

Sharing Christ's Sufferings

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Date: 24 June 2018

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] and verses 12 to the end of the chapter at verse 19. Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes to test you as though something strange were happening to you, but rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings.

Persecution has always been a feature of the life of the church, of the experience of the church, all the way down through the centuries. And of course that persecution varies in intensity from one outbreak to another.

It varies in terms of its duration. Sometimes it lasts a long time. Sometimes it's a very short period. But there is always, somewhere or other, persecution against the people of God, against those who testify to be Christ's people.

And indeed, if it's not strictly persecution, it certainly is the case that there's always opposition, and sometimes a very vehement opposition.

And we know that for ourselves. We don't have to go out with our own community to actually see that opposition. And sometimes in its virulent nature, it comes across very strongly.

[1 : 24] And Peter here is actually writing, as we've seen already, to Christians over a very large area. As you remember, at the very beginning, he speaks about the regions throughout which these Christians are scattered.

And he knows that they are suffering persecution. And it appears, as you read through the letter, as we've gone through it, sometimes he speaks about persecution as if it were in the past, other times as if it's presently ongoing, or even here, something that is about to come upon them or will come in the future.

So Peter is really taking account of the variety of needs, the variety of circumstances in those that he's writing to, depending where they are and to what extent persecution has already been experienced by them or is being experienced by them or yet will be experienced as he writes this to them.

And what he's doing here is giving directions to us so that whenever we experience that kind of opposition, even if it's not really deep persecution, nevertheless, he's saying to us here things which we'll actually, we'll need to actually bear in mind and apply whenever we find our stand for Jesus, our witness to Jesus, our presentation of the gospel, our opposing views which are contrary to the gospel.

And especially when we do that publicly, what Peter is doing here is giving us certain principles, certain precepts, certain points to bear in mind, a counsel or advice, in other words, that he's giving to those he's writing to and that we now have before us in this passage.

[3 : 01] And the two things we can see from this passage, just briefly trying to summarize it without going into too many of the details. First of all, he talks about an attitude. The attitude that Peter specifies is necessary on our part.

And secondly, he talks about an advantage. The advantage God's people have and continue to have even during times of trial, of persecution, of trial, difficulty, whatever type it is.

So the attitude that Peter specifies and the advantage that Peter stipulates belongs to God's people. See what he's saying here in terms of the attitude.

First of all, he's saying, don't be surprised, but rather rejoice. Secondly, he's saying, don't be ashamed, but rather glorify God.

And that's taking you down through the first part of the passage. Don't be surprised. Instead of being surprised, rejoice in what God has placed you in.

[4 : 05] Now that may seem rather difficult, and it is, but we'll look at it in more detail in a minute. But then he's saying, rejoice in so far as you share Christ's sufferings. If you're insulted for the

name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of God, glory and of God rests upon you.

And if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name, or as a Christian. So these are two things within that first heading of the attitude that Peter specifies.

We're not to be surprised by opposition, not even if it's persecution. And instead of being surprised, we're to rejoice. And secondly, we're not to be ashamed. Instead of being ashamed, we are to glorify God.

So let's look at them in turn. Beloved, and of course by that, he's showing his great affection for them. He's showing that he's fully with them in their circumstances. He's not writing this coldly to them.

He's not just writing matter-of-fact theories to them. He's telling them this as a pastor. He's telling them this as somebody who deeply cares for them, deeply cares for their well-being, deeply cares that they will continue to be obedient and faithful to God.

[5 : 17] Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial which is about to come upon you, as though something strange were happening to you.

And when he says, don't be surprised as if something strange were happening to you, what he means by that is, don't think that these trials, even if it's persecution, don't think that it's strange. That's to say, don't think it's out of place. Don't think that it doesn't have a purpose in it. Don't think that it's outside of God's purpose. Don't think it's something that is misplaced in the way that God is arranging your lives.

Because he's saying, as he goes on to say, far from being misplaced, far from being something that's not really to any particular purpose, something strange, something that really doesn't belong there, something that properly belongs in somebody else's life, don't be surprised.

Don't think it's strange. Don't think that it's something out of place, something that doesn't rightly belong in your Christian experience. Rather, he's saying, it has to be something that you see as beneficial.

[6 : 31] See, what he's going on to say is that it actually is a fiery trial. Don't be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you as though something strange were happening to you.

Now, you remember way back in chapter 1, quite early on in the epistle, that he said, having acknowledged who they were and their blessedness, that he actually said, you have been, you have caused us again to be born to a living hope.

And verse 4, to an inheritance, imperishable, undefiled, unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are now, by God's power, being guarded through faith, ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this you are rejoicing. He's saying, 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 be tested with fire, may be found to result in praise and honor at the appearance of Jesus Christ.

Now, it's very much along the same lines that Peter is writing here in chapter 4. Don't be surprised at this, he says, this fiery trial, which is coming to test you.

[7 : 40] And when he uses the word fiery, it's not so much to do with the depth of suffering that they might have to undergo. It's not describing the intensity of the persecution, but the purpose of the execution.

Because the fiery trial is the refining trial. It's using words that describe what happens to precious metal when it's put into a crucible, when it's actually subjected to heat in order to burn away all the impurities.

We saw that in that passage in chapter 1. And you can refer back to that study. But what he's saying here is very similar. Don't be surprised at this fiery trial, this testing of you, this refining of you.

Even though it's persecution, it's still a refining thing. It's in God's hand, an instrument of actually burning away the things that are impurities in your lives, of making you holy, of making you more holy than you are.

And don't therefore think it's something strange, something out of place. Because God uses these trials, these testings, just as if we were precious metal.

[8 : 52] But we are, of course, more than that. God's people are precious people to him. And as they are precious to him, he is determined that they will actually be like him. That they will be

perfectly like him.

That they will bear his image and the image of Christ finally in heaven to perfection. And on the way there, he's busy working in their lives. He's busy working in them as they're going through these various trials, so that they are now saying, well, yes, this is hard going.

Sometimes it's a real struggle for me. Sometimes I know that my faith is really put to the test. But here's God telling me in his word, it's a refining trial.

It's a testing by fire. It's something, far from being strange, that has his purpose in that way in it. And so that's a constant theme in the epistle.

And not only that, but it's really a constant theme throughout the Bible, isn't it? We're going to be singing in conclusion tonight from Psalm number 66, which really looks back at some of the history of God's people that the psalmist is there recalling.

[10:05] And he's calling people to rejoice in the Lord. He's calling to the whole earth to shout out for joy. Come and see what God has done. And he goes back to the Exodus.

He turned the sea into dry land. They passed through the river on foot and we did rejoice in him.

And then he actually then goes on to say, For you have tested us.

You have tried us as silver has tried. You brought us into the net. You laid a crushing burden on our backs. You let men ride over our heads. We went through fire and through water.

You might think that's misplaced, isn't it? In a psalm that's calling upon people to rejoice in the Lord. That's calling on the whole earth to sing the glory of the name of God. Is this the God that he's actually talking about?

This God, he's saying, brought them into the net, who tried them as silver has tried, who let men ride over our heads. Yes, that God. Why? Well, he says, Yet you have brought us out to a place of abundance or to a place of wealth.

[11:15] That's the outcome. That was what was at the end of the trial. That's what God was intending all the time, to bring his people into possession of, into the enjoyment of.

I know that's very difficult. Lord, when you are struggling and when the going is tough and when you know that this life is really at times a wilderness that you have to plow through and there doesn't seem to be much in it to benefit you and your soul is hurting and you're asking, Well, why this for me, Lord?

Why am I this compared to other people like the psalmist in Psalm 73? But where we need to be readjusted in our thinking, Peter is actually bringing us face to face with that.

Don't be surprised at this fiery trial which is coming upon you to test you, to refine you, as though something strange were happening. Instead, he says, Rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings.

And that really corresponds, doesn't it, to the beatitude that Jesus himself spoke about in Matthew 5. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

[12:30] It's amongst those wonderful beatitudes that Jesus spoke of there in the whole list of them and it's one of those that's maybe surprising to us at the beginning.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. It's to them the kingdom of heaven belongs. That's their property.

That's what rightly belongs to them. In Christ, God has made it over to them. And so they're blessed people even when they're persecuted, when they're entering through the struggles of this life.

They still remain blessed. God's blessing has not been removed. God's promises have not. In verses 12, the advantage they have continues as God's people. For to them belongs the inheritance of God's people.

So they are to rejoice. But how are they going to rejoice? How do you rejoice when you are passing through the fiery trial? Well, we'll see it in more detail in a minute, but notice he's saying, but rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings.

[13:38] The key to the right attitude during sufferings is in our union or link with Christ. That's what brings us a proper perspective, a right outlook, and a right application of everything that is happening in our lives.

When you see it as being joined to Christ and to his sufferings, then you're saying, well, he went through it for me and I'm going through this for him. He did this because he loved me and surely it's all too little for me to do this if I love him.

We'll look at that in more detail in a minute. So don't be surprised, he's saying, instead of that, rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings. But then he says, don't be ashamed, what he says there in verse 16, if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed.

He said, verse 15 there, let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a meddler. That's similar to what we saw before, that sufferings that come to us justly, well, that's different to those that are laid upon us unjustly or just because we happen to be Christians.

What he's saying here is, if anyone suffers as a Christian, it's a word used only here and in the book of Acts, to describe God's people. But it's there if anyone suffers as a Christian.

[15:07] And you can see that, by the way, you can see that even in those early times of the church when Peter was still living as an apostle, these people had come to be known by this name. Christians. People who follow Christ. People who take the name of Jesus as their Lord and are obedient to him.

If anyone is a Christian, he says, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. Now, being ashamed is important for Peter.

We've seen already how much he's borrowing from his own personal experience. And as he's looking back over his life, you can just see him thinking through these words, as it were, when he's saying, if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed.

Because there was a time he was ashamed. He was ashamed to own himself as a Christian. He was ashamed even at the challenge of a little girl who came to him and said, shortly before the Lord was led out to his death, and there was Peter, there's this girl coming to him and saying, you also are one of these disciples, are you not?

[16:20] And Peter denied it, as you remember very well, three times. He denied being one of Christ's people. And he was very ashamed of that.

When he realized it, when Jesus looked, looked him in the eye, Jesus turned and looked upon Peter, and he went out and wept bitterly.

He knew what he had done was something to be ashamed of. He had been challenged about his link with Jesus, his being a follower of Jesus, and he had out and out, out of fear, whatever it was was happening in his heart at the time, he was ashamed to confess it.

It made a coward of him. And he denied his Lord. But you see, he's now taking that experience, as you and I must from all our experiences, and build upon it not just for ourselves, but to help others through their difficulties, through their struggles as well.

That's really what Peter is doing in this great letter, as we've seen so many times. He's taking things from his own experience, things where he failed himself, things in which he himself let the Lord down, such as here.

[17:43] But he's learned from that, and he's learned from that not just for himself, for his own benefit, but for those that he's writing to here. That's so important for your life and for mine, if we've learned things by making our mistakes.

It's not just for our own benefit that we've learned that. It's for others too. It's for strengthening others. It's for supporting others. It's for actually being with them and being beside them, rather than criticizing them when they make mistakes.

And the Lord here is using Peter to speak to all of these scattered Christians, going through these struggles and difficulties. And Peter is saying, if you're suffering as a Christian, don't be ashamed. Don't be ashamed to confess that you are his, that you are one of his people. Because being ashamed and refusing or holding back from doing that is really going to lead to being ashamed of what you've done.

what he's really saying to us is, there's nothing to be ashamed of in openly acknowledging that we belong to Christ, that we belong to Jesus, that he's our Savior, that he's our Lord, that he's in charge of our life.

[19:05] And you know, the more that that is called into question by the world in which we live, the more it's ridiculed, the more it's denied as a reality, the more that people find fault with that sort of idea, the more you and I have to stand up and say, well, I'm here and I'm not ashamed to be a Christian and I'm not ashamed of the Lord and I'm not ashamed of his gospel.

And I want to actually make it clear that whoever else says whatever they want to say, whoever else does or does not deny him, I'm not going to do it.

And by the grace of God, I will stand by him and I will stand for him and I will not be ashamed of being his. But he said, glorify God in that name.

If anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

Sometimes this is translated on that account or in that regard.

Different ways of translating the words that are used here in the text by Peter, but it's probably best to use it as it is here in the ESV. Let him glorify God in that name.

[20 : 19] What name is it? Some people will say, well, it's the name of Jesus. He's just mentioned if you're insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed. So, if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name, the name of Jesus.

And that makes sense in the context. But it could also, and it's probably better to actually take it, in relation to that word Christian that he's just mentioned in the same verse.

Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

Just remember that the word Christian as it was something that described these people of God had come to be vilified by this time that Peter wrote.

And after this, there would be certain Roman emperors that even in Peter's own time who lived during the time of the Emperor Nero who became a despot and other emperors even after that too as the Roman Empire began to break up and sometimes that was taken out on the Christians and they were put to the sword and put to the lions.

Well, there were many times when deliberate persecution was organized right from the very top level of the Roman Empire against these Christians who were blamed when things went wrong.

[21 : 41] And here is Peter saying, glorify God in that name, Christian. Don't be ashamed of it. Glorify God in that name.

And when you meet with all the assaults that are made on the name of Jesus, when you meet with the blasphemy in our society and the bad language and the misuse of God's name and of Christ's name and how it's banded about sometimes very deliberately in your hearing because people know you're a Christian and really want you to feel offended by this abuse of God's name and of Christ's name, glorify God in that name.

Be proud of the fact that you bear the name Christian. Be proud of the fact that that associates you with Jesus and with the one who is your Lord and who has saved you.

And if you haven't yet come to openly confess Jesus as your Lord, and there are some here I'm quite sure this evening. You have not yet taken that step and you've got reasons your own, you have reasons yourselves for not taking that step.

I know you've said things to yourself and to other people as well as you've discussed this perhaps and you really want to take that step but there are still things holding you back.

[23 : 02] Well, here is the Lord saying to you, glorify God in that name Christian. Be proud of it. Exult in it. Don't keep back from showing the greatness of the word Christian to the world.

Glorify God in that name. And to glorify God in that name means take whatever it takes, do whatever it takes rather to show who you are and what you believe in and who you belong to and what Jesus means to you.

and especially in times of persecution or opposition glorify God in that name. In Fidel Castro's Cuba a man called Armando Valadares was imprisoned in 1960 just for something very simple but he was accused of plotting against the state.

and in 1960 he was sent to prison. He spent 22 years in prison in Cuba sometimes and most of the time in terrible conditions. And many times he would hear men led out to be executed and some of them were Christians and those who were Christians very often called out long live Christ the King down with communism.

And they would shout that out. and he confesses that these shouts these confessions really got to his heart. They affected him deeply. And the authorities from 1963 onwards he tells us they actually gagged the prisoners that were being sent out to the execution so they couldn't speak out about Jesus and others would hear them.

[24 : 53] But in this book he wrote a book and the book is called Against All Hope. And in that book he tells about his experiences and how he exercised faith in God.

And in one passage this is what he says I was utterly exhausted. The lack of sleep and the tension were seriously affecting me. I sought God then.

My conversations with him brought me a spiritual strength that gave me new energy. I never asked him to get me out of there. I didn't think that God should be asked or that God should be used for that kind of request.

I only asked that he allow me to resist and that he give me the faith and spiritual strength to bear up under these conditions without sickening with hatred.

I only prayed for him to accompany me and his presence which I felt made my faith an indestructible shield.

[26 : 01] His presence which I felt made my faith an indestructible shield. That's the faith that's ridiculed by that world out there.

That's the faith in Christ that people find fault with. That's the faith in Christ that persecutors just cannot stand and want to take it out on people just because they have that faith and confess that faith.

Well listen to what he said. The presence of God which I felt and prayed for made my faith an indestructible shield. He meant of course that God was his shield really but through faith and exercising that faith and trust in him he felt that security he felt impregnable in that prison despite all the suffering and the horrible conditions and the torture that he had to endure.

Well here is Peter saying don't be surprised but instead of that rejoice. Don't be ashamed but rather glorify God in the name that you bear in the name Christian.

That's the attitude Peter specifies. And secondly more briefly the advantage that Peter stipulates. You see he's saying there rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings.

[27 : 20] That's the first advantage. The first thing he says Christians have the advantage of this. Share in Christ's sufferings. How do you share in Christ's sufferings? What does he mean by that? Well go back to chapter 2 and verse 21.

Remind yourself of what we saw there. For to this you have been called because Christ also suffered for you leaving you an example that you might follow in his steps. When he was reviled he didn't revile in return.

When he suffered he did not threaten but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly or righteously. That he says is our example. And Christ is always our supreme example whatever it is in the Christian life we need to actually be busy with.

Peter was a witness to the sufferings of Christ as he says the beginning of the next chapter. exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ.

He saw the sufferings of Christ. He saw with his own eyes what Jesus suffered for him and for all his people. And he knows why he suffered. Chapter 3 verse 18 we're picking up all these texts we've looked at before.

[28 : 31] Christ also suffered once for sins that he might bring us to God. That was the purpose that was the reason to bring us to God.

Now he's saying rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings and as far as you follow the example that he has set you knowing that whatever sufferings you and I need to endure they will never be as deep as his.

There will never be that depth of pain and extent and excruciating pain which he endured for us. You're sharing in Christ's sufferings he's saying so therefore have that approach to your sufferings too. Secondly he says the second advantage is that they have the Holy Spirit.

For he says here in 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.

[29 : 43] Now that could be translated the glorious spirit and the spirit of God rests upon you but much better the way it is there. The spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. Being insulted for the name of Christ is something that's not easy to bear.

It's something that can itself be a massive persecution. You just think of the way well not all the media but certain parts of the media even today will actually insult those who are Christians especially when they detect something that's gone wrong in a person's life.

You can see how instantly certain sections of the media will latch onto that because that's what the church they will say is really like they're all just hypocrites and this is really why people should not trust in these people who are ministers or followers of Christ and it becomes an intolerable burden for those who have to go through certain difficulties at certain times.

You are insulted for the name of Christ and that insulting really at times can be really hurtful and it gets to you and the worst part of us wants to get back at them and treat them in the same manner but Peter is saying if you are insulted for the name of Christ you are blessed because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you yes the insult that comes to you is difficult the insult is hard to bear it's difficult to contend with it's difficult to answer you don't want to answer in kind because you then don't follow Jesus' example but this is he says what you believe this is what you must take with you that spirit of insult that rests upon you persecutors is nothing it's not to be compared with the spirit that rests upon you because on you rests the spirit of glory and of God why is he calling the Holy Spirit the spirit of glory well not just because the spirit is the glorious spirit the spirit of glory because he also is God he's the spirit of glory because that's where he's taking these persecuted people he's the spirit of glory because that's the end of their journey and they're going through these difficult times right now and it's difficult for them to bear it they're struggling through all of these times of persecution it's a testing time they're being refined and it really hurts and they're being insulted for the name of Christ but he says remember the spirit of glory is resting upon you remember the outcome of God's work in your life remember what that's going to lead to remember what the end is what the terminus is the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you that's your advantage along with sharing in Christ's sufferings remember the

Old Testament where the Holy of Holies had the presence of God signified and the glory above the mercy seat all this he says is now the New Testament time we don't have the Old Testament temple anymore we don't have that tabernacle we don't have God present in that way we have something even greater something to our great advantage he is actually in us and he's resting upon God's people and that Shekinah glory of the Old Testament if you like has come to be transferred as it is in Jesus and rests upon the people of Christ that's their advantage they have that spirit the spirit of glory and of God resting upon them you know your position tonight and the nature of your character as a Christian is indescribable there are no words adequate to describe what a Christian is in terms of this description the spirit of glory and of God is resting upon you what a privilege to have it what a description about a sinner who is deserving of hell as we all are that when God comes into our lives and when God changes us and when we're converted and when we come to know this

[33 : 58] Jesus for ourselves as Peter is saying well then from then on the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you and whatever happens to you that's not going to go away that's not going to change the end of your course is not going to be altered by all the insults that are heaped upon you the way there you're blessed you're blessed because there's nothing else like this anywhere else a people who have that spirit of glory and of God resting upon them and then of course he comes to various conclusions now we've pretty much run out of time but let me just summarize in conclusion there from verse 14 onwards 15 onwards in verse 13 we've seen rejoice greatly because he's then saying you are united to Christ and united to his sufferings that you also may rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed that's another privilege or another advantage you might say that's the end of your journey but he's talking here about for he says it's time for judgment to begin at the household of God and if it begins with us what will the outcome be 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 now he's borrowing from

Ezekiel chapter 9 and Malachi chapter 4 where we read and there's a combination of the imagery or the words in those passages because talking about fire in those passages and God's coming with fire now fire in this imagery is really something that has two sides to the meaning of it fire as far as the fiery trial is concerned is for the refining of God's people they are being processed for glory but fire is also used in terms of describing the judgment of God for those who obey not the gospel of God and he's putting together in verses 17 and 18 here terms which really pretty much amount to this he's saying here in verse 17 if the judgment begins at the household of God if it's really something where God's people have been refined through the sufferings of their persecution and their difficulties what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God if this suffering of God's people is eventually going to lead forwards onwards to glory to heaven to being with Jesus what about those who don't obey well isn't it obvious that it's a contrast that Peter has in mind and although he doesn't answer the question directly the answer is obvious isn't it if for God's people the sufferings of the journey end up in glory the sufferings that are ahead of those who are lost are indescribably great and that's what he's saying in verse 18 if the righteous is scarcely saved and you mustn't misunderstand what that's saying what he's saying there is if the

righteous through difficulty is saved scarcely means with great difficulty not that God has a difficulty in saving us he's talking about these trials these fiery trials these persecutions that God's people have to go through whatever trials they may be they're scarcely saved they're saved through these difficulties or having to go through them and if there's such suffering you could say this is what he means if there's such suffering in the experience of the righteous what will become of the ungodly and the sinner what must the sufferings of the lost be like if the sufferings of the saved can sometimes be so deep that's what he's saying that's what he's saying to you and to me tonight what must the sufferings of hell be like if the sufferings of the saved on the journey to heaven are really difficult well you know what the answer to that is and you know why he's bringing this out why he's mentioning this what will become of the ungodly and the sinner where are we tonight in relation to eternity do we believe this have we taken careful note of this contrast or remember that the ungodly and the sinner are not just notorious criminals people who have committed some desperately wicked act in public the bible often uses the word wicked just simply to describe those who have not accepted

God and God's offer in the gospel and the saviour Jesus Christ it's not what people think of me tonight that counts it's not what people conclude just because I stand in a pulpit it's not what people say about you it's not the verdict they have over your life it's not what matters it's not unimportant but it's not primarily what's important it's God's opinion isn't it it's God's view God's verdict God's conclusion let's just remind ourselves again of the contrast if judgment begins at the house of God what will the outcome be for those who don't obey the gospel of God and if the righteous is saved through difficulties what will become of the ungodly and the sinner but what's this conclusion the Bible brings hell to us not so that we'll hold it up and at every opportunity just hold it up before people

I'm not saying of course we don't do that I've just done that and beware of any teaching that says it's no longer relevant or that you mustn't mention it hardly at all but when the Bible mentions hell and the death that is involved in hell it's so that we will actually look at the positive so that we will come to look and major on the alternative what he's saying is therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful creator while doing good you see they're suffering for doing good as we saw earlier and he's saying that those who suffer according to God's will this is not an accident he's saying it's not fate it's not an uncontrolled arrangement of their lives it's God's will that has mapped out their lives including the sufferings and the type of sufferings in it even the ones that are deep and difficult and hard to struggle through they're part of God's plan according to

[41 : 30] God's will what are they to do well that's what every one of us must do we have to entrust our souls to a faithful creator not just to a creator but a faithful creator not just one who is all powerful but also one as all powerful who is loving and kind and compassionate and faithful and the word entrust is really significant it's again going back to Peter's experience of Jesus of his sufferings and of the cross and you recall when Jesus came to expire on the cross Luke chapter 23 and verse 46 father into your hands I commit or I entrust my spirit that's exactly the word that Peter is using here entrust commit your souls to him and the word means for

Jesus it meant what it means for us to to entrust in this sense of it the word literally means depositing something precious with someone to look after it for you what's more precious than your soul let them entrust their souls to him really saying to God Lord I want to be a Christian I want to be true as a Christian and I want always to have my soul entrusted to you for safekeeping safekeeping now safekeeping always safekeeping throughout eternity surely that's what you want surely that's what you've done and if not surely that's what you're going to do even tonight let's pray Lord our God we give thanks for your call through your word to us at all times we are called to things which we know we ourselves would not have chosen we would not have chosen you as a saviour we would have not have chosen the righteousness that is in you that you make available to us through the gospel we confess we would not have chosen the sufferings that sometimes are included in the Christian way that we would have chosen another route for ourselves around them and yet you have chosen them for us to go through give us wisdom we pray and grace to strengthen us so that we may be true to you and so that we may know the benefits and the advantages that belong to your people even in such circumstances keep us Lord we pray from being ashamed of you keep us and all that we have had before our minds this evening we might indeed glorify God in the name of Christian hear us we pray for Jesus sake Amen we're going to conclude our service this evening

singing in Psalm 66 some of the verses we quoted from earlier Psalm 66 and sing Psalms the tune is Golden Hill singing verses 8 to 13 those who inhabit distant lands with all regard your ways where morning dawns and evening fades you call forth songs of praise and so we'll sing on through to the end of this

Psalm 60 sorry Psalm 66 at verse 8 I read the wrong psalm there O people's praise our God his praise in song repeat he has preserved our soul alive from slipping kept our feet you tested us God as silver is refined you laid sore burdens on our backs in chains we wear confined and all the way through we'll sing to verse 13 to God's praise O people's praise our God his praise in song repeat he has preserved our soul alive fromologyECT christine conditional letters■i■ our vats and chains we were confined you let us be oppressed we went through flood and fire but yet you brought us to a place which met your hearts desire with all offerings your temple courts

I'll tread I will fulfill my vows to you the promises I made I'll go to the store to my right this evening now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and always amen