

The Painful Road to Glory

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[0 : 00] Well, it's good to be back here again, not just as a guest, but also as a future member and elder of the congregation.

I'm looking forward to getting to know many of you. Some of you I've already gotten to know, and I still came back, so that's not bad. This is going to be my fourth Sunday here, and some of you, a lot of, well, all of you laughed at me.

On the first Sunday, when I admitted I'd actually never been to Squamish before in my life, and everyone thought that was the strangest thing in the world, I have now been to Squamish five times now.

It's still pretty good. I still like it. I still haven't hiked the Chief, right? So that's something that I'm supposed to do, and I think I talked with a few of you about it. We had a few people suggest the idea of maybe the next time you're up here, Dave, you can join us and we can go hiking the Chief, and I thought it was a great idea, and I took a look at the weather forecast, and it called for potential thunderstorms this afternoon, and so I thought a little bit about it, and I said, no.

The Chief is sort of an intense experience, isn't it? I haven't done it. I've done the grouse grind, which I've heard is worse, and I actually, in a sick sort of way, enjoyed it. So who knows?

[1 : 18] I think this might be fun. But if you make it to the top of the grouse grind without cheating by taking the gondola, that's cheating. You're not allowed to do that, in my opinion.

Then what happens is you've got to get all the way from the base to the summit. You can't stop halfway through and hope that someone's going to come and drag you up the rest of the way. You've got to make it all of the way to the top of that grueling hike.

That road to mountaintop glory, that road to a glorious view and panorama, it's by necessity, it's painful, it's difficult. And really, I think that's true of any glorious thing in life.

And I've just found this to be true, is that anything in life that is truly worth it, that is truly good, that is truly glorious, is painful and difficult to get. Genuine glory is always preceded by genuine pain.

I know that's not always the way that we think about things in our culture, because we want the glory without the pain, don't we? I guess that's not just a cultural thing, that's a human thing. We want the glory without the pain.

[2 : 24] We settle for smaller counterfeit glories that are offered by a full bank account, a shiny new car and house, a weekend of adventure up at Whistler.

And those are all good things. Those are all gifts from God. They're great things. But we tend to settle for them. We settle for little minor glories that take small minor pains to get.

But what these are meant to do is they are meant to point us towards a greater glory. They're meant to point us towards a road that leads to what the Apostle Peter calls in 1 Peter, an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

That's in 1 Peter 1, verses 4 and 5. In the New Testament book of 1 Peter, in the Apostle Peter, his letter to Christians scattered around the Roman Empire, God the Holy Spirit is speaking through his Apostle Peter to remind us, to remind us of this, that the glory of the present age, the passions of the flesh, all the things that our culture says that we should devote our lives to pursuing, all of these things, they are going to perish.

They are going to rot away. They are going to fade into the past. They're a lot like your iPhone. They're obsolete in three years. Now in the book of 1 Peter, the Apostle Peter, he isn't writing a letter to a world that is dominated by throwaway gadgets.

[4 : 00] He's writing a letter to Christians in the first century who are scattered all across the empire, and he's urging them to endure, to endure through this present era of history, to remain pure, to demonstrate honorable behavior as Christians.

He's reminding them that they are sojourners. They are exiles in this world. They don't belong here. And Peter has to do this.

This is so important for these people because these Christians, these little churches, they're facing an enormous amount of opposition. They're hated by the Jewish authorities who view them as a blasphemous and corrupt sect.

And they're hated by their Gentile families and neighbors. And these Gentiles are shocked. Their neighbors, their families, their friends that they have known all their lives are now turning away from idol worship.

They're turning away from religious pluralism. They're turning away from being open to the worship of whatever God you want to worship. And these Gentiles are shocked. These new Christians are turning away from hedonism, from this obsession with pleasure, with adventure, with an infatuation with sexual behavior.

[5 : 13] And what's happening is that these early Christians are facing an enormous amount of pressure from friends, from family, from bosses, from business partners, from religious and government authorities, and all of these outside sources of pressure are pressuring the Christians to abandon their commitment to Jesus Christ.

Because what those outside of the church realize in that day and age is they recognize that if these Christians continue to follow the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, if they continue to worship him as the Son of God and the one and only Lord, then this will disrupt family relationships.

This will disrupt work relationships. This will disrupt the very fabric of Jewish and Roman society. And indeed it did. There are a lot of tactics that people across time and history have used to pressure Christians into abandoning their faith.

And you can start that with soft pressure. So friends can ridicule Christians. Families can disown them. Customers can boycott their businesses. If that doesn't work, you can ratchet up the pressure.

You can vandalize, seize personal property. You can refuse the right to speak about Jesus Christ. You can have them arrested. You can have them killed. And historically, many of those things have taken place to Christians.

[6 : 33] In our country, at this time, it's really way on the softer end. We actually don't face a lot of pressure. Very little. For the Christians who received Peter's letter, the situation was a lot more severe.

And it was only going to get more severe. That's why Peter was going to write to them. These Christians are under a lot of pressure to abandon their commitment to Jesus Christ, to his church.

And there are hundreds of millions of Christians around the world today who face severe pressure from their friends, from their family, from their bosses and business partners, from religious and government authorities, to deny that Jesus of Nazareth is God's son and his chosen king.

So, in 1 Peter chapter 4 in the New Testament, Peter has some words of counsel for Christians who are suffering and who are beginning to question, is it really worth it?

Is it really worth all of this to stick with Jesus Christ? Join me in reading 1 Peter chapter 4, beginning in verse 12.

[7 : 41] If you're new to the Bible, it's in the New Testament, near the end. 1 Peter is before 2 Peter. 1 Peter. But, if you don't have a Bible with you, just scoot next to someone else who does.

They don't mind at all. I'm commanding them not to mind at all. Take a look over their shoulders and go ahead and read the text. We're going to spend a lot of time with our noses in Scripture this morning because we need to hear and learn and let the Word stand in judgment over our lives and transform us and change us.

Here's what the Holy Spirit writes through his apostle Peter. 1 Peter 4, verse 12 through 19. Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed.

Because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

[9 : 01] For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God. And if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And if the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?

Therefore, let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful creator while doing good. Now notice how here Peter begins in verse 12 with a warning.

He says, Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial. Do not be surprised. Now when times get easy for Christians, as they have been in our culture for hundreds of years, we tend to believe that this, what we're experiencing right now, this is the normal state of affairs in history and across the world.

We think this is normal. We tend to believe that our faith is more or less compatible with our culture, that God and country can mesh together in perfect harmony, that you can hold on to the Christian mindset and the Canadian mindset at the same time.

There will be no conflict between the two. We live in a time and place where persecution is very, very light. We think that's normal. But none of this is normal.

[10 : 18] We are in an unusual situation right now. Because the majority of Christians throughout the world today do not share our freedom to claim Jesus Christ as Lord without consequence.

We basically, here, live in Disneyland, and everyone else is living outside of Disneyland. But Peter wants us to be sober-minded. He wants to call our attention to the fact that the world is not a Disneyland sort of place.

Peter is concerned with the real world. Peter wants to remind us this is unusual. We should not be surprised by difficulty. We should expect it. There's a hymn by the hymn writer Isaac Watts, written in the 1600s, and the second verse reads, Must I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease, while others fought to win the prize and sailed through bloody seas?

And that is one of those lines that just, I cannot shake. I cannot shake that. Because the reality is, I tend to think of myself as, sometimes tend to think of myself as like this mature and strong Christian.

And then the reality is, there are so many more believers throughout the world who are sailing through bloody seas for Christ. And I'm whining because my pillow on my flowery bed isn't fluffed just right.

[11 : 37] You know? Suffering is, it is a normal part of Christian experience. Frankly, it's a normal part of human experience. But for Christians, it takes on a special significance because suffering always produces a crisis in faith.

Suffering will always produce a crisis in faith. We start out naive about the world, about life, and suffering will always destroy that naivety. You were given two choices when you suffer.

Will you trust God, or will you give way to fear? Will you trust God, or will you give way to fear? And that is true, not just of persecution. That is true of any sort of suffering that tests our faith in God's goodness.

Author Paul Miller writes that the new American journey is from naivety to cynicism. We start out naive, believing in all the Disney stories.

And then we encounter the real world. We become cynics. But God wants us to make the journey from cynicism to faith. And trust in him.

[12 : 43] And in his goodness. So how do we respond to suffering? How do we respond, especially when we are pressured to abandon our commitment to Jesus Christ? Or when we are tempted to give up our commitment to Jesus Christ?

And another question. How, why is this suffering taking place? Has our God abandoned us? Is God powerless to stop the suffering? Does God even care at all about you?

Here in verse 13, Peter tells us how we should think about suffering. How we should think about persecution. How we should respond to it. Rejoice.

Insofar as you share Christ's sufferings. That you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed.

Because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. Now put yourself in the shoes of someone who has never read the Bible. Lord willing, this Sunday and in many Sundays in the future, we will have people in our church who have never read the Bible before.

[13 : 58] Put yourself in the shoes of someone who has never stepped foot inside of a church, has never read the Bible. Someone who hasn't become sort of callous to these words so that we just sort of gloss over them. Would you not be appalled at what Peter is saying?

Peter is writing to people, going through very difficult, painful experiences. And what he's telling them is this. Hey, rejoice. Be glad. Wow.

Kind of insensitive. Wouldn't you say? Man, this guy just is not Captain Empathy here. In high school, you know, I once attended a motivational event where the speaker encouraged all the students at this event.

Whenever someone asks you, how are you? He said, you should answer, I feel great. Some of you are already laughing. I mean, that's ridiculous.

Do you all feel great right now? No. No, we don't always feel great. It's kind of, isn't it kind of insulting? It feels insulting. It feels inauthentic to demand that people slap a smile across their faces even though they're feeling rotten inside.

[15 : 05] We have enough of that at the church. And that is inauthentic. That is fake. That is hypocrisy. But that is not what the Holy Spirit is telling you and me to do.

That is not what he's calling us to do here. Peter is saying to rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

So the idea here isn't that we're happy that we're suffering. We're not. Think about it this way. We are like a patient who is about to undergo surgery.

No one wants to be cut open just for the fun of it. Nobody goes into surgery thinking, this is going to be a blast. What a ride. Nobody goes up to, Whistler doesn't have big surgery centers for people to go up there and get, you know, their appendix removed.

That's not the sort of thing that we're up for. We're going to surgery because in the end it's going to benefit us. And so there is a sense in which we are glad to undergo surgery.

[16:09] We may be apprehensive, but we are glad because we need it. And Peter is reminding his readers that that imperishable, undefiled, and unfading benefit will be theirs.

He's reminding them that suffering is a promise of future glory. Suffering, especially the suffering that comes from persecution, suffering is a promise of future glory.

Now how can Peter say this? How can Peter say that our suffering has any sort of meaning whatsoever, that is directed towards any sort of end, any sort of purpose?

Well, it's because when you face suffering, when you and I face suffering, especially persecution, what that does is that tempts you to abandon your commitment to Christ.

It tempts you. And Peter says this, you share Christ's sufferings. You share Christ's sufferings.

[17:08] That's a major theme in his letter. Peter associates Christ's sufferings with our own. Isn't that amazing? We tend to think of our sufferings as being completely unrelated to Jesus Christ.

But they're not. Peter writes in chapter 2, verse 20, If when you do good and suffer for it, you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you as an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

There are false teachers who will tell you that Christ suffered so that you would never have to suffer. Peter tells you Christ suffered so that you would follow in his steps and suffer as well.

And now Peter's going a step further. Because not only are you following Christ's examples of suffering, Christ's example of suffering, you're sharing his sufferings.

This isn't just a Peter thing. This isn't just something that he came up with off the cuff. The Apostle Paul writes about this too. Romans chapter 8, verse 17, he writes about all forms of sufferings that Christians face.

[18:14] He writes that we are heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Romans 8, verse 17. Now that might be, maybe that's new to you. I remember when I first learned this, and this was like, what in the world? I'd never heard this before.

And maybe it doesn't quite make sense to you because there are some aspects of Christ's suffering that we simply can never share. That's true. Our sufferings can never atone for our sin.

That's what Christ's sufferings were for. And he alone could bear that burden. But what we're learning here is that Jesus Christ, he has so strongly identified with each and every one of you who are a believer, who are a follower of Jesus Christ.

Jesus has identified himself so closely with you. And he has united himself to all of us as part of his tight-knit family so that when we suffer, there is a sense in which we are sharing his experience of suffering.

[19 : 24] We are in this together. And particularly in the case of persecution, particularly in that case, we are faced with the decision, am I going to crumble under the pressure or am I going to remain faithful to the end?

Just as Jesus continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. And what's great about this is that because we are united to Christ in suffering, we know that we will stay united with him in glory.

Because the story of Jesus suffering on the cross and his death and resurrection is our story too. Just as Christ died, was laid in the tomb and raised to life again, so we too die to sins, we too die to ourself, and we are raised to life again.

We experience God's life, not only in this present world, but even more so in a fuller sense in the world to come where we live forever with Jesus Christ. Nothing can tear apart this unity, this bond that you and I have with Jesus Christ.

He is our brother. Rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. Because when Jesus Christ, when he returns to earth to reign, at that moment that Peter calls the revelation of Jesus Christ, at that moment we will share his glory and we will reign with him.

[20 : 52] That is good news. That is good news. The persecution, the shame, the ridicule, the suffering, it will all end. Paul writes back in Romans 8, Christians are heirs of God, fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him, in order that we may also be glorified with him.

For I consider the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. They are not worth comparing. And Paul suffered more than, probably more than everybody in this room put together, tremendous amounts of suffering in his life that he endured for the sake of the gospel.

Our thinking, our emotions, our decision making, it is so often focused on right here and right now. We place not a lot of value on the coming kingdom of Jesus Christ.

It's so easy to place a lot of value on what's going to happen in the next seven minutes, and not a lot of value on what's going to happen in the next 700 million years. But Peter is urging us, fix your eyes on what is imperishable, undefiled, unfading.

And that is the mindset of someone who can go through suffering and who can smile and who can look you in the eye and say genuinely, I'm suffering, but I'm rejoicing.

[22 : 18] If that's not enough, we are about to learn that this coming kingdom this coming revelation, this coming glory, this is not just something that we look towards in the future. We already have a taste of it right here, right now.

Peter writes in chapter 4, verse 14, If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

This idea that the spirit of God rests upon you, this is not something that Peter just came up with himself. Again, it comes from Isaiah 11, there it is written, there shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

And this shoot from the stump of Jesse, this is God's anointed king. This is his Messiah, Jesus Christ. He is going to come from the line of King David. He is going to come from the line of Jesse.

And this man will turn out to be Jesus of Nazareth. That's the one that Isaiah is talking about. And now Peter says this, the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

[23 : 33] You. You. We are united with Jesus Christ in glory. That is remarkable.

That is amazing. Now, that might be hard to believe. You might wonder, I don't, I'm not experiencing this glory right now.

My life looks a little bit less than glamorous and glorious right now. Maybe that's what you're thinking. And, sometimes, it's true, God's spirit doesn't work as we expect him to a lot of times.

We expect him to do what all the TV preachers say he'll do, which is give us, you know, a new car and keep us from being sick and poor and unhappy. But, the people that Peter is writing to, they are experiencing these things.

Their persecution is getting to them. So, what Peter does is he explains what the Holy Spirit is doing right here, right now. He writes in verse 15, Let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.

[24 : 39] Yet, if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God. And if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

And if the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner? And so, here's where Peter tells us how this future glory is going to take place.

It's going to come by way of present trials. Future glory comes by way of present trials. But, Peter wants to remind us.

He wants to remind us again, as he's already done a few times in this letter. Suffering, there are certain kinds of suffering that don't care.

count towards future glory. You can suffer for the wrong reasons. You can suffer in ways that you aren't sharing the sufferings of Christ. That's why Peter writes, let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.

[25 : 42] If you get thrown in prison for being a murderer, don't say, I'm sharing the sufferings of Christ. No. No, you're not. You murdered somebody. That's on you.

I think Peter threw in this meddler one because, you know, we as Christians, we have sort of these respectable sins that you're allowed to do in church. And maybe meddling is one of those, you know, where you kind of get into others, poke your nose into other people's business.

You interfere with things. You cause divisions and envy in the church. And Peter knows that's what happens in churches. And he says, look, if you do that and then other people in the church come down on you for it and call you out for it, don't act like you're suffering in a holy way for what you've done wrong.

That's not the sufferings of Christ. But for those who are suffering as a Christian, Peter tells us not to be ashamed. Instead, we are to glorify God in that name. In other words, we should be quite grateful to be considered a Christian.

We should glorify God in that name. We should be grateful to be considered a Christian. Why? Because of God's judgment. Because of God's judgment.

[27 : 00] And this is, once again, an area in which Peter follows the example of Jesus Christ in that he says things that do not fit into our culture and our way of thinking, our way of living.

Like the rest of the authors of Scripture, Peter will say things that don't fit into any culture. God's word has never been popular in all of its truth.

I was preaching at a church in Vancouver for a couple years and I had a nice lady tell me after one service that she thought my preaching had improved quite a bit since the first time I spoke there.

And I was like, okay, well, fair enough. But she said, the reason she gave I thought was pretty interesting. She said that when she first heard me preach, she thought I was sort of a doom and gloom preacher.

A bit of a doom and gloom preacher and I probably because I started by preaching in the book of Judges which is this incredible doom and gloom book. Very depressing. Now, I have no intention of being a doom and gloom preacher.

[28 : 03] Just for the record, I have no intention of being a doom and gloom preacher unless I have to be. Here I have to be. Because what I'm saying to you is what God wants me to say to you because this is what Peter comes to next in his text.

I can't gloss over it. I can't skip over it. This is God's word to us. Peter is not afraid to say things that are offensive but true. And so, we read this in verse 17. It is time for judgment to begin at the household of God.

And here's what he is saying. The persecution his readers are experiencing is the beginning of God's judgment on them. Think about that for a second.

The persecution that his readers, these Christians, the persecution they are experiencing is the beginning of God's judgment on them. Now, if you think the culture is offended and troubled by a statement like that, those of you who are Christians are, got to be troubled by that too, right?

Because even in this letter, we've seen that Christians no longer face punishment for their sin because Jesus Christ took that punishment when he died on the cross. Back in chapter 3, verse 18, Peter writes, Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.

[29 : 27] So, we who once were righteous, we have been declared unrighteous because of what Jesus Christ has done. So, how can Peter say to his readers that their persecution is God's judgment on them?

Is this guy just, did he just like drop his pen, go out and play volleyball and come back and forgot what he just wrote? No, not at all. We find clues to answer this question in the rest of the letter.

Back in chapter 1, verse 6, Peter writes about God's promise of future glory and he writes this about it. In this, you rejoice, chapter 1, verse 6, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials so that the tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

So, the idea here is that suffering is something that tests or examines or judges our faith. it judges us to see are we truly Christians or not.

Persecution is God's way of examining you and me to ensure that we are genuinely born again for the world to see and for the heavenly authorities to see that we are the real deal.

[30 : 49] God is testing us. God is separating the sheep from the goats. God is allowing Satan to sift through his people and separate the wheat from the chaff.

Persecution refines the church. Those who are not genuine believers abandon the faith when it's no longer convenient. So, this suffering, Peter says, it is kind of a prologue, a prelude to the final judgment when every man and every woman on earth, every person in this room, every person in Squamish, everyone who is at home right now, everyone who is out on the hiking trails, everyone who is out on the lake will kneel before the judgment seat of God when Jesus Christ will stand in judgment over all of the world.

And just as the glory of God's kingdom, that has broken into the present age through God's Holy Spirit who is with us and among us, so the glory of God's judgment has also broken into the present age through the suffering that we endure.

And what's remarkable is that Peter says, this is, and just when you think that's crazy enough, Peter says, this suffering, this persecution is saving his readers.

It's saving his readers. Remember, back in chapter 1, Peter wrote, the tested genuineness of your faith may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

[32 : 21] He writes in chapter 1 that by God's power they are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. So in other words, you and I will only be saved if we persevere to the end, if we continue to trust God and his saving work all the way until we see him in glory.

We are not saved by our good works, but we are not saved without them either. We must endure to the end. We must persevere. The Apostle Paul once told a little church that he founded, through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

Acts chapter 14 verse 22. Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. And for Christians, suffering might be bad in and of itself, but God uses it for his good purposes.

God uses it to identify his chosen people, his elect to the world, and to reinforce their faith, to strengthen it, so that they endure and are saved.

And then we reach verse 17 where Peter gives us a reminder of what we are being saved from. It is time for judgment to begin at the household of God, and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

[33 : 36] And if the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly? And the sinner? As Jesus himself put it, it is easier for the camel, a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a Canadian to enter the kingdom of God.

He said rich person, but same thing. And Peter here says, if the righteous is scarcely saved, that's not something that we like to hear. We want to believe we're basically good people sitting here, and that God can simply wink at our pesky faults, but the fact is, it is a monumental accomplishment that you and I get to enter the kingdom of heaven.

It is such a monumental accomplishment that the Son of God had to die for it to happen. It's true. suffering.

It is a prologue for that final judgment, but that, but through that suffering, we enter the kingdom of heaven. Our God is a holy God.

He hates evil, and he wants to refine us from it. He wants to bring us out of that evil that we keep getting enmeshed in and entrenched in. God is right to judge evil.

[35 : 02] God is right to free the world from the grasp of evil. We all want that, but we've sinned against him, and we've tried to accomplish a great reversal to put ourselves in the judgment seat to critique God for failing to meet our expectations, our standards, but we see in these verses there is a ransom to free us from these futile ways that will lead to our own destruction.

There is nothing that we can give to pay our own debt. In 1 Peter 1, Peter writes that, not with perishable things such as silver or gold are we ransomed, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

And dear friends, our sin was so bad that it cost the Son of God his life. That is how severe it is. I know that's hard to believe. It doesn't feel like that. But that's why Peter warns us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

The answer to these questions is found in Proverbs 11, verse 31, which reads, if the righteous is repaid on earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner? And God is going to punish sin. He has to do it. He must do it.

And so our alternative, we throw ourselves on Jesus of Nazareth, God's Messiah, our Savior, our Lord. And that's why Peter ends this passage with verse 19.

[36 : 26] Therefore, let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful creator while doing good. Entrust their souls to a faithful creator while doing good.

So that's what I will plead with you to do this morning. Entrust yourselves to your faithful creator. Whether you've never trusted him with your salvation, whether you've spent a lifetime entrusting yourself to him, please, every day, choose to go down this road of entrusting yourself.

It is a painful road. It will make you unpopular. It may cause you to suffer as you resist temptation that you used to give into gladly. But if God is the creator of the entire universe, entrusting ourselves to him, that is our only hope.

And what is amazing is that Peter writes this. He is a faithful creator. God will not disappoint you. God does not disappoint those who entrust their souls to him.

He will preserve you to the end. What does this trust look like? It looks like rejoicing. Rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

[37 : 46] Because if you do believe, if you believe that your almighty creator is on your side, that he will bring you safely to glory, and that what you are going through right now is not meaningless and arbitrary and God losing track of you, but rather this is part of his plan to bring you to glory, then that is good reason to be glad.

That is good reason to be glad. that I come into this morning with thoughts heavy and thick on my mind about troubles in my life, and I need to hear this message, that this is how God is bringing me to glory, and through my sufferings, he's even using them maybe to bring some of you to glory, and vice versa.

Let this sink into your bones. When you face suffering and persecution, you will find a deep sense of joy that bears you up in spite of the pain and the sadness that you face.

And in chapter 5, Peter continues to show us what this trust looks like. He challenges the elders of the church, lead with humility. He challenges those who are younger, submit with humility.

He challenges all believers to pray to God and resist the devil with humility. Kind of a broken record. He says in verse 5, clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

[39 : 07] Because if we believe that God is our faithful creator, we are no longer afraid that outside forces are going to crush us. We're not afraid that suffering is going to crush us.

We're not afraid that persecution can bring us down. We're not afraid that the devil will break us. If God is our faithful creator, we don't need to promote ourselves anymore.

We don't need to pretend that we've got it all together anymore. We can humble ourselves before him and get down on our knees and call to him for help.

And we can tell the truth to other people about what we're going through and the doubts we're facing and the anxieties we're experiencing. We can trust God. We can let him do his work for us.

We can cast our anxieties on him because he cares for us. Because he loves us. Because we're united with Jesus Christ. We are bound to him with cords of grace that when he looks at us he can't, our God can't help but see Jesus Christ.

[40 : 10] The road to glory might be painful. It might subject us to hardships that we can't begin to imagine or predict. But after you have suffered a little while, Peter writes, the God of grace who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. Our God will be the managers to turn our into longer.

Amen.