

## 1 Peter 3:13-22

(Lectionary Year A Easter 6)

By Beth Barnett

This passage gives us context for understanding our suffering as a chance to share their story of God and the Good News of his love.

You will need:

- Copies of the text in large print on A3 pieces of paper
- Blue highlighters, or for a more adventurous group, blue watercolour paints (use the solid block kind and provide brushes with only a little water in the base of a jar to avoid spillage)
- Art image for 1 Peter 3:18-22 by Chris Booth, large on projector screen

Time required:

7 minutes

### Connect

In our reading today the writer to the followers of Jesus in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, is encouraging those people who are suffering.

### Context

The writer wants them to be sure to know that their suffering isn't proof of their sin, it isn't punishment. Suffering can give them a chance to share their story of God – the Good News story of Jesus and the love of God.

The writer encourages them to share their story gently. And then makes an example mash up of the story of God in the Old Testament (Noah) the story of Jesus life and Death and resurrection, a story from the Greek culture about death, and the story of

the followers of Jesus being baptized. It's a pretty crazy mash up in just a few verses.

But artist Chris Booth has helped to show how these stories mash together in the art for this passage.

*Briefly identify the different parts of the story – Jesus death and resurrection in the centre; the imprisoned souls from the days of Noah on the left, the believers baptized on the right – noting that everyone is under water.*

## Content

We are going to read today in small groups. Each group of about 6 people needs a copy of the text, and a blue highlighter or paintbrush.

In your group, choose one person who is happy to start reading, slowly and clearly. As they read another person begins to underline the words they are reading with little blue waves.

Read as much or a little as you like then let someone else read – highlight as much or as little as you like, then pass the highlighter on to someone else.

*For example:*

13 Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? 14 But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear,<sup>[a]</sup> and do not be intimidated, 15 but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; 16 yet do it with gentleness and reverence.<sup>[b]</sup> Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. 18 For Christ also suffered<sup>[c]</sup> for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you<sup>[d]</sup> to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, 19 in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, 20 who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few—that is, eight persons, were saved through water. 21 And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for<sup>[e]</sup> a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

*Give about 3 minutes to this process, then re-gather*



## Consequence

We have immersed ourselves in the bible reading – read it together, added underwater waves to the text. I wonder if, as you did this, there were any phrases that made an impact on you today, or were a particular gift to you today, or provoked a question for you today?

Give space for a few people to share if they are willing.

Let's pray

Loving God, immerse us more and more in your Good News, in the story of Jesus.

Help us to remember our baptism, and know that we belong in your story.

When we have opportunity help us to share your story in ways that are a gentle and refreshing as water. When we are suffering remind us that Jesus is suffering with and for us too.

Amen.



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