

## 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

(Lectionary Year A Easter 7)

By Beth Barnett

This passage encourages us to think about the ways that God is present in our lives: sheltering, holding, protecting...

You will need:

- display of art image by Chris Booth

Time required:

7 minutes

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### Connect

Who can read? Who can write? Who likes reading? Who like writing? Who has messy hand writing? Who has beautiful hand writing?

Did you know that many of the first followers of Jesus couldn't read or write? It just wasn't something that everyone learned in those times. School wasn't for everyone, and there were lots more important things for people to learn to be able to survive and do their jobs. There were slaves or workers who learned how to write very neatly, and they did the writing for other people, either their masters, or they worked in the market place and people paid them to write what was needed.

### Context

So while there were books and writing and libraries and letters and lists and signs around, most people relied on speaking and listening, on stories and poems, and on art for communicating.

So even when people did write things down, they still communicated in stories and language that was like drawing pictures in the mind.

So when we come to listen to the Bible, which comes from this time, we need to make sure we have our best visual imaginations switched on and are ready to let the words make pictures in our minds.

## Content

To help us with today's bible reading from 1 Peter, artist Chris Booth has drawn us the picture he sees in his imagination when he hears the Bible reading. Let's look together.



### Question sequence.

*Accept and affirm all observations.*

*Draw out a diversity of perspectives with invitations like:*

*Does anyone see something different? Or*

*Is there anything we haven't mentioned or noticed yet?*

What can you see?

Whose hands do you think these are?

What identifies the hands? – do you know the story that is shown by the marks on the hands?

What is happening to the people on the left?

Is it something good? Or frightening? Or a mix?

Is the hand

- Pushing them down?
- Sheltering them?
- Threatening to grab them?
- Protecting them?

And what is happening with the hand on the right? What is it doing?

How have the people changed in the picture on the right?

If these two pictures were telling a story about God – how would that story go?

Turn to the people around you and in two or threes, discuss which of these two pictures best shows how you think things are between you and God at the moment?

*Give a minute for discussion*



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Let's come back together.

This picture was created in response to the reading from 1 Peter 4 and 5. We will read that passage now... As we do, consider each phrase and decide whether it goes with hand on the left or the hand on the right, or both.

### **1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11**

4:12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

4:13 But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed.

4:14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

5:6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time.

5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.

5:8 Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour.

5:9 Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.

5:10 And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you.

5:11 To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

*Repeat the reading inviting people from your gathering to put up their hand to volunteer to read a line that is significant for them.*

## **Consequence**

I wonder now if there is one part of the reading that you think matches the picture specially for you?

*Take suggestions*

During this week as things happen to us, or happen in the world around us, we can return to this passage in 1 Peter, and return to the image of God's hands, God's suffering hands, God's sheltering hands, God's protecting and covering hands, God's lifting, holding, caring hands.

Prayer:

We thank you living and loving God for your sharing in the suffering and joy of the world.

Help us to be your hands of help, protection, shelter, lifting, holding and care for others as you are for us.

Amen.



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