



The Letter of Hope

1 Peter 4:12–5:14

hope for those humbled

Author: Simon Peter, apostle
(for more, see “Peter’s Life and Ministry” in The Lutheran Study Bible p. 2148)

Date: Before AD 67

Genre: Letter; possibly a sermon or early baptismal liturgy

Purpose: To instruct and encourage the Lord’s people as they endure suffering for the sake of righteousness

Outline:

IV. Specific Instructions and Encouragement for Holy Living (2:11–4:11)

V. Joy Amid Suffering and Church Roles (4:12–5:11)

A. Sharing in Christ’s sufferings (4:12–19)

B. Role of elders (5:1–4)

C. Role of younger men (5:5)

D. Exhortation to humility and trust (5:6–11)

VI. Final Greetings (5:12–14)

A. Silvanus’s help (5:12)

B. Other brothers send greetings (5:13)

C. Holy kiss and peace of Christ (5:14)

Commit to Memory Verses:
Humble yourselves (5:6–7);
after suffering a little while (5:10)

Overview: Peter encourages persecuted Christians to stand firm in the one thing that is truly trustworthy: God’s grace in Christ Jesus, who suffered at the hands of evil men.

1 Peter 4:12–19 ▪ Sharing in Christ’s Sufferings

+ List some key words in this section:

+ Why should Christians not be “surprised at the fiery trial”? How should we approach such trials? See Philippians 4:4.

+ What does it mean to share (the fellowship of) Christ’s sufferings? See John 15:20–21.

+ What pattern is witnessed and shown to us in Christ, especially in Holy Week? See also 1 Peter 5:1; Luke 24:26; Romans 8:18.

+ Quoting the Greek version of Proverbs 11:31, Peter describes the difficulty of being saved. What makes salvation difficult? See Mark 10:23–27.

What Does This Mean?

+ From an earthly standpoint, why is there persecution and suffering for the faith? From a divine perspective, what is God doing?

+ What happened following the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7 (the first persecution)? See Acts 8:1–3.

+ What do you think has been the greatest time of persecution in the history of the Church?

+ Name some Christian martyrs.

+ Is it shameful to suffer?

1 Peter 5:1–5 ▪ Roles in the Church

+ Which groups within the church are addressed in this section?

+ What are the responsibilities of the Office of the Holy Ministry? Temptations? Promises?

+ What directions are given to others within the household of faith? What promise? See Proverbs 3:34.

What Does This Mean?

+ What do *we* expect of our pastors, leaders, the young, and other Christians? How might we encourage and cultivate these attitudes and behaviors in ourselves and in others?

1 Peter 5:6–11 ▪ Exhortation to Humility and Trust

+ “At the proper time” and after “a little while” it will all be over. How does that encourage us?

+ What particular “roaring lion” might Peter have had in mind?

+ In the face of the lion, what should we do?

+ How might this section reflect Peter’s own personal experience? See John 21:15–19.

+ What blessing and promise does Peter give?

What Does This Mean?

+ How does the description of devil admonish and encourage us as Christians to receive the Sacrament frequently?

+ What difference does it make to know that God cares for you?

1 Peter 5:12–14 ▪ Final Greetings

+ What do we learn about Silvanus (Silas) and Mark?

+ What three figurative terms are used in 1 Peter 5:13? How may this verse help indicate the time and place of 1 Peter?

Conclusion: God permits suffering in our lives for a variety of reasons. Although we do not know God's hidden will, we trust He has only the best in mind for us. Knowing that sin and the devil seek to entrap us, the chief Shepherd also calls under-shepherds to teach, preach, administer the Sacraments, and guard His sheep through the Word.

Therefore, we do not lose hope!

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+ What does church tradition state about Peter's last days?

+ How does Peter describe the purpose of his letter?

+ How does the letter end?

What Does This Mean?

+ What will you take away from this study of 1 Peter?

Luther: The devil is called the master of a thousand arts. But what shall we call God's Word, which drives away and brings to nothing this master of a thousand arts with all his arts and power? The Word must indeed be the master of more than a hundred thousand arts. . . . We must daily use it against the daily and unending attacks and lurking of the devil. (LC Longer Preface, 12–13)

Opening/Closing

Like newborn infants,

long for the pure spiritual milk of the Word.

Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God

so that at the proper time He may exalt you,

casting all your anxieties on Him,

because He cares for you.

After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace,

who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ,

will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

Before the study

*Almighty God, our heavenly Father, without Your help our labor is useless, and without Your light our search is in vain. Invigorate our study of Your holy Word, that by due diligence and right discernment, we may establish ourselves and others in Your holy faith; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.***

After the study

*O God, by the patient suffering of Your only-begotten Son You have beaten down the pride of the old enemy. Now help us, we humbly pray, rightly to treasure in our hearts all that our Lord has of His goodness borne for our sake that following His blessed example we may bear with patience all that is adverse to us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.***

Let us suffer here with Jesus,

And with patience bear our cross.

Joy will follow all our sadness;

Where He is there is no loss.

Though today we sow no laughter,

We shall reap celestial joy

All discomforts that annoy

Shall give way to mirth hereafter.

Jesus, here I share Your woe;

Help me there Your joy to know. *LSB 685:2*

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

Amen.