

# Trusting God in Trials

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 08 July 2018

Preacher: Cedric Moss

[ 0 : 00 ] But this morning, we'll be considering Scripture's call to those of us who belong to Christ, to trust Him in the midst of trials.

And such a message as this is always relevant because the truth is, as somebody has rightly said, we're either coming out of a trial, we're in the midst of a trial, or we are preparing to go in a trial. And when we think about a human being outside of Jesus Christ who has suffered in unimaginable ways, I believe that for most of us, the person who comes to mind is Job. You may have even jokingly referred to yourself as Job when you walked through unexpected trials. In Job 14, verse 1, Job makes this very insightful statement about life in a fallen world, and here's what he said.

Man who was born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble. Job's statement is a universal statement.

[ 1 : 12 ] It's a statement that applies to all of us. So what is true of all of us is that our days on earth will be few, no matter how long we live, and our trials will be many.

And I think most of us have lived long enough to prove this to be true. And since it is true that man born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble, I think it's important for us to learn how to deal with the troubles and the trials of this life that come our way.

There are many people who don't know how to deal with troubles and trials of life, and so they resort to all manner of things to try to cope. But for those of us who belong to Christ, God has not left us to ourselves.

He has given us his word, and in his word he teaches us how we are to walk through trials, and we would be wise to heed his word.

And no doubt there are some of us present this morning who are walking through trials. I'm aware of some. And I believe the Lord wants to speak to us this morning, whether we're walking through trials or we will face them in the days ahead.

[ 2 : 37 ] So let's turn to 1 Peter chapter 5, and this morning we'll be considering verses 6 through 11. 1 Peter chapter 5, verses 6 through 11.

Please follow along as I read. I'm reading from the English Standard Version. 1 Peter chapter 5, verses 7 through 11.

1 Peter chapter 5, verses 7 through 11.

Confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. Let's pray. Holy Father, we are grateful this morning that we can gather in this place. Thank you, Lord, for a time of singing and lifting our voices to you in praise.

[ 4 : 25 ] Lord, now we ask that as we open your word that you would speak to our hearts. Lord, you know where each one of us is. You know those of us who are walking through trials.

And you know those of us who trial awaits. And I pray, Lord, that you would speak to us from your word in particular ways based on where we are.

Lord, I ask that you would grant me the grace to be faithful, to proclaim the truth about what you are calling your people to do in the midst of trial.

So, Lord, would you speak to us now in the name of Jesus and by the power of your spirit, we pray. Amen. If I were to summarize the letter of 1 Peter as a whole, I would say that the letter of 1 Peter provides suffering saints with divine comfort by giving them divine perspective.

Now, it's Peter's purpose throughout the whole letter. He was seeking to bring comfort to those who were suffering by giving them divine perspective.

[ 5 : 47 ] And that remains his purpose even as we see him concluding this letter of 1 Peter. Our history in the Bahamas has been such that we have not known what it is to suffer for our faith.

But that was the case of Peter's original audience. They were suffering largely because of their faith. But we do face trials. We face difficulties.

We face sufferings in life. And what we see is that Peter not only addresses the persecutions that his original audience faced, but he also addressed the reality of just suffering in general.

And so, whether we're suffering because of persecution for our faith, or we're suffering because we live in a fallen world, the letter of 1 Peter addresses us generally.

And these verses that we have come to this morning address us specifically. And here's the point that I want us to see from the passage that we just read.

[ 7 : 02 ] It is this. In the midst of trials, divine perspective is a gracious means of divine comfort. In the midst of trials, divine perspective is a gracious means of divine comfort.

And by divine perspective, what I mean is seeing as God would have us to see. And the reason that we need this divine perspective is that we all know, I believe, that when we walk through trials, it can be very disorienting.

Sometimes when we're walking through trials, things can be hazy. We don't see as we ought to see. We sometimes evaluate situations other than we should.

And many times, we act differently than we should. And Peter knows this. And so, he wisely and intentionally offers divine perspective to those who suffer as he concludes his letter.

This morning, what I want to do is I want to take the remainder of our time and I want us to consider what the Lord would say to us about trusting him in trials.

[ 8 : 14 ] And I want to do so under three points. And they are, number one, our view of God in trials. Number two, our view of the devil in our trials.

And number three, our view of trials in our trials. I want to consider each of these in order. So first, our view of God in trials.

How should we view God in our trials? Well, I believe it is laid out for us in verses six and seven.

We're told, 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.

Now, when we see this call to humility in verse six, it is connected to the call to humility in verse five.

[ 9 : 17 ] But in light of this conclusion that Peter is making to this letter, he goes on to talk about suffering in verses nine and ten.

And I believe that this call to humility in verse six is connected to this larger context of trials that Peter is focusing on in the letter.

You may remember when Peter opened this letter in chapter one in verse six, he talks about us being grieved by trials that are to test the genuineness of our faith.

And then throughout the letter, he calls believers to submit. And sometimes he calls us to submit under difficult situations like to wicked rulers.

In the case of his original audience, they were called to submit to Nero. Sometimes it is to submit to an unjust boss or an unbelieving husband.

[ 10 : 27 ] And so this command in verse six to humble ourselves under God's mighty hand relates broadly to these trials that we face. Because, I mean, the truth be told, when we are walking through difficulties, the last thing that we naturally want to do is to submit under God's hands.

We want to do whatever we can to cause those trials to cease and to come to an end. But God's word calls us to trust God and to humble ourselves under his mighty hand so that at the proper time he would exalt us.

And really, brothers and sisters, what this is, is this is a call to see God as sovereign in all of our trials. It is a call to see him as the one who we are ultimately dealing with.

It is so easy to believe that we are dealing with that wicked ruler or that unbelieving husband or that unjust boss. But no, ultimately, we are dealing with the sovereign Lord.

and he calls us to humble ourselves under his mighty hand. And the reason that we are called to do this, the reason that we should do this, is that God cares for us.

[ 11 : 56 ] And that's what he says in verse seven. For he cares for you because he cares for you. We cast our anxieties on him. We humble ourselves under his mighty hand because he cares for us.

But again, the reality of trials is that in them we have sometimes no perspective of God. We don't see God. We don't hear God.

We don't think about God. And when we do see him, at times we still complain and we question, in the process we betray our lack of trust in God, that he is indeed good and that he indeed cares for us.

And so it's important for us to note that in the same way that casting our cares on the Lord is a demonstration of humility, not casting our cares on the Lord, not humbling ourselves under his mighty hand, is an expression of pride.

So how do we humble ourselves under God's mighty hand when we are walking through trials and we're walking through difficulties? But in a general sense, it means that we trust God knowing that he is all-powerful, knowing that he is all-wise, and knowing that our situation, no matter how difficult, does not escape his gaze, and knowing that he cares for us.

[13:42] And the way that we do that, the way that we humble ourselves and trust in the Lord in the midst of all of our trials and our difficulties is we seek to draw near to God.

We draw near to him through prayer. We draw near to him through reading his word. We draw near to him through gathering with the saints as we're doing this morning. And I think most of us know that it is a rare occasion when we're walking through trials that our natural instinct is to do things like this to gather with God's people, to read his word, to pray.

And when we do feel those things, we have much to be grateful for because God is clearly at work in our lives, but it's not the natural instinct. The natural instinct is to do quite the opposite.

But we need to do these things because these things are perspective shaping. They help us to see God as we ought to see him. I think of Psalm 73 where Asaph is lamenting about whether he in vain washed his hands from sin, whether he in vain is serving the Lord.

And he's complaining. He says, Lord, look at the wicked. They're prospering. They don't have a care. And then Asaph says this. He says, It wasn't until I went into the house of the Lord, then I saw.

[15:09] Then I understood. I saw, in other words, reality. I saw it as I should see it. And so these activities of drawing near to God, whether in prayer, whether in reading his word, rather in gathering with the saints, these are all perspective shaping for us to help us to see as we ought to see when we walk through trials that can be disorienting for us.

Again, for Peter's original audience, the trials were largely in the form of persecution that they were facing. And again, that's not the case for any of us this morning because we just at this point in our history have not faced that.

And being ridiculed for our faith is not persecution. But what I do know is that we have many in this room who are suffering, who are walking through trials in different shapes and different forms, different sizes.

trials. One of the obvious ones is health. Some of us are walking through health trials, extended health trials.

For some of us, it's of a financial nature, due to job loss, even bad financial decisions, or other reasons beyond our control, we walk through financial trials.

[16:44] for some of us, it's relational, marital breakdown, a relationship that seemed to have promise that just ended prematurely.

And I'm aware for some of us, it's of a parental nature. Some of us are grieving over children who are unbelievers, children who are not walking in the faith in which they were raised.

And maybe it's your child this morning and there's difficulty with your relationship with your parents, and that too can be a trial. But here's the question to all of us, no matter what the trial is, no matter what the size of it is, what the shape of it is, what's your view of God in the midst of the trial?

Do you have a view of God? Or is the trial looming so large that that is all that you see and is so difficult to see God?

Are you mindful that he is sovereign? Are you mindful that he is all powerful, that he is all wise, and that your situation, your circumstance has not missed his gaze?

[18:07] Are you mindful of that? The promise that we have in God's word is that when we humble ourselves under his mighty hand at the proper time, he will exalt us.

God determines that proper time. That proper time is his sovereign time. That proper time is the all wise time. And few of us ever align ourselves naturally with what that time is.

For us, it couldn't come fast enough. But the Lord calls us to humble ourselves in the midst of our difficulties, in the midst of our trials, until the time that he says is the proper time that he will exalt.

He'll exalt us. So what is your response to trials as you walk through them? Is that some people do, sleeping, or eating, or drinking, or just indulging in distracting entertainment?

And all of those are wrong responses. Because in the midst of trials, what we need more than anything else is we need God. We need God.

[ 19 : 52 ] But because we are fallen people, God is not the appetite for God, a desire for God in the midst of our trials, is not what we naturally desire. And so we need God's word to call us and even command us to humble ourselves under his hand and to trust him in the midst of our trials.

So here's the first lesson that I believe Peter is teaching us about walking through trials. God is sovereign over your trials.

Trust him. God is sovereign over your trials. Trust him. In addition to instructing us about how we are to view God in our trials, in verses 8 and 9, the apostle Peter instructs us about our view of the devil in our trials.

notice what he says in verses 8 and 9. 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.

[ 21 : 24 ] brothers and sisters, we are called to resist the devil. But before we can resist the devil effectively, we need to be aware of how the devil seeks to destroy us when we are walking through trials.

Now, there are really what I would call two extreme views about the devil and his work. And the first one is people who see the devil behind everything that happens that's bad.

A flat tire, that's the devil. A lost set of keys, that's the devil. You lose your job, that's the devil. Have a headache, that's the devil. You get sick, that's the devil.

And the list goes on. And people who have this view of the devil give the devil a lot of air time.

Something bad happens and their reflexive response is to think about the devil first, before they even think about God.

Before they see God, they will see the devil. And yet we are called to see the Lord as sovereign, as the sovereign Lord, and we are to humble ourselves under his mighty hand.

[ 22 : 44 ] Now the second extreme is those who see the devil, sorry, those who don't see the devil at all in their trials. They're ignorant and indifferent to the words of Peter in 1 Peter 5, 8, and 9.

They're ignorant and indifferent to the many expressions in scripture of the devil's work and the spiritual warfare in which we are engaged.

But Peter says to us in verses 8 and 9, he says, be sober minded, be watchful. He calls us to be aware that we have an adversary.

He prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Now we know that Peter is speaking figuratively. The devil cannot literally destroy us.

If he could, he would. God doesn't let him do that. the devil is a devil on a leash. So what Peter is getting at though is that the devil seeks to destroy us and the way we know that he seeks to destroy us is the way that Peter tells us that we are to resist him.

[ 24 : 09 ] How does Peter say that we are to resist him? He says we are to resist him firm in the faith. We are to resist him firm in the faith. So if that is the way that we are called to resist him, I believe that hints to us what the devil is seeking to do when he attacks us, when he comes against us in the midst of our trials.

So here's what it looks like. In the midst of all the sufferings and the trials and the difficulties that we walk through, the devil comes and he comes against our faith.

he comes in the same accusing way that he expected that he could come against Job and question God's goodness.

Job's wife said to him, are you still going to serve God with integrity? Curse God and die. And so the devil would come against our faith trying to tell us it is not worth serving God and he plants all manner of lies and doubt and deceit in our mind with one goal, to destroy our faith and our trust in God.

You know one of the biggest lies of the devil when we're walking through trials and difficulties? One of his biggest lies is you're the only one. Look around.

[ 25 : 35 ] Nobody else is going through what you're going through. You're the only one. You're the only one who's struggling in this way. You're the only one who's suffering in this way. What sense

does it make? Peter says no.

Peter says in verse 9, he says the same kinds of sufferings are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And this is true whether the suffering is in the form of persecution as it was for most of Peter's original audience or whether it is related to life in a fallen world. It's still true. We face these trials. The enemy has one goal to destroy our faith and we are called to resist him steadfast in the faith.

And so what we need to be doing is we need to be doing faith building things. We need to be, as I pointed out earlier, getting in God's word, getting before the Lord in prayer, gathering with brothers and sisters as we're doing this morning to have our faith fed and fueled and strengthened. We're called to sober mindedness. We're called to be watchful and we are called to resist the devil holding firm our faith in God who is all powerful, all wise, and who cares for us.

[ 27 : 05 ] You know, if you sat with someone who was walking with the Lord for any period of time and got distracted, got bumped off the journey, got sidetracked in some way, when you talk with them, you will notice that it goes back to the issue of faith in God.

You know, in the parable of the sower, Jesus talks about those who endure for a while but when trials and difficulties in this life come, they dry up because they had no root in them and they fall away.

That's the devil's strategy and scheme to cause us to lose faith in God and to cause us to fall by the wayside. So I think Peter's second lesson to us about how we are to walk through trials is this. Satan seeks to destroy you in your trials. Resist him. Satan seeks to destroy you in your trials. Resist him. So when we walk through trials, let us be aware of this. Let us not think that, well, I'm just going through a difficult season. I'm just going through something hard. No. the devil, his goal in that, his efforts in that, is to destroy our faith in God and cause us to be derailed.

[ 28 : 40 ] And what we have to do is we have to resist him. We resist him steadfast in the faith. I'm going to ask you this morning, is this your view of the devil in your trials?

Do you have of you an awareness of the devil in your trials? Are you resisting him firm in the faith and trusting God? Or is he devouring you and destroying your faith and prompting you to doubt God's power and to doubt God's wisdom and to doubt God's care for you?

God's worthy.

So Peter instructs us regarding how we are to view God in our trials. He tells us how we are to view the devil in our trials. And third and finally Peter instructs us regarding how we are to view trials in our trials.

In other words, he is saying to us that there's a particular way that we need to see trials as we walk through those trials.

[ 30 : 23 ] Look at what he says in verse 10. He says, and after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

Peter is simply saying to us that God will deliver us from our trials. He's telling us that. God will deliver us from our trials.

Notice he tells us that after we have suffered a little while, and the first hint here is that our trials are not forever. This is how we must view trials.

we must remember that the trial, whatever it is, however severe it is, it will not last.

And even no matter how long it is, it can be a lifelong trial of some health issue for a child who lives to be a hundred odd.

[ 31 : 36 ] In the scheme of things, compared to eternity, that still is a little while. So Peter's not implying that a little while means literally a little while every single time.

No, it can be an extended period of time on this earth, but in light of eternity, it is a little while. And be reminded that no trial is permanent, therefore.

Every single trial has an expiry date on it, even if that date is the date of our death. Notice the phrase that Peter uses, the God of all grace.

And here Peter is saying to suffering believers that God is the possessor and the giver of all grace. And he's saying that to us this morning. He is the God of all grace.

He is the possessor. He is the giver of all grace, whatever grace we need for whatever circumstance we face, and we need to look to him for that grace.

[ 32 : 53 ] Notice next this clause, who has called you to the eternal glory, to his eternal glory in Christ. Christ. Peter is reminding those of us who have put our trust in Jesus Christ of something greater than the trials that we are walking through.

That God has effectively called us through the gospel. He has saved us and he has brought us to himself, brought us to Christ for all eternity, not just for this life, but also for the life to come. It is as if Peter is reminding us that something greater than our trials is our everlasting portion. And then the latter part of verse 10, notice what Peter says.

He says that God himself will restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

God will restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. And it's like Peter is just using four different expressions, four actions on God's part that are basically saying the same thing.

[ 34 : 13 ] He is assuring us of God's personal deliverance of his people. God himself will do this. have you ever had a situation where, and I had one just this week, where somebody called you and they were looking for you to do something, they were in a difficulty, and you get called and you say, yeah, I'm coming to help, and then before you are able to act, their situation is resolved and they don't need you anymore.

That's not what Peter is talking about here. Peter says God himself will do it. Our trials are not going to just resolve by some other circumstance, some other event happening.

No, God himself will do this. He himself will restore, will confirm, will strengthen, and will establish us.

So at the end of our trials, we will meet God. In the midst of them, he is with us, but at the end of those trials, God himself is the one who brings them to an end.

And so I think one of the pictures that we need to have about our trials is that God is superintending them. His eyes are upon us as we walk through those trials.

[ 35 : 33 ] He is with us. He is sovereignly overseeing those trials. And Peter says to us in the end, this is what God says that he himself will do.

And the promise that we should hold on to and rejoice in is that God will do this.

But here's the reality for the trials that we face right now. If God were to perform this promise today and lift us out of those trials, we rejoice in that we thank God for that.

But as we live in a fallen world, we'll face more trials. No trial is permanent, but we will never get to a place in life in this world where we are just absent of trials.

Thank God for those seasons of reprieve where we're not aware of trials. But if we live long enough in this world, we are going to face trials because as Job said, man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble.

[ 36 : 56 ] But the wonderful thing is that we are able to remember that the trials aren't permanent and God will personally be at the end of our trials to confirm, to restore, and to establish us.

is this your perspective of trials as you walk through trials? They're not permanent and God himself will deliver us or we think this is permanent and we don't remind ourselves of God's promise to deliver us.

trials. This is true of us for the worst trial that we will face in this life.

And so here's what Peter is saying, this third lesson I believe he wants us to see in terms of how we are to walk through trials, how we are to view our trials. Peter wants us to know God will deliver you from your trials.

wait for him. God will deliver you from your trials. Wait for him. The last part of Peter's trial is his trial shaping perspective that he gives us in this text is in verse 11 and it is in the form of a doxology.

[ 38 : 30 ] He writes to him be the dominion forever and ever. And this doxology is a further reminder that God is sovereign. He is the one who is ruling over all things including our trials.

To him be the dominion forever and ever. God is sovereign over all things.

If God is not ruling over all things then God is not God. But we know he is God and we know that he is sovereign over all things.

that includes our lives. That includes every difficulty, every circumstance that we face.

Even though from a human point of view it may seem otherwise. And so brothers and sisters the divine perspective that comes to us in the midst of our trials is a gracious means to bring us divine comfort.

[ 39 : 50 ] My prayer this morning is that every believer, everyone who belongs to Christ this morning who might be and certainly will if we live long enough walk through trials, can benefit, will

benefit, is benefiting from God's word this morning that is helping to shape for us divine perspective of trials and how we walk through them.

If you're here this morning as an unbeliever, you have not put your faith in Jesus Christ, it's very interesting that certainly in this culture even when unbelievers are in difficulty, God is the first name on their lip, oh Lord, help me, help me, help me.

God calls you to more than that. He calls you not just to call upon his name in the midst of your difficulties, but he calls you to be where those who have trusted in Christ are, and that is to have him with them in the midst of their difficulty, and that they may know that he is with them, and he is Savior and Lord of their lives.

And so, if you're here as an unbeliever this morning, while what we're talking about is a wonderful promise to believers that God is with us in the midst of all of our trials, that's not the greatest need that you have this morning.

Your greatest need is not so much working through your trials and getting comfort in the midst of them. The greatest need is to have the comfort that God brings through salvation in Jesus Christ, putting your faith in him, receiving the forgiveness that only he can give.

[ 41 : 59 ] God is the forgiveness of sins and that you would receive reconciliation to God.

And I encourage you, right where you sit this morning, to do that. God is the only place where our souls will find true and lasting rest.

True and lasting rest is found nowhere else and in no one else. Let's pray. God is the