Reformed Theological Seminary – Washington, D. C. Campus

Course Syllabus

JOY IN SUFFERING WITH CHRIST

Instructor: Peter Y. Lee
Associate Professor of Old Testament

Email: plee@rts.edu

• COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will expound on the theme of the union with the suffering Christ as found in 1 Peter 4:12-13. It will then apply this principle of Christ-like suffering throughout people(s) throughout the history of salvation. The goal is twofold: first, to show that these suffering believers were given an extraordinary joy because of their trials; second, to show that believers in our day can also experience the same joy insofar as they “share in the sufferings of Christ” (1 Pet. 4:13).

• Office Hours: By appointment (contact the instructor to setup a time and place).

• Required Readings:
  o This is the primary textbook for the class. Students need to contact Dr. Lee directly in order to get a copy of the book.

• Recommended Readings:
  o Richard B. Gaffin, “The Usefulness of the Cross”

• Requirements:
  o Attendance: You are required to attend each class. If you know you cannot make it to a class session, notify me in advance.
  o Class discussions: The nature of the subject of this class allows for more discussion than lecture. For that reason, students will be expected to prepare the readings ahead of time for class discussions.
- **Reading Report**: See below.

- **Total Grade**:
  - ✓ Class Discussion: 30% of total grade
  - ✓ Reading Report: 70% of total grade
READING REPORT

The course will be based on the recent book written by Dr. Peter Lee. The following questions are based upon that book. Students will prepare written answers to each question and bring them to class for discussion.

Chapter 1 – A Layout of the Land

1. What is the purpose of this book?
2. Why is the book of 1 Peter helpful for those enduring hardships?
3. How does the Bible comfort suffering that results from sin?
4. Explain how suffering helps us trust in the Lord.
5. How does the Word help us in our suffering?
6. Is fatherly discipline painful? If so, how?
7. How does Christian suffering produce Christ-like virtues?
8. How does Christian suffering demonstrate the power of God?
9. How does Christian suffering encourage missions?
10. How does Christian suffering witness the reality of the gospel?
11. How does Christian suffering purify our faith?
12. How does Christian suffering glorify Jesus Christ?
13. You have often heard it said that the suffering we endure now does not compare with the glory that will be revealed in the last days. Does this really bring you comfort and joy?
14. How does 1 Peter 4:12–13 differ from other biblical instruction on finding hope in suffering?

What do you think of this principle?
Chapter 2 – The Inconvenient Truth

1. What is the “inconvenient truth” about the Christian life?

2. In the chapter, this question is asked: “what is the true reality of life?” Answer this question.


4. How is Matthew 7:21 relevant to suffering in the Christian life?

5. Faith is needed during times of suffering. Of all virtues, why faith? Explain how Psalm 73 illustrates this.

6. How is our “new-birth” related to Christian suffering?

7. How is our identity as spiritual sojourners related to suffering in the Christian life?

8. In light of our identity as spiritual sojourners, how should we live our lives?

9. Describe the correlation between spiritual warfare and suffering in the Christian life.

10. Describe the connection between our union with Christ and Christian suffering.

11. Describe union with Christ and the Christian’s new-birth, spiritual sojourning, and spiritual warfare.

Chapter 3 – The Surprising Source of Joy

1. Do you find the command in 1 Peter 4:13 shocking? Why or why not?

2. What are three significant factors to keep in mind in order to understand how Peter correlates joy and suffering?

3. What does “sharing in the sufferings of Christ” not mean?

4. Who can “share in the sufferings of Christ”?
5. How does 1 Peter describe the suffering servant of Isaiah 53? How is this related to our union with Christ?

6. Explain how the movement from suffering to glory is comforting for Christians.

7. Explain how sharing in the sufferings of Christ brings joy to believers.

8. Is it helpful for the church to preach/teach a Christ who knows suffering? Why or why not?

Chapter 4 – Joy in Singing Songs of Lament

1. The ancient title of the book of Psalms is “Book of Praise.” Why is this title ironic?

2. Why do you rarely hear a psalm of lament used in the church?

3. Explain how celebrating a psalm of lament is an act of faith, and not a complaint.

4. Describe the movement within the book of Psalms.

5. Are the psalms prophetic? Explain.

6. What lessons do we learn from Luke 24?

7. Who is the singer of the psalms?

8. Did the psalmist know joy?

9. How can psalms of lament bring joy?

Chapter 5 – Joy in the Perfect Storm of Job

1. What is the argument of Job’s three friends? What is right and wrong with it?

2. What is the argument of Job? What is right and wrong with it?

3. What are some wise principles to consider when contemplating about righteous suffering?

4. How is Job introduced to us?

5. Describe the “perfect storm” of Job.
6. According to Job 1–2, why did Job suffer?

7. In essence, what was the accusation made against Job? Is this unreasonable?

8. Psalm 44:20–21 is bold. How does this bring joy?

9. Is Jesus similar to Job, or is Job similar to Jesus? Is this difference significant?

10. Did Job know joy?

11. How can the book of Job bring you joy?

Chapter 6 – Joy of a Mourning Father

1. We are told that Sarah, Abraham’s wife, is barren in Genesis 11:30. Why is that significant in light of the promises God made with Abraham?

2. What was at stake in the birth of Isaac?

3. There are two different kinds of crises Abraham had to face in Genesis 22. What are they?

4. Describe the pace of the narrative in Genesis 22. What effect does this have?

5. How is Isaac described in Genesis 22? Is this significant?

6. What other event in the historical of redemption does Genesis 22 seem to anticipate?

7. From whose perspective is the narrative told in Genesis 22? Is this significant?

8. Who can share in the pain in the loss of a child?

9. How can Genesis 22 bring joy to those mourning the loss of a child?

Chapter 7 – Joy in a Broken Family

1. For whom is this chapter written? Do you know of people who could identify with the message of this chapter?

2. Why was the Lord’s choice for Hosea’s wife so surprising?
3. Describe the literary organization of the book of Hosea and the message within it.

4. Describe the theological reality behind Hosea’s marriage? Why is this important?

5. Describe the struggles of Hosea as a husband and as a father?

6. Who else can identify with Hosea’s struggles?

7. How can understanding Hosea bring joy to those struggling with family issues?

Chapter 8 – Joy of a Rejected Messenger

1. Share a time when you shared the gospel with negative results.

2. Describe the function of the Old Testament prophets.

3. Describe the message of the Old Testament prophets.

4. How did Israel respond to the prophetic word? Whose word did Israel like?

5. What are some modern “false prophetic words”?

6. Describe the life of the prophet Jeremiah.

7. Describe how Jeremiah could identify with the Lord.

8. Describe how Moses could identify with the Lord.


10. Describe how you can identify with the Lord.
## Lecture Schedule

Provided below is a tentative lecture schedule with relevant required reading assignments. The instructor reserves the privilege to change these lectures and schedule as he sees fit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>LECTURE</th>
<th>REQUIRED READING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 21</td>
<td>• Introduction&lt;br&gt;• Exposition on 1 Peter 4:12</td>
<td>Lee, <em>Joy Unspeakable</em>, ch. 1, 2, Appendix A Currid, <em>Why do I Suffer?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Exposition on 1 Peter 4:13</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Joy of a Mourning Father</td>
<td>Lee, <em>Joy Unspeakable</em>, ch. 4, 5&lt;br&gt;Psalms 13, 44, 55; Job 1-2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 23</td>
<td>• Joy in a Broken Marriage/Family</td>
<td>Lee, <em>Joy Unspeakable</em>, ch. 7, Hosea 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Joy in a Rejected Messenger&lt;br&gt;• Glory after Suffering</td>
<td>Lee, <em>Joy Unspeakable</em>, ch. 8&lt;br&gt;Lee, <em>Joy Unspeakable</em>, Finale</td>
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## Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</strong></td>
<td>Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Scripture</strong></td>
<td>Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reformed Theology</strong></td>
<td>Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sanctification</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Desire for Worldview</td>
<td>Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winsomely Reformed/Evangelistic</td>
<td>Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preach</td>
<td>Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shepherd</td>
<td>Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church/World Id</td>
<td>Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.</td>
<td>None</td>
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