

The Exiled Life: 1 Peter 5:5-11

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Date: 22 February 2026

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[0:01] Today we will probably be our last message with that theme. Peter is concluding his message and he is returning to that theme. And if you will, how I view last week's message and this week's message is this.

Prior to last week's message we had suffering and persecution and then we talked about elders and leadership. And then we're going to pick it up again and he's going to speak on suffering again. Well, what does this eldership leadership have to do with this dialogue of suffering? It kind of seemed to be inserted into the middle of nowhere in this conversation of suffering.

And how I understand that is Peter is saying, Okay, elders, you are also to serve as an example to the flock in leading them through a time of suffering. That's part of your job.

And then he picks up the conversation again. Today we will conclude that section on suffering. And there's probably nothing in this life that begins to cause doubt like suffering.

[1:01] If we doubt the goodness of God, doubt the Lord in some way, oftentimes affliction, suffering, persecution is in the atmosphere of that season of doubt.

And so today if you are suffering, maybe that suffering has been caused by watching a loved one suffer and die.

If you, maybe suffering is stemming from in your own life, your own sin and the consequences of that sin are from others' sin around you. We read in Proverbs that the companion of fools suffers harm.

So maybe you're surrounded by foolish people and their foolishness is causing you harm. That could be the case. Suffering may be from the common pressures of life, of just living and wondering how you're going to pay the bills.

Or an emotional suffering or struggling of a loss and feeling of inadequacy or loneliness and anger and worry and fear. Perhaps your suffering is because of some sickness or illness, infirmity.

[2:13] Regardless, suffering is inevitable. And so Peter writes to these persecuted, suffering people because of their cause of Christ.

And he seeks to encourage them. And I pray that we would be encouraged today as well. We're going to look at three things today that Peter is going to write to us concerning what is it to grow in a season of suffering.

Often times we think of suffering as just something to get through, put your head down, and one day hopefully it will be over. But Peter has a different framework. He's actually communicating to us today that this can actually be an incredible season of growth for you.

So about how do we grow through seasons of suffering? We're going to look at three things. We need to, if we're going to grow through a season of suffering, it's going to require humility before God. It's going to require resisting Satan or resisting the devil.

And then thirdly, we're going to see that it's going to require trusting in the sovereign Lord. Let's look at the first one, though. That growing through suffering is going to require a humility before the Lord.

[3:26] We see this in verse 6 and 7. So if you have your Bible with you, we're going to read 1 Peter 5, verses 6 and 7. Verses 6 and 7 is where we're going to give our attention.

Growing through suffering requires humility before God. 1 Peter 5, verses 6 and 7. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him because he cares for you.

The Greek word here, anxieties, comes from a word that means to divide. Anxiety divides our minds, so it's casting all our anxieties on him.

So anxiety comes from this word to divide. It divides our minds so that we cannot concentrate on anything else. Have you ever been anxious over something, and it seems like that thing that has us anxious is what the focus of our mind is, and we seem to not be able to shake it.

So then worry, someone defined worry this way, is a small trickle of fear that meanders through the mind until it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained.

[4:42] I thought, what a vivid picture for anxiety and worry, these worries that we have. Worries and anxieties then distract us from being productive in the things of the Lord and the things that he wants us to be productive in.

It consumes us by diverting our thoughts into the things that channel all of our other thoughts. Why is then there a need for humbling ourselves?

The verse begins, Humble yourselves, therefore. Why is there this need for humility? Because at the heart of anxiety is the proud notion, I can handle this myself.

We all have this sinful tendency to lift ourselves up and put the Lord down. Even when we have trusted Christ as our Savior, those of us who talk about trusting him in everything, when it comes right down to it, we really trust in ourselves and in our ability to work our way throughout life's difficulties sometimes.

We call on God for a little boost now and then to get us through a time or a season, but to put our full weight of trust, maybe we do not. I think you would say that I would be foolish if I were to do this.

[6:04] Let's imagine I'm on a cruise liner. By the way, I've never been on a cruise, but I hear sometimes they can have, go through some storms and seas that can be a little rough and even the big boats can topple and shift and sway and make one unnerving.

And it can give someone an unnerving experience. Well, let's assume I'm getting anxious. And so I find my way to the bridge and I start barking out orders to the captain and everyone on the crew on the bridge.

I imagine they would find an usher to get me out of there as soon as possible and it would be so audacious for me to even just take the helm, to take control.

I have no idea what I'm doing. It's not going to make the circumstance any better, but if I were to do that, that would be the height of arrogance. And so too it is with us. The best place for me to be is to go back to my room and trust the captain.

That would be the best thing for me to do. Go to my room and trust the competency of the captain at the helm. And yet that's what worry and anxiety keeps us from.

[7:19] We don't want to trust the Lord who has a firm control of the circumstance, who cares about you deeply. Fear often would subside if we would just stop and think about the captain's competencies, the Lord's competencies.

George Mueller wrote one time of a man, this is in mid-30s, 40s in England, and he wrote of a man who was driving a cart, a horse-drawn cart.

And he saw a boy beside him who wanted, this is actually in the 20s, sorry.

And there was a boy who was on the side of the road and he was carrying a big load in his hands and on his, he had like a backpack. He had a heavy load and this boy was carrying it to wherever he was going.

And the man stopped his horse-drawn cart and said, son, get in the cart. I'll take you to wherever you're going on the way. And the boy obliged and got into the cart, but he kept hunched.

[8:38] He was next to the driver of the cart, horse-drawn carriage thing. And he was kept hunched over, still carrying his load. And the man said to the boy, hey, young man, just put your burden in the cart.

Put your bag, put your stuff, put your load in the cart. And the boy responded with, I don't want to, I don't want to burden the horse. Church, we have climbed in the cart of Christ's salvation alone for our salvation.

He is, in fact, bearing our load so that we don't have to. We are prone, when trials happen to us, adversity happens, suffering happens, we are prone to doubt two things in an intense time of trial. Doubt, number one, can be this. God is sovereign and in control of my circumstances. So we say things like this. Where is God in all of this? Second thing we doubt is we doubt his loving concern

for us.

So we say things like this. If God were in control and he cares, then why is this happening to me? First Peter, I want us to read the text. Look with me in verse six.

[9:55] Let's consider our first doubt. Is God sovereignly in control? Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God. This verse helps satisfy our first doubt.

Is God sovereignly in control of my circumstance? Yes, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. He is competent to take care of this. Secondly, we question his loving care.

Look with me in verse seven. Casting all of your cares upon him because he cares for you. Our first and second doubt is satisfied in these two verses.

Is God sovereignly in control and powerful? Yes. Under the mighty hand of God, humble yourself. Secondly, does he really care? Yes.

Because he cares for you. Is he loving? Is he caring? Yes. He cares for you. Having acknowledged that God is in control and having acknowledged his care, I think about what Paul wrote to the Philippians saying, be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be known to God.

[11:12] And that is an appropriate response to the Lord. So we now have looked at the first, well, how can we grow through suffering?

How can we grow? We need to humble ourselves before the Lord. The second thing we find in our text today of how is it that we can grow through our sufferings, it requires someone who is resisting the devil.

Verse eight and nine. Be sober-minded. Be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. Growing through suffering requires resisting the devil.

No sooner does Peter say, just relax. God isn't in control. God is in control. Cast your cares upon him. Then Peter just says, wake up. Be alert. There's a roaring lion.

[12:15] George Morrison put it this way. God does not make his children carefree in order to make them careless. He wants us to be watchful, mindful.

There is a real enemy. In fact, in a time of trial, we are most vulnerable to the enemy of our souls. We must be sober and alert to resist the attacks that come. when it comes to the role of Satan and the devil.

When it comes to the role of Satan and the devil, every day, Christians often go to two extremes. one group of people think Satan and the other group of people ignore him altogether.

Depending upon your denominational background, whether you grew up in a more charismatic circles or whether you grew up in more reformed circles and how you were raised and what you were exposed to, probably has affected your thinking on the role of Satan.

[13:28] I'll quickly tell you a story. In the baptistry, at our old, one of our old buildings, we were in a former church. The church got torn down.

It doesn't exist anymore. In the baptistry, there was a basalt rock facade in the backdrop of the baptistry.

And it was exposed all the time. And so everyone looking in the worship center, you could see the baptistry in this basalt rock masonry work that was done as a backdrop.

And I remember one lady coming into the church and she held my hand and she said, do you see it? And I'm like, I don't know what we're looking at. And she says, do you see in the rocks, do you see the face of Jesus?

And I was like, no. But she was convinced that the rocks kind of made a human face and she could see. And then she says, and do you see it?

[14:25] I'm still, no. But she said, I see Satan on the other side and they're having a battle. I'm like, I just see basalt rock. And so that just illustrates the two differences.

But she was sincere and every day she was bothered. Every time she attended church, she saw this cosmic battle happening on the basalt rock. We do need to sober up.

On one hand, Satan is a powerful, unseen foe. So powerful that Michael, the archangel, did not dare to pronounce against him a railing judgment, but instead said, the Lord rebuke you. In the book of Jude, we see in verse nine, we see this. But when the archangel Michael, and Michael is the archangel, of all the good angels, he is the most powerful angel there is, contending with the devil, who is a fallen angel, was disputing about the body of Moses. He did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, the Lord rebuke you. So here is this. Satan is a real powerful foe. So powerful that Michael, the archangel, just said, one day the Lord will judge you, but I'm not going to cast that judgment upon you myself.

[15:48] We dare not be arrogant and start barking orders at Satan like some tin horned general, because he may make quick work of us. Probably none of us also have encountered Satan personally, yourself, although he has legions of demons to do his bidding.

On one hand, Satan is neither omnipresent nor is he omnipotent. He is not everywhere and he's not all powerful. He is a defeated foe.

So everyone I know is going to get a quick chuckle of my box. If you're new, just bear, so everyone who's not new, just, I in my mind put all of creation in the box.

God exists and then he started creating. So the stars, the moon, the all living things, trees, mountains, he knows all of the galaxies, the stars, he knows each by name, put them all in the box. And then God is outside the box. He transcends all of his creation. So all of created things, everything but God is in the box. Here's my point. Satan too is in the box.

[17:02] He is no equal with God. So he is a defeated foe. At the cross, Jesus spelled his doom. At the resurrection, Jesus sealed it.

It is finished. And so we can resist him who are firm in the faith and knowing that he will flee from us. In James 4, 7, we have this promise.

Submit yourself therefore to the Lord. Submit yourself therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. So we have two verbs here that I want to capitalize.

We want to talk about submitting ourselves to God and we want to talk about resisting the devil. Submitting. Submitting ourselves is to place ourselves firmly under the authority and the victory of Christ.

I am his because he has chosen me before the foundation of this world. My salvation is sure because of his finished work on the cross to forgive sin of whom I believe and I trust in my salvation.

[18:00] Therefore, I yield to Christ and Christ alone. He is my allegiance. I submit to him. We're also though told to resist the devil.

Now to resist is to stand against, to oppose. There is no neutrality. There is no middle ground. We are to resist.

James says, friendship with this world, which is Satan's domain, if you will, is hostility toward God. So what I wanted to think about, talk about were 10 ways that I think we can resist the devil or we can capitulate to the devil.

So resisting Satan is in part to stand against everything sinful and worldly that is formerly appealing to us, that was formerly corrupting to us, and formerly enslaving to us.

Let me list 10 things that were formerly appealing, corrupting, and enslaving, and if we fall into this, we're no longer resisting the devil. So how do we resist the devil?

[19:07] Let me put it formerly. What are those things that are appealing, corrupting, and enslaving? The desire to live for human approval. Do you desire to live for human approval?

We are to live for God and God alone. He is our highest affection. He is our highest allegiance. To Him alone we live, we move, and we have our very being. He is who we meditate on.

He is who we give our allegiance, our time. So, but do I live for human approval? Secondly, sexual immorality. I have much to say.

I will just, well, I'll say it this way. When I read about the grievances that are done, the appalling nature of sexual sin that is committed against those, I was thinking about those who are captured in Israel and taken to Gaza.

Everybody with me? I'm trying to be mindful of younger ears. And the things that were done to them sexually, I think, how, anything, I cannot think of in any word to describe that other than that is pure evil and satanic.

[20:22] And yet, do you see how sexual sin, we may excuse it, well, I love her, I love him.

It's just an image that on my screen. Sexual immorality. Are we resisting the devil if we are playing with sexual immorality? Third, greed and materialism.

Greed and materialism is the way of the world, but it is appealing, it's corrupting, it's enslaving to us. Am I content or do I long for what I don't have and greed and materialism?

Satan loves to play in that ground. Fourthly, substance abuse or anything that is addictive forming, addiction forming.

fifthly, pride and self-exaltation. We are perhaps never more like Satan himself when we have pride because he wanted to lift him up above the most high.

[21:33] And that pride is what the Lord cited in his fall. Bitterness or unforgiving?

Are we bitter and unforgiving? Do we place ourselves as judge against others? We know better. I will judge you. I am unforgiving.

I have received mercy, but I will not extend it to you. These are areas in which that are appealing, corrupting, and enslaving. Anger or harsh speech.

Satan is known as the accuser of the brethren. And so, does your speech, is it in keeping with Satan of how he speaks?

Lies and accusing. Anger, harsh speech. Seventh, fear and anxiety. Do you give in to fear and anxiety?

[22:37] Is it your master? It is the opposite of the Lord being peace. How is it, how else can we play into Satan's realm, if you will, and not be resisting him is when we have the idolatry of comfort and self-indulgence.

This life, I deserve it. It's about me. And then lastly, when we have envy and we compare ourselves with others.

We measure life against others. We don't measure our life against the Lord. We measure our life against others. I wish I had what they have.

I'm doing pretty good because we compare ourselves with another. Why am I mentioning these things? Because we want to resist Satan.

These are areas in which I would say we ought not to play around in, but we ought to be diligent to resist. Peter describes Satan as your adversary, the devil.

[23:53] So, I want to hop down to verse nine. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of sufferings are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

I think verse nine is a very encouraging and comforting verse. Why? Sometimes when we suffer, we think I alone am going through this.

I am the only one who can relate to my circumstances. My circumstances are so unusual, others would have a hard time even relating. And there is a certain pride that we can have going through suffering that it reminds me of Elijah.

Elijah was a prophet of God. You may remember Mount Carmel. The 450 prophets of Baal have created their altar.

Elijah has created his altar. And whosoever God accepts the sacrifice on the altar is God. Nothing happens for a long time to the prophets of Baal's altar.

[25:05] And God accepts the sacrifice and the altar that is on the altar for Elijah. And Elijah then says, the Lord, he is God.

And declares. And that breaks the three years of drought. And it begins to rain much. after that, you have wicked King Ahab and Jezebel, his wife.

Jezebel says to Elijah, all of her prophets are now dead. All of her, it's been a great victory for the Lord. And Jezebel is not happy what has happened and how her, everything that she's been working for has just been foiled.

and she says to Elijah, by this time tomorrow, you're a dead man. And it's amazing, Elijah's response. You have just seen God be victorious.

He accepted your sacrifice. He has vindicated your message that he alone is God, that God is a lone God. He has shown himself strong that unless three years earlier, Elijah said, it's not going to

rain until I say so.

[26:21] And then finally, he prays for rain. Three years later, it starts a deluge of rain. Of all the times that Elijah would be fearful after this great victory, by this time of tomorrow, you're a dead man.

He flees to the south. He flees to the south, and he gives into a little bit of a pity party. Because he says, I alone, of all your prophets in Israel, am left.

He alone, God corrects him. No, no, no, no. There's hundreds of prophets who have not bent the knee. But here's how that story relates to suffering. It's oftentimes we feel like, I alone am going through this.

And notice verse 8 and 9. Be sober-minded, watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking whom to devour.

And then look with me, verse 6, or verse 9. Resist him from your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

[27:34] You're not alone. You're not alone. This kind of suffering is being experienced en masse. You're not that special.

that's my words. That's not in the Bible. You are not alone. And that is so comforting.

That is so comforting. Okay. Growing through suffering requires humility before God. It requires resisting the devil.

And thirdly, we're on our last point, trust in the sovereignty of God. Trust in the sovereign Lord.

Verses 10 and 11. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. Trusting in God has fallen on hard times in Christian circles.

[28:48] If you were to come to me with a big problem and you were to ask me what should I do and I respond to you, I encourage you to trust God.

You would probably leave that conversation and say, I have just received the most worthless counsel from my pastor. That is not helpful. sometimes trusting in the Lord is perceived to be the most impractical thing one can do, but it is actually the most practical.

From cover to cover throughout God's word, the Bible extols those who trust in the Lord, who place their trust and faith in the Lord, who go nowhere else other than to the Lord to say, Lord, you alone can solve this problem.

I have my back against the wall, my enemies are around me, but I trust you. The Bible extols those who do that. So you ask, well, how can I trust God?

I think our text has four ways that we can articulate our trust in the Lord. Number one, I would say this, we need to put our trials in perspective.

[30:09] We need to put our trials in perspective. Notice in verse 10, it will only last, this time of suffering, it will only last for a little while.

Look with me in verse 10, after and after you have suffered a little while. A little while. You need to put your trial in perspective and understand it will only last a little while.

And you say, oh, Scott, you have no idea. I have been going through this for many years. And some would say, my whole life, I have gone through this trial.

I want us to put our lives in light of eternity. Remember when Jay took that ticker tape, he put a line on it and he rolled it over this direction and all of our life was just a line on a long ticker tape that was supposed to indicate a time of eternity, if you will.

In light of eternity, even if your suffering has lasted your whole lifetime, is just a little while. And so, and after you have suffered a little while, that is to be encouraging to us.

[31:19] So we need to put our on trial, we need to put our trial in perspective. That's the point. I even appreciate how Paul writes of his trial.

He says it this way, for this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory. This momentary light affliction, even if it is your whole life, is working for you an eternal weight of glory.

That helps me put trials in perspective. Second, we need to put something else in perspective. We need to put God in perspective. Notice in verse 10, we read, God of all grace.

He is not the God of a little grace. He is not the God of a lot of grace. He is the God of all grace. Grace is like an ocean.

It is a limitless supply that keeps breaking over our lives time and time again. His grace will never run out.

[32:30] He is God of all grace. So we need to put our trial on perspective, in perspective.

We need to put God in perspective. We also need to put God's calling and purpose in our perspective. Look with me in verse 10. God's calling and purpose.

He has called you to his eternal glory in Christ. You did not come to him by your own strength or your own effort. No, he has called you.

He didn't call you to condemn you, but to bring you to eternal glory in Christ. That's why he's called you. He's called you to his eternal glory in Christ.

So put God's call and purpose for your life in perspective. That helps when we go through suffering and trials. So first, we need to put our trial in perspective.

[33:27] We need to put God in perspective. We need to put God's call and purpose in perspective. And last, I would say, we need to put God's purpose in trials in perspective. Notice in verse 10 again, he himself will restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

This is why I say we ought to grow in seasons of suffering and growing. That is God's intent to restore, confirm, strengthen, establish you. This word restore means to equip, repair, or render. It is a word that is used to mend fishing nets. So to restore means to equip, to repair, to render. This is God's purpose in suffering.

It's to restore you. To confirm means to fix or to set fast, to strengthen. my wife and I, I met an acquaintance friend of my wife's.

It's really a friend of my wife. And she was in town this week. She lives on the east coast and she came to my office and we hugged and it was good to see her again. I think the world of this lady and she has had a horrific year.

[34:46] she served as the interim president of a university and she served well in that capacity.

She applied for the presidency of that university and everything seemed like it's going that way. She was asked to apply for the presidency. Everything, the faculty, the students, she has worked for that institution for over 20 something years. She was a beloved person.

It was a denominational school so the head of the board though had the ultimate say and he didn't have influence, he had his person that he had in mind. And so the job was ultimately not given to her.

And this is a small town, a smaller university, and so a big uproar was had because of this. And not because of her own stirring things up, but people on her behalf got very upset.

[35:51] So the mayor of the town got involved in this. And it became a thing. And she though said, no, I didn't get the job, so I'm going to pass my job off to this other person.

And so the new president got the job, and so she had all the departments say, where are we at to give a report? And she set the next president up very well, but did resign.

And upon her resignation, it was one of the hardest seasons in this person's life. And so my wife asked her, like, tell me about this year, and all of this came out.

But she just told the story rather factually. She didn't have any ill intent in her voice toward anyone, and she said this, if I did not know that God is sovereign, and that he is good, I don't know how I would have weathered this last year.

But I am confident, and I have grown. And she was, she to me is one of the most beautiful people that I know. Because of how she suffered, she suffered well, she saw God's sovereign hand in it, she praised him, she understood circumstances, she knew that God is in control, and I just think, I love people like this, and I want to be one, and so do I commend all of us.

[37:23] Let's be a people who grow through suffering. Let us be a people who have to grow in suffering requires humility before God, resisting the devil, and trusting in the sovereignty of God.

And may we be a people like that, which we pray. Father, I thank you. I thank you for the times and seasons in our own lives in which we suffer.

God, we have to you. God, we you. God, we have to you. we have designed and orchestrated suffering in such a way to grow us, to mature us, to show yourself strong on our behalf, so that we may rightly emulate who you are and show you off to others.

Lord, for those who are struggling and suffering, Lord, I pray that we would be a people who would honor you through it, that we would trust your goodness, we would trust your presence with us, we would trust that you are sovereignly in control, that we would be circumspect, Lord, that we would resist Satan, and we wouldn't give into his playground, those ten things that I listed, of how the things that we have been liberated from and freed from, the things of this world, may we honor you this week, honor you with our lives for all eternity.

Thank you so much for this day, and it's in your beautiful name we pray, amen.