



# ***Do not be Surprised***

***1 Peter, James 4  
Acts 1, 8:1-4***

**Sermon Study Guide  
March 22, 2020**

## **Opening:**

In the past two weeks, we have seen the growth of information from a small story about a faraway virus that had little effect in our world to being inundated with moment-by-moment news about this contagious virus. Most of our daily activities have changed drastically. What should be the Christian response to the challenges we face? Let's look at the Scriptures to gain wisdom for our unique situation.

## **Read 1 Peter 4:12-13**

- Peter asked the believers not to be surprised of what? (vs.12)
- In what sense is the Christian's suffering part of Christ's suffering?
- Why should Christians find joy in sufferings and trials? (vs.13)
- How does God look upon us for sharing in Christ's suffering? (vs.14-18)

- When Peter tells them to continue to do good, what reason does he give for continuing? Have you ever had a time when you wanted to quit because you were overwhelmed? (vs.16-19)

*Christ will send his Spirit to strengthen those who are persecuted for their faith. Peter creates no illusions; God's plan for your life may include pain and hardship. When trouble comes, don't be surprised.*

### **Read Acts 1:8 and 8:1-4**

- After Christ ascended to heaven, what was promised to the disciples and what were they supposed to do? (Acts 1:8)
  
- This verse describes a series of widening circles to share the Good News. What was the strategy of where they were to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ? (vs.1:8)

- Jesus instructed His disciples to go to the nations. How did Matthew 28:19-20 describe the “Great Commission”?
- Where is your Jerusalem, where you start sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ? We are to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations. How can we take Jesus to the world?

Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit in a hostile crowd, preached one of the best sermons in the Bible. He was stoned with the approval of a Pharisee named Saul. This man led the persecution of the church. (Acts 8:1)

- Stephen’s death was the start of persecution of the church in Jerusalem. How does the church react to the persecution? (Acts 8:1)
- How were Stephen’s death and Saul’s mission examples of God using evil to fulfill His plan?

- What do you discover about persecution of the church in Acts 8:4? What was the positive reaction of the church of Jerusalem?

### **Read James 1:1-8**

- Who is the letter written to and where are they? (James 1:1)

After Stephen was martyred (Acts 7:55-8:3), persecution increased, and Christians in Jerusalem were scattered throughout the Roman world. There were thriving Jewish-Christian communities in Rome, Alexandria, Cyprus, and cities in Greece and Asia Minor. Because these early believers did not have the support of established Christian churches, James wrote to them as a concerned leader, to encourage them in their faith during those difficult times.

- What should be our attitude when we face trials and temptations? Why? (vs.2)
- When (not 'if'- but when) we go through trials -how specifically might our faith be tested and what will that testing produce? (vs.3)

- What does steadfastness/perseverance/endurance of faith do for us?
- We can't really know the depth of our character until we see how we react under pressure. It is easy to be kind to others when everything is going well, but can we still be kind when others are treating us unfairly or when we are under stress or strain?
- God wants to make us mature and complete, not to keep us from all pain. Instead of complaining about our struggles, we should see them as opportunities for growth. Thank God for promising to be with you in rough times. (Write it out - your story of facing trials.)
- Ask God to help you solve your problems or to give you the strength to endure them. Then be patient. God will not leave you alone with your problems; he will stay close and help you grow.

- Describe a man who is double-minded? (James 1:6-8)

If you have ever seen the constant rolling of huge waves at sea, you know how restless they are—subject to the forces of wind, gravity, and tide. Divided loyalty leaves a person as unsettled as the restless waves. If you want to stop being tossed about, rely on God to show you what is best for you. Ask him for wisdom, and trust that he will give it to you. Then your decisions will be sure and solid.

Here are the summary points from Joe-

1. Remove the element of being surprised.
2. Keep our eyes on what we have in Christ.
3. Purpose to live out our faith and share the Gospel.
4. Consider the trial to be our joy and allow it to grow our faith!
5. Ask God for the wisdom to understand how He is using the trial to help us mature.

## Grow MORE Together Reading Plan

Videos are optional and they are found at:

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/mark/>

### Week 7: Video – Overview of Mark 11-16

#### Reading:

- |              |           |
|--------------|-----------|
| ○ Mark 9-10  | Psalm 99  |
| ○ Mark 11-12 | Psalm 100 |
| ○ Mark 13-14 | Psalm 101 |

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