

# Stand Firm in Times of Suffering

*FCC Life Group Discussion Notes*

*Based on the "We Stand Firm" Series of Matthew Rogers*

*Matthew Rogers Preaching*

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## Leader Prep

The sermon from First Christian Church (FCC), Warsaw, IN, titled **Stand Firm in Times of Suffering** centers on **1 Peter 4:12-19**, using the car wash story as an illustration of unexpected but normal challenges. The key scripture is **1 Peter 4:12**, emphasizing not being surprised by suffering for faith, as it's not unusual. The main theme is that suffering because of following Jesus is normal for Christians (exiles in this world), and instead of surprise or shame, we should rejoice, glorify God, and trust Him, as God provides strength, purifies us, and prepares us for glory.

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## Opening Prayer

- Pray for group members facing any form of suffering or mistreatment because of their faith in Jesus, asking God to help them not feel surprised or alone.
- Pray for open hearts tonight to receive encouragement from God's Word and strength to stand firm.

## Ice Breaker

Share a time when something surprising and unusual happened to you (like a funny mishap or unexpected difficulty), and how you reacted in the moment.

## Key Scripture

**1 Peter 4:12 (CSB)** – *Ask a group member to read aloud.*

Dear friends, don't be surprised when the fiery ordeal comes among you to test you, as if something unusual were happening to you.

## Sermon Summary

Peter reminds us not to be shocked when suffering comes because of our faith in Jesus—it's normal for Christians as exiles in this world, not strange or unusual. Instead of surprise, we can rejoice because we share in Christ's sufferings, experience God's Spirit resting on us, and trust our faithful Creator who uses these times to purify us and bring us strength.

## Discussion Point 1: Don't Be Surprised When You Suffer for Being a Christian

**Scripture: 1 Peter 4:12 (CSB)** – *Ask a group member to read aloud.*

Dear friends, don't be surprised when the fiery ordeal comes among you to test you, as if something unusual were happening to you.

**Point Summary:** Peter uses the car wash pile-up story to show how we often get caught off guard by difficulties, but suffering for faith isn't unusual—it's part of being an exile here. This world isn't our home, so opposition or mistreatment because we're following Jesus should be expected, not shocking.

### Discussion Questions:

1. What kinds of "fiery ordeals" (suffering tied to faith) have you or someone you know experienced, and why might it feel surprising at first?
2. How does remembering we're "exiles" change your perspective on challenges that come from living out your faith?

## Discussion Point 2: Rejoice and Glorify God When You Suffer for Being a Christian

**Scripture: 1 Peter 4:13-14, 16 (CSB)** – *Ask a group member to read aloud.*

Instead, rejoice as you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may also rejoice with great joy when his glory is revealed. If you are ridiculed for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ... But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God in having that name.

**Point Summary:** Instead of despair, Peter calls us to rejoice because suffering connects us to Christ's own experience, brings blessing through God's Spirit, and gives us a chance to bring glory to God. Examples like the apostles rejoicing after flogging or modern believers forgiving persecutors show this counterintuitive joy and honor in the name "Christian."

### Discussion Questions:

1. What makes it hard to "rejoice" or feel blessed during mistreatment for faith, and what helps shift your mindset?
2. Share a time (personal or observed) when someone glorified God through suffering—how did that impact others?

## Discussion Point 3: Trust God When You Suffer for Being a Christian

**Scripture: 1 Peter 4:19 (CSB)** – *Ask a group member to read aloud.*

So then, let those who suffer according to God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator while doing what is good.

**Point Summary:** Suffering purifies us like fire refines gold, helping us leave sin behind and preparing us for glory—our temporary trials pale compared to what the unrighteous face. We can entrust our souls to our faithful Creator (like a deposit in a safe place), keep doing good, and rely on His strength.

### Discussion Questions:

1. How have past difficulties because of faith helped purify or strengthen your walk with God?
2. What does it look like practically to "entrust yourself" to God during a current challenge?

## Wrap-Up

Peter's message in **1 Peter 4:12** ties it all together: don't be surprised by suffering for Christ—it's normal. Instead, rejoice because we share in His sufferings and have God's Spirit; refuse shame and glorify God in the name "Christian"; and trust our faithful Creator who purifies and strengthens us through it all, leading to great joy when His glory is revealed.

## Challenge

This week, identify one area where you're facing (or might face) pushback for following Jesus. Commit to responding by rejoicing in God's presence, refusing shame, and entrusting yourself to Him while continuing to do good. Consider journaling your "fiery ordeal" and one way you're trusting God with it. If our church has any current initiatives like a prayer focus or outreach, tie your action to that as a way of standing firm together.

## Closing Prayer

- Thank God for the reminder that suffering for faith isn't strange but an opportunity to grow closer to Him and glorify His name.
- Pray for strength and joy for anyone in the group experiencing mistreatment right now, asking the Spirit of glory to rest on them.
- Commit the group to entrusting ourselves to our faithful Creator as we continue doing good.

# Handout

## Stand Firm in Times of Suffering – Life Group Handout

**Key Verse: 1 Peter 4:12 (CSB)** Dear friends, don't be surprised when the fiery ordeal comes among you to test you, as if something unusual were happening to you.

### Main Points to Remember:

1. Don't be surprised – It's normal for Christians (exiles) to face suffering because of faith.
2. Rejoice & Glorify God – Share in Christ's sufferings, blessed by His Spirit, honor in the name "Christian."
3. Trust God – He purifies us, provides strength, and is faithful—entrust your soul to Him while doing good.

### Personal Reflection:

- My current "fiery ordeal" (if any): \_\_\_\_\_
- One way I can rejoice/trust God this week: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prayer commitment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Action Step:** Choose one response (rejoice, glorify God, trust Him) and apply it this week. Share next time how it went!