**Don’t Be Surprised**

***Suffering for the Glory of God***

**(1 Pet. 4:12-19)**

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**1.** Why is Peter’s use of the term “Beloved” (v. 12) important? In what way(s) does it set the tone for what follows in verses 12b-19?

**2.** Review 1 Peter chapters 1-3 and answer the following questions: What might Peter be referring to when he mentions a “fiery trial” (v. 4:12)? Where else has Peter likened suffering to a testing by fire? Why shouldn’t Christians be “surprised” when suffering for Christ’s sake enters their lives?

**3.** In what way(s) do suffering Christians “share Christ’s sufferings”? How is his suffering (on the cross) qualitatively different from our suffering? Review the following passages: 2 Corinthians 1:5; Philippians 3:10; Hebrews 12:10. How do these passages support/reinforce what Peter says in 4:13?

**4.** In what way(s) does the martyrdom of Stephen illustrate what Peter teaches in 4:14 (see Acts 7)? How would Peter’s words encourage the original audience(s) of his epistle?

**5.** According to verses 14-16, describe the difference(s) between God-glorifying suffering and God-belittling suffering. Why is this important to note?

**6.** Read 1 Peter 4:17-19 and compare with Hebrews 12:3-17. How does the author of Hebrews help us understand what Peter is conveying regarding God’s dealings with the church? How might Peter’s words be encouraging for Christians rather than terrifying? How might Peter’s words be a stern warning to non-Christians?

**7.** How does 1 Peter 4:19 help us endure suffering with hope, submission, and joy? Cite 3-4 other places in Scripture in which God’s sovereignty over suffering is plainly seen.

**8.** In what way(s) has suffering for Christ’s sake: Drawn you closer to the Lord? Confirmed your election and given you assurance? Revealed idols in your life? How has your growing understanding of God’s grace (i.e., the gospel of Jesus Christ) changed your perspective on suffering? In your own words, explain the danger(s) of not have a healthy personal theology of suffering. How does today’s passage also affirm and honor the reality of pain in the Christian’s life?