

Learning to Rejoice in Suffering

1 Peter 4:12-13

Suffering should not surprise you but should strengthen your faith in Christ and should give you reasons to rejoice.

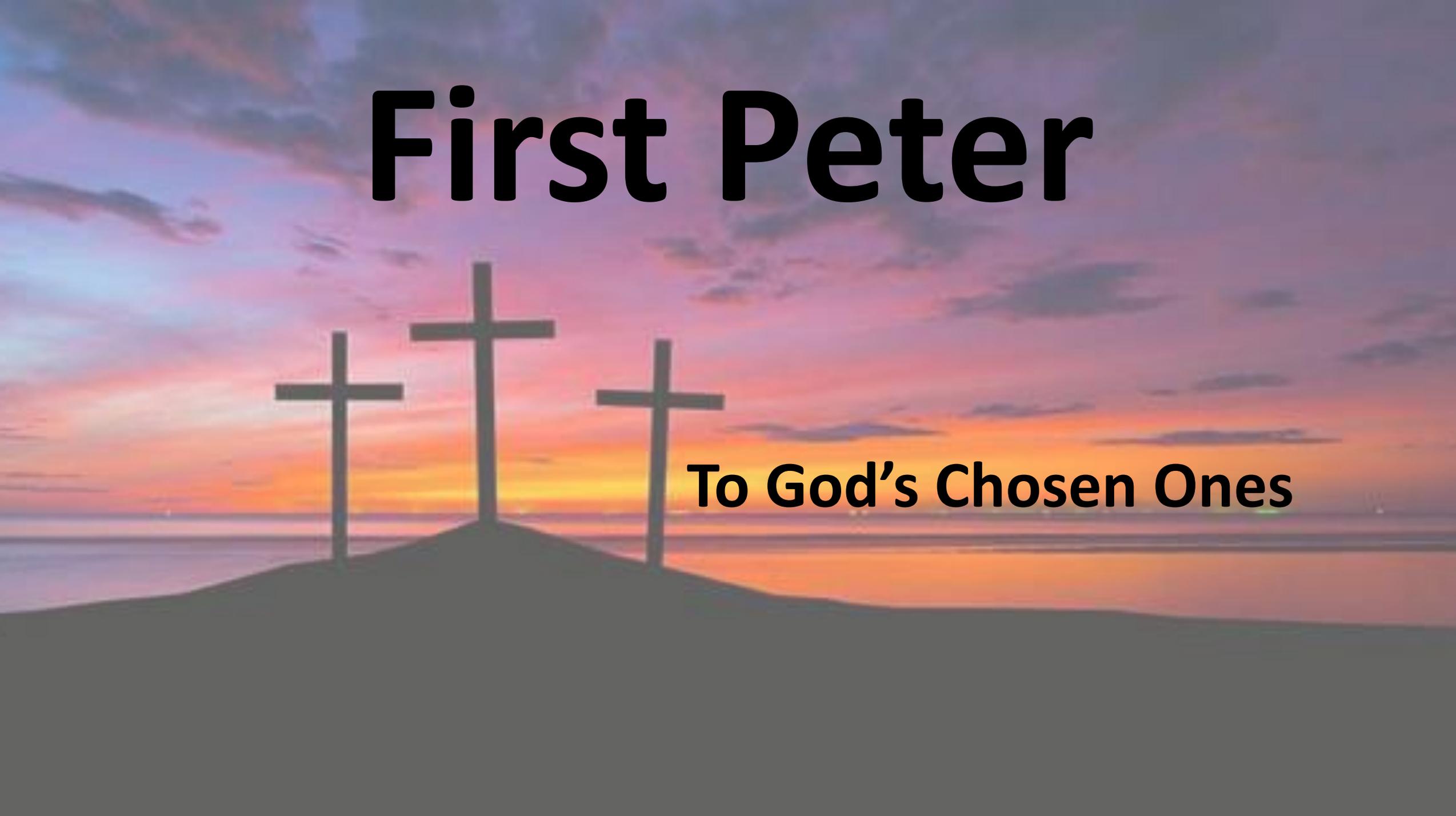
1. Why shouldn't you be surprised by suffering?
 - a. Because sinners _____ the darkness and _____ the light.
 - b. Because sin has _____ everything.

2. How does God use your suffering to strengthen your faith?
 - a. God uses your suffering to _____ your faith.
 - b. God uses your suffering to _____ your faith.

3. Why should you rejoice in your suffering?
 - a. Because your suffering allows you to _____ with Christ in His sufferings for you.
 - b. Because your suffering _____ you to meet Christ when He returns.

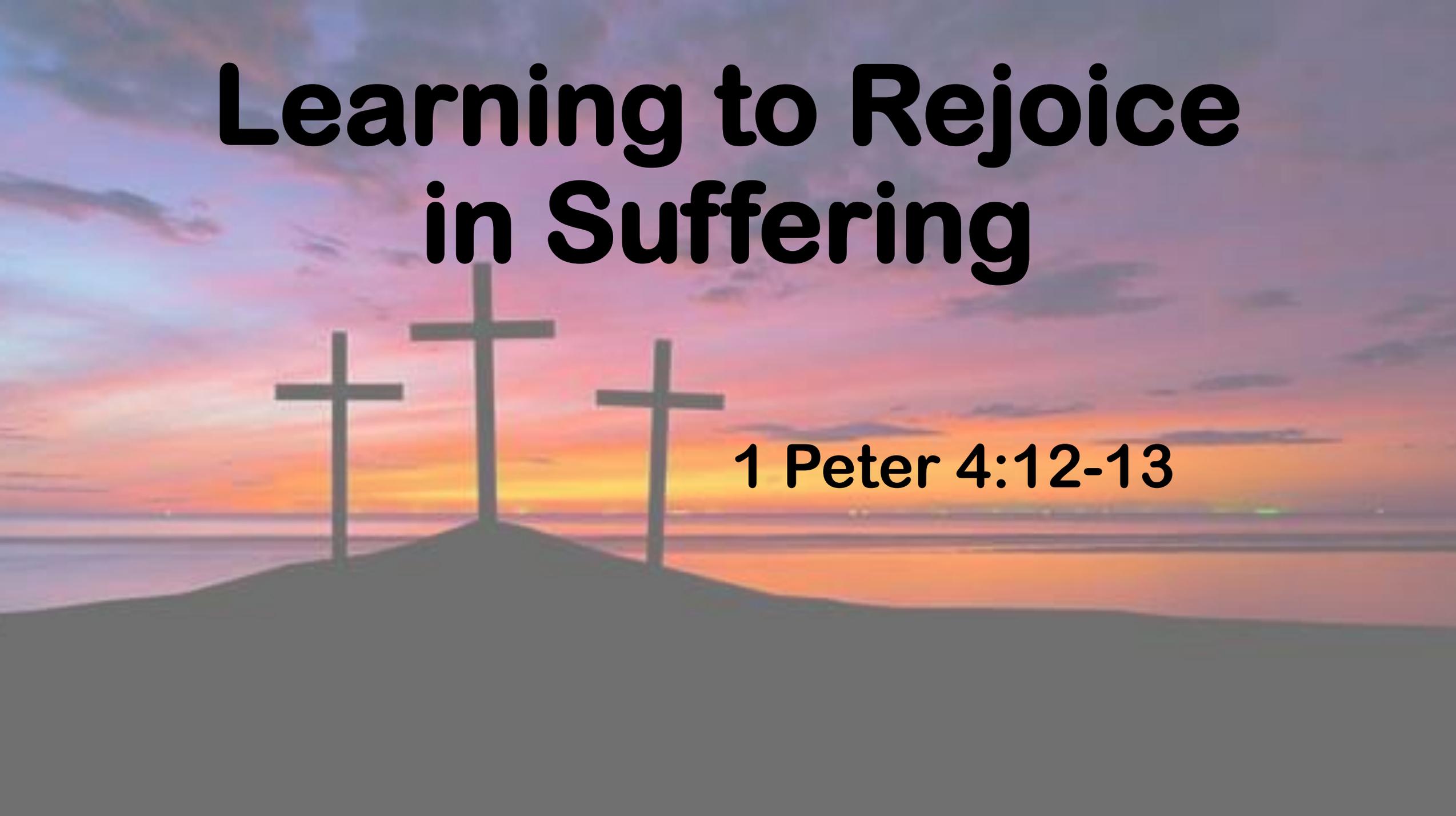
First Peter

To God's Chosen Ones

The background of the slide features a silhouette of three crosses on a hill against a vibrant sunset sky. The sky transitions from a deep orange near the horizon to a soft purple and blue at the top. The water in the foreground reflects the colors of the sky. The crosses are positioned in the middle ground, with the central one being the tallest and flanked by two shorter ones.

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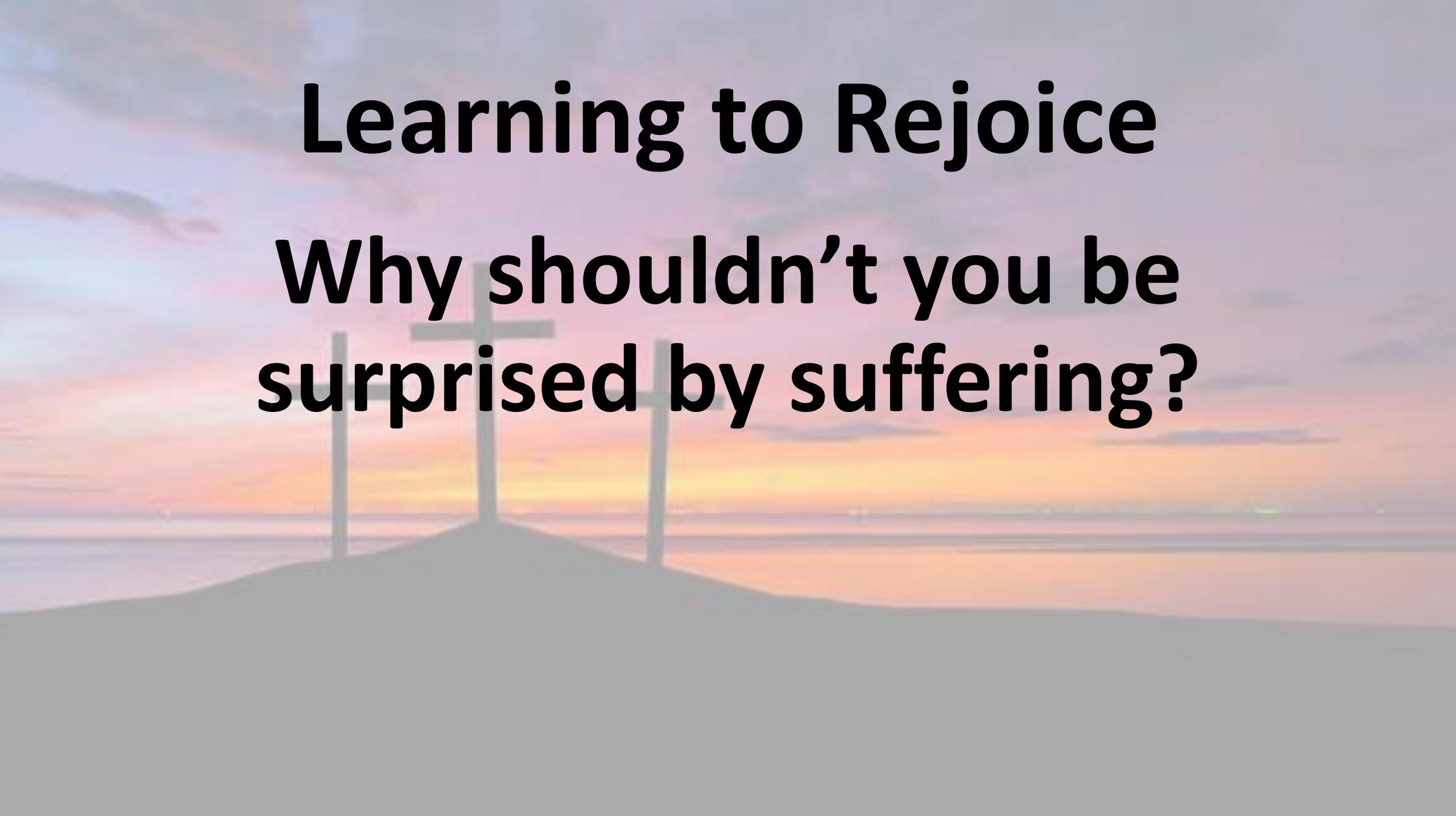
Big Idea:

Suffering should not surprise you but should strengthen your faith in Christ and give you reasons to rejoice in Him.

Two categories of suffering:

Persecution

General suffering

A serene sunset scene over a body of water. In the foreground, three crosses are silhouetted against the bright, orange and yellow sky. The text is overlaid on the image in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Learning to Rejoice
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surprised by suffering?

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Why are we surprised?

Because we do not really believe, or we simply forget how sinful and broken we and the world around us really is.

Because we continue to believe a prosperity gospel that goes back as far as Job's friends.

Why shouldn't you be surprised?

*Because sinners loves the darkness
and hate the light.*

John 3:19-20

This is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

John 7:7

The world...hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil.

The world hated **Jesus** because He came to save them from their sin, and no one likes to be told that they need saving.

The world hates **us** because we have the same message and point to the same Savior.

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John 15:18

If the world hates you,
you know that it has hated Me before it hated you.

John 15:20

Remember the word that I said to you,
“A slave is not greater than his master.”
If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.

Persecution is real both in great intensity around the world and in increasing measure here.

Does it surprise you?

Why shouldn't you be surprised?

Because sinners love the darkness and hate the light.

Because sin has corrupted everything.

Genesis 2:16-17

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying,
“From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;
but from the tree of the knowledge
of good and evil you shall not eat,
for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.”

Romans 5:12

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world,
and death through sin, and so death spread to all men,
because all sinned...

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Every part of God's creation has
been damaged and broken by sin;
death has infected it all.

Jeremiah 12:4

How long is the land to mourn and the vegetation of the countryside to wither? For the wickedness of those who dwell in it, Animals and birds have been snatched away, Because men have said, “He will not see our latter ending.”

Romans 8:19-20

For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it...

Examples of General Suffering

Natural disasters, famines, and war.

Physical diseases, disabilities, damages, and even death.

Emotional aches or agonies or even abuse.

Spiritual afflictions and even attacks.

Relational frictions or fractures or even fatalities.

Do these things take you by surprise?

Learning to Rejoice

Why shouldn't you be surprised by suffering?

**How does God use suffering to
strengthen your faith?**

How does God use suffering?

*God uses suffering to **prove** your faith.*

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Tests are administered in order to prove what is known and how well it is known.

God uses suffering to push your true beliefs to the surface for assessment.

1 Peter 1:6-7

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

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Suffering not only proves the **content** of your faith, but it proves the **quality** of your faith.

It reveals weak faith muscles.

How does God use suffering?

God uses suffering to prove your faith.

*God uses suffering to **purify** your faith.*

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God uses suffering like the refiners fire to surface the impurities of your faith so that they can be removed.

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Psalm 66:10

For You have tried us, O God;
You have refined us **as silver is refined**.

Isaiah 48:10

Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver;
I have tested you **in the furnace** of affliction.

The pressures of suffering surface your false dreams, your false securities, your false hopes.

Job didn't need better friends, better health, better circumstances...

He needed a purer faith in the One to whom he belonged.

Learning to Rejoice

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How does God use suffering to strengthen your faith?

**Why should you rejoice
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Why Rejoice in Suffering?

Because your suffering allows you to fellowship with Christ in His sufferings for you.

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When you suffer **as a Christian**, you suffer in the name of your Savior and share in His suffering as the Christ.

1 Peter 4:16

...but if anyone suffers as a Christian,
let him not feel ashamed,
but in that name let him glorify God.

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...but if anyone suffers as a Christian,
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but **in that name let him glorify God.**

But even your general suffering is an opportunity for you to fellowship with Christ and to rejoice in His sufferings on your behalf.

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When you suffer from sickness, disease,
and death; from losses, betrayals,
loneliness or rejection; from
discouragements or depression...

**You are suffering from the sin
that Christ bore for you.**

Isaiah 53:3-4

He was despised and forsaken of men,
A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
And like one from whom men hide their face,
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

Surely our griefs He Himself bore,
And our sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.

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Are you using your suffering to
fellowship with Christ,
to remember and rejoice in
His sufferings for you?

Suffering Has Benefits

Your suffering allows you to fellowship with Christ in His sufferings for you.

*Your suffering is preparing you to meet
Christ when He returns.*

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God is using suffering to prove
and purify your faith and to
prepare you for the everlasting
joy of the presence of the one
who suffered for you.

Conclusion:

Rather than being surprised by suffering, you can learn to rejoice, remembering that you belong to God and to your Savior Jesus Christ who suffered so that you could have eternal joy in Him.