

STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, November 15, 2026
Teaching: *Tough Times Part 1*
Key Scripture: 1 Peter 3:13–4:6

CEDARVALLEY

5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:
Monday: 1 Peter 3:13 – 4:6
Tuesday: Psalm 46
Wednesday: John 15:18-27
Thursday: John 16:1-15
Friday: John 16:16-33

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's Word (The Bible), what do I need to do?
4. What is your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

Memorizing Scripture provides spiritual strength, guides your daily life, and equips you for ministry in everyday moments. For the rest of the year, we're switching things up! Each week, we encourage **you** to choose one verse from the weekly Key Scripture that stands out to you and commit it to memory. Before you choose your verse, ask God to reveal the one you most need to hide in your heart. Over time, you'll be amazed at how God brings that verse to mind—whether to strengthen and encourage you or to help you encourage someone else.

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION: Following Jesus absolutely makes our lives better, but that doesn't mean it always makes our lives easier. Sometimes doing what's right actually makes life more difficult. We may face rejection, lose opportunities, or experience mistreatment because of our decision to follow Jesus. So how do we keep doing right when doing right makes things go wrong? Peter gives us a clear answer: Remember who's Lord! That means continuing to do what's right, responding to others with gentleness and respect, and being ready to explain the hope we have in Him. Jesus understands what it means to suffer for doing what's right. He suffered for our sins, remained faithful to the Father, and ultimately rose victorious from the dead. Because of His resurrection, we have a living hope and an eternal inheritance that nothing in this world can take away. So when following Jesus becomes difficult, we don't give up or compromise. When doing right makes things go wrong, remember Who wins and carry on.

Questions: Ice Breaker: What is your favorite Thanksgiving pie? What is the best Thanksgiving food you ever had?

1. Read 1 Peter 3:13 – 4:6 together as a group. What do you think it means to honor Jesus as Lord of your life? (see Note below)
2. Why do you think our attitude and tone matter when we're sharing our faith (3:15-16)? What is the difference between standing firmly for what we believe and being argumentative?
3. How does the suffering of Jesus and the victory of the resurrection change the way you view difficulties?
4. In 1 Peter 3:18-22, what is the main encouragement Peter gives to the suffering believers? (Hint, look at verses 18 and 22 and Digging Deeper below for help)
5. Read 1 Peter 4:3–4. Peter describes how the people around these believers reacted when they stopped participating in their former way of life. Why might choosing to live differently create tension in our relationships? Have you ever experienced something similar?
6. What is one situation this week where you need to remember that Jesus is Lord and allow Him—not your circumstances, feelings, or other people's opinions—to determine how you respond?

NOTES | Question 1—1 Peter 3:15 says "worship Christ as Lord of your life." The Greek word for "Lord" is kyrios. It means someone who has authority, like a master. But when the New Testament declares Jesus to be Lord, it's saying something even greater.

> He has authority over our lives.
> He's the One who determines what's right and wrong.
> He's the One who determines how we should live.
> He's the One who determines how we should treat other people.
> And He's the One we're ultimately accountable to.

DIGGING DEEPER | In 1 Peter 3:19, what does it mean that Jesus "preached to the spirits in prison"?

This passage is very difficult to interpret. Bible scholars have debated this text for centuries! New Testament scholar, Dr. Craig Keener, helps us by summarizing the main interpretations throughout history:

"Of the many views of this text, the three main ones are (1) that between his death and resurrection, Jesus preached to the dead in Hades, the realm of the dead (the view of many church fathers); (2) that Christ preached through Noah to people in Noah's day (the view of many Reformers); (3) that before or (more likely) after his resurrection, Jesus proclaimed triumph over the fallen angels (the view of most scholars today). In early Christian literature, 'spirits' nearly always refers to angelic spirits rather than human spirits, except when explicit statements are made to the contrary… nearly all ancient Jews read Genesis 6:1-3 as a reference to the fall of angels in Noah's day (1 Peter 3:20); after the flood, they were said to be imprisoned (2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6), either below the earth or in the atmosphere (1 Peter 3:22). Then, according to a commonly known Jewish tradition, Enoch was sent to proclaim God's judgment to them; here Christ is the proclaimer of triumph over them."

> —Dr. Craig Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*. IVP: Downers Grove, 2014.

Is 1 Peter 3:21 saying that baptism saves us? Aren't we saved by grace through faith?

This is also a confusing passage, but Peter answers our question by saying "not by removing dirt from the body, but as a response to God from a clean conscience." Being immersed in water simply washes away dirt. Peter is referring to what baptism represents – the death and resurrection of Jesus – which saves us. Here is more context and help from Dr. Walter Kaiser:

"The point of this paragraph (1 Pet 3:18–22) is to give a reason for suffering for doing good…In mentioning the triumph of Jesus at the resurrection (1 Pet 3:18–19), Peter is reminded that Noah built the ark and that "in it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water" (1 Pet 3:20). Why would this fact be important to Peter and his readers? The believers in Asia Minor to whom he is writing were once pagans, very much part of their culture, fully accepted in their cities and villages. Now they are being ostracized and slandered because they are Christians. The whole world appears to be against them. True enough, Peter reminds them, but the world was also against Noah. He looked a fool building the ark, but the majority were wrong and drowned in the flood. The minority of eight people (Noah, his three sons and their wives) were the only ones saved, although they were saved through water, and it must have been a rough voyage at that.

This has set the stage for 1 Peter's drawing an analogy to the Christian experience… As Noah was saved through water, so is the Christian: "Baptism now saves you." How does baptism save a person? The answer is "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." In other words, baptism is a union with Christ, and, united with Christ, we are carried with him to resurrection life…The key is that, as in 1 Peter 1:3, it is being joined to Jesus that saves. Without Jesus and his resurrection, baptism would be useless…

The point in 1 Peter is that the outward washing is not the important part. That is simply "the removal of dirt from the body." Without something more, one would go into the water a dirty sinner and come out a clean sinner. The water has no magic properties, nor does the ritual itself save. If it did, baptism would be like circumcision was for the Jew, and Christians would indeed be saved by works (which in Paul means ritual acts), although not works of the Old Testament law." —Walter Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*. IVP: Downers Grove, 1988.