

Wednesday Bible Study
Session 6 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

Gathering

Check-In

- Any reflections from the sermon?
- Have you ever experienced rejection or condemnation for your faith? How did you deal with it?

Prayer

Open Scripture

Read 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11.

- What word or phrase stood out for you?
- What question would you like to ask the writer of 1 Peter or the first listeners of this letter?
- What message do you hear for Zion Lutheran Church?

Join the Conversation

Historical Context

- Read 1 Peter 4:7-11.
- The Early Church was motivated to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in part, because they expected Jesus to return very soon and usher in the End Times. Now, more than 2,000 years later, we continue to wait and anticipate the Lord's return.
- What motivates us or keeps us vigilant to live as God's holy people?

Literary Context

- Read 1 Peter 5:1-5.
- We do not know exactly who the author of this letter was, nor his relationship with the churches he wrote to. He seems to have some authority to advise them about how they should be living, both individually and as a community.
- To whom do you give advice like this?
- Who do you listen to (or who have you listened to in the past) for guidance in life and in faith?

Lutheran Context

- 1 Peter 5: 8 "Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour."
- Martin Luther had a very clear picture in his mind about "the devil".
 - "At all hours the devil is seeking to kill us all. After you have been baptized, he will not let you have any rest...He is not satisfied to let us have one kernel of grain on the field, one fish or piece of bread, or anything good. Far less does he spare us who are exposing his shame, who rebuke him to his face, and preach what we should—God's grace and the works of the devil.

- “So when the devil throws your sins in your face and declares that you deserve death and hell, tell him this: ‘I admit that I deserve death and hell, what of it? For I know One who suffered and made satisfaction on my behalf. His name is Jesus Christ, Son of God, and where He is there I shall be also!’”
- “The devil, the originator of sorrowful anxieties and restless troubles, flees before the sound of music almost as much as before the Word of God....Music is a gift and grace of God, not an invention of men. Thus it drives out the devil and makes people cheerful. Then one forgets all wrath, impurity, and other devices.”

Though hordes of devils fill the land
 all threat'ning to devour us,
 we tremble not, unmoved we stand;
 they cannot overpow'r us.
 Let this world's tyrant rage;
 in battle we'll engage!
 His might is doomed to fail;
 God's judgment must prevail!
 One little word subdues him.

A Mighty Fortress, v. 3

- How do you understand “the devil”?

Devotional Context

- 1 Peter 5:10-11 serves as a kind of benediction to this letter that both acknowledges the suffering of the Early Church and gives encouragement to withstand it. Imagine a plaque or cross-stitched wall hanging with these words:

The God of all grace
 who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ,
 will himself restore, support,
 strengthen, and establish you.
 To him be the power forever and ever.
 Amen

- How does this blessing encourage you?
- What words of blessing do you (or might you) give to others?

Wrap-Up

- How have you been encouraged by this letter over the last few weeks?
- How might you carry it into your faithful living—in daily life and in our life together as a congregation?

Prayer

Draw your church together, O God, into one great company of disciples, together following our teacher Jesus Christ into every walk of life, together serving in Christ’s mission to the world, and together witnessing to your love wherever you will send us; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen