**The Surprising Power of Gospel-Centered Suffering**

**(1 Peter 3:8-18a)**

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**1.** According to verse eight, how do we know that Peter is now addressing the church (i.e., the Christian community)? How does the word “finally” connect Peter’s thoughts in 1:13-3:7 with today’s passage? How do his previous exhortations (i.e., be subject, love enemies, show honor, etc.) culminate in his address to the Christian community?

**2.** What characteristics (i.e., family creed) does Peter call the church to cultivate? What does he call them to abstain from? In what way(s) would such things be considered countercultural in Peter’s day? In our own day?

**3.** In his quote from Psalm 34 (1 Pt. 3:10-12), what positive encouragement does Peter offer to compel Christian ethics? What negative aspects does he cite to serve as warnings? In your own words, explain how the promise of blessings operate in the Christian life and conduct.

**4.** What does Peter call Christians to do in verse 15? In light of the context of our passage, why might someone ask a Christian “for a reason for the hope that is in [them]”? How does honoring Christ as holy in one’s heart enable them to courageously respond/give a defense for their hope? What hope does a Christian have (see also 1 Peter 1:3-9)? With what attitude should Christians offer their defense of their faith? Why?

**5.** In what way(s) does 1 Peter 3:17 indicate that God is sovereign over (rather than absent from) the suffering of his people? How might this encourage suffering Christians like the ones in Peter’s original audience? How would it enable them to offer a respectful defense of their hope in the face of persecution? Where else in Scripture do you see God’s sovereignty over suffering?

**6.** What are some hindrances to pursuing the characteristics prescribed for the church by Peter in verses 8-9? How/why do you personally struggle in these areas? In what way(s) do the promises of the gospel (cf. Romans 8:28-39; 1 Peter 1:3-9) compel the church (as a community) to humbly endure persecution? Do you personally feel “prepared to make a defense” for your hope in Christ? Why or why not?