## <u>TEXT SUMMARY</u>

In this week's text, <u>1 Pet 4:12-19</u>, Peter concludes the main body of his letter with several specific exhortations about how Christians are to think about suffering for their faith.

## INTRODUCTION (OBSERVATION):

- 1. Verse 13 opens with the conjunction "but," which points out a contrast between two exhortations. What are those two exhortations (v. 12-13)?
- 2. The conjunction "but" is used in v. 15 to point out a contrast between two different responses to suffering for faith. What are those two responses?
- 3. Peter opens v. 17 with the explanatory conjunction "for." How does v. 17 provide an explanation for v. 16?
- 4. Verse 19 begins with "therefore" as the summary and conclusion of the main body of the letter.
  - How does Peter qualify the verb "suffer"?
  - How does Peter refer to God in this verse?
    - What title does He use for God?
    - What attribute of God does he point to?
  - This exhortation concludes with a phrase describing an ongoing action. What is that action?

## DISCUSSION (INTERPRETATION):

- Peter qualifies his exhortation to rejoice in our suffering for our faith: "insofar as you share Christ's sufferings" (v. 13).
  - What does this mean?
  - How did Peter himself personify this principle in his own suffering? (See Acts 5:40-41.)
- 2. Peter keeps returning to the theme that suffering for our faith is the pathway to blessing.
  - What does he say about suffering and blessing in our text?
  - How did he describe the relationship between suffering and blessing earlier, in 3:8-13?

	.
	.
	.
	.

## SO WHAT? (APPLICATION):

- 1. **Peter tells us that we should not be surprised when we suffer for our faith** "as if something strange were happening to you" (v. 12).
  - What assumptions are we making when we regard suffering for our faith as "surprising" or abnormal?
  - Why then should believers regard suffering for their faith as normal and not strange?
- 2. Verse 15 could almost be thought of as a parenthesis, a caveat that Peter felt he needed to add: "But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler."
  - Given our capacity to lie to ourselves about our sin, how can we tell when we are suffering for our faith and not suffering for our own sin?
  - Have you ever seen a Christian (maybe you) suffering for his/her own wrongdoing but responding to that suffering as if it were persecution? What does that kind of response to suffering do for the reputation and testimony of the Gospel?
- 3. Peter's exhortation for believers to rejoice in suffering for their faith is far more than looking on the bright side of things. He sees real, positive value in that particular sort of suffering (as opposed to suffering for our own wrongdoing).
  - Have you ever seen that principle work itself out in your life or the life of someone else?
  - How is this mindset about suffering different than a grim determination to endure? What else is involved besides sheer willpower?

