



Groups

HOLY LIVING 9

I Peter 3:13-22

Life Group Study Guide

Sugar Grove Church of Christ 11600 West Airport Blvd. Meadows Place, TX 77477

For use by Sugar Grove Church of Christ Life Groups 2007

Connect:

- ◆ If your group has guests or new members take some time to make sure everyone knows each other.
- ◆ What has been a high and low point in everyone's life in the last week?

Scripture:

¹³Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened." ¹⁵But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. ¹⁷It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. ¹⁸For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, ¹⁹through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison ²⁰who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, ²¹and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

I Peter 3:13-22 (NIV)

Grow:

- ◆ Up to this point in the letter, the theme of the persecution facing these young churches has been in the background. At this point, however, it becomes a prominent theme in this letter. Read I Peter 3:13-17.
 - ☞ Does the Bible guarantee Christians a life free of suffering? Why?
 - ☞ What is the significance in verse 15 of setting apart Christ as Lord? Could difficulty or suffering cause a Christian to put something other than Jesus Christ as Lord of their life. Why?
 - ☞ Has anything ever caused you to put something other than Jesus Christ as Lord of your life? Would you be willing to share this with the group?
- ◆ Verse 15b is a phrase many Christians have heard many times- 'Be ready to give an answer...' This verse has been used and misused in many ways but if we allow the context of Peter's letter to shape its meaning we realize Peter is asking Christians who are facing persecution to be ready

to explain why they are willing to put their faith and hope in Jesus Christ even when that faith brings persecution and criminal charges.

- What kind of faith do you have? Is your faith a 'fair weather' faith that might disappear if the going gets tough or is your faith something that will make it through anything that comes your way? Why? Does your faith need to change? How can this group help?
- Why does Peter expect a believer, when faced with persecution, to explain their hope with gentleness and respect? Do you show gentleness and respect to everyone including those who are mistreating you or simply to those people who treat you with gentleness and respect in the first place? What do you need to change to be able to do what Peter describes?

Prayer:

- ◆ Spend a few moments gathering prayer requests from your group.
- ◆ Confidently go into the throne room of God in prayer.
- ◆ Ask God to give us a heart for the people who have yet to come to know Him through Jesus Christ.

Preparation for Next Time:

- ◆ Read I Peter 4:1-6
- ◆ **Optional Discussion:**
- ◆ *I Peter 3:21 has been used to support the belief of 'baptismal regeneration' – the belief that a person receives salvation through baptism alone, i.e. baptism is a rite to be performed that appropriates salvation to the participant.*
 - *Does salvation arrive through baptism, belief and faith in Jesus Christ, or the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead? Can any of these be separated from the other? (i.e. baptism without faith is worthless, faith without resurrection is meaningless...) Do the three of these together describe a single event or a process?*
 - *Are our sins literally washed away by the act of baptism or are they washed away by the resurrection of Jesus Christ and claimed/entered into by the believer through baptism? What is the difference? What difficulties could arise by believing that our sins were literally washed away by baptism?*
 - *What is the problem with the belief that our behavior through the act of baptism alone is what saves us? How is this belief humanistic? How is this belief legalistic?*

notes from "Life Application Bible Commentary " I Peter 3:18-23 "The Greek word for "symbolizes" means "antitype" or "that which is prefigured" (NRSV). It refers to a person, event, object, or act that anticipates or foreshadows a more perfect fulfillment of the essential idea. So the floodwaters convey some meaning and point toward baptism. Peter may have intended a double meaning: Baptism was both a sign and seal of salvation, and it was also a solemn oath made before God (thus it was a warning not to take baptism lightly). The Flood came as a judgment upon evil people, but for Noah it brought deliverance from their mockery and sin, ushering him into a new life. In baptism, believers identify with Jesus Christ, who separates us from the lost and gives us new life. Baptism is a sign of the new covenant, identifying the person baptized with the people of God, the Christian community. It is not the ceremony, the water, nor the removal of dirt from the body (referring not to physical cleansing but to a spiritual cleansing) that saves. The water of baptism does not "wash away sin" literally, although that picture is inviting. Instead, baptism is the outward symbol of the inner transformation that happens in the hearts of those who believe ([Romans 6:3-5](#); [Galatians 3:27](#); [Colossians 2:12](#)). "