



SERMON RECAP: WHAT DID THE TEXT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

People and marriages fail all too frequently in our society. However, Scripture teaches God uses our past failures to establish bright futures for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

God uses all things and makes them good.

- Divorce > Grace abounding in love
- Blended/Step Family > Redemption & New beginnings
- Single Parents > Perseverance and faith

Our role in God's work is to walk in love and purpose.

THE TEXT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?

READ:

1 Peter 1:3-9

In verse 6 Peter acknowledges the trials Christians all over the 1st century world were experiencing. In verse 7 Peter provides the reason they have been "distressed by various trials". (NASB)

- Thinking back to your own trials, would Peter's reason given in verse 7 have given you comfort? In what way?

Peter also uses the phrase "proof of your faith" (NASB).

- Have you ever considered the trials you have been through being an opportunity to prove your faith? If so, did that perspective help you walk through the trial more confidently? Describe your experience with the group.
- In verse 7 Peter writes "proof of your faith...may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Would you say your response to trials in the past have resulted in praise, glory and honor to Jesus? How did you accomplish this? How did you miss the mark?

SOMEONE READ ALOUD:

The theme of this passage is hope in an inheritance obtained for Christ-followers by Jesus' death and resurrection. Peter communicates to his fellow Christ-followers that their inheritance is something so incredible there can be only "inexpressible" (see verse 8) joy in all circumstances. Some might say the trials experienced in our lives pale in comparison to what Christ has done for us. Therefore, when we encounter trials in our life, we have an opportunity to "prove" our faith in Christ by walking with Jesus and rejoicing in the truth that when we were enemies of God, Christ died for us. Moreover, in the midst of any trial, no matter the circumstances, Jesus can make all things new when we walk with Him.

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- How difficult has it been for you to cling to hope in the midst of trials in your life? How easy?
 - If we as a group were to ask a close friend of yours if during trials you express joy because of what Jesus did for you on the cross, what would they say? Would they say you suffer well and have your eyes on Christ and the inheritance He purchased for you? Would they say your faith seems to be paralyzed by your circumstances?
 - What do you believe are the tensions a Christ-follower must balance when going through a trial? Why those?

Take a few minutes and think through your journey in Christ or if you have yet to receive Christ, your journey exploring Christ:

- What are some adjustments you need to make regarding your perspective in the midst of trials?
- Does your life reflect your belief that God makes all things new?
- If you are a Christ-follower, are you excited by the inheritance (eternal community with God Himself) Jesus purchased for us?
- If you have yet to follow Christ, what are your thoughts regarding the gift God has to offer you?

DIGGING DEEPER

Watch the *Gravity* video:

- In the midst of your trials how easy is it for you call on Jesus?
- Have you ever imagined that in your sorrow, Jesus wants to put His arm around you and say “I know.” What feelings does that bring up in you?

CLOSING THOUGHT

Watch *The Initiating Love of God* video.