

Living together under suffering

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[0 : 0 0] Let's open to 1 Peter chapter 4, 7 through 11, and I realized that a couple of weeks ago! that Brother John Moore preached on this passage, but I'm not going to thereby ignore it.

So, in God's providence, you need this passage. It's been preached to you twice. So, 1 Peter chapter 4, verse 7 through verse 11. Here's the word of the Lord.

The end of all things is at hand. Therefore, be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. Whoever speaks is one who speaks oracles of God.

Whoever serves is one who serves by the strength that God supplies, in order that in everything, God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

[1 : 1 1] Father, thank you for your word, and we need your help. We need your spirit to illuminate our minds, to give us faith, to trust what your word says, and Father, to be empowered to live out what your word tells us. And so we pray that you would help us, and we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

Now, if you're not a Christian this morning, I want to just start with you because what I'm about to preach and describe is very specifically directed towards Christians.

And I'm not going to apologize for that, but I just want you to understand that someone who is not a Christian cannot live the life that we're about to describe. Let me just say that again. Someone who's not a Christian cannot live the life we are about to describe. If you're not a Christian, you may find yourself doing things similar to the things that we're going to describe, but a Christian can never do the things that Christian, a non-Christian can never do the things that a Christian is commanded to do, and for the same reasons that a Christian is commanded to do them. For example, we're going to talk about hospitality here before too long, and even lost people can be hospitable to lost people, but they can never do so for the sake of the glory of the crucified, resurrected Christ. And that's the difference. And so I just say at the out front of all of this that to you who maybe you're not a believer, to listen carefully to the life that ought to be the way Christians live. And maybe, just maybe, by that, and the kindness that we're to have to one another that mirrors the kindness of God, God might use that to draw you to himself today.

And then we as Christians, what I'm about to talk about here, this is not a natural way for us to live. And frankly, I have found myself convicted and stumped, thinking to myself, why wasn't this passage something that I studied more thoroughly way back years ago?

Because there's been a lot of these thoughts through the years that have hit me about these ideas that we're going to look at in prayer and love and hospitality. And yet, looking at this passage, I found myself kind of convicted, knowing that God has perfect timing, but finding myself saying, Lord, I wish that I had known this earlier.

[4 : 0 1] But I just am pretty sure the Lord knows me better than I know myself. And had he brought this to me earlier, I probably would have been like, nah, because that's just my attitude sometimes.

Like, I know better than you. Like, come on. God, I studied Greek, okay? And so I just, I'm coming to you just wanting to preach this so that we grasp and understand it very clearly.

Because here's the layout, right? So Peter's writing to several churches in a region that's about to go through persecution. They're going to be going through suffering.

And he's been telling us all kinds of things to do, how to live under that suffering, things about redemption and a holy life. But now here, and it really does feel like Peter started to wrap up his

letter right here, right?

Because right there in verse 11, you get like this sort of, that's it. That's all I'm going to say. But then verse 12 comes in, and he's got more to say. And it's really strange. But it's like he just got on a roll going like, and listen, if you're going to go through persecution, you need to understand that you've got to go through it together.

[5 : 17] And this is what I think he's telling us about. How does a church live together under suffering? And he gives us a few things. The first thing is that we ought to pray fervently.

Fervently. Okay, you know that word. There it is. We should pray lots. And in verse 7, that's where you see it, right?

And in verse 7, if you read verse 7, you get the sense that the goal of verse 7 is not the end of all things, and it's not being self-controlled and sober-minded, but the goal is for the sake of your prayers.

And I would even state the goal this way, that his goal that he has in mind is that you guys' prayers, this lets you catch up with me on that one, that y'all's prayers are not hindered.

Now, the grammar here is really interesting because it's a plural you, all of you, and it's a plural prayers, so it's not just some of you, and it's not just some of your prayers, but all of your prayers.

[6 : 27] And the reason I'm saying hindered is because he says, listen, you need to do these things for the sake of your prayers, because of the prayers. And the only other time that he's said anything like that is back in chapter 3 in verse 7 when he tells husbands that they need to treat their wives in such a way so that their prayers may not be hindered.

So in our passage in front of us, chapter 4 verse 7, he's wanting them to live a certain way for the sake of their prayers, and back chapter 3, he doesn't want their prayers to be hindered.

So I really think that he's still got that in his mind as he comes here. He wants your prayers to be good. He wants you to live a life of prayer, and he knows that in order to do so, certain things need to be put into place.

And here's the interesting thing about this word for prayer. There's several words in every language, but in the Greek there's several words that can be used to talk about prayer, and some of them are words that we would use to talk about other things as well.

Like if you say the word petition, we know that in prayer we are making petitions to God. We're asking God for things. But it's a word that in the Greek and the New Testament is also used to talk about humans making petitions to humans.

[7 : 43] Right? This particular Greek word, the only time it is used, is to describe that requesting conversation that we're having with God.

We're always the one requesting. God is always the one that is being asked of. It's never used in human-to-human relationships. It's never used as God making even a request of us.

But it's us making a request of God. It is this word that signifies that we're having a sacred moment talking to God.

And I feel like sometimes we forget that. We want God to be close. We want him to be that father, and that's true and right and good. But he's also the king of the universe.

And so we come to the throne room, someone higher than us, and we get this sacred divine moment where we get to talk to God. But we're not just talking to him.

[8 : 42] The word literally is to ask. It's to request. We don't just come in and shoot the breeze with God. But we're coming in because we need something.

And it is not wrong for us to come with our needs and with our, you know, I hear so many people who will beat themselves up to say, you know, it seems like in my prayers, all I ever do is ask God for things.

Beloved, that's what you're supposed to do. You're fully dependent upon him for everything. Did you know that by his power, he holds the little alveoli together in your lungs so that you can actually breathe?

And moment by moment, your breath is held together by him, so we need him for everything. And so prayer is this coming to him and asking God, not being afraid to ask him.

But Peter says that there's a way that we ought to live in order for our prayers to be what they should be. And he uses these two words, sober-minded and self-controlled. Now, it's interesting because that language should be familiar to you from Peter and the rest of his writings, because he's written in this same kind of way several times.

[10:02] The idea of being self-controlled is the idea of being reasonable, prudent, able to think in a reasonable way, in a sensible way.

The word sober-minded means to be without rashness. It is to have restraint. It is to have a moderation that avoids excess.

Right? So Christians are to live in these ways. You'll remember back in chapter 1, he said that we are to be sober-minded, setting our hope fully on the grace that's to be brought to us. In chapter 5, it's coming.

He says, be sober-minded and watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Christians need to live in a restrained, avoiding excess kind of way, a reasonable, rational, sensible, keeping a good head on your shoulders way.

Because if we don't, it does hinder our prayers. We're not thinking clearly. See, that's the thing I think is so cool about this. And so, interesting to me, is that prayer is not about a stirring up of emotions first in order to pray, but prayer is about thinking reasonably and rationally with moderation as we come to the Lord because we're thinking through the issues very clearly.

[11:29] We're not just responding in emotion. Not that emotion can't be there, but it's not just an emotional thing. It's really thinking through the issues. And we're going to see more and more as we go through the whole thing kind of what these issues are going to be.

But just think about the fact that he's writing this in a letter where he's telling people, here's how you deal with persecution. You sit down with somebody and you listen to the suffering and the difficulty that they're going through, and you want to pray for them, but you want to pray prudently and wisely for them.

And then he tells us the end goal, right? The motivation that we ought to have. He says the end of all things is near. The end of all things is near. Now, it's interesting to me that Peter, as he starts talking about the end, has sort of two timelines or two points in time that he begins to talk about. One of those time periods has to do with what's called the last days. So, for example, chapter 1, verse 20, talking about Christ, that he was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in the last times for your sake.

So, the incarnation of Jesus is considered by the Bible the last times. I'll let that sink in for just a second.

[12:47] We could preach sermons on that, but we'll just let you think about it, then we'll go on. The other time period on the line that we have seems to be some future yet to come, as exemplified in verse 5 of chapter 1, that we, by God's power, are being guarded through faith for salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

Same words, but different points of interest that are here. So then, what is it that Peter is saying? I think that he is pointing to the fact that we are living in the last days.

We've been living in the last days ever since Christ came, and the fact of the matter is, is we have no idea when the end is coming, but it is always at hand, and I think his point is to say, listen, you need to be motivated to live sober and self-controlled because you have no idea when the end is coming.

Don't waste time. It's going to be over soon. And because of that, you need to be sober-minded and self-controlled.

Christians then need to live this holy life that we talked about last week. It needs to impact us and affect us to the degree that we're living sober and self-controlled because otherwise our prayers are hindered.

[14:05] Because we have a tendency to act rashly, right? We have a tendency to trust in our own flesh, to trust in our own arms, to trust in our own strength.

We have a decision to make. We have a project to fulfill. We have a thing that we want to get done, and sometimes we, because we're so anxious to get rolling, forget prayer and just dive in because we think we understand the issues at hand and what needs to happen and what needs to take place.

So we bully ourselves to not do something that's so passive such as prayer and just get busy and get to work. That is the more action-oriented of us who tend to do that.

Then you have the others of us that, like myself, I'm a little bit more worldly-minded. I'm so filled up with the goods of this world. I'm happy and pleasantly satisfied with where I am, and because of that, my mind becomes lazy about prayer because I feel I have no needs sometimes because I

don't let it hit me.

But we need to be fervent about prayer. And to do so, we have to be sober-minded and self-controlled. So how do we do this? How do we take what he's saying and put it into practice so that we can be people who pray?

[15 : 25] Well, I give you two things. The first is this. You just got to gut it out. You just, if you're going to be fervent in prayer, you just have to gut it out.

I have prayed for years. I've grown in prayer. I have a whole section of books books in my library. They're all, they're all probably about this big, but they take up about this much space on my bookshelf. There's probably 20 of them right there. They're all about prayer. I have read about prayer. I've studied prayer.

I've taught on prayer. prayer. doing as well as I ought to be.

The reason you just got to gut it out is because prayer never gets easier than it is today. When you're young, you think to yourself, well, you know, I've just got so much going on in my life that maybe when I'm older, I'll pray, but by the time you get older, you have enough time but not enough mind.

[17 : 00] You find yourself confused. You find yourself not able to focus nearly as much as you did when you were younger. And you say, I wish that I were younger and I could pray more. And the fact of the matter is you will never have any more time and it will never get any easier than it is right now today to pray.

This is your best chance today. So what we have to do is gut it out and get into it and do it. You know, my brother's a physical therapist and he told me this story once about patience. Not as in perseverance, but as in people. And he said that the best patience were older women, empty nesters and beyond because when he told them to do the exercises that they needed to do, they just did it.

That whatever it was that they had been through in their life had taught them that they got to do the things to get to the place and they will just gut it out and do it and they won't complain about how much it hurts to do the exercises and how little, you know, commitment they have to do it.

They just do it. They just gut it out and they do it. And he said, you know the worst patients? 20-year-old athletes. Boys. Because the exercise hurts.

[18 : 25] The exercise doesn't seem to be doing anything. It's not given to them what they want immediately as soon as they want it and so they don't do the stuff and they don't get better. The best patience are those women whose life has taught them, I got to do this to survive.

And they just gut it out. When it comes to prayer, if we're going to grow in prayer, we're just going to have to gut it out. But let me give you one other thing about prayer and I may have shared this with you before, but I think sometimes one of the things that stops us is we're just like, well, how do I pray?

So I'm going to give you an acronym. It's ACTS, A-C-T-S. It's going to be on the screen. You can take a picture of it if you want to. This is a simple way. It's not the only way, but this is something that I have found in my life has been very helpful to help me get all the things together and as I pray.

Starts with A, adoration, which is giving praise to God. Start my time off in prayer, just praising God. C is confession. That is, confess my sin to the Lord.

I don't have to spend long here. You don't have to try to track back everything for the past 20 years and go back to it again. Just go back to this last day or go back to yesterday or go back throughout the day or the last few hours and think about the ways that you did not obey the Lord because there is something and confess that to the Lord and tell him, that was wrong and please forgive me.

[19 : 50] And if you can't think of anything, then just pray, Lord, you know that there is sin that I have committed that I just can't remember, so please forgive me of that as well. And then move on to thanksgiving.

Giving the Lord thanks for the forgiveness of sin first and then start thanking him for all the blessings you have in your life because no matter how bad it is, no matter what the suffering is, there's always blessings that we have in our lives and we need to thank the Lord for those things and be reminded of those things and finally we get to supplication.

Supplication is an easy word. We use that all the time. It means to ask God. It means I'm going to pray for others and I'm going to pray for myself and I'm going to ask for the things that are needed

because I want you to grow.

I want you to be well. I want to grow. I want to be well. And so we ask the Lord for those things. So we need to pray fervently because this is how we live together under suffering.

The second thing goes along with this. It's in verse 8 and it's that we should love earnestly. He says, Above all, keep loving one another earnestly since love covers a multitude of sins. You can see his priority of love, right?

[21 : 06] That it's above all these things. In relationship to one another, the most and best thing we can do towards one another is to love one another. And he says that we're to do this earnestly.

That earnestly is to do it without wavering, without slacking in our devotion. It's not giving up. It's never tiring. It's never stopping. To love one another without faltering in love.

I think sometimes we falter in our love for one another. I don't think we do so purposefully, but I just think that sometimes things happen in our lives and that takes over.

But the thing that we need to do most is to love one another. And notice the audience. He says one another. This is about Christians, right? Christians loving Christians. Now there's plenty of the Bible that talks about how we are to treat lost people and we are to love lost people.

But there's something, there's something good and right about understanding that there's a family of love that we're supposed to have here. And we're all a part of the family and we're to love one another as family.

[22 : 16] And when you join a family, you should get family love, right? But there's something different about family love than about the way we love lost people out in this world.

And there should be something different. You know, it's like my kids. I love my kids and I love your kids, but I don't love my kids and your kids the same. And that's right and good because I'm supposed to take care of my kids, not yours.

And so too, we're to love one another in that family sort of way. But he tells us the reason for this as well.

And that is that love covers a multitude of sins. Now what does he mean by that? That love covers a multitude of sins. I'll tell you what he doesn't mean is he does not mean that my love covers someone else's sin like Jesus's blood covers mine.

That's a whole different word for cover. What this means is it veils it. It throws something over top of it so it's not seen or it doesn't happen. And the best way I can describe it is something like this, that when someone sins against me because I love them, I don't sin back.

[23 : 33] But I forgive them. Love covers a multitude of sins because I don't escalate the problem. And when there's a conflict, and obviously my wife has walked into the room and she's sinned against me, I don't escalate that by sinning back.

If I walk into the building one day and I sin against you, you don't escalate that by sinning back against me. But instead, live in forgiveness and love, letting love cover a multitude of sins.

In other words, we are to love each other as we should. We're to live in that forgiveness, live in that graciousness, live in that encouragement and picking each other up, not living in envy and spite and jealousy and revenge and murder even.

So then how do we grow in love? How do we grow in our love for one another? Well, let me give you a couple of things. One, we love because we've been loved.

We love because we've been loved. It says in 1 John that we love because he first loved us. The only way I can truly love you the way that I'm supposed to is because Christ loved me and saved me.

[24 : 48] The only way I can truly love you the way Christ has commanded me to love you is because of the gospel, because of what he's done upon the cross, because he loved me first. So without that, it's not the kind of love that we need.

We also love because we love what we're familiar with. Without spending time together, it's easy to be suspicious of one another.

So we need to be ready to love by spending time together. And third, we love when we seek out somebody's spiritual good and growth.

Now let's meddle just a little bit here. just because you want good things for someone, just because you want well wishes for someone, just because you want an easy life or you want blessings upon their life, that does not mean that you've truly loved them the way you should.

It could mean that you're just simply sentimental. You truly love someone when you move past that. When you move past I hope you have a good day to I hope God uses all the things in your life today to draw you closer to him and I hope that you're willing and submissive to his difficult providences and you grow humble in yourself before God today.

[26 : 11] That's a whole different statement than I hope you have a good day. Do you want the best for one another spiritually? You know love love wants the best for one another and the best is to grow in Christ to become more Christ like and there's a lot of times that I look at the difficulties and things that happen in people's lives and I often pray I often pray for that to go away I don't want you to be discomforted I don't want you to suffer I don't want you to have difficulties but maybe that's the very thing that God's going to use to grow you to be more like Christ so do I want you to have less pain or to be more like Christ and true love for one another always wants you to be more like Christ even if it means you have to suffer to get there we are to we are to love one another earnestly that's why that list starts with we love because we've been loved because it's impossible to love that way apart from what Christ has done for us the third and final thing is that we need to serve faithfully now this one gets a little strange and I may be out on a limb by myself but I don't think

I am because the grammar just is right there it's just right there and I've not heard too many people say this and so it's strange but Peter's primary focus in verses 9 through 11 okay the primary focus is on hospitality okay the point of verses 9 through 11 is to show hospitality now let's talk about hospitality for just a second what is hospitality hospitality well first hospitality happens to be qualifications for pastors you can find that in 1 Timothy and Titus that part of the qualifications to be a pastor is to be someone who is hospitable but it's also something that all Christians are commanded and called to do you can see that in Romans you can see that in Hebrews and the word hospitable in the Greek literally means lover of people and by that

I mean it's the Greek word for love and it's the Greek word for nations or peoples crammed together okay so it's a lover of people and a couple of verses that help us like Romans chapter 12 verse 13 says contribute to the needs of the saints seek to show hospitality so there you have the idea of hospitality being connected to the idea of meeting needs but when you go to Hebrews 13 you find do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers for thereby some have entertained angels that doesn't mean you did a song and dance but you receive them as guests into your home that's what that means so some people who showed hospitality to strangers entertained angels or received as guests into their homes angels and they didn't even know it because they were just trying to do something nice and kind for these strangers that they brought into their homes so hospitality is when out of kindness for the glory of Christ and out of love we meet needs receive people as guests into our lives

Peter is after hospitality in the church the members are to be hospitable to one another they're to receive one another as guests enter their homes into their lives this is how the church grows in their love for one another think about this what we've said is we need to love one another need to spend time for one another so Peter goes on to talk about hospitality you don't have to have something extra to do just show hospitality you will spend time for one another and what gradually grows out of that is more love and what also grows out of that is an opportunity to hear the stories of what's going on in people's lives for you to then be sober minded self-controlled and pray fervently for them or to be this kind of person that invites people into our lives receive them as guests but he tells us how to do this here in our passage he says without grumbling that's without complaining complaining shows a heart that lacks gratefulness invite someone to come into our home and maybe maybe they're not as enjoyable to be around as we thought they were maybe they're not as grateful to us as we thought that they would be maybe the connection wasn't as fulfilling as we hoped that it would be and so even just in our own minds we can grumble and complain about that listen you start you start being hospitable and getting people into your lives bringing them into your home you're going to have room for complaint because these are sinful people and you're a sinful person and by

God's grace you're trying to do something that he's called us to do there's going to be temptation to complain but that is the very thing we need to not do so what are we to do how are we to think about this and Peter gives what I think to be an example or an illustration if you will so verses 10 and 11 often we run off and start talking about spiritual gifts now if you want to know my view on spiritual gifts it's on the website 1st Corinthians 12 13 14 you can go listen to that and see what I

think I don't think that Peter's purpose here is to help us start to think about well what gift do we have and I got to use this instead I think he uses the idea of spiritual gifts as an illustration for how to do hospitality because the verse 10 starts with the Greek word just as and it is a comparison saying show hospitality just as these other things take place so you have someone who's gifted with the ability to speak or teach and they're to do so as though they're speaking the oracles of God that's a huge thing that's a massive thing there's a seriousness that's there there's a soberness that's there that this act that I'm doing right here right now taking

[33 : 14] God's word and giving it to you if I'm teaching this correctly that I am giving you the very oracles of God you ought to be sober minded about that I ought to be sober minded about that it's a vital it's important taking the time to speak God's word and taking the time to listen to God's word is a serious serious matter it's a way that we are stewards of God's grace grace and then he goes on to talk about someone who serves that they are serving not in their own strength but they're serving by the strength that God supplies they're not leaning on their own understanding they're not leaning on their own stamina but they're serving doing good for others meeting needs for others out of the strength that God supplies out of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in order to do what it is that needs to be done the task to help someone else there's a surrender and a submission about this and the usage of these gifts so here's what he's saying just as a serious sober matter as speaking the oracles of God so hospitality is this important hospitality is as important as though we were speaking the oracles of God and just as surrendering to God and being empowered by him to serve others so hospitality is an obedience that cannot be done with simply ice cubes and paper plates but must be done out of the filling of the Holy

Spirit in order to show the kind of love and kindness that we need to have without complaint this is what we're to do is to show this love to one another by being hospitable and it's a vital thing for the church you know preaching is necessary preaching is necessary for the growth in grace and for the discipleship of every member of the congregation but preaching is insufficient by itself there has to be that life on life and he gives us a way to do so through hospitality and having one another in our homes and he tells us the motive of all this right right there at the very end in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ Peter is so moved that he thinks to end with to him belong glory and dominion forever and ever so so

Christians here's what I want you to do I want you to think to yourself the question how can I be active and participate in the life of First Baptist Church and be vitally connected so that so I'm doing something that's really making a difference show hospitality show hospitality spend time together this is what fosters the love for one another not just creating a supper club but really spirit empowered time that you give of yourself your home your resources to welcome someone as a guest this is how a church who's going through suffering and persecution lives together they spend time they serve one another in this way they hear the stories they pray for one another they love one another so how can you do this how can you make this happen let me give you just a couple of things number one you just got to be committed to it you got to make the commitment to do it nobody has time

I just want you to understand that nobody nobody that I know of says you know I have about 20 hours of free time every week what should I do with that free time you know a pastor once who said if you own a house and have a yard you'll never want for anything to do there's always something to do but this will have to be something that you want to do and you make time to do and you may have to leave something else out there's there's there's no it's just like prayer you're just going to have to gut it out and you're just going to have to do it secondly pick a schedule of times where you bring people into your life and stick to that schedule just plan it think of it as a thing you do on Sundays or a thing you do on Saturdays and maybe every other Saturday you know I'm not trying to tell you the best way to do it you'll have to figure that out for your own life and let me just say this is for those men who are like me get involved in the process of asking people over and don't leave it entirely to your wife to do

I hate planning everything and so I lean on my wife for all things related to planning and several years just what a terrible thing that has been to put that on her because we as men are to be the leaders in our homes so it needs to be something that we get involved in as well but also when someone invites you be a good guest go enjoy open up love pray seek those spiritual good things and honestly one of the best things to do is to team up together and branch outside of the one another's here to those strangers that might be out there because you never know when you might

entertain angels years ago we were in Glen Rose Texas I was the chaplain at a at risk facility for at risk kids we were part of a local church

[39 : 44] I didn't really get to go very much because being chaplain I had to be in the chapel services on Sunday there on the campus but my wife and my kids they went to grace community church and there was a couple who they were transplants from California i m e r k i m e r k we got to know them pretty well and they invited us over to their house a lot they had this bed and breakfast thing that was right there by their property and it had all these trails that went through the woods to connect everything together all this sort of rock and the first time they invited us over they had gone to like Hobby Lobby or something and they had bought all of these little precious stone imitation things like bags and bags of these you know really pretty rocks and they walked the trails and they just scattered them all over the place and when our kids showed up they thought they had found treasure beyond their wildest dreams they were just picking up look what I found look what I found it was a really precious moment but it didn't just stop there that wasn't the only thing when we would get into the time together they would just begin to ask us so tell us how's your quiet time going how's your faith right now you know you guys are struggling a little bit you got a lot on your plate how are you handling that how can we be praying for you and as time wore on we had an incident at the farm and I'm not really allowed to say too much about it except to say that I was being told by my higher ups to cover up truth and I just couldn't handle that so I was getting let go and you know who I reached out to first

Gary I said Gary we need to come over they invited us over I think they might have fed us curry I don't remember but I remember going through and talking about all the various things that were happening and and and and really the isolation that I was getting from all the staff and how I was being let go because I wouldn't do the thing that I felt like was wrong and I tried to write down what it was that Gary said to me and I don't know that I've really captured but he said something to me that had we not spent time together he would have never been able to say to me but this is what he said to me he says I'm so excited for you and your family and for the troubles that you're going through I just want to smack you right there God is working in your heart to grow you and make you more like him through these troubles and that means he's not done with you yet and every time we would call every time we would talk after that because he kept up with us for for a couple of years after that because we had to make a transition we had to find places to be he would always end the phone call he said I'm just so excited to see that God is sanctifying you all of that because they invited us into their home fed us treated us kindly and asked us how they could pray for us beloved that's how we should be as a church that's how we should be ongoingly because many of you you have walked through such difficulties and such trials and heartaches and you had people there for you you know what I'm talking about you've experienced what I've experienced and so what we have to do as a church is just make sure that we are not letting anybody fall through the cracks that we're looking for one another and we see that somebody's not here today we don't ask one another has anybody seen but we call them and we say where are you we don't let them fall through the cracks and we get people together and we say listen

I want you to come into my home I want to know what's going on for you I want your spiritual good I want to love you in that way and I want us to pray that's how a church lives under suffering together and that's all we have by the power of the spirit and what God does for us may he grant us a heart to follow him in that let's pray and that's all we have