

## Session 4: 1 Peter 2:19-25

### Gather

#### Check-In:

- Share any reflections or questions from the sermon on Sunday.
- Last week's homework: Thank about the various roles you have in your life. To which of these roles do you feel you were called, that almost chose you more than your chose them?
- What are the roles the church holds? What about our congregation's roles?

#### Open Scripture

Guided Imagery: 1 Peter 2:19-25

### Join the Conversation

#### Historical and Literary Context

1. To read and understand 1 Peter 2:19–25, it's important to know that slavery was a common practice in ancient Mediterranean society. Under Rome, slavery began with household slaves and field workers, and grew as thousands of citizens and soldiers from defeated nations were enslaved. The session Scripture text uses the practice of slavery to describe the role of the Christian before God, and the demeanor of Christians in a world hostile to them.

- Read 1 Peter 2:18–20. Note that verse 18 addresses those who are slaves. Jot down a list of the advice given to slaves. How does this advice apply to the early Christians? What are some pros and cons of comparing Christians to slaves?
- At times in history, Bible texts like this have been used to condone slavery. What do you think about this?
- Are there ways we might translate this text for our time and place?

2. Household codes were a popular form of literature in the first century. These codes described the duties and expected demeanor of every member of the Roman household (children, parents, spouses, and workers). The writer of 1 Peter uses this familiar literary genre to give churches advice for their situations.

- Read 1 Peter 2:18–22 and 3:1–7
- Thinking about the different roles you hold—both in positions of leadership & power and as subordinate to others—what, if anything, do these verses speak into our day?

## **Lutheran Context**

1. Lutherans test interpretations of scripture partly by working in community. The name of this series of studies—Together in Faith—reminds us that Bible study can't occur in a vacuum. It needs the breath of the Spirit as well as the voices of many. Only in partnership can we hope to discern the living truths waiting for us in, with, and under the printed words of the Bible.

- What types of different voices might provide insights into 1 Peter 2:19–25 that we cannot attain ourselves? Whose voices would you most like to hear? Why are their voices important to understanding this text?
- The “you” in 1 Peter 2:19-21 is plural. If we read this passage as a congregation, how do we engage its message as a community of faith? How might we be intentional about including different perspectives in our learning and living as followers of Christ?

## **Devotional Context**

1. How can a good, just, and benevolent God either cause suffering outright, or allow it to occur? In the case of 1 Peter, the suffering is not senseless or meaningless, like the pain from illness. Rather, the suffering is purposeful. Those who would follow Jesus stand out from the crowd by virtue of their selflessness and concern for others, and so they are persecuted. And although it is evil, God transforms that evil into good and their suffering into joy with the cross of Christ. By modeling a life lived for others, Jesus' death makes such suffering a part of the endless river of righteousness that flows out from Eden and into the new Jerusalem.

- The Psalms and many hymns provide words for our suffering, called lament.
  - How have you been experiencing suffering lately?
  - How have you (or have you) given voice to your lament?
  - How might our congregation validate or provide safe space for the laments of our members or the community?

## **Wrap-up**

- Did you consider new roles in your life, or for the life of the church?
- How might the call to follow Christ, especially as it pertains to the suffering that comes from being God's people, be lived out faithfully—individually and/or as a congregation?

## **Pray**

*Lord, in baptism we are marked with the cross of Christ, and you call us to a life that reflects that cross. As your son Jesus suffered for what was right, help us to boldly suffer for doing what is right in the name of Christ. Give us the courage and strength to take what we learned this day and put it into action. Amen*

Go in peace to serve the Lord. Remember you are baptized!

## **Extending the Conversation**

### **Homework**

Read the next session's Bible text: 1 Peter 3:13-22.

- Spend some time considering the importance of your baptism and how we, as a congregation lift up the baptismal life in all its fullness.