (Examples: completing a college degree; getting engaged and marrying your spouse; expecting a baby; the crop from a home vegetable garden; funding a retirement account.)

What are some consequences of not allowing things to grow to maturity?

Why are we prone to impatience while we wait for worthwhile things that take time? What does this tendency reveal about our hearts?

The apostle Peter closed his second New Testament epistle to believers explaining what true spiritual growth looks like. He also explained the reasons why such growth is important. Spiritual growth is a long process, not an instantaneous change. Nevertheless, we should remain diligent to grow in Christ, guarding our conduct and glorifying God as the Holy Spirit conforms us into His image and likeness.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Have a volunteer Read 2 Peter 3:10-13.

The New Testament Scriptures, including Peter's epistles, confirm that God is not bound by time, and that Christ will return according to God's timetable, not ours. In the meantime, we know that God is patient because He wants more people to come to Christ. What may seem like abandonment to the world, skeptics and scoffers, is actually God's kindness as more lost people hear the gospel and are saved.

How can Peter's description of the cataclysmic events related to Christ's return encourage believers to live rightly?

How would we answer those who might say these words are too frightening to encourage anyone to strive toward godliness?

Have a volunteer Read 2 Peter 3:14.

Peter used a couple of terms associated with animals offered as sacrifices at the Temple. The law God gave to Israel through Moses (Exodus, Leviticus) explained that when the people and the priests brought animals to be offered, they were only to bring those that had no flaw - no spot or blemish. Bringing an imperfect sacrifice to God was an offense to Him. He demanded the best his people had to offer.

How can we be found "blameless" when Christians continue to sin?

Note that Paul stated in both 1 Corinthians 8 and Colossians 1:22 that it is the work of Christ in us to "keep us" blameless until He returns. This is part of the good work that He began in us, that He will be faithful to complete (Phil. 1). We guard our conduct because we're looking forward to Christ coming and our going to our eternal home, not because we strive to earn it.

What does it mean to "keep the peace" in our church? How can we, individually and together, promote and strive toward unity in our body?

How does confession of sin to one another promote unity and peace in the church? What effect will this have on our spiritual growth?

Have a volunteer read 2 Peter 3:15-18.

The "but" at the beginning of this verse is similar to a "therefore." We need to understand what Peter said before this. He warned his readers about being led away with the "error of the wicked." Recall that earlier Peter explained some in the church scoffed about Jesus' return, doubting that things would ever change from the way they were. There were also those who twisted the Scriptures to suit their own preferences and ideas.

How can growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus steer us clear of errors in biblical thinking? How can it strengthen us against doubts that Jesus will return to claim His church?

Spiritual growth isn't like going through a cafeteria line. What did he mean by this? Why is it not OK to pick and choose when it comes to our spiritual growth?

How can growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus steer us clear of errors in biblical thinking? How can it strengthen us against doubts that Jesus will return to claim His church?

Grace and knowledge are two essential aspects of spiritual growth: grace, flowing out of a believer's life, is a fruit of spiritual growth. Knowledge, going into a believer's life, is the root of spiritual growth.

What can happen to us if all we concentrate on is gaining biblical knowledge without learning to express grace toward other believers? How about forgetting to trust in the grace that God extends to us in Christ?

On the other hand, what could be the consequences of separating grace from growing in the knowledge of Christ? How does biblical knowledge lead to growth in grace?

Why do you think Paul prayed at the end of his book that God would receive glory both now and forever (v. 18)? In what ways does the spiritual growth of His children glorify God?

Imagine that you're producing the kind of spiritual fruit you want to see from your life that will glorify God. What does that look like? How will you get to that point? What is preventing you from starting that journey now?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How can you look to the people in your group to help you in your spiritual growth? If you're not part of a group yet, what is preventing you from taking that step?

In what ways could you be a mentor and discipler toward a less mature believer, to help him or her achieve goals toward spiritual maturity?

PRAYER

Thank God that your growth in the Spirit is His work in you. Ask for the strength to cooperate with the Holy Spirit as He prompts and urges you toward greater maturity. When doubts enter your hearts, ask God to remind you of the promises He has made in His Word that He will complete the work He began in you. Confess and repent of any sins in avoiding growth in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

COMMENTARY

2 Peter 3:10-18

3:10. This is excruciatingly plain to see in light of the ultimate destination the universe is headed for. "The day of the Lord" is another description of the second coming of Jesus Christ which is entirely consistent with the imagery of the Old Testament Scriptures which Peter regularly points back to (cf. 3:2). The Old Testament basically sees time in terms of two ages—this present age and the age to come, the age of God. The transition from one to the other would not come by

human effort or evolution, because the world is headed for destruction. The transition would be by the direct intervention of God.

The time of that intervention was called the day of the Lord. It was to be a time when the universe would be shaken to its foundations. It was to be a time when the judgment and punishment of sinners would occur. Despite all the warning of the Old Testament, people still did not (and do not) believe and are not prepared for the world-ending day of the Lord. Thus Jesus taught, and Peter here reaffirms, that his coming will be as unexpected as the coming of a thief at night.

Christ's unexpected though predicted coming will bring the destruction of the present creation. The "heavens" likely refer to the galaxies and solar systems beyond the earth's. The "elements" could refer to the earth's solar system, or the elements of earth, air, fire, and water, or to the atomic particles which are the basic structure of nature. The "earth" describes the planet we inhabit. All of these things will disappear, be destroyed by fire, laid bare, and melt in the heat (cf. v. 13).

All of these expressions are meant to emphasize that God's final judgment will be total and complete—nothing will escape. The exact methodology of God's intervention should not be pressed from the terminology of destruction that Peter uses. The point being made is that everything that God has created and everything that humankind has made will be laid bare before Almighty God. Then God will create a new heaven and a new earth (see 3:13; cf. Rev. 21:1).

3:11–13. God's people should demonstrate an outstanding quality of character in their lives as they live with the belief that Jesus Christ will return some day. The injunction to live holy and godly lives defines what that character should include. These terms are both plural and literally mean "in holy forms of behavior and godly deeds." Peter is not specific at this point, but suggests that holiness and godliness should impact the lives of the followers of Jesus Christ in many ways.

The timing of the second advent is, to some degree, dependent upon the character of believers' lives. Our life on earth as followers of Christ is not intended to be a passive waiting for the final events of prophecy. It is intended to be a time of active cooperation with God in the salvation of the world.

New mention of the Second Coming leads Peter to repeat his earlier description of the impending destruction that awaits the world. Here he added the positive hope that at that time, the new heaven and earth will be the eternal home of the believer. Actions of righteousness find their expression in the holy and godly lives of the followers of Christ, the inhabitants of the new heaven and earth.

3:14. Peter now encouraged his readers to apply themselves diligently to the process of their salvation. We are not passive agents in God's character-shaping endeavors. We are to make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. "Spotless and blameless" should be understood together. They describe the character of Jesus Christ as seen in the lives of believers (see 1 Pet. 1:19 where these same terms are used to describe Jesus Christ). These terms

do not suggest that the follower of Christ will live a perfect life, as did Christ; rather, they mean that what drives the Christian in our behavioral choices is a desire to be like Christ.

3:15–16. Peter borrowed the authority of the apostle Paul for his emphasis by reminding us that Paul, in his writings, has made the same point. Peter observed that Paul’s letters contain some things that are difficult to understand, but they still contain the same authority as the other Scriptures. Peter’s point of contact with Paul’s writings is simply this: all through Paul’s letters he, too, challenges Christians to live godly lives in light of the day of the Lord. That much is not difficult to understand. It could not be missed, unless deliberately. That is exactly what the false teachers have done. They have distorted or twisted the teaching of Paul, along with other parts of the Scriptures. Primarily, these teachers refused to submit their lifestyles to the scrutiny of Scripture, but instead twisted the Scriptures in order to condone their sinful lifestyles.

3:17. Knowing this common tactic of false teachers, we should be sufficiently warned. We must be on guard against this kind of teaching. “Fall from your secure position” should not be understood in reference to salvation. “Secure position” describes the fact that they were stable, or firmly grounded in the Word of God, unlike the false teachers who were unstable and not grounded in the Scripture.

3:18. Peter’s letter concludes with words reflecting the opening statements of chapter 1. This encourages us to “keep on growing.” No true Christian believes, “I have arrived.” The Christian life is a continual, growing life and was never intended to stand still. That growth finds its focus in an ever-increasing awareness and understanding of the person and character of Jesus Christ. To him belong all praise and glory.

Second Baptist Church

Purpose: Living Out the Call of God

Contend for the faith

Jude 1:1-4

8/7/2022

MAIN POINT

We are called to contend for the faith of all saints.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

When you hear the word “fight,” what comes to mind?

Hearing about a “fight” might bring to mind a boxing match, a squabble with friends, arguing children, or perhaps even a high school brawl. Fighting, of course, requires effort and emotion, because a fight typically involves a desire to win or a defense of self, someone else, or even an idea.

What are some bad reasons to fight?

What are some good reasons to fight?

The Letter from Jude to the church begins simply enough with an introduction of the writer and his audience. But Jude quickly shifted gears. Instead of writing about what he wanted, he felt the need to encourage the church to fight, or contend. So let’s look at what the church should fight for and how.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Ask a volunteer to read Jude 1:1-4.

What caused Jude to change the focus of the letter he was intending to write?

Jude wanted to write about the salvation shared by all Christians in the name of Jesus Christ, but he had received word of some in their midst who were contradicting the gospel. No doubt these people rejected the details of the faith, but they were also living ungodly lives. And the truth of the matter is that these two—faith and holy living—go hand in hand.

How does wrong doctrine impact the way we live?

What might be some examples of ungodly behavior stemming from false beliefs?

People tend to live out what they believe, though not always perfectly. For example, if someone doesn't believe in the afterlife, then they think this life is all they have. Such a person could choose to live this life with complete selfishness, trying to get everything they can experience before they die. Or such a person could strive to leave a lasting legacy in hopes that this one life might matter to others.

But the faith once and for all delivered to the saints centers on Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age (Gal. 1:3-4). Therefore, a Christian should resist and run from selfishness and a legacy for this world. A life in Jesus leads to a desire for holy living and a desire to love others with the good news of the gospel.

So if we are to contend for the faith, what does the faith entail? If the scoffers were denying the faith in denying "Jesus Christ, our only Master and Lord" (Jude 1:4), then we must look to Jesus Christ to define the faith. The apostle Paul defined the gospel, the gospel that the Christian must contend for, clearly in his letters.

Ask a volunteer to read 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.

What elements comprised the gospel that Paul preached?

Paul defined the gospel as Jesus' death and resurrection, according to the Scriptures. Furthermore, Jesus appeared as the resurrected Savior to numerous people, proving His resurrection from the dead, which fulfilled His words prior to His crucifixion (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34). The gospel is that Jesus died to save us from our sins and their penalty so that we can have eternal life with Him.

How do we come to be saved by the gospel?

Paul said that he preached the gospel to the Corinthians, so it must be shared in all its truth and glory. But it must also be believed. Paul said the Corinthian Christians had "received" the gospel and had "taken their stand" on it, and they were to continue "holding on to it." Elsewhere, Paul said that we are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9), a succinct way of saying what Paul was saying here in 1 Corinthians. And Jude called his readers to contend for the faith that received, believed, and stood on this gospel.

Ask a volunteer to read Jude 1:20-25.

What are some ways we should contend for the faith?

How do Jude's instructions differ from the way the world contends for its beliefs?

On a personal level, Christians ought to be building themselves up in the faith, and they should be praying constantly in the Holy Spirit for wisdom, strength, faith, and love. They should make every effort to abide in the love of God through faith while looking forward to the second coming of our resurrected Savior.

For the sake of others, Christians contend for the faith by trying to love and protect others from the sin that would distract them from the faith. We should show mercy to those who struggle with faith and sin; we should proclaim the gospel to those who have not yet believed.

We contend for the faith by believing the whole gospel, and we contend for the faith by mercifully and lovingly holding others accountable to the truth of the gospel. We contend for the gospel by living holy lives ourselves and by denouncing the unholy lives of those who would call themselves Christians. To sum it up, we look to God in faith that He would keep us from falling and perfect us in Christ so we can one day stand in the presence of His glory.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What are some ways we can build ourselves up in the faith, both as individuals and as a group?

How will you change the way you fight for the faith delivered to the saints?

How can you contend for the faith in a way that would draw in those who don't yet believe the gospel?

PRAYER

As a group, pray the following prayer: Father, You are the One able to keep us from falling into sin and disbelief. You are the One able to deal with our sin and perfect us for eternity with You. But there are so many in the world who do not know of Your goodness and grace, so help us contend for the faith with Your love, mercy, and grace that others would see the light of Jesus and run to Him in faith. Amen.

COMMENTARY

Jude 1:1-4

1 Jude called himself a slave of Jesus Christ and a brother of James. The James named here was surely the well-known leader of the Jerusalem church (Ac 15:13-21; Gal 2:9). This James was the brother of Jesus (Mk 6:3). Jude humbly designated himself as Christ's slave rather than mention that he was related to Jesus. The called are those who respond in faith to God's initiative in salvation. Loved by God the Father is a result of being called. The expression kept by Jesus Christ means that believers are kept safe or preserved by Jesus until their salvation is consummated at His return.

2 Mercy is God's kindness and compassion toward His people. Peace is the well-being that results from this relationship. Love is (Gk) agape, a godly volitional love which has the best interests of other persons in mind whether or not they love in return. The word may refer to God's love for man and to man's love for God and other people.

3-4 Jude originally meant to write a letter about salvation to his friends, but he changed his plans when he learned about false teachers who had secretly made their way into the church. Because of the influence of false teachers he urged his readers to contend for the faith entrusted to them once for all. Contending for the faith is not just a vigorous defense of the Christian faith but an advancement of the gospel as well. These actions must be accompanied by an obedient lifestyle (cp. Jude 1 vv. 20-23). The faith... delivered once for all refers to the Christian revelation, or the body of fixed, authoritative, orthodox apostolic teaching that has been handed down to believers.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

15:1-58 This chapter represents the most comprehensive discussion of resurrection in the entire Bible.

15:3-4 These verses recount the basic gospel message as Paul delivered it in town after town.

15:5-11 Early Christian evangelists validated the certainty of Jesus' resurrection by recounting His post-tomb appearances to authoritative eyewitnesses (e.g., Ac 2:32). Paul refers to himself as one abnormally born due to his late arrival in the chain of eyewitnesses to Christ's resurrection (Ac 9:1-6).

Jude 1:20-25

20-23 After primarily describing the false teachers up to this point, Jude now exhorted his readers on how to contend for the faith (cp. Jude 1 v. 3). They were to show mercy to those who were wavering, reach out to those who had already been taken in and needed to be snatched from the fire (cp. Am 4:11; Zech 3:2), and show concern for the wayward heretics, all at the same time. But believers were to be careful lest they also became defiled.

24-25 Jude ended his letter with a doxology that served as a reminder of the divine power available to believers as they contend against heretics. He praised God because He was able to protect them from falling into the sinful practices of the false teachers and grant them entrance into His glorious presence.

Second Baptist Church

Purpose: Living Out the Call of God

Sound the alarm

Jude 1:5-7

8/14/2022

MAIN POINT

Believers are to diligently contend for the faith, reminding others of the dangers of defecting.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What makes someone who defects to an enemy a military or security threat?

Why are defectors so scorned by their former countries? Should a defector be trusted by the people he or she defects to? Explain.

“Traitor” is a title most of us would rather not carry. The social and political ramifications make traitors targets, facing the wrath of many. Jude warned his readers of the dangers of being a traitor of God’s mercy. This warning pointed to false teachers and the judgment of God on those who follow them. Jude used various illustrations to emphasize the need for believers to contend for the faith against the false teachers who wormed their way into the church.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

ASK a volunteer to read Jude 1:5.

Why should all believers be reminded of the basic truths of the gospel? How does a reminder also serve as a warning?

How does the unfaithfulness of the people delivered from Egypt compare to a person who professes to be a follower of Jesus but never demonstrates any fruit of that confession?

Jude pointed to people who had been shown God’s mercy yet failed to demonstrate faithfulness to God. These people faced God’s judgment, just like those who at one time profess to be followers of Jesus but fail to demonstrate faithfulness to that profession. Genuine salvation leads to faithfulness to Christ.

ASK a volunteer to read Jude 1:6.

What makes it difficult to understand why an angel who has experienced the splendor of heaven would abandon that privilege? What does this reveal about the power of sin and temptation?

What might cause a person to abandon God today? How does abandoning God lead to darkness and judgment?

How are darkness and judgment related?

While various interpretations exist as to the understanding of verse 6, the end result is the same: God's judgment. Regardless of one's past position, abandoning God leads to facing His wrath. Believers must take care to avoid the temptation of abandoning that which is true for a lie. True faith is not defined by a previous position, but a lifetime of faithfulness to God.

ASK a volunteer to read Jude 1:7.

How is being a false teacher comparable to the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah?

How do the three events identified by Jude relate to the issue of unbelief? How does each event show the dangers of tolerating false teachers?

Jude pointed to the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah to remind his readers of God's judgment on false teachers and those who follow their teachings. God's judgment on those who reject Him is terrible and eternal. Believers should warn others of the horrible fate awaiting those who reject faith in Jesus.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What steps can you take to make sure you remember the basics of the Christian faith?

Of what temptations must you remain diligent so that you remain faithful to Christ?

How can you warn others of the danger of following a false teacher?

PRAYER

As a group, pray the following prayer: God, thank You for demonstrating Your mercy to us through the gospel. Help us remain faithful to the gospel, warning others who may be in danger of abandoning their faith in You.

COMMENTARY

jude 1:5-7

5-7. Three examples from the past warn us of the danger of defecting from the faith. First, the Hebrew people were delivered under the leadership of Moses from slavery in Egypt. However, not all those Israelites were true believers. Some were rebellious against God. As a result, God destroyed them in the wilderness. Even some of the “chosen people” suffered judgment for their unbelief.

Second, angels rebelled against God. All angels were righteous in the beginning and had positions of authority. Apparently, Satan enticed some of these angels to follow him in rebellion against God. (Satan is called the “prince of demons” in Matt. 12:24.) When they abandoned their original position, God confined them in darkness, waiting eternal judgment. Some interpreters believe this may refer to Genesis 6:1-4 where the “sons of men” are interpreted to be angels who left their positions of authority and cohabited with human women (“daughters of earth”). As a result of the heinousness of this sin, God wiped them out immediately. The New Testament makes it clear that not all fallen angels (demons) are confined, but some are.

Other interpreters see these verses not as a reference to Genesis 6:1-4 but to a book called the Book of Enoch, which is not part of the Bible but is usually included in the Jewish writings known as the Pseudepigrapha. Since Jude did not tell us to what he was referring, we have to be content with ambiguity. Apparently, the common knowledge of the time did not make it necessary for Jude to explain himself further. His readers must have understood his reference easily. We do not.

Third, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns were destroyed by God’s judgment of fire. These towns gave themselves to sexual immorality and perversion (Gen. 19:1-29). Physical fire fell on them, destroying them and serving as an example to the false teachers, who will suffer the punishment of eternal fire in hell.

Second Baptist Church

Purpose: Living Out the Call of God

When God Calls Us To Swim upstream

jude 1:14-16

8/21/2022

MAIN POINT

The Lord calls believers to live a godly life in an ungodly world.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

If we imagine things that are opposite of each other, what comes to mind (tall/short, good/bad, young/old, love/hate, light/darkness)?

How do you describe or characterize people's personalities? What are some opposite terms to use for this? What makes us value certain characteristics more highly than others?

Today we are going to look at people who were opposite—not in their physical characteristics, but in the way that they lived. These people lived in a way that was opposite of how everybody else around them did. We are going to be looking at people who spiritually swam upstream.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

In Jude 1:14-16, Jude referenced Enoch. What do you know about Enoch, if anything?

Enoch is a name we do not hear often. In fact, he's mentioned only a couple of other times in the New Testament. Luke included him in a genealogy that traced Jesus' family all the way back through the generations to Adam. Enoch is mentioned (Luke 3:36) along with Adam, Noah, Abraham, David, and others.

Enoch is also mentioned in Hebrews 11. We will look at that text in a couple of minutes. Let's first see what we can find out about Enoch. Knowing who Enoch was will help us better understand what Jude had to say about him.

HAVE a volunteer read Genesis 5:18-24.

What stands out to you in this passage?

What do we learn about Enoch from these verses?

How old was Enoch when he started to walk with God?

The text does not say that Enoch walked with God before the birth of his son Methuselah. Enoch's son was the well-known figure, Methuselah, who lived 969 years—according to Genesis 5:27.

From what you've seen, what kind of life-altering experiences have caused people to direct or redirect their lives toward God?

The text not only says Enoch walked with God, but it also says, "God took him" (v. 24). Enoch did not die. God simply took him home to be with Him in heaven. We don't have any description of how or where that happened. We are going to look at what it meant for Enoch to walk with God, and in doing so, how he was swimming upstream.

Look at Hebrews 11:5. What hint does this verse give about Enoch's life and what it meant to "walk with God"? What does this verse indicate about how God views faith in His people?

HAVE a volunteer read Genesis 6:9.

The only other person described in Scripture as "walking with God" was Noah.

What do we know about what was going on in the time that Noah lived (look at Gen. 6:5)?

How did Noah contrast with other people of his day? What made him different from others?

What do you think it meant that Noah was a righteous man and was blameless among his contemporaries?

If we know what life was like in Noah's day, what do you think life was like in Enoch's day?

Luke's genealogy says Noah lived just a few of generations after Enoch. In fact, Methuselah was Noah's grandfather, which means Enoch was Noah's great-grandfather (Luke 3:36-37). So for Enoch and for Noah, their lives were radically different from those around them. Indeed, they were swimming upstream.

HAVE a volunteer read Jude 1:14-16.

Knowing the background of Enoch and the day in which he lived, what do you think about his message in Jude 14-15? Why do you think Enoch used the word "ungodly" four times in his message (Jude 15)?

How would you contrast the "holy ones" the Lord is bringing with Him (v. 14) with the ungodly in verse 15?

Let's look at the ungodly people that Jude described.

Have a volunteer read Jude 1:4 and 1:20-23.

What three phrases did Jude use to describe these people?

Jude was calling his readers to be aware and to live differently from “those people”—the ungodly. He was calling his readers to live godly lives regardless of what was going on around them. He called them to swim upstream.

How did God reward Enoch in Genesis 5 for living a godly life in an ungodly world? How did God reward Noah in Genesis 6 for living a godly life in an ungodly world? From these verses, how will God reward those who live a godly life in an ungodly world?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How does Jude's message apply to us today?

What challenges do we face trying to live a godly life today, in an ungodly world?

How can we support each other as we struggle to swim upstream, spiritually?

PRAYER

Ask God to help us live in a way that honors Him. Ask the Holy Spirit for the boldness to live for God, no matter what our culture around us is doing.

COMMENTARY

jude 1:14-16

Jude declared that the godless people of his day were the ones being referred to when Enoch prophesied. There is no new information in Enoch's revelation. When Christ returns, accompanied by thousands of thousands of angels, he will judge the ungodly acts of these men, as well as the harsh words [they] have spoken against Jesus, whom they have denied.

Self-serving godlessness has four facets: Grumblers and faultfinders—they see the faults of others but never their own. Such actions are evidence of pride; Full of evil desires—these may be the cause behind the grumbling and fault finding. When someone determines to satisfy his or her own desires, grumbling and fault finding often follow because evil desires are not easily satisfied.; Boast about themselves and flatter others—their intent is to gain some advantage. The phrase here means they used swollen and extravagant speech. Maybe these were lofty, self-glorifying speeches in which they claimed superior knowledge of God.; They manipulate

others—all of the above actions are to in hopes of getting others to think highly of them. We can almost hear their using slimy, oily words in their attempts to manipulate others.

Second Baptist Church

Purpose: Living Out the Call of God

When God Calls Us To Swim upstream

Jude 1:14-16

8/21/2022

MAIN POINT

The Lord calls believers to live a godly life in an ungodly world.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

If we imagine things that are opposite of each other, what comes to mind (tall/short, good/bad, young/old, love/hate, light/darkness)?

How do you describe or characterize people's personalities? What are some opposite terms to use for this? What makes us value certain characteristics more highly than others?

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UNDERSTANDING

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Look at Hebrews 11:5. What hint does this verse give about Enoch's life and what it meant to "walk with God"? What does this verse indicate about how God views faith in His people?

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Have a volunteer read Jude 1:4 and 1:20-23.

What three phrases did Jude use to describe these people?

Jude was calling his readers to be aware and to live differently from “those people”—the ungodly. He was calling his readers to live godly lives regardless of what was going on around them. He called them to swim upstream.

How did God reward Enoch in Genesis 5 for living a godly life in an ungodly world? How did God reward Noah in Genesis 6 for living a godly life in an ungodly world? From these verses, how will God reward those who live a godly life in an ungodly world?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How does Jude's message apply to us today?

What challenges do we face trying to live a godly life today, in an ungodly world?

How can we support each other as we struggle to swim upstream, spiritually?

PRAYER

Ask God to help us live in a way that honors Him. Ask the Holy Spirit for the boldness to live for God, no matter what our culture around us is doing.

COMMENTARY

jude 1:14-16

Jude declared that the godless people of his day were the ones being referred to when Enoch prophesied. There is no new information in Enoch's revelation. When Christ returns, accompanied by thousands of thousands of angels, he will judge the ungodly acts of these men, as well as the harsh words [they] have spoken against Jesus, whom they have denied.

Self-serving godlessness has four facets: Grumblers and faultfinders—they see the faults of others but never their own. Such actions are evidence of pride; Full of evil desires—these may be the cause behind the grumbling and fault finding. When someone determines to satisfy his or her own desires, grumbling and fault finding often follow because evil desires are not easily satisfied.; Boast about themselves and flatter others—their intent is to gain some advantage. The phrase here means they used swollen and extravagant speech. Maybe these were lofty, self-glorifying speeches in which they claimed superior knowledge of God.; They manipulate

others—all of the above actions are to in hopes of getting others to think highly of them. We can almost hear their using slimy, oily words in their attempts to manipulate others.