

Burghfield Common Bible Study: Growing through times of trial

Session 1: Peter – Seven lessons about overcoming regret

There are a range of reasons why we suffer:

- Our own actions
 - Self-sabotage
 - Sin & Selfishness
 - Foolishness
 - The actions of others
 - Reacting out of jealousy
 - Misunderstanding
 - Sin
 - The state of the universe
 - Things not being the way God wanted
 - Natural conflict/ competition
- Our own actions
 - The Israelites during the Exodus
 - David
 - Peter
 - The actions of others
 - Daniel
 - The early church
 - Elijah
 - The state of the universe
 - Job, Lazarus
 - Natural conflict/ competition

Easter: Peter's Darkest Hour

Luke 22:31-34

Jesus prophesies that Peter will betray him

Luke 22:47-53

Peter attacks a man

Luke 22:54-62

Peter denies Jesus

John 20:1-8

Peter races into the tomb

John 21:7-9

Peter jumps into the water

John 21:15-18

Peter is restored

Easter: Peter's Darkest Hour

This story – of Peter's own failure and then his restoration is played out powerfully in his first letter to the Church, 1 Peter. In this letter there are dozens of occasions when we can see how his failure and suffering translated into faith and hope.

The following are seven lessons we can learn from Peter's experience of suffering and failure, if we too want to be transformed by hope and have our experiences converted into strength and good news for others...

1. Accept God's Mercy

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.” 1 Peter 1:3-4

- Why is it sometimes hard to accept forgiveness?
- Is Mercy something you can deserve?
- What on earth does Peter mean about new birth into a living hope?

2. Learn From your Mistakes

“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people.”

1 Peter 2:13-15

- Why is learning from mistakes easier said than done!?
- How do we know Peter learnt from his mistakes?

3. Copy Christ

“When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats.”

1 Peter 2:23

- What other Bible verses recommend this same strategy?

4. Expect Jesus' story to play out in your own life

“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.”

1 Peter 4:12-14

- Why would God want us to go through this?
- Can insults ever really feel like a blessing!?

5. Be sure of what is to come

“I appeal to you as... a witness of Christ’s suffering and one who will also share in the glory to be revealed.”

1 Peter 5:1

“If you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”

1 Peter 3:14-16

- Where does hope come from when things are tough?
- How can we actually find assurance of what comes next?

6. Be more dependent on God

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”

1 Peter 5:6-7

- Do trials help us humble ourselves?
- Should we be glad then when things are tough?
- How do we cast our anxieties on him?

7. Let your life be an example of Redemption

“And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen”

1 Peter 5:10 &11

- This is the best bit – can you hear Peter’s experience here?
- What though, really is redemption?
- Is it better to be redeemed than to never make a mistake?

Easter and our deepest regrets

Whatever failures and disappointments we know, none of us have stood under the cross where Peter stood hours after denying three times that we even knew Jesus. Yet with Peter, Paul and all the early Church, the empty tomb tells us that death, fear and regret have been defeated.

“Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...” Romans 8:1

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Session 2: Elijah – Learning through Loneliness