

Strange Doings

*In winter I get up at night
And dress by yellow candle-light.
In summer quite the other way,
I have to go to bed by day.
I have to go to bed and see*

*The birds still hopping on the tree,
Or hear the grown-up people's feet
Still going past me in the street.
And does it not seem hard to you,*

*When all the sky is clear and blue,
And I should like so much to play,
To have to go to bed by day?*

“Bed in Summer” by Robert Louis Stevenson

Some things that seem hard to us as children, even strange, make sense when we grow older. The same thing is true as we grow in our relationship with God. Let's discover this week what Peter has to say about living through the hard, strange times and looking forward to what is to come.

Monday – Something Strange

“Fact is stranger than fiction.” Swedish proverb

1. Please read 1 Peter 4:12-19. What type of “painful trial” might Peter refer to in verse 12?
2. In 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, what spiritual realities are misunderstood by those who do not belong to Jesus?
3. Now read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, and identify how spiritual life differs from what the world considers a successful existence.

Making it Personal: Is there any part of your relationship with God that has been misunderstood by your family, friends or co-workers? Ask God to give you opportunities to help them understand.

Tuesday – Of Glory and of God

“A man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship Him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling 'darkness' on the wall of his cell.” C.S. Lewis, The Problem of Pain

1. Please read 1 Peter 4:13-14. Why is the Holy Spirit both a spirit of glory and of God?

Text Insight: The complete trinity of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is identified in these 2 verses.

2. What do you learn of the glory of God in John 17:1-5?
3. According to John 14:23-26 and 15:26-27, what is the Holy Spirit's role – and ours – in revealing God's glory?

Making it Personal: What steps can you take to reveal who God is to those you see today?

Wednesday – Murderer! Thief! Meddler?

“Meddle not in what you don't understand.” Portuguese proverb

1. Please read 1 Peter 4:15. Why do you think Peter added meddling to his short list of criminal behavior?
2. Peter may have mentioned murder and theft as a shorthand way of referring to the prohibitions you will see in Exodus 20:13-17. When have you been tempted to commit any of these crimes?
3. Now look at Romans 1:28-32, 2 Thessalonians 3:11 and 1 Timothy 5:13, and identify the areas where you struggle in your own behavior and choices.

Making it Personal: Pray for God's guidance in avoiding anything that would lead someone to think less of the God you worship.

Thursday – No Shame in Bearing the Name

“My dear Jesus, my Savior, is so deeply written in my heart, that I feel confident, that if my heart were to be cut open and chopped to pieces, the name of Jesus would be found written on every piece.” Ignatius, 1st-2nd c. Bishop of Antioch

1. Please read 1 Peter 4:16-18. How will those who belong to Christ be treated in God's judgment?
2. What warning did Jesus give his followers in John 15:18-21? Have you seen this in your own life? When?
3. What assurance do you find in Isaiah 45:22-25 and Romans 14:9-12 regarding your ultimate fate?

Digging Deeper: Compare Isaiah 45:23, Exodus 3:13-14 and John 18:1-9, and explain in your own words why those arresting Jesus fell to the ground in response to his statement.

Friday – The Prince of Peace is Also the Servant who Suffers

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.” Jesus, John 14:27

1. Please read 1 Peter 4:19. What are we to do when times get tough?
2. Look at Isaiah 52:13-53:12 and list the ways Jesus would suffer in his time on earth.
3. Now list the characteristics of the peace Jesus brings according to Isaiah 9:1-7 and John 14:25-27.

Prayer Focus: Pray that all of God's people will not only know the peace of God, but will strive to make it known to the world through both good times and hard times they face.

For the Weekend: How does Isaiah 42:1-9 encourage you in carrying out the instructions in 1 Peter 4:12-19?