

# Three Mindsets To Endure Suffering

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Date: 12 April 2026

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[ 0 : 00 ] Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking. For whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh, no longer for human passions, but for the will of God.

For the time that has passed suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this, they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery and they malign you. But they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

Amen. I'll be 39 years old here in just a couple of months, but to be honest, I peaked physically at 29 about a decade ago.

[ 1 : 15 ] It was that year I ran my first marathon that year and everything has been downhill ever since that moment. Some of you have run long distances like that. I know Kathy has.

Maybe some of you have done races like that. And you know what it's like to hit the wall. Did you experience that, Kathy, when you ran a marathon a few years ago?

You know what it's like to hit the wall. Hitting the wall in endurance running, it refers to that most difficult part of the race. And in a marathon, it typically comes somewhere around mile 18.

And that's the point that you really begin to question all of your life choices in that moment.

Everything hurts. It's painful. Your breathing is labored.

You're not sure why you ever wanted to do this and if you should continue on. They call it endurance running for a reason. Athleticism is helpful, but athleticism is not actually what gets you to the finish line in those races.

[ 2 : 18 ] It's endurance that gets you there. It's perseverance. It's enduring the suffering that gets you all the way to the end. And enduring that hardest part of that race is all about a disciplined mind.

It's thinking the right way at the right time. And there's lots of things in that scenario that come. And for those of you who have experience, that can be helpful to you. Certain mindsets that if you can think about what you're doing and how you've prepared.

And the people who are around you who are right there in the trenches with you. Trying to get to the same finish line that you're trying to get to. Thinking about those who are around you, around the course, who are cheering you on.

Who are there to help you and support you and encourage you all along the way. If you can get the right frame of mind, that's the thing that will kind of help you endure all the way to the end.

And thriving in exile is the theme of this letter. And thriving in exile has everything to do with endurance and perseverance in suffering. In fact, we're at a point in this letter where we are neck deep in suffering.

[ 3 : 32 ] It's all we've been thinking about for several weeks now. And how we are to consider the suffering of this life in relationship to the suffering of Christ. And what that means for us.

And how we're to think about it. How we're to persevere through it. The kind of suffering that Peter is dealing with at this particular point in the letter. Actually, really throughout the letter, this is a common theme.

But at this point, he's really focused in on the kind of suffering that shows up in being socially shunned. Ridiculed.

Mocked. Specifically because of your faith in Christ. And then the transformation of life that that faith ends up bringing to your life.

Not a transformation necessarily that you initiate. But the transformation that by God's grace, he initiates and begins to happen by virtue of him calling you.

[ 4 : 31 ] And regenerating you in the power of the spirit. No one wants to be rejected. And an experience like that in this life is a bit like hitting the wall in one of those endurance races.

Every step of the life seems a bit painful. And you eventually get to a point where you're wondering, is this really worth it?

And when you start to wonder if this is really worth it, you might start to doubt whether or not these things that you've subscribed to and that you've bought into religiously in terms of your faith, if those things are actually true.

And you're tempted to doubt. And when the doubt becomes introduced, you start to waver on other commitments that come as a result of the faith. That transformation that God initiates that we're to pursue in our sanctification.

When doubt creeps in, you begin to give in to those doubts. You start to move away from faithfulness to those commitments. You begin to compromise not only the truth, but the behavior and the holiness that God calls us to.

[ 5 : 41 ] And where does it often begin? With suffering. The temptation to shrink back from the faith and return to the things that marked your life before coming to Christ are very strong.

And here, Peter is repeating that this perseverance that it takes to get to the end and to thrive in this time of exile requires a disciplined mind.

Now, he said this already once in the letter. If you just flip back to chapter 1, after that opening call to worship in verse 13, we saw it there. As a result of the acknowledging this inheritance that we have waiting for us beyond this life, our calling in Christ, the regenerating work of the spirit in our lives, the surety of our election, all of that coming together.

He says, therefore, in verse 13, preparing your minds for action and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

So this isn't the first time we've seen Peter do this in the letter. Repeatedly, he's acknowledging that if we're going to thrive in exile, if we're going to persevere and endure to the end, we've got to get our mind right.

[ 7 : 03 ] It comes in this text in the single imperative of verse 1, which says that we are to arm ourselves with the same way of thinking.

Same way of thinking in relationship to who? In relationship to Christ. In his way of thinking in his own suffering. In other words, when we suffer, we are to have the mind of Christ as we face our own suffering.

And what I think Peter ends up doing here in this paragraph, or what I'd like to present to you this morning, is three mindsets, three truths to which we must tightly cling as we hit the wall in the Christian life.

As we face suffering, particularly suffering that comes as a result of social ostracization, shunning, ridicule, and mockery from the world.

Three truths we need to cling to. Three mindsets of Christ that we need to have. And here's the first one. In your suffering, you need to remember that you are dead to sin.

[ 8 : 16 ] You are dead to sin. We see this in verses 1 to 3. Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking.

For whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh, no longer for human passions, but for the will of God.

For the time that has passed suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do. He's using Gentiles not necessarily in the sense of non-Jews. The churches to which Peter was writing were predominantly non-Jew.

He's using this term to speak of unbelievers, those who are not following Christ. So the time passed suffices for doing what unbelievers want to do, how they want to live their lives. And he goes on and he presents that short list to us.

Now I want you to notice that the command of verse 1, the imperative, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, is flowing out of the indicative of verse 1, which is, since therefore Christ has suffered in the flesh.

[ 9 : 24 ] What is Peter doing with that? He's drawing our attention once again to the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what it means to be a Christian, isn't it?

We are followers of Jesus, meaning we not only trust in what he has done for us in his atoning death and resurrection for our salvation, but we are following the pattern of life that he has modeled for us.

And with respect to what Peter is dealing with here, what is it that Jesus did? What is the mindset that he had? Well, we know first, he lived righteously before the Father.

He lived righteously before God. He was totally committed to holiness, to not living as unbelievers would do, to not living in sin. Indeed, he committed no sin.

Neither was any deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return. When he was threatened, he did not threaten in return. He was totally committed to living righteously before God.

[10:28] That was a mindset of the Lord Jesus, one that we need to follow. But there was more to it than that, wasn't there? We've seen in this letter. He willingly suffered for righteousness' sake, understanding suffering to be the path to glory.

He willingly did that. That's a mindset that Christ had. Indeed, he came to suffer so that he might bring us to God. His suffering being one of an atonement for our sins.

That was a mindset he had. He lived righteously before the Father. He willingly endured suffering as a result of that righteousness, understanding that beyond that suffering was glory, vindication, resurrection.

The third mindset that Christ had is he trusted God. He trusted the Father to deal with his enemies and to vindicate his righteousness.

Now, Peter spells all of this out in chapter 2. We've studied it at length. When he says that you've been called to this, for Christ also suffered for you, that you might have an example to follow in his steps.

[11:43] He committed no sin. No deceit was found in his mouth. He did not revile. He did not threaten. But he continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. Peter's already spelled that out for us.

Now, he's taking that indicative and he's applying it to how we live as Christ's people in the world. Looking to what Christ has accomplished in his suffering.

We are to arm ourselves with the mind of Christ, thinking as he thought, living as he lived. But there's another ground for this imperative in verse 1.

And it's weird. Peter says, Now, what does that mean?

What is that all about? Well, that he uses suffered in the flesh twice in the verse. That should grab our attention. First, he uses that phrase in relationship to Christ.

[13:01] Christ suffered in the flesh. And what was the nature of that suffering? It was death. Right? It wasn't just that he had a hard time. It's that he died.

And in reference to that, now he says that there is some way in which we suffer in the flesh. And yet, it's clear that he's not actually talking about a physical death at this point.

Because he goes on to say that those who have suffered in the flesh have ceased from sin so that they continue to live now, not for human passions, but for the will of God. So what is it that Peter's doing here?

What's he saying? He's linking Christ's suffering with ours. He's saying that beyond this moment of suffering that we experience, we're living our lives for God's will now.

What is he circling around? I think he's circling around the idea of our conversion. What he's reminding us of is that our life of sin, that old man of the flesh, was put to death with Jesus on the cross so that we might now walk in newness of life in the power of the Spirit.

[14:19] I think he's making a theological connection here. I don't think he's referring yet to the suffering we experience as Christians. I think he's talking about being dead in Christ. Our sins being nailed to the cross of Christ.

Our death being experienced in the death of Christ. So that whoever has suffered in the flesh, that is, has died with Christ through faith, is now dead to sin and alive to Christ.

We're going somewhere with this, right? Now, what does that resurrection life then look like? It looks like verse 2. So that the rest of your life, the rest of your time in the flesh, after this moment of conversion, after this moment that you are dead in Christ and salvation, the rest of your life, you're no longer living for human passions.

Instead, your whole life is oriented toward the glory and the will of God. This is so important.

This is the opposite, the exact opposite of what the world calls us to. The world calls us to leave the Lord.

[ 15 : 43 ] It calls us to live for ourselves. Its most fruitful or most prominent catchphrases are, follow your heart.

Or, in the kids' language these days, YOLO, right? You only live once. You might as well enjoy it. We live in a YOLO culture.

The world says, you know, you just need to do what makes you happy. What is it that makes you happy?

What is it that makes you feel fulfilled? What is it that really, really, it doesn't matter what anybody else thinks. What is it that really makes you happy? That's what the world says this life is really meant to be lived like.

What Peter's instructing us with here, what the gospel instructs us in, is actually the opposite of that. The outworking of what the world says is the good life is described in verse 3.

[ 16 : 44 ] It's consumed with the passions of the flesh. It's consumed with them in such a way that it lives as if God does not care what you do.

Or perhaps maybe even more predominantly is that God is not actually there to do anything about it. So you just do what you want to do. And then Peter gives that whole list, doesn't he?

All of these things. What is that in verse 3? It's what the world calls the good life. Sensuality, passions, drunkenness, drinking parties, lawless idolatry.

This is the good life. It's do what makes you happy. Do what feels good. If you just do what feels good, that's really what this life is about. That's all you need to really care about. But Peter says, no, those who have experienced this death in Christ, they don't live that way anymore.

They're not oriented toward human passions anymore. They're oriented toward the will of God.

They desire to glorify God in what they do. They desire to obey God now in what they do.

[ 17 : 50 ] And that's not just the result of willpower. We don't just wake up one morning and decide, you know what? I'm just going to pull myself up by my bootstraps and be a real good Christian. It's not how this works.

This is grace. God does this work. Christ works his righteousness in us. And then we enter in this unique partnership with the Holy Spirit as we pursue righteousness.

And he sanctifies us as his people. What's Peter saying in all of this, right? When we're tempted in suffering to compromise with sin and to move toward the old ways of the flesh, we need to remember, we need to set our mind on the fact that we're actually dead to sin.

Like literally dead to sin if you're in Christ. Our motivation to endure suffering and to continue in righteousness, it begins with remembering that our old self was put to death on the tree.

That Christ bore our sins there so that we might die to sin now and live to righteousness. That's the reality of your life if you're a Christian.

[ 19 : 10 ] That's the reality of your position in Christ. You are dead to that way of life. Enough is enough of that. You don't need to go back to it. And don't go back to it.

And be motivated by the cross as you think about it. That person's dead. And now you're called to live the rest of your days for God's will. And here's the kicker.

No matter what the social cost is. And there is a tremendous cost. Paul said it this way. He actually said it in a lot of different ways throughout his letters.

But he said it this way in Galatians. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live. But Christ who lives in me.

In the life that I now live in the flesh. I live by faith in the son of God. Who loved me and gave himself for me. What is that all about?

[ 20 : 10 ] It's about the fact that you're dead to sin. And all of your life is now oriented toward the gospel and the glory of God. So don't compromise the truth and righteousness.

No matter how hard the temptation is. Don't compromise on it. Don't shrink back from it. Keep going. One step at a time maybe.

But just keep going. Stay faithful. You're dead to that old life. Don't go back to it. Alright. That's mindset number one. Mindset number two is this. God is a faithful judge.

God is a faithful judge. Look at verses four and five. With respect to this. That is with respect to this new life that you're living. Not living in human passions but for the will of God.

With respect to this. Unbelievers are surprised. When you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery. And they malign you. But they will give account to him.

[ 21 : 14 ] Who is ready to judge the living and the dead. Well who's the living and the dead there? It just means everybody. That there is a judge. And every one of us will stand before him.

That's what Peter means to say. Now we tend to think of suffering in the most extreme ways. Right? When we think of suffering for the faith. When we think of persecution for the faith.

What immediately comes to your mind? Well you might. Maybe you've read the book Tortured for Christ. And you think about that Lutheran pastor in Eastern Europe.

Who was tortured for years as a result of his faith. Maybe you're thinking about martyrdom through history. And of course that's a part of it. Right? Our minds tend to go there. And that was certainly a possibility for the Christians to whom Peter wrote.

We know he was living underneath Emperor Nero. We know that Nero killed hundreds. Maybe thousands of Christians for sport. But over and over in this letter Peter has defined suffering for Christ.

[ 22 : 16 ] Not so much as a physical one. Though it can eventually move there. He's not describing it that way in this letter. He's describing suffering as a social suffering.

So often in the letter isn't he? In this passage it comes in the form of being maligned for your faith. Unbelievers see your faith and they see the life it produces.

And they then ridicule you and mock you for it. But he's used this language in other places hasn't he? In other places he's described it as slander. He's described it as reviling. He's described it as speaking evil against you.

So when we think about suffering in this letter primarily that's what Peter has in mind. I think that's important for us to consider. Because there really is a tremendous cost to following Jesus.

And Christians should always be willing to give their lives for the faith. And of course we are. The gospel is that important to us. We would die for it. Very few of us if any of us will ever be in a position to actually do that.

[ 23 : 25 ] The Lord has blessed us to live in a place where that kind of persecution is not prevalent. There are Christians around the world who today do actually deal with that as a reality. That's not really us though.

How is it that we suffer? Every one of us. Without exception. Every one of us in this room if you're a Christian. And you care to live as a Christian.

You will routinely have to endorse suffering of being a social outcast. Of being viewed as a cultural pariah.

As being the one family member that everybody hopes doesn't show up to the thing this year.

Right? Why? Why? Probably not because you're constantly shoving your beliefs down people's throats.

Probably just because you live for God's will rather than your own human passions. Isn't that what he's saying here? He hasn't said anything about preaching. He hasn't said anything about street evangelism.

[ 24 : 36 ] He hasn't said anything about always being the one to bring up religion at the dinner table. He hasn't said anything about that here. What has he said? You just live for God and not for yourself.

And that provokes people. Peter didn't view this as a lesser form of suffering. And you don't need to view it as a lesser form of suffering either.

It's a reality for us. We need to expect it. We need to be willing to walk that road as we have the mind of Christ. And we need to remember that God is a faithful judge in it.

Now, Peter describes how this works in verse 4. At first, unbelievers that we know are surprised.

They're surprised that you no longer desire to join them in what Peter calls, this is amazing language, isn't it?

Their flood of debauchery. Right? It just means that the things that you used to do with them, you're not doing anymore. The things that you used to say, the things that used to entertain you with those people, the things that used to characterize your life and the way that you lived, and maybe even the things that made you happy, those things aren't the things that make you happy anymore.

[ 25 : 57 ] That's not where your joy comes from anymore. You're just living a different life. And first, they're just surprised. Because that's different, isn't it? But surprise eventually turns to offense.

There is something about the presence of righteousness that sets the unrighteous on fire. R.C. Sproul told this story in *The Holiness of God*, if you've read that book, about Billy Graham playing golf with President Ford and a couple of PGA golfers.

And after the round was over, one of the golfers just storms off and one of his friends sees him and he's angry and he's frustrated. And the guy asked him, what's going on? And he said, I don't need Billy Graham shoving religion down my throat.

And the friend said, he said, he said, he was pretty rough on you out there, wasn't he? And the golfer just replies, well, actually, he never even brought up religion. It's astonishing, R.C. Sproul says, how Billy Graham was so known for living righteously, so characterized by the gospel, that just his presence, to quote a proverb, sent the man fleeing when no one was chasing him.

He's just angry. We call that spiritual war. That's what's happening there. Now, I know some of you are dealing with family members and friends who don't know the Lord and they don't love the Lord and they think that a nice way to put your life is just maybe as a stick in the mud.

[ 27 : 40 ] And that's a hard way to live. To be rejected not only by our culture, but to be rejected by the people that you love the most in this life. But there's something that you need to realize that the Spirit of God working righteousness into your life, it has a way of setting on fire the people that are around us that do not know the Lord and do not love the Lord.

You might not have to say anything. Sometimes it will come just merely because you're doing right. And that causes conviction to people, right?

And if it's not conviction, it's just anger because they assume that because you live different than them that there must be something wrong with the way that they're living. It's amazing in an age of tolerance, people can be tolerant of anything but that.

What does Peter say that we are to do with it? Well, he tells us in verse 5, the second mindset. He says we're to remember that God is a faithful judge. Do you see it there in verse 5?

What do we do? He just reminds them, look, those people that are maligning you, they will give an account to God who judges the living and the dead. I think what he's doing here is what he's done often in the letter, which is basically to remind us that God is the judge.

[ 29 : 06 ] God will handle our persecutors. We don't need to take that responsibility on our own. Our place is not to retaliate. Our place is not to sit in the seat of judgment.

Our place is not to pick a fight or to continue maligning them in return. No, we leave the judgment to God, don't we?

But there's another part to that, isn't there? He says it's not just that God judges the sinner, the living and the dead. All people, we're all going to stand before him.

What's the temptation when we're facing this kind of suffering? The temptation is to, well, maybe I can just get a little relief from the slander. Maybe I can get a little relief just by compromising a little bit.

And what we end up trying to do is we take our Christian faith and we try to maintain a Christian faith without being fully committed to a Christian life. And that just doesn't work. But that's what we try to do, isn't it?

[ 30 : 07 ] And I think at least part of what Peter is reminding us of here is if you walk that path of compromise and you start to go back to the things that are supposed to be dead in your life, that you're supposed to be dead toward, you will end up being in the seat of the sinner and in the path of the scorner.

And you too will stand in the judgment of God for that. So what's the mindset that we're to have? Well, we're dead to sin. The old life is enough.

We don't have to go back to that. God's a faithful judge. Let him take care of our enemies who do not repent. And then let's be mindful that we too will stand before him as well.

That should be a motivation to continue and endure. And then thirdly, the third mindset is this. Eternal life is yours in Christ Jesus.

Eternal life is yours. Look at verse 6. For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead. That though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

[ 31 : 19 ] This is another part of the text that needs careful thought. Because the idea of preaching the gospel to dead people is so strange. Right? What is that about?

Well, the verb tenses help us with this, don't they? The gospel was preached. Right? That's past tense. To those who are now dead.

That's present tense in the way that the verbs are being used. Now, the word now is not in the Greek text. But it's implicit there, isn't it? That this is why the gospel was previously preached to those who are now dead.

So what's Peter getting at? Well, I think we already know that the death of other Christians was a significant concern for first century believers. We see that teaching repeated in the New Testament. Paul dealt with it head on in 1 Thessalonians. People were concerned. They believed that the return of Christ and that the kingdom was so imminent that they didn't expect that any of them would actually die still.

[ 32 : 19 ] And then those that they loved and who loved Jesus began to die and they were getting very discouraged about that. So Paul deals with that in 1 Thessalonians. Well, I think what Peter is maybe implying is the opposite.

That it's not just the Christians who are concerned about that. But now it's the unbelievers who are maligning the Christians. Who are noticing that, well, you guys died too. So what advantage is there to Christianity?

What advantage is there to the Christian life if all of us are going to die the same way? We might as well live it up while we can, right? And I think Peter is answering that for us here.

And he reminds us that unbelievers, they don't see the whole picture, do they? They spend all of their time living for this life as if it's all that there is. But we know better than that. The gospel teaches us better than that.

Though we will all face death, we will be judged in the flesh the way that all people are, Peter says. We know that there is life that awaits us still.

[ 33 : 24 ] But how can we be so sure? Shane was telling me about an evangelistic conversation he had with a friend this week. And the guy's just constantly asking questions. How do you know? How do you know? How do you know?

How do you know? How can we be so sure that there is actually life beyond this? Because most people that you know probably don't think that there is. This is all you get.

You only live once. So you might as well make the most of it. Do what makes you happy. How do we know that it's different than that? Well, it's the very reason that we've gathered for worship today, isn't it?

It's the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. That makes all the difference for us. This verse calls us back to chapter 3 and verse 18. Just set your eyes on it.

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God. And notice the language Peter used about Jesus there. That Jesus was put to death in the flesh.

[ 34 : 22 ] He died physically. But was made alive in the spirit. Made alive in the power of the spirit. That is, he was resurrected. Now, what is the language Peter is now using for us, those of us who are in Christ in verse 6?

Look at it. Though judged in the flesh the way people are, we might live in the spirit the way God does. What is it? It's death and resurrection.

That's the whole idea, isn't it? What's the third mindset? It's the whole thing that Peter's been on about in this letter. Keep your eyes on what's coming. Set your hope fully on the grace that will be yours at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Keep thinking about this very real, very secure inheritance that God is keeping secure for you. It's imperishable. It's undefiled.

It's unfading. He is keeping it safe as he guards you through faith in this life. When we're suffering, when we're beaten down, when we're struggling to get through, what are we supposed to think about?

[ 35 : 24 ] What's going to get us through? We think about the resurrection of Jesus. And if we're dead in him, then that means we will also live in him. That's what Paul says in Romans 6.

For one who has died has been set free from sin. Just as Jesus, or excuse me, now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again. Death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died, he died to sin once for all.

That means we're included in that. But the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Jesus Christ.

Isn't that it? That's the thing that the unbelievers that we love in our lives, that hasn't clicked with them. They don't see the whole picture.

[ 36 : 33 ] This life is not all that there is. This life is not about us making the best of it and just living as happy as we can. That's not the point.

There's more to it. And we know it because Jesus rose from the dead. That's the heart of the gospel message. That Christ has taken our death.

He has brought us to peace with God. And he offers us eternal life. So Peter says, this is why we preach the gospel even to those people we love who are now dead.

So that even though they die now, they might continue to live in eternity as a result of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This is the third mindset we're to have. Just as Jesus entrusted himself to the father for final resurrection, so do we. And when we're tempted to shrink back and compromise in light of the reality of death, we are to continue trusting that there is indeed an imperishable inheritance that awaits us.

[ 37 : 47 ] If we're going to thrive in exile, we're going to have to get accustomed to the cost of being a Christian in a hostile world. That's why Peter calls it an exile.

It's hard, isn't it? It's really hard. Harder than probably what we ever imagined. And one of the more difficult things is when people that we love cut us out.

It's not just that they think it's weird, but they take it further. They actually think we're a problem because we're living for God. That's hard. That's a legitimate form of suffering, and we all need to expect it.

And we all need to be willing to walk that path, which means enduring, staying faithful, not compromising the truth, and not backing away from the life that God has called us to live.

Living for his will rather than for human passions. And as we do that, not alone, but in community together, right? We need each other in that desperately.

[ 38 : 56 ] But as we do that, we want to get our mind right, and discipline our minds. And how do we want to do that? We want to remember that we're dead to sin. And that our lives are now consecrated in holiness to the Lord.

We're living for him, not ourselves. And that's the joyous life. It really is. We also need to remember that God is faithful. He's a faithful judge.

We can trust him to deal with those who sin against us. We should tremble before him as we consider our own lives. But then as the faithful judge, we also know that when he looks at us, those who are in Christ, he is faithful to judge our sins on Christ so that we might be counted righteous. And then we set our hope on the grace that is ours in Jesus Christ. We really do have eternal life. It awaits us beyond this time of suffering.

And just as suffering is harder than what we ever imagined, I am certain that the blessing of that life is far greater than what we could ever imagine.

[ 40 : 17 ] Now, Paul certainly had to have been one of the most brilliant Christians to have ever lived. The Lord used his life in an amazing way, in a radical way.

It still affects us now in the way that the Lord used him to write the scriptures. And maybe it would be helpful to leave off with what he said about this. Romans 8 and verse 18.

He said, I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us. This life is hard.

It is. We're not trying to discount that at all. It's hard. It doesn't even compare to the glory that awaits us at the end that Christ has secured for us and for those who believe his gospel.

We're not trying to discount that at all.