

WEEK 1 - Sept. 13 – Called Out (1 Pt. 1:1-2)

Icebreaker: What is the greatest letter you've ever received?

Pray: Holy Spirit, would you speak to us and teach us today, helping us to surrender our will and forming us to be like Jesus.

When diving into a book of the Bible, it is important to understand the context. Check out this [sheet](#) for background on 1 Peter.

This is a letter written by the disciple Peter. He opens the letter addressing how his audience has been called out from the world. Let's go back and remind ourselves how Peter himself was called out from his ordinary life to KNOW and follow Jesus.

Read Luke 5:1-11. Peter was a master fisherman and Jesus was not.

1. What was it about Jesus' teaching that drove Peter to obey and cast the nets again?
2. Have you ever felt like Peter: you try and try in your own effort, with no results, and then when you clearly obey the direction of God, suddenly there's fruit from your effort? If so, share this story. If not, what would it look like to listen to God's leading before you set out to accomplish a task?

Peter left everything to follow Jesus. He likely didn't know how he would feed his family when he left his fishing nets.

3. What in your life might Jesus be calling you to leave right now so you can follow him with abandon?

Read Matthew 14:22-33. This is perhaps the story Peter is most famous for.

4. Why do you think Peter wanted to walk on water? What do you think he learned from that experience?

Read Luke 22:54-60. This is not Peter's finest moment. This is the other story he is most famous for. In Jesus' moment of greatest suffering, Peter denies even knowing him. Take a moment to reflect silently: How in my own life have I denied knowing Jesus? It might not have been verbal, but it might be in actions you've taken or choices you've made. If you feel comfortable, share this with the group, and then spend time confessing and repenting together.

Jesus called Peter out a normal life to an extraordinary life. He was just a fisherman, barely making ends meet. He didn't become rich in the ways of the world, but he spent three years as one of Jesus' closest friends.

5. In what ways is your life ordinary, looking no different than anyone else in this world?

6. Have you ever had an extraordinary moment with Jesus, where you've seen him work powerfully in, through, or around you?

Spend some time in prayer asking for more and more of these experiences.

Jesus, we thank you that you call us out of ordinary to something extraordinary. Give us the courage and faith to get out of the boat, or to leave the old behind. Perhaps there is sin we need to stop doing, or maybe it's just that we need to choose what is greater. Perhaps we need to commit to Sabbath, when the world around us knows no rest. Maybe we put strict limits on our use of cell phones because we'd rather be connected to our Father. Perhaps we commit to spend more intentional time with our kids, raising them in the ways of Jesus. Lord, show us the work that you have for us, and when and how to step out in faith, so we can obediently follow you. Amen.

WEEK 2 - Sept. 20 – Hope in a Dying World (1 Pt. 1:3-12)

Icebreaker: Have you ever received any kind of inheritance? What was special about it?

Pray: Holy Spirit, would you speak to us and teach us today, helping us to surrender our will and forming us to be like Jesus.

Everything in this world dies. We have no hope apart from Jesus. The salvation of our souls is the ultimate goal of this life, but notice the wording in this passage shows this as an ongoing process, not just a done deal once you've prayed a prayer. Yes, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit when we believe, but then comes the refining process as we obediently walk with him.

Peter knows very personally what it is like to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He denied Jesus at his death, but then Jesus forgave him after he rose again (John 21) and then gives him instructions right before ascending into Heaven.

Read Acts 1:4-5, 8-9.

Following Jesus' instructions, the disciples wait and pray.

Read Acts 2:1-13.

1. What happens when the Holy Spirit comes?
2. What do you imagine this was like for Peter?

Read Acts 2:14-41. The same Peter, who fifty days earlier had denied he even knew Jesus, now preaches the most effective evangelical sermon to that date, and thousands believe and are saved!

3. How did Peter get the words, boldness, and confidence to LOVE like Jesus and share the gospel?

The same Holy Spirit who was now empowering scared Peter to testify boldly about salvation through Jesus is available to each of us.

4. Have you ever felt the Holy Spirit was talking through you? What happened? How did you know it was him?
5. Do you allow the Spirit to give you boldness to testify to others about Jesus? Why or why not?

Read 1 Peter 1:3-12. Note all the benefits of salvation.

6. Why is it essential that we allow the Holy Spirit to empower us to be witnesses just like Peter? (Remember, this is a way we LIVE and LOVE like Jesus!)

7. Look back at verse 12. In what power does Peter say the gospel was preached to them?

Take some time to pray for the lost people in your life: neighbors, coworkers, family, and friends.

Holy Spirit, thank you that you will give us power, boldness, and words to say to testify about Jesus. Please increase my faith so I will trust you and be bold like Peter. Lord, we beg for thousands to be saved as we read about in Acts. We pray for _____ (name lost people you know specifically). Holy Spirit, soften their hearts, and give me and others the words to say to them to share about the hope we have in Jesus. Amen.

Activity: Take a prayer walk through your neighborhood or a community near MCC. Pray for the salvation of the people who live in each home. For a guide you may find helpful, open the MCC app, click “groups” at the bottom, then “group tools,” then “Prayer Walking Guide.”

WEEK 3 - Sept. 27 – Set Apart, Not Checked Out (1 Pt. 1:13 – 2:3)

Icebreaker: Play a couple “Minute to win it” games. Examples [here](#).

Pray: Holy Spirit, would you speak to us and teach us today, helping us to surrender our will and forming us to be like Jesus.

Time felt very short in these games, right? We often forget it, but in this weeks’ passage of 1 Peter, he reminds us just how short our lives on this earth really are.

How can we live faithfully with the time God has given us on earth? Let’s look at what Peter modeled in his life.

Read Acts chapter 3.

Notice Peter and John were going to the temple at the time of prayer. Early Christians stopped what they were doing to pray the Lord’s Prayer every day at 9am, noon, and 3pm. They also fasted every Wednesday to remember Jesus’ betrayal and every Friday in remembrance of the crucifixion.

1. Peter prioritized and scheduled prayer and fasting. Do you?

Challenge: Set alarms to go off 3 times a day every day this week and when they do, pause what you’re doing and spend at least a minute in prayer. Could you fast at least one meal this week and use the time that you would have spent eating to pray for lost people you know to believe in Jesus?

Peter healed this man in the power of the Holy Spirit, then boldly shared the gospel AGAIN.

2. Talk about a time you shared your faith in Jesus with someone. How did that go? Do you feel ready to share tomorrow if the opportunity arose?

One of the best ways to share about Jesus is by telling what he has done in your life. Turn in pairs and allow each person 2-4 minutes to share about how they met Jesus, how their life changed, and the purpose and hope they have now. (You will likely need to set a timer! We need to learn to share this story briefly so we don’t lose people’s attention.)

Check out this 8-minute video on Right Now Media (everyone can get their own free account at [mcc.church/groups](https://app.rightnowmedia.org/en/player/video/955281?session=959780&position=412)), “Citizens of heaven while residents on earth.”

<https://app.rightnowmedia.org/en/player/video/955281?session=959780&position=412>

3. What stood out to you from the video?

Read 1 Pt. 1:13 – 2:3.

4. Look back at 1 Peter 2:1. How can you rid yourself of these things? (Hint: see 1 Peter 1:22)

5. The nourishment Peter writes about in 2:2 comes through time in the Word of God, at church, and with other believers. What steps are you taking to nourish your soul?

Challenge: Put yourself in a situation where you are surrounded by lost people this week. Just spend time getting to know them with no set agenda, and then start praying for them regularly.

Lord, help us to LOVE like Jesus, being ready to share about the hope that you have given each of us. Jesus, help us to KNOW you personally so we can share honestly about the impact you’ve had on our lives. Give us a burden for the lost so that we truly live like our mission on earth is to engage with the lost and share hope in Jesus. Make us holy like you are holy, so that through our love for one another the world would be drawn to know you. Amen.

WEEK 4 - Oct. 4 – Built Together, Not Alone (1 Pt. 2:4-10)

Icebreaker: Share about a time that someone came through for you when you really needed them.

Pray: Holy Spirit, would you speak to us and teach us today, helping us to surrender our will and forming us to be like Jesus.

Read 1 Peter 2:4-10.

Why does Peter talk about stones?

Read Matthew 16:13-20. After Peter's bold claim that Jesus was the Christ, the promised Messiah, Jesus tells him that he is Peter (meaning rock) and "on this rock I will build my church." The rock is: Jesus and his work on the cross, Peter (the first great leader of the church in Jerusalem), and the confession of faith that Peter just made (and that future believers would make as well). In 1 Peter, Peter is likely remembering this statement of Jesus, knowing that Jesus is the cornerstone (the most important, foundational piece), but that all believers are joined into this one church through faith in Jesus as Savior, which Peter proclaimed in Matthew 16:16. The church is God's living, spiritual house, but each believer is a stone. Everyone is necessary and everyone is included.

Read Acts 4:1-22.

1. What power does Peter speak with? (see 4:8)

Look at Peter's claim in verses 11 and 12. With verse 11, he sends them back to Psalm 118:22, showing Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecy about himself being the capstone for the church! Verse 12 is a great verse to post around your house and memorize.

2. How does v. 13 encourage or empower you?

3. Look at v. 20. Have you encountered Jesus so personally and powerfully that you cannot help but speak about what he has done for you? Our pursuit to KNOW and LIVE like Jesus should leave us overflowing with excitement to talk about him!

Read Acts 4:23-30 slowly, taking time to make it your prayer to God. What an amazing gift that we have this prayer of the early church in writing!

Read Acts 4:31 and finish your prayer asking for more of the Holy Spirit and boldness to share about Jesus.

Read 1 Peter 2:9-10.

4. How do these verses convey that the community of believers is essential and we can't live our faith in isolation?

The early church was largely made up of Jews, but Peter wrote to make sure everyone understood that non-Jews had now been grafted into this community too. He made it clear that this new people, our new identity, involved all nations and ethnicities.

5. How should our identity as a multi-ethnic people of God practically impact our church today?

Read Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 4:32-37.

6. What do you learn about the community Peter and the early church experienced?

7. What could it look like for the Holy Spirit to bring that kind of unity to our church today?

Sovereign Lord, you made heaven, earth, seas, and everything in them. Lord, in spite of the threats of the world around us, enable us, your servants, your Church, to speak with great boldness. Use us to bring healing, restoration, and the justice and righteousness of your kingdom here to earth. Amen.

WEEK 5 - Oct. 11 – Winsome Witness (1 Pt. 2:11-25)

Icebreaker: Take just a couple minutes to play a round or two of Chameleon. You can do it for free [here](#).

Pray: Holy Spirit, would you speak to us and teach us today, helping us to surrender our will and forming us to be like Jesus.

In this game, one person doesn't know the real word and is trying to blend in. As Christians, our job is not to blend into the world by changing color like chameleons. We are actually called to stand out in such a way that we bring hope and life to those around us.

Read 1 Peter 2:11-12.

1. Tell about a time you compromised to blend in OR were bold to do what is right. How did others respond?

If our lives look just like the world around us, there is nothing to attract them to us or to Jesus. We must live lives that stand out so others crave what we have. To truly LIVE like Jesus will look differently than living like the world.

2. Think back to the things we read about last week in Acts 2 and 4 that the early church experienced. What could our church or family be devoted to that would draw others to faith in Jesus?

Read 1 Peter 2:13-25.

3. What is it about submission that makes you cringe?

4. What would a healthy submission to God and earthly authority look like?

This passage is not condoning slavery or telling people to stay in abusive situations! However, it offers great encouragement for times when it seems life is against you or you are being treated unfairly.

5. What is a situation that makes you angry and how can you release that anger, trusting the situation to God "who judges justly"?

Peter and the early Christians were treated unfairly and suffered for their faith.

Read Acts 5:12-42.

6. What amazes you about Peter and the apostles?
7. How is the Holy Spirit convicting or nudging you?

Returning to 1 Peter, at first glance, v. 25 doesn't seem to fit in. However, just as Jesus had taught Peter about the rock on which he would build His church, Jesus previously used shepherding imagery with Peter when he had gone astray. At Jesus' crucifixion, Peter denied knowing Jesus three times. After Jesus rose again, he made sure to show Peter he was forgiven.

Read John 21:15-17.

Jesus is not only forgiving Peter, but also reinstating him as the rock on which he would build his church. He was empowering Peter as a shepherd of God's flock, telling him to pursue and care for other followers of Jesus. This interaction, coupled with the filling of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, gave Peter the confidence, courage, and mission to care for the church.

Peter was an undershepherd to God's church and sacrificed a great deal to help people follow Jesus. Take a moment to pray for our pastors, elders, and deacons at MCC.

Thinking back to 1 Peter 2:25, Peter understands what it's like to be a sheep who's gone astray. But he also knows God as our great Shepherd. Let's take a moment and make Psalm 23 our prayer:

Lord, you are our Shepherd - we lack nothing. You lead us to safety, nourishment, and refreshment. You return us to you. You guide us along the right paths for your name's sake. Even when we walk through dark valleys we will fear no evil, for you are with us. Your discipline and correction comforts us. You prepare a table of abundance in the middle of the battlefield. You honor and refresh us, our cups overflow. Surely your goodness and love will follow us all the days of our lives, and we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever!

8. If we pursue KNOWing Jesus, living in intimate connection with our Shepherd, aware of his presence, and trusting in his provision, what would the world notice? What kind of witness would we have?

CHALLENGE: Read a Psalm each day this week slowly and make it your prayer to God, helping you to KNOW your Shepherd more intimately. Become more aware of the Holy Spirit's presence inside you giving you courage and empowering you to speak boldly about Jesus.

WEEK 6 - Oct. 18 – Countercultural Marriages (1 Pt. 3:1-7)

Icebreaker: If you're married, share your engagement story in 30 seconds or less.

Pray: Holy Spirit, would you speak to us and teach us today, helping us to surrender our will and forming us to be like Jesus.

Read 1 Peter 3:1-7. This is a tough passage! We must always remember that Biblical authors lived in a different culture and context than us, so we need to understand their culture and the message the author had for that audience before we try to apply it to today. 1 Peter 3:1 says "in the same way," which means we need to look back at chapter two and ask: In the same way as what? In chapter 2, Peter discussed submitting to earthly authority and gave the example of how Jesus submitted when treated unjustly.

In the society that Peter writes to, men had authority and women did not. Just as in chapter 2, Peter *acknowledging* that masters had authority over slaves doesn't make it the *idea*/way, here Peter is acknowledging the cultural norms that husbands had authority over wives. *Never once does he say this is God's ideal design.* Instead, he is addressing the tension for women in that time who wanted to follow Jesus but their husbands didn't believe. Culturally, women would have adopted their husband's religion. New female converts to Christianity wondered if they should leave their husbands because of their new faith. Instead of instructing them to leave, Peter gives them a plan for effective evangelism.

Pause and spend some time in prayer, following these prompts:

- If you are in a marriage where your spouse is not a believer, or if you have family members who don't believe in Jesus, pause and pray that the Holy Spirit would draw them to himself. Ask God how you can be a better witness, sacrificially loving them to show the love of Christ.
- If you're in a marriage where both partners are following Jesus, pray you'll be a stronger witness for the Lord together than you would be apart.
- If you are single, pray that God would give you contentment in your singleness, help you to serve him faithfully, and if it is your desire and

his will, that he would bring you a spouse who can help you to be a better witness for Jesus.

We all should be driven by the dual purpose in life:

1. To KNOW Jesus
2. To make him known to others

We seek him wholeheartedly and we actively engage with the lost to help them KNOW Jesus.

1. How can God use our current relationships (family, friends, co-workers, etc.) to draw others to Jesus?

Read Acts 7. As Stephen is dying for his faith, he gives a great summary of the Old Testament story of God which culminates in Jesus. He values the salvation of others more than his own life. Notice who is watching at the end of the chapter. Stephen's witness and death likely planted seeds in Saul (later Paul), to lead to his salvation in Acts 9.

In 1 Peter 3:7, Peter calls the women co-heirs under Christ, trying to flip the table on the cultural norm to say that in Christ, we are all equal and valued sons and daughters. In a patriarchal society, first Jesus and now Peter teaches that women have value and are co-heirs in God's Kingdom. Saying that men's prayers will be hindered if they don't respect their wives was also incredibly counter cultural. Essentially, Peter's saying a man isn't living as a disciple of Jesus if he doesn't treat his wife with love and respect. This would have been revolutionary in his culture.

Jesus continually lifted up women, even including them as disciples. (Though they aren't listed in the 12, women followed him, learned from him, and supported his ministry. Women were quite possibly included when Jesus sent out the 72 disciples!) Throughout Acts, we see the early church was built on men and women.

- When the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost, it is highly likely that men and women spoke in tongues (Acts 2:17-18)
- Lydia likely led a house church (Acts 16:15,40)
- Priscilla taught (Acts 18:26)
- Women prophesied (Acts 21:8-9)

Read Acts 9:32-43, a story of Peter healing a female disciple named Tabitha.
2. Why is it important that God uses men and women to grow his kingdom?

All people have value in the Kingdom of God and the Holy Spirit can enable each one of us to testify about him and spread the gospel to those in need.

3. How do I value and empower others, humbly considering others more than myself? (Phil. 2:3)

4. How would the world respond if we focus more on the heart than outward appearance and humbly serve one another in love?

Lord, may our relationships reflect you to the dying world around us. May our selfless love and humility shine above all else. May we always look to lift others up and never seek to rule over someone. We pray for the marriages of MCC and the community around us: make them strong, filled with mutual submission and love, and strong against the attacks of the enemy. Holy Spirit, draw our lost family members to you, working on their hearts and helping us to be a witness to them in words and in actions. Amen.

WEEK 7 - Oct. 25 – Passionate Peacemakers (1 Pt. 3:8-12)

Icebreaker: Share in a minute or less each: Who is the most peaceful person you know and what makes them that way?

Pray: *Holy Spirit, would you speak to us and teach us today, helping us to surrender our will and forming us to be like Jesus.*

Read 1 Peter 3:8-12.

1. What added insight does v. 8 give into last week's passage (the beginning of chapter 3)?
2. Look at v. 10. How much attention do you pay to the words you use?
3. Look at v. 11. What does it mean to pursue peace in your life? Describe a situation where you might need to work harder to pursue peace.
4. Why does it matter how we live around those who do not know Jesus?

How we treat others matters. We are called to treat our spouse with love, respect, and mutual submission. We are to treat brothers and sisters in Christ with compassion and humility. We are to pursue peace with those who believe differently than we do for the sake of the gospel! It is only through love, gentleness, kindness (do you recognize these as fruits of the Spirit?) that others will be open and receptive to the gospel.

Let's look at how the gospel continues to spread in Acts.

Read Acts 8:1-7.

5. How are the people treated and what is their response?

Read Acts 8:26-40.

6. How important is it that Philip listened to the Holy Spirit (v.29)? How do you listen to the Spirit?

The Holy Spirit was drawing the Ethiopian's heart to Jesus, but he used Philip to help lead him to saving faith.

7. Share about a time God used you to help someone come to faith in Christ. If that hasn't happened, pray that God would send opportunities *this week*. We must be more intentional about sharing the gospel!

Verse 35 says that Philip told him the "good news" about Jesus (remember, this is the definition of "gospel"), and in v. 40, Philip continues to preach the gospel wherever he goes.

8. How would you describe the gospel in 2 minutes or less?
9. How can following Peter's instructions in 1 Peter 3:8-12 help others be more open to receiving the gospel?

Lord, help us to be passionate peacemakers. Help us to love well, be compassionate and humble, and bless those who treat us wrongly. Keep our tongue from evil and our lips from lies. We want to turn from evil and do good. We commit to seeking peace and pursuing it! Thank you, Lord, that your ears are attentive to our prayers. Please empower us this week, and Holy Spirit, speak through us to share the gospel in love. Amen.

WEEK 8 - Nov. 1 – Ready for Action (1 Pt. 3:13-22)

Icebreaker: Play 2 or 3 rounds of [Reverse Charades](#). Hint: select the category of “animals” or “emotions.” One person acts while the rest of the group has two minutes to guess as many of the words as they can.

Pray: Holy Spirit, would you speak to us and teach us today, helping us to surrender our will and forming us to be like Jesus.

In charades, you have to be ready for action. As soon as you see a word, you need to put movement to it so others can guess it. In today’s passage, Peter calls all believers to be ready for action.

Read 1 Peter 3:13-22.

1 Peter 3:15 is a great verse to memorize. Post it somewhere that you will see it often this week, perhaps on a mirror, kitchen counter, or the dashboard of your car.

1. What is the reason for the hope in you?
2. How hard is it for you to tell others about your hope in Jesus? Is it hard to retain gentleness and respect when you do so?
3. We are often so afraid to tell others about Jesus. Go back and reread 1 Peter 3:13-16 with the perspective of entering a situation where you want to tell someone about Jesus. What new insight do you gain?

It’s easy to get bogged down in the rest of this passage. This is a difficult piece of Scripture and even scholars aren’t completely sure what Peter means in v.19-21. It’s important when we get to something in the Bible that we don’t understand, that we remember the big picture of Scripture and the larger meaning of the passage. We know through the Bible that God is on mission to redeem all people back to himself. Therefore, we can see here that Jesus died for all, no matter how righteous or ungodly. We are saved through the death and resurrection of Jesus, who has power over Heaven and earth. We see the importance of baptism as a step of being grafted into the family of God.

Throughout Acts, we read of the immediate correlation between faith in Jesus and baptism. It is clear that once one believes, he/she should be baptized.

Read Acts 2:38-41, Acts 8:12, 36-38, Acts 10:47-48, and Acts 22:16.

4. Share your baptism story in a minute or less. What drove you to make that decision? What was significant about the experience? (If you haven't been baptized since placing your faith in Jesus, visit mcc.church/beliefs and read our baptism statement and pray for wisdom on if God is calling you to take that step.) Baptism is also a great witness toward unbelievers. If you choose to get baptized, who could you invite to come support you at your baptism who might not yet know Jesus?

Read Acts 9:1-19 about the conversion of Saul (Paul).

5. Picture the role of Annanias. Describe the faith he must have had to approach Saul and lay hands on him. What do you think it would have been like to witness Saul's conversion first-hand like that?

6. What do you think Saul's 1-minute testimony would have sounded like?

Read Acts 9:20-22.

7. How long did Saul wait from his belief in Jesus before going on to tell others about him? There is no spiritual "holding period" that says we are unqualified to share the gospel until we've walked with Jesus for a certain amount of time. Whether you are new to KNOWing Jesus, or have been a believer for decades, we all should be declaring what he has done for us!

Read Acts 9:23-31.

8. What do you notice about the progression of fear in this passage? Who or what should we fear?

9. What would it take for our church to look like the church described in v. 31?

Holy Spirit, prepare us for action! Jesus, you are on the throne as Lord of our lives. Prepare us to give an answer for the hope we have in you with gentleness and respect. Rid us of the fear of people or our own inadequacy, and help us to only fear you. Grow our church by adding believers to your family. Use us to help bring others to KNOW you. Strengthen and encourage us, Holy Spirit!

WEEK 9 - Nov. 8 – Living for What Lasts (1 Pt. 4:1-11)

Icebreaker: When have you felt a clear purpose and drive in your walk with Christ? What was that like?

Pray: Holy Spirit, would you speak to us and teach us today, helping us to surrender our will and forming us to be like Jesus.

Read 1 Peter 4:1-6.

1. How have your priorities and values changed as you grow to KNOW Jesus and LIVE like Jesus?

Read 1 Peter 4:7-11.

2. How are clear thinking, self-control, and prayer related?
3. Share about a time God used your gifts to bless others.

Throughout the time of the church, many have placed varying value on gifts. Some say the gift of tongues is the ultimate gift, others say it's teaching or prophesy. The most important thing to note about gifts is mentioned here in v. 8 as well as by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:3. Love is more important than any spiritual gift and must be the driving factor behind all the gifts. The Spirit empowers us not for our benefit, but the benefit of others. If gifts aren't motivated by love and for the benefit of the body of Christ, they are empty. Each of us should offer hospitality, not just if we feel we have that gift. We can live for what lasts and have clear purpose in this life when we serve others in love "so that in all things God may be praised" (1 Peter 4:11).

Let's continue reading in Acts, watching how God taught Peter to use his gifts to serve others in love.

Read Acts chapter 10. There is so much richness in this chapter! First, note that Cornelius knew what it meant to LIVE like Jesus - he faithfully practiced generosity and prayer. God saw what he did in secret and rewarded him. Acts 10 is the gentile version of the Pentecost the Jews experienced in Acts 2. This chapter shows the spread of the gospel to include all people, not just the chosen nation of Israel. To make sure that no one would miss the fact that God has given his Holy Spirit to all people, the gentiles now speak in tongues, just as the Jews did in Acts 2.

4. In this chapter, we see God stretching and growing Peter in his understanding of God's love, power, and gospel message. How has God been growing you or stretching your understanding of *his* mission and *your* purpose?
5. What do you learn about the Holy Spirit in this chapter?

The name of this book "Acts" is short for "Acts of the Apostles." This title can be misleading, however. Some could argue Peter is the main character of the first half of Acts and Paul (who wasn't even one of the original apostles) is the main character of the second half. However, as you follow the action of this book you'll notice a better name would be "The Acts of the Holy Spirit." It is the Holy Spirit who drives the mission of the church. He speaks through people, leads, guides, and draws people to salvation. The Holy Spirit is the main character, and the apostles play the supporting roles. Peter encounters the Holy Spirit so powerfully in Acts 1-12 that he is able to write the letter of 1 Peter, instructing believers in his day and in ours on how to live for what lasts!

Oh Jesus, we recognize that only what's done so "God may be praised" will last. We surrender to you. We submit to you. We live our lives to love you and serve others out of love so that they might come to KNOW you too. Only what's done for you will last. We don't want our glory, riches, recognition, or fame. You are the star, Jesus. Holy Spirit, you are the power that fuels me to do any of the good that I do in this life. Lord use us to draw others to you. Holy Spirit, speak through us to impact souls for eternity.

WEEK 10 - Nov. 15 – Suffering in Solidarity (1 Pt. 4:12-19)

Icebreaker: Have you ever suffered for following Jesus? If so, briefly share that story.

Pray: *Holy Spirit, would you speak to us and teach us today, helping us to surrender our will and forming us to be like Jesus.*

Read 1 Peter 4:12-19.

1. How committed are you to doing good, no matter the outcome?
2. How do believers in America today suffer for their faith in Jesus?
3. How do believers across the globe suffer for faith in Jesus?

Read [this story](#) of the persecution of Christians in North Korea. Take some time to pray for persecuted Christians around the globe.

Pray for:

- boldness, that the gospel would be proclaimed in the face of suffering
- protection and the spread of the Christian faith
- courage
- all people everywhere to know the saving power of Jesus

Read Acts 11:1-18. Peter was no stranger to persecution. Jewish Christians were mad at him for spreading the gospel to gentiles, and he witnessed the persecution of the early church that led to the spread of the gospel!

Read Acts 11:19-30.

4. What was the fruit that came from the persecution of early Christians?

Lord, we lay down our desires. Help us not to want what the world wants. We don't need temporary pleasures or worldly treasures. Forgive us for holding our own comfort and safety as an idol. We worship you alone and trust you alone. We know you are able to save from any trials, persecution, evil and illness in this life, yet just like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in Daniel 3, we declare that even if you don't save in this life, we will always worship you. Nothing will turn our hearts from you, Lord. We will follow you, Jesus, the rest of our lives!

WEEK 11 - Nov. 22 – Rooted, Not Shaken (1 Pt. 5:1-14)

Icebreaker: Open today with some extended time in prayer. Sit in silence with the Lord, pray and reflect over what he has taught you throughout the study, and give him praise and thanks.

Pray: Holy Spirit, would you speak to us and teach us today, helping us to surrender our will and forming us to be like Jesus.

Read 1 Peter 5:1-4.

“Elder” translates as “old ones.” While the early church appointed some who were older to specific leadership positions in the church as we appoint elders at MCC, the opening of this passage can apply to all of those who are older in our body.

1. To those of you who are more seasoned in years: what attitudes does Peter say you should have? What attitudes should you NOT have?

Read 1 Peter 5:5-14.

2. How are hope and humility related? (see v.5-6)
 3. What anxieties do you need to throw on the Lord?
 4. How do your ideas of the devil match (or not match) Peter’s description? How can you grow in awareness of the enemy and his schemes?
 5. As we reach the end of 1 Peter, reflect over the entire letter. What is the biggest thing God has taught you or the greatest way he has shaped your heart and life?
- Spend some time in prayer, thanking and praising God for the work he has done throughout this study.

Read Acts 12:1-19.

6. How did God deliver Peter?
7. What do you see as the importance of prayer in this passage?

Reflect on Peter’s life and experience walking with Jesus in the Gospels and working empowered by the Spirit in Acts.

8. What has God revealed to you through Peter?
9. How has your heart changed throughout this study?
10. What is your next step of obedience?

Jesus, clothe us with humility. May we love one another well and care for one another well. Spirit, teach us, lead us, guide us, empower us. Guide our church and our elders. Help all of us, no matter our age, to step out in obedience wherever you call us. Father, we want to KNOW Jesus so we can LIVE and LOVE like Him!