

Suffering Well

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Date: 20 September 2026

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[0:00] And we're going to pick our reading up in verse number 12, read to the end of the chapter. Have a word of prayer and then we'll jump right in. Peter says this in verse number 12. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.

But rejoice inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's suffering, that when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy. If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.

On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God, and it will first begin at us, which shall the end of them that obey not the gospel of God.

And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing as unto a faithful creator.

[1:19] So we've kind of seen this theme throughout this epistle of 1 Peter that suffering is real. Life is hard. It's difficult. And it's just as Christians, we're not exempt from the difficulties of this world.

But Peter says here, we can suffer well. That we can glorify God no matter what comes in our life. And he's going to give us some practical ways to do that in our life. So let's go to him and ask him to help us tonight.

Father, thank you for this opportunity. Lord, thank you for this little book of 1 Peter that we've been studying. And Lord, I pray that even tonight we would come to it with fresh eyes again. We would be reminded of some wonderful truths that really meet us where we live, Lord.

That there's many different things even represented in this room. And trials and burdens that we're walking through. And it doesn't mean that the suffering is not real. It's not painful. But Lord, there is another way to look at it.

And we pray that you would give us your eyes and we could see it from your point of view. Lord, I pray that you would be with me now. That you would just guide my thoughts and my words. And be a help to your people tonight. And we ask this in Christ's name.

[2:22] Amen. Thank you so much for standing. May be seated. I'm sure every time you update your phone, you get the same thing that I do. It says, hey, there's an update available.

And you click the button. And it has this little thing that pops up and says, I have read the terms and conditions. And all of you lie and click yes.

Is there anybody that just reads all of the terms and conditions? Not me. I am not going to waste my time doing that.

I mean, the thing could say by clicking, agree, you hereby surrender your home, your vehicle, and your first child. I'm like, yeah, whatever. Just update my phone. And that's kind of how we approach it. You go through the fine print.

And really, we like to know what we're getting into. But apparently, we're not willing to spend a lot of time to really dive into the details, so to speak. And if we aren't careful, we can really approach the Christian life in the same way.

[3:21] And we can come and we can sing songs about looking to the Lamb of God and knowing that he can deliver us. And we love the promises of God. We love his forgiveness in our life and the grace that he offers.

We think of heaven and maybe try to imagine what it would be like. But then difficulty comes in our life. Pain comes in our life. Persecution comes.

And as we're following Christ, we suddenly think, wait a minute. I didn't sign up for this. I didn't agree to these terms and conditions. Well, actually, here in 1 Peter 4, verse 12 through 19, Peter says, you did.

Jesus made this very, very clear. And when you read the Gospels, you see that Jesus doesn't kind of trick us into following him. No, in fact, he lays the cost of discipleship out over and over and over. And we see that he reminds us that if any man come after him, let him deny himself. Let him take up his cross daily and follow him. And we see that. We see even the life of Christ.

[4:21] The Son of God was dealing with difficulty. And Jesus reminds us of that truth. And that's really what Peter does here in the first verse that we read in verse number 12. He's just reiterating what Christ taught us.

What we know to be true from the Gospels and from the other New Testament writers. But as we walk through these verses here this evening, Peter's going to take it a step further than just simply telling us to expect suffering.

He's letting us know it's going to be real in our life, but we don't necessarily have to dread it. There is a way to suffer well for the Lord. There is a way to glorify him.

I know it's been a week since we've been together in 1 Peter, but we back up to verse number 11. He tells us this in the middle of that verse, So he reminds us that God can be glorified in everything. And then he immediately goes into our text this evening and he talks about suffering. And I think the idea that we see here is that all things includes things we would never choose.

[5:27] What they were dealing with as Peter was writing this letter aren't things they would have signed up for. They weren't growing up when they were little and saying, Man, one day when I'm an adult, I want to just live in persecution all the time.

But they find themselves there. And the same is true for us tonight. There's many in this room and there's many on our prayer list that are walking through things they never would have signed up for. But God knows and he understands where we are.

And as Peter closes this chapter out in chapter number 4, his concern isn't whether we're going to suffer, but how we're going to suffer. How we're going to live it out before the world around us. And the big idea that I want us to kind of look at this evening is this, is that we can glorify God in suffering when we respond with joy and faithfulness and trust. Those are things that God keeps calling us to and wanting us to be a part.

So let's ask this question tonight and we're going to see how Peter gives us the answers. How can we suffer in a way that glorifies God? Well, that very first verse that we read, verse number 12, here's how we can do it.

[6:29] Number one, we can expect suffering. That it shouldn't throw us for a loop. But before we really get into it, I love that first word in verse number 12, beloved. Peter's reminding them that they are loved of God.

He's writing to the saints that are scattered abroad. God, he's just reiterating that truth that God knows you, that God loves you, and he knows exactly where you are.

Because some of the verses we're going to read here tonight, they're heavy. They're difficult. And it meets us right where we live. But even as we walk through the difficulties of life, even if we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we're still loved.

That we're not abandoned. Jesus Christ promised that he will never leave us nor forsake us. And so Peter reminds them, hey, God loves you, and I love you, and I'm here to help.

Then he goes on to say, think it not strange. In other words, don't treat suffering as though something has gone terribly wrong. I would imagine that may be our first response.

[7:36] That when a difficulty comes in our life, when a diagnosis comes across the table, when a work situation doesn't go like we want, we immediately think, Lord, what is happening? Why would you let this come across my desk?

But Peter describes that, and he says, this is not something that should throw us for a loop. He goes on to explain that, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial.

I mean, this is not coming out of the gate like real exciting and real uplifting. I mean, I think we get the picture of a fiery trial doesn't seem like, oh, that's something easy to walk through.

It has this idea of this intense heat, the pressures of life. And in Scripture, as you really study it often, fire is connected with testing and refining.

We're kind of really getting some maybe impurities out of our life. And Peter's already used that picture in chapter number one, that he reminds us that the trial of our faith is likened to gold being tried in the fire.

[8:38] Gold, when it's tried in the fire, it reveals what's real. It gets the things out that shouldn't be in there, the impurities. And Peter reminds us that sometimes difficulties come in our life, and God is using them to try us, not to bury us.

And I think we've all been there. We tell the Lord, Lord, I'm not sure I can handle one more thing. Well, here's the reality. You couldn't handle one thing. I can't handle one thing. And God is not sending, God is not allowing, God is not wanting us to walk through something so he can bury us under the load and under the weight of the world.

No, God can use, and we see all throughout Scripture. We love the story of Joseph. We love the story of Moses and Daniel and the three Hebrew children. I mean, you name all of these people, we love how God did some amazing miracles and walked them literally through the fiery furnace and allowed them to come on the other side.

But we sometimes want to end up like them, but we don't want to walk through the difficulty. But difficulty can expose, it can strengthen, it can refine our faith.

Nowhere in this letter have we seen that Peter is giving the impression that suffering isn't painful. No, he acknowledges that. We see that all throughout Scripture that it is hard.

[9:58] But what he is showing us, and he reminds us over and over again, that suffering is not pointless. That God can use even the most difficult thing, even the most painful thing in our life if we allow him.

But I think what makes it difficult sometimes is we're not expecting it. You know, sometimes it just comes out of left field, doesn't it? I mean, everything can be going well.

You can have everything kind of lined up in your life, and all of a sudden you're thinking, where did that come from? And if we're not careful, we can begin to follow Christ, and somewhere along the way we begin to assume, Hey, well, Lord, if I'm doing right, hey, I'm obeying you, I'm trying to live faithfully, I'm trying to stay plugged in to the church.

Shouldn't life get easier? Sometimes we think that. And that's a natural way to think. You know, we feel like if we're doing well at work, we should be promoted. If we're doing well at home, maybe as a teenager or a kid, you're thinking, well, I'm doing everything I should.

Why is my life so hard? But the hard pill to swallow when it comes to following Jesus is that often, and more likely than not, obedience to Him will make life harder and not easier.

[11:10] And that's why many start on the road and realize, hey, this is not what I signed up for. But Peter says, you did, but I don't want you to quit now because there is a glory that's coming.

And we're going to get to that here in just a minute. And really in this first verse, he's just kind of coming out of the gate and reminding them, hey, when that difficulty comes, don't just assume. Don't just think that God must have abandoned you.

That God just, I mean, he was in the car and you fell out of the passenger door and he just kept driving. Sometimes life feels like that. And we're like trying to chase the car down. No, God knows where you are. Sometimes we make decisions and the Lord speaks to our heart.

We may come to the altar. You may just, in your own devotions, the Lord lays something in your heart and say, Lord, I'm going to do this. I know this is what you have me to do. But then life happens. Then you lose that job.

Then your health takes a turn for the worse. And you think, well, did I miss God's will? Did I take the wrong turn, Lord? Am I lost? What's going on here? Peter.

[12:13] But Peter is just constantly reminding them and in turn reminding us that a difficult season does not mean you're outside of the will of God. I mean, walk through the Gospels.

How many times were the disciples exactly where Jesus called them to be and there was a storm? And there was a difficulty? And there was a lack of resources? And whatever it might be.

Listen, sometimes even with a difficulty, we might be right in the middle of where God wants us to be. And that's hard for us to kind of wrap our mind around. Because I know that in my own life, I think, Lord, if I'm walking right next to you, I should face no problems.

But we find that nowhere to be found in the Scriptures. And really, when we think about it this way, and that's kind of why Peter begins this section of chapter number 4 this way, because he wants us to think differently about what we're facing.

Because when we realize that what we're going through is not strange, that God hasn't abandoned us, it really is going to change how we face it. See, because there's a big difference between being surprised by suffering and being prepared for suffering.

[13:19] You know, you know something's coming at work. Maybe some of you know something's coming next week or the week. You're trying to prepare yourself for it. You just want to be ready. You want to handle it properly.

Because if we believe hardship means God has failed us, here's what suffering can do. It can shake your faith. You can think, well, God doesn't love me.

He doesn't keep his promises. But if we understand, and that's what Peter's trying to drive home, if we understand that God works even in the difficulties, even through suffering, then when a trial comes, we can say, listen, I don't like this.

This is not what I would have chosen for my own life. I don't understand what you're doing, but I trust you. And that's the difference between expecting it and being surprised by it.

See, Peter isn't telling these people, he isn't telling us that, you know, just pretend like you're not hurting. Listen, I'm thankful we don't have to pretend that.

[14:17] We don't have to pretend like the name's on our prayer list, and we go through it on Wednesday night, like it's not a big deal. It is a big deal. And he's going to tell us in the very next chapter that we're to cast all our cares on him, that we're to bring it to the Lord because he cares for us.

He's not just saying, sweep it under the rug and put a smile on your face because Christianity is all about just plastering a smile, and everything is hunky-dory all the time. That's not what he's talking about. But he is teaching us how to interpret our hurt through what we know about God.

Because he keeps coming back to the character of God. He keeps coming back to the fact that he's faithful, that he's trustworthy, that he's in control. And the fire you might be walking through, it was real for them, it might be real for you, but here's what he's saying.

So is God. So is his faithfulness. So is his goodness to you. And we come to verse 12 and we read it and we think, okay, Peter, I mean, this is going to be tough.

I don't like what's going on in my life, but I understand God's in control, so I think I can do this. I think I can just hang on and make it through. Well, then he says in verse number 13, but rejoice.

[15:25] So not only should we expect suffering, number two, he tells us to rejoice in suffering. I don't know about you, but verse 12 and then coming into verse 13 kind of sounds impossible.

On a surface level. Hey, I know you're going through a fiery trial and it seems like it's taking you down, but here's the great news. Rejoice. Maybe when they got this letter, they're thinking, Peter has lost his mind.

Well, what is he thinking? Well, here's what he's not thinking. He's not saying enjoy the pain. Pain is gain. That's dumb. I don't want to have pain in my life.

He's not saying search for pain because pain is the only way that you know that God loves you. No, our joy isn't found in pain. Our joy is found in what the suffering connects us to. Because here's what suffering should do.

Here's what difficulty should do. It should push us towards Christ. It should remind us that he is the one that is in control. Peter says this in verse number 13.

[16:28] But rejoice in as much as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings. Just to make sure we're clear what Peter is saying here. Our suffering doesn't accomplish what Christ's suffering accomplished.

No, he suffered for us. His suffering was substitutionary. His death purchased our redemption. We don't add anything to the work of Christ. But when we suffer because we belong to him.

When we are living for him and we're persecuted for that reason. Here's what Peter says. That there is a fellowship with Christ. That we understand. That we are followers of him.

Here's a way we can just break it down real simple. Here's what Peter is saying in verse 13. Don't be surprised when following Jesus leads you down the road that Jesus walked.

If you're following somebody, you're going to walk down the same road they walk. You can't follow somebody and not go what they're going through. And that's what Peter is saying. That Jesus

walked this road.

[17:30] That he suffered. For doing the right things. He went about, the Bible says, he went about doing good. He told us in John that he does all things that please the Father. The perfect, sinless, spotless Lamb of God suffered.

And if we're going to follow him. If we're going to live for him. If we're going to try to model our life after him. Then guess what? We're probably going to walk down that road at some point. In fact, Paul told us, all that live godly shall suffer persecution.

We're not seeking it. We're not searching for it. We're not signing up for it. But we're just reminded that's what happens. That's where it leads to. But Peter doesn't stop with the suffering.

Praise the Lord. Verse 13, he says this. That when his glory shall be revealed. That you may be glad also with exceeding joy. We see this idea that he keeps bringing us back to the fact that life is hard.

But it's not the end. You're walking through a fire. You're walking through a valley. But glory is coming. Jesus is coming. We see that over and over.

[18:37] He keeps reminding us of this imminent return of Christ. We hear the old gospel song. Joy comes in the morning. That's what Peter is saying. Yes, it might look dark right now.

It might look bleak. It might seem like everybody is forsaking you. But God hasn't. And really the thought is we cannot interpret today's suffering in light of what's coming tomorrow.

See, the trial that you might be walking through right now. Or the trial that's going to come in your life at some point. Is not the end of your story. That's what Peter wants them to know. But when we're in the middle of it, we can agree with it.

Listen, we can assent to it right now and say, yeah, I agree with that truth. But we've all been in a place where the trial comes and we start thinking, this is the end. I don't know how I'm going to make it out of this one.

But we're reminded over and over. Well, we made it out of that one and this one and this one. Not because of anything we did, but because of God. Because he's there that he understands. And we see that really throughout the life of every believer.

[19:39] I mean, Jesus suffered. Then came the resurrection. The cross came before the crown. We see this connection really all throughout the Bible.

And as Peter has made clear time and again that he is coming. And because that is true, everything that looks upside down, even in your life right now, God's going to turn it right side up.

He's going to make all things right. Everything that you endure for the cause of Christ will be worth it. Sometimes, I get it, that may be hard for you to wrap your mind around right now.

But there is coming a day when we will see him face to face. And everything that we think, and it's not to belittle anything because there are some difficulties even in this room, even on this prayer list.

Listen, they are real life difficulties. But when we see him, we're not even going to remember any of them. And that's what Peter's telling us. He wants us to see that.

[20:38] He's reminding these Christians walking through life that you can hurt and still have hope. We have a living hope. You can grieve and struggle, but you can still rejoice because God is not done with you.

This difficulty you're walking through is not the end of your story. But I love when we come here into verse number 14. We don't have to wait until the day we see him face to face.

I'm looking forward to that day. But he reminds us that God is with us right now. Peter would have understood this as he would be there in the upper room. And Jesus said, hey, I'm leaving. But there in John chapter 14 and John chapter 15, he says, if I go, I'm going to send the comforter.

And that God is presently with us. And verse number 14 says, if you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, present tense. Why? How can that be possible? For the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.

On their part, he is evil spoken to him. But on your part, he is glorified. Listen, the world may insult us. They may misunderstand your convictions. They may make you feel like you're on the wrong side just because you're trying to take a stand with Jesus.

[21:49] And I will remind us that the closer we get to Christ, the more it's going to be. That evil is going to wax worse and worse. I don't think God's done it.

I know God can still work. But we are moving towards the end of history. And as that day approaches, the world is taking every shot that it can. But Peter's reminding us we can still stand for the Lord.

He says, happy are ye. Why? Because God's spirit, his glory resteth on you. That's a wonderful truth.

That's a wonderful promise from God. You know, we sing that old hymn, standing on the promises. But sometimes when we read a promise in the word of God, we just run right past it. This is a wonderful promise that Peter's giving.

That life is going to be hard. And people are going to misuse you and mistreat you and twist things that you say. And you think nobody cares and nobody loves me and I'm all alone.

[22:50] Let's go eat worms or whatever that old saying is. Nobody loves me. Everybody hates me. Let's go eat worms. Sometimes we can get like that in our Christian life. And Peter says, actually, listen. You have the Holy Spirit of God.

It just rests on you. That you're not walking through this life alone. It's not up to you for the strength that you have. See, suffering has a way sometimes of making us ask, God, where are you?

Peter says in verse 14, he hasn't left. If you are his child, his spirit rests on you. The spirit of God is there for you. The world might reject you, but God never will.

That's something we can hold on to. That's a promise that we can stand on. That his word reminds us. See, trials often change our circumstances, but it does not change the presence of God in your life. Sometimes it makes it difficult to see him and to understand him, but we must trust who he is because he's revealed himself in the word of God.

So if we're to glorify God in our suffering, but we're going to notice here in verse number 15 that not every difficult thing we experience when it comes to suffering is for Jesus. Number three, we can glorify God in suffering, but he puts a little disclaimer before he gets there.

[24:00] Look at verse number 15. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or as a thief or as an evil doer. As Peter has walked through this letter, he's reminded us time and again that sometimes we suffer for doing right.

For being a witness. For taking a stand. For having certain convictions in our life. But he also reminds us that there is nothing commendable about suffering the consequences of our own sin.

I mean, he gives quite a list here. I mean, a murderer, a thief, an evil doer. You think, thank goodness, that's not me. Look at this.

Or a busy body. Doesn't seem, sometimes when he puts a list like this together and Paul puts a list like that together. I mean, he's putting all these horrible sins. And then he'll say, Paul will say something like this.

Disobedience to parents. Like, you know, as a kid you're like, where did that come from? That's kind of what's going on here. And it seems like, well, I'm doing okay. But here's what Peter says.

You know what we need to be doing?

[25:06] Just minding our own business. Sometimes we like to meddle in other people's business. Peter said, that's not what God's called us to do.

Sometimes we meddle in their business to make ourselves feel a little bit better. A busy body is just someone that concerns themselves with things that are none of their business. And Peter's point is simple.

Do not, I mean, whatever the list is, murderer, thief, evildoer, busybody, don't create unnecessary suffering through sinful behavior. And then call it persecution.

You know, if we're rude and difficult and dishonest and meddlesome and sinful and people respond negatively, we can't say, well, I'm just suffering for Jesus.

No. You're being a jerk. I mean, there's no other way to say it. These aren't spiritual gifts. I mean, speaking your mind and being mean is not what God has called us to do in that sense.

[26:04] And Peter wants us to understand, as Christians, we should live in such a way that if we suffer, when we suffer, it's because of our faithfulness to Christ, not a foolish way that we're living. That's really what he's telling us here in verse number 15.

But then he goes on in verse 16 to get to the idea that he really wants to drive home for these believers. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf.

See, Peter, nowhere have we seen that he says when suffering comes, your primary goal is to get out of it. No, he keeps coming to this point.

When we suffer, here's the goal, that we glorify God. That is the aim. That is what he calls us to do. That takes us back to verse 11. That in all things that we may be glorifying God in what we do.

And that all things might include your suffering. See, it's easy to glorify God when life is going well. But how do we live for him when life isn't going well?

[27 : 12] Because people watch how we live in the good times and the bad times. There might be somebody at work watching you walk through this difficulty. Watching you, how you respond. How do we respond? And listen, none of us are perfect.

There's going to be days where you're going to just not handle it really well. But overall, are we trying to live for Christ? Are we trying to apply the principles of the Word of God to our life?

Peter says, that's what our goals should be. And he says, if any man suffer for Christ, let him not be ashamed. I know we know who wrote this book, but just think about that.

This is Peter. This was the man that on the night Christ was arrested and crucified, he was given an opportunity to identify with Jesus.

But he was ashamed. He said, I don't want to be associated with that. Three times he denied even knowing him. The man that had left all and forsaken his business and followed Christ with everything that he had.

[28 : 14] But here's the wonderful thing about the grace of God. This is not the same Peter. Just because we maybe didn't handle things well in the past doesn't mean, well, I messed up then so I can't do it now.

I'm thankful for the growth in Peter's life. I'm thankful that when Jesus showed up there in John 21, he said, Peter, do you love me? Yes, Lord, you know I love you. Then do what I've called you to do. And God restored Peter and brought him to a place and Peter became a great leader in the early church and preached at Pentecost and God used him in a mighty way.

And see, Peter's speaking from a place of experience. He learned that there are worse things than suffering for Jesus and one of those is being ashamed of Jesus. He said, listen, I'd rather suffer for Jesus than be ashamed of him.

Because I know what Jesus has done for my life. And now he is writing to believers who are most likely going to have to pay the price for bearing the name of Christ.

And the same applies to us today. That we don't have to hide our faith because someone may ridicule it. We don't have to compromise our convictions because it might cost us something.

[29 : 27] We don't need to be embarrassed by the name that we bear. No, we belong to him. See, on the cross of Calvary, when he laid down his life, here's what he did. He purchased us.

Read 1 Corinthians 6. He says, glorify your God in your body, which is his. He's the one that paid the price for it. We belong to him. We have no reason to be ashamed.

Then he comes to verse 17 and 18 that kind of seem like a troubling place. And we don't necessarily like how it may sound off the get-go. But he says this in verse 17, For the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God.

Now, don't misunderstand what he's saying. He isn't saying that Christians are in danger of being condemned with the unbelieving world. No, we know Christ. He has secured us.

That we are in the Father's hand and no man can pluck us out of his hand. Christ has already borne the condemnation of those that belong to him. That's why we are his children. But what he is reminding us in these two verses here is that God deals with his own people.

[30 : 36] That sometimes the trials and sometimes the fiery trial that you might be walking through, it might be from the outside. But sometimes God is using things in our life to refine us. To purify us.

He wants to use that difficult season to shape us into what he wants us to become. That he wants us to be conformed to the image of his dear son. That we would be more and more like Christ. And the fiery trial that we saw in verse 12 isn't evidence God has forgotten you. No, in fact, it's the opposite. That God is still at work in your life. Listen, I'm so thankful that God loved me enough to come to where I was.

But he loves me enough not just to leave me there either. That he wants me to be more like him every single day through every situation. And there are things that we learn about God. And I know we can have testimony after testimony.

That you learn in suffering that you just can't learn in prosperity. There are things when suffering comes in our life that it exposes that we just kind of let the comfort hide.

[31 : 38] See, sometimes the fire reveals really what we've been trusting. And God says, you're going to trust in that? That's no place in your life. Sometimes what the fire does is it loosens our grips on things that we really thought were important.

And it refocuses our life. And it keeps pointing us back to the one that's in control. See, we don't have to know everything God is accomplishing in a particular trial to know that God does not waste suffering on his children.

The trial that you might walk through one day is not pointless. Now, sometimes here's the problem. We choose to miss the point of it.

We choose to waste the trial. But God says, hey, if you just let me, you just trust me, I can use this for your good. We know that all things work together for good. Listen, that's not a verse to quote to somebody else.

That's a verse that we need to live by. That he wants to work in our life. And then there towards the end of verse number 16, Peter turns his attention to those that are outside of Christ.

[32 : 46] He said, if it first begin at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel? He's kind of just reminding these believers here that if God takes holiness seriously among his own people, what about those that reject the gospel?

See, we can walk through difficulty because we know it's not the end. But we say it all the time, and I know you understand this. I don't know how people come to a funeral service and walk through that without knowing the Lord.

I don't know how you walk through some of the fire and some of the trial that we even have on that prayer list back there and not know the Lord. And Peter's saying, listen, you should be thankful you know God.

You don't have to walk through this alone. And he continues there in verse number 18, and if the righteous scarcely be saved, what shall the ungodly and the sinner, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

Now that word scarcely, it doesn't mean God barely manages to save us. He didn't get it in right under the nick of time. Our salvation is not hanging on by a thread. No, it's secure.

[33 : 52] We have an anchor of the soul that's steadfast and sure. But Peter's point is this, that the road home, the road to glory, the place that God is preparing, it's going to involve suffering, and it's going to involve testing, and it's going to involve refining.

But here's the wonderful thing. God will see you through. God will see you home. Paul told us, faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it. He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.

We see that over and over throughout Scripture. But the question that lingers here in verse number 18 is what hope does the person have who rejects Jesus?

You notice Peter doesn't even answer the question. He just kind of lets it sit there. It's a scary thing to think about. And you think, well, thank goodness I don't have to worry about that. Praise the Lord for that.

But what about that co-worker? What about that classmate? What about that neighbor? What about that person that you have all this conversation with all the time? Do they know? Hey, they're going to walk through trials just like you are, but do they have hope on the other side?

[34 : 58] Do they have hope if they close their eyes in death that they're going to see their Savior face to face? Peter's reminding them that, hey, he's coming back. We need to make sure. They need the hope. That's why we can't pack it in.

Hey, that's why we've got to love deeply and serve faithfully. As he talked to us last week in those texts, there's still a job to be done. The Great Commission has not expired.

He still wants us to go forward for him. See, there's no refuge from God's judgment apart from Jesus Christ. We need to make sure that we're living it out the way that he's called us to.

Because as we walk through the fiery trial, somebody might see and say, I want what you have. I don't know how you're walking through this and still somewhat have a smile on your face and have some hope and have some joy in your life.

You know, that isn't an opportunity to share the gospel. So how do we glorify God in suffering? First, we need to make sure that we're suffering for what is right.

[36:01] Not because of our own sinful decisions. We can glorify him by not being ashamed of his name. We can glorify him in recognizing that even in the fire, God is still at work.

But as Peter closes out this passage in verse number 19, he finally tells us kind of what to do when we can't understand what God is doing. And here's what he says. Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing as unto a faithful creator.

Here's what he wants us to do. Trust God through the suffering. That we know who is in control.

Verse 19, that first word, wherefore, it connects it back to all of this.

Everything that he just told us. That suffering shouldn't surprise us. That rejoicing is possible because we belong to Christ. That we can glorify him in the way that we respond.

And that God can use this fire. But what does it look like when we're actually in it? Peter gives two very simple instructions. Here's what we need to do when suffering comes.

[37:12] We need to trust God and keep doing good. It sounds cliché. It sounds too simple. But that's what it is. That's what Peter says.

He says, commit the keeping of their souls to him. That word commit, it carries this idea of entrusting something valuable to somebody for safekeeping.

You know, when you have something that's very valuable, as a kid, as soon as you get something valuable, you know who you take it to? Mom. Can you hold this? That's why, you know, you give moms a hard time. The reason everything's in their purse is because they're the one that can be trusted with what's in the purse.

I'm giving her the keys. I'm giving her the wallet. I'm giving her, hey, would you hold on to this because I'm not going to keep up with it. We give things to people that we trust. And here's what Peter's saying as he closes out this chapter.

That's what you do with your life when you're suffering. Why don't you give it to somebody that knows what they're doing? Why don't you give it to somebody that you can trust? That you know, hey, they can handle what you're going through and they can see you through to the other side.

[38:16] You can trust your life with God. Because suffering sometimes, it gives us this thought that I've got to take control. You know, when life starts falling apart, here's what you do.

Google it. Don't Google it. You start feeling sick, do not get on WebMD. You will be telling everybody you're not going to make it.

You've got five minutes to live. You probably just have allergies. No, when suffering comes, here's what we want. We want answers. We want to know why. We want to know how long is this going to happen.

We want to know if everything is going to work out. Peter didn't say that's what we need to do.

Here's what he says. Just trust God. Commit your soul to him.

Allow him to work. Here's what faith does. It just requires me to know who I'm trusting in. And Peter tells us exactly who he is. Unto a faithful creator.

[39:15] I mean, Peter could have just simply said, trust God. But instead he says, trust your creator. That's on purpose. He's saying, trust the one who made you.

Who knows you better than you know yourself. The gospel tells us that he knows the number of hairs on our head. He knows us better than we know ourselves. And he loves you.

And Peter's reminding him, your life is not outside of his control. He is the creator. He is the beginning and the end. And we must remember that constantly.

And when we know that to be true, we realize this. He's been faithful all this time. And he's going to continue to do so. And Peter's just simply saying, put your life in his hands.

He can see you through. He knows where you are. And he says this little phrase there in the middle of verse 19. In well doing. We're not just to trust God.

[40:14] We're to trust him and keep on living for him. Keep doing the right thing. See, because suffering can tempt us to change the way that we live.

You know, something's going wrong. And almost every area of life we think, maybe I need to change something. Maybe I need to reevaluate it. Sometimes if obedience costs us this much, we think, why not, you know, maybe not just go all in on this.

It seems like I can't afford following the Lord. If people are going to treat me this way, why should I keep responding graciously? Those are thoughts that are going to pop in our mind. The enemy is going to try to get in there.

But what he's reminding us when he tells us to keep doing good is that suffering is going to change your circumstances. But it shouldn't change our obedience. It shouldn't change how we live for him. As we've seen throughout this study, Peter never promises these Christians the road's going to be easy. He didn't say, man, if you just keep following the Lord, the fire's never going to come. There's a champion inside of you.

[41:20] He never says that. But he does tell them how to walk through it. He tells these people going through a difficult time, hey, you need to expect it.

You need to expect suffering. Don't think it's strange that this has happened just because you're following the Lord. Peter tells us we can rejoice in the suffering.

Why? How? Because it's temporary. Yeah, it might. Some of the things you might be dealing with, it might be for the rest of your life. Here. But this time that we have on earth is just a speck.

In light of all of eternity, it's going to be erased from our memory in a sense. And he's reminding us glory is coming. God hasn't left you.

And we can glorify him in that. We don't need to be ashamed of Jesus. Just because we're walking through a difficulty doesn't mean that God doesn't love us. But sometimes we think, well, I can't live for God because they're going to see I have all these problems.

[42:29] I've got this health issue. I've got this. And, you know, if God loves people, he doesn't let these things happen. That's not true. We don't have to be ashamed of what we're walking through. God's using it in our life. And it's not just for our good, but it's for maybe others around us.

You might be walking through something right now because somebody's watching you and they're thinking, if God can help them through that, maybe God can help me through that. And you can be a testimony. We can trust him through our suffering.

And maybe that's where you are. Right here today. You're walking through something you never would have chosen. You have no idea how long it's going to last and you don't know why God allowed it.

And I know in my own life when things like that happen, I'd love for God just to explain it to me. God, could you just shed a little light on this for me? But Peter reminds us, hey, we have a faithful creator.

We don't have to know what he's doing, but we can know who he is. So put your life in his hands.

Trust him to do that. Keep doing what's right.

[43:29] That we can suffer well. I'll leave you with this thought. You may not get to choose whether you suffer, but you can choose whether God is glorified and how you suffer.

We have that choice. We can respond in a way that is glorifying to God. And it points others to him. That's what suffering well looks like.

And one day it will be worth it all when we see Jesus. Please stay away. Please stay away away. Please stay away away. Please stay away away away.