

Faith in the Fire

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[0 : 00] Well, let's turn together once again this evening to 1 Peter. We're continuing with our studies in the letter of Peter, the first letter of Peter, and tonight we're looking at verses 6 to 7.

In this you rejoice, 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 honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Now we've noticed how Peter is building up layers of teaching or of doctrine, especially there from verse 3, although we saw some of that in the previous verses as well, when he's mentioning about them being God's chosen people. And then verse 3, we have these great doctrines of God having brought his people to a living hope, how that is united to or anchored in the resurrection of Christ from the dead. And then we saw the inheritance that's mentioned there as that towards which they have been saved or been brought to this living hope, that it's towards or to an inheritance incorruptible and defiled and unfading, which is kept in heaven. And we look as well at God's kept people for that kept inheritance, that they are kept by the power of God through faith, ready to be revealed in the last time. Now you need to take these great doctrines with you into these verses we're looking at this evening, because they're very much bringing us into the personal or circumstances of those people that Peter was writing to, and of many if not most of Christians in the world and every generation. So he's really saying, here are these great layers of teaching, these crucial doctrines, though there are many others in the letter will come to God willing, but those meantime, what he's really saying to them is, now I've told you this, I've brought you to consider who you are, what God has done, and the living hope that you have, take that with you now into your circumstances, and think of those circumstances against the background of these doctrines, or put it another way, take these doctrines with you into your circumstances, and let that really be what informs your thinking and forms your conclusions as to your present situation. And it reminds us that doctrine, as the Bible brings us these great teachings of the faith, none of these doctrines, not even the greatest doctrines of the Bible, are there so that we can leave them independent of our everyday lives. They are there for our everyday living for our everyday use. In other words, when you go to school tomorrow, or when you go to work tomorrow, or whatever it is you're doing tomorrow, you don't do it without taking the resurrection of Christ with you, without your thoughts about being God's chosen people with you, without taking this living hope with you that God has caused to be born again in the experience of those that he has come to bring to that knowledge of himself. So all of these doctrines, it's really a reminder to us that this is really what we need in our everyday life, so that our lives are both garrisoned and also strengthened and nourished through these great doctrines of the faith. And what he's telling us here is that these doctrines are brought into their circumstances, as he writes to them, in their grievous and difficult and heavy circumstances. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials. So two things.

Firstly, the present trials that Christians have in this life, because of course this is applicable to us, as well as it was to those original receivers of Peter's letter. The present trials that Christians experience in this life. And then secondly, the purpose of these trials, as Peter here mentions it, it is so that the tested genuineness of your faith might be found to result in praise and honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Now the word trial there in verse 6, you rejoice, you have been grieved by various trials. The word trials there, in the old translation it was temptations or testing, and that really is what it means. It means trials or testings.

[5 : 09] It's different to actual temptation itself, which comes, of course, from Satan, from the evil one.

And if you go to James, just the previous letter there in the first chapter of James, he really begins his letter there, if you follow it with me, there in verse 2.

You count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds. Almost exactly the same language. For you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness, and so on.

You'll find other places, we'll maybe mention one or two tonight as well, like Romans chapter 8, where we've read just a short time ago of the trials that God's people have in the present sufferings of this life. Well, the trials are really testings, but the element of temptation is never really far away in the thinking of the apostles of the Bible, because when you think about testings that come our way, these are trials and difficulties that come upon all who are Christians, as well as other people in the world, of course. But the devil actually can really just log on to that, if you like, and seek to spoil our peace and bring us a sense of disquiet, and even come to persuade us that perhaps we're not Christians at all, if certain things like that are in our lives.

So the element of temptation is never far away from the testings and the trials that we undergo, but it's on the testings, the trial itself, that Peter is really giving his thoughts at this time, focusing his thoughts. Now the first thing about the trials, the present trials, is that they are various. Notice what he's saying, In this you rejoice, though now for a little time, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials. You may think that's not terribly important, but actually it is, because it means that these trials are of a whole lot of different kinds, and have a very considerable variety to them.

[7 : 20] They're not all of the same kind. Some of these trials are physical, some of them will be mental, some of them psychological, some of them will entail losses, bereavement, sorrow, the things that cause us that sort of pain, worrying about other people, families, different problems like that.

Virtually every kind of circumstance in life can prove, and very often proves to be a trial, or a testing of our faith. That's really what he's focusing on here, the variety of trials that these Christians are experiencing. They are under persecution, they're being mistreated, as we saw earlier, and as we'll see throughout the epistle, but it's a whole variety of trials that that really makes up for them. In other words, no Christian can say that he or she is exempt from any particular trial necessarily. God's people are not exempt from trials that other people have in the world. There's a variety of suffering, a variety of trials, a variety of testings that God himself in his providence brings us into in his wisdom and in relation to our faith. So the first thing is, it's a variety of trials. You have been tried, you're being tried, you're being tested by various trials or testings. The second thing is that this trial or these trials are painful.

They're painful. And Peter really wants to point that out. Of course, those he's writing to know that, but he wants them to know that he appreciates that, that they are going through these difficulties as experiences of pain. He says, in this you rejoice though now for a little while if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials.

And if you go back to the older translation, you've been put to grief is what it says, and the AV uses the word heaviness. And there's that idea in the way that Peter is using this language here.

He's not just generally referring to trials and to various kinds of trials, but he's really taking in the effect of that on their lives. They are in heaviness. And you think of the various trials that you yourself know of even so far in your life as you've experienced them. And there's a great variety of trials and of experiences here before me this evening.

[10 : 02] This congregation itself, given the size of it, will have such a huge variety of experience and of trials and of different kinds of things that cause heaviness and pain. And think of the things we've mentioned, the losses, the psychological blows, the unexpected events, the mental stress, the physical pain, the illnesses, the anxieties. Well, all of these themselves can so readily and so easily be a heaviness upon us. They can be crushing on our spirits. And Peter appreciates that. And the Lord doesn't hide these facts from us when he actually spells out for us in the Bible what being a Christian is about, what the way of following Christ entails. You are in heaviness through various testings.

It's painful. It's painful. They're being weighed down. And that pain sometimes can be very acute.

The Lord doesn't bring us into a living hope so as to avoid trials. Indeed, that's when our living hope really comes, as it were, alive more than anywhere else. That living hope of God's people is a living hope that is itself active, very much active in these trials, these temptations, these testings.

There's no bypass around the trials for a Christian. But there is a lot in the trials with them of the Lord's own power and the Lord's own direction, as we'll see.

So there are various trials, and there are also painful trials. And then he comes to two rather remarkable things he says about them. Firstly, the third thing he says about these present trials, they're various, they're painful, but they're short-lived. He's saying here, though now, for a little while, or for a season, as it is in the AV, for a little while you have been grieved, or being grieved by various trials. Now, how can he say this?

[12 : 22] How can he say this little while is short-lived? How can it be short-lived? What if a person really goes through most of their lives as a Christian and lives to a good old age and knows of many trials and various trials in the course of that life? How can they, how can Peter be saying this is short-lived?

How can he be saying it's short-lived when sometimes it really feels, as your soul sometimes feels crushed under the trials that you're undergoing and the pain that you're experiencing?

How can it be short-lived when it feels so long? Well, of course, it's short-lived against what he's been saying earlier, this inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading that's kept in heaven for you.

It's short-lived in comparison with the eternity that is awaiting these chosen people of God. Or to put it in Paul's word in 2 Corinthians, our light affliction, which is but for a moment, which is but short-lived, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look at the things, not with the things which are seen which are temporal, but at the things which are unseen and eternal.

In other words, Peter is saying, here is what you and I must be exercised about in our trials. They may feel very long, and sometimes, like the psalmist, though weeping may endure for a night, and sometimes the night is not just literally one night in a timely sense, the night of the soul, the night of pain, the night of weeping, the night of bereavement, the night of experiencing the loss, the night of having to adjust to things that you would never want to have in your life, experiences you would never want to undergo, that you would never yourself have chosen.

[14 : 28] Maybe a very, very long night in terms of the pain that's there, and the ongoing agony of soul that seeks and wants to come to terms with it, but finds it so difficult.

Well, Peter is saying, this is one of the things that you must do. You must see it in the light of what's awaiting you. You must see it in the light of the certain inheritance that's being kept, that's reserved in heaven for you.

You must see it in light of the fact that you are being kept with regard to that inheritance. It's a kept inheritance for God's kept people. And when you begin to look at it like that, you actually bring something into your present sufferings that helps you through them.

It doesn't mean they go away. It doesn't mean the pain really recedes that you hardly feel it at all. It means that God is teaching us to look with a long look towards the horizon.

And just to take in very carefully what he has placed on that horizon, this glorious inheritance that is kept for God's people, and the fact that they're kept for it. You know, when you're taking photos, sometimes with a telephoto lens, if it's a long lens, and you're taking that photo, and let's say you're just looking across the minch to the mainland, with the mountains in the background, it's quite a long distance, as you see it with your natural eye, and with a shorter lens, it really just looks pretty much the same.

[15 : 59] But with a longer lens, if you're looking at a ship, let's say just out from the coast there, and you're focusing with your long lens on the ship, you'll notice then, when you've taken the photo, that actually it's brought to the mainland, as it were, much closer to you as well.

Because the telephoto really brings the background further forward in the photograph, though of course not in reality. And what Peter is really saying is that, here is what God's people must seek to do, by his help, to use that telephoto lens of your faith, he's saying, draw that inheritance towards you, bring it into your present experience, let it soak into your soul, that this is what you're being prepared for.

And that these sufferings, these trials, these difficulties, as Paul put it to the Corinthians, are themselves in a mysterious, but God-directed way, they are working for us, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

And that's why Paul, as we read in Romans chapter 8, is able to say, I reckon that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared, to the glory which shall be revealed in us.

That's really the same, as the inheritance, or the occupancy, of that inheritance. What Paul is doing there in Romans 8, is saying, here is my set of balances, my scales.

[17 : 31] And on the one side of the scales, if you think of the old-fashioned balances, I am putting the weight, of these present sufferings. Right? And the balances, go right down.

And just hit the table. But then he says, I'm going to put on the other side, the weight of the glory, that awaits us, that's going to be revealed in us.

The weight of this inheritance, that's kept in heaven for us, in Peter's words. And what happens to the balances? It goes the other way. I reckon that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared, to the glory, to the weight of glory, to the significance of glory, that shall be revealed.

And that's why Peter is able to say, it's for a little while. The little while may feel very long. It may seem so protracted, you wonder at times, will I get through?

Is there light at the end of this tunnel? But there's the light. There's the end of the tunnel, in this inheritance. There it is on the horizon. And by faith, you draw it close to you.

[18 : 41] With your telephoto faith, it brings it into, very much nearer to your, and into your present circumstances. And it helps you to focus, on what this is about.

That it is something, short-lived, and for eternity. But the fourth thing he says, about the present trials, we need to move on quickly, is that, in this you rejoice.

Notice what he's saying there, in verse 6, in this you rejoice. Now how can that be? If it's difficult enough, to see how they can be short-lived, and you can see that, in relation to eternity, in relation to the, everlasting inheritance, yes, of course they're short-lived.

Life in this world, is but just a tiny segment, compared to eternity. But how can he say, that you rejoice, in your present circumstances?

Is this not a contradiction? How can that possibly be? Well, there are various ways of looking at it, but I think, when he says, in this you rejoice, he's not dealing with, the sufferings themselves, because that would be a contradiction.

[19 : 53] But what he's saying is, in this, in this what I've just said to you, in this matter of being born again, to a living hope, in this matter of being united, to Christ's resurrection, in this matter of this inheritance, being kept for you, and you being kept for it, you rejoice.

You're able to actually have, gladness of soul, even in the midst of your sufferings. Don't misunderstand this, because this is not saying that, as you appreciate this, all the sufferings go away, and all the pain go away, and you don't fall into line, with that idea of Christianity, that is really pretty much, all about nice feelings.

Or that idea of Christianity, that really says, God doesn't want you, to have any suffering in your life, and suffering is bad for you. And so you need to go to people, who claim to be apostles, and they send you some fancy stuff, so that God will remove, the sufferings from your life, and make you rich, and really make you happy.

That's not the Christianity, of the Bible. That's a distortion. And it's a harmful distortion. Because this Christianity, of the Bible, as in this passage is saying, yes, sufferings are so difficult, they can be so protracted, they're really testings, of our faith.

But they are nevertheless, circumstances that, enable you to have rejoicing, in what belongs to you.

[21 : 20] Even though presently, the going is hard, and the struggles are tough. Because what belongs to you, is nothing less than what Peter, has described, as you're a Christian.

So you're seeing beyond, that horizon. There's no wrong, with having good feelings. But that's not, what Christianity, consists of primarily. Because even, the sufferings, and the heaviness, this being grieved, by the trials, that has its positive emphasis, in God's hands.

And, it reminds us too, you see that, what must regulate, our souls, what must regulate, our thinking, our attitude, and our conclusions, is not our feelings.

And it's not, how we feel about certain things, whether they are painful, or otherwise. What must regulate, my mind, and your mind, as Christians, is God's truth.

It's truth, that regulates the mind. And that means that, if you take the question, if you widen this out, let's just widen it out, to the question, that you often, are confronted with.

[22 : 34] How can God, be a God of love, when so much suffering, exists in the world? When he could, people will say, change that in an instance, but he chooses not to.

How can you say to me, that he's a God of love? You can take it out, with the sufferings, of the Christian, to the sufferings, of the world, to everybody, to the circumstances, of human life, in its width, and generality.

How can God, be a God of love? Well, of course, that needs far more, than we're able, to give it of an answer, this evening. But let me say this, one thing, that's absolutely crucial, in answering it is, to say, that all depends, on what you mean, by love.

Because, if you think, that God's love, is just simply, a soft, cushy feeling, then you're, really mistaken, because God's love, includes, the way he handles, suffering for his people, and for the benefit, of his people.

And in, C.S. Lewis, in his, great book, *The Problem of Pain*, this is what he says, the problem, of reconciling, human suffering, with the existence, of a God, who loves, is only, insoluble, so long, as we attach, a trivial meaning, to the word love, and look on things, as if man, were the center of them.

[24 : 06] Man is not the center. Man does not exist, for the sake of man, God does not exist, for the sake of man, man does not exist, for his own sake. Thou hast created, all things, and for thy pleasure, they are, and were created, he quotes.

And he says this, we were made, not primarily, that we may love God, though we were made, for that too, but that God, may love us, that we may, become objects, in which the divine love, may rest, well pleased.

Now that's, a transforming thought, I suggest. We, were not made, he says, not primarily, were made, not primarily, that we may love God, but, so that God, may love us.

And if you take that, with you, into the sufferings, of God's people, the issue then is, how much more, can I love God, through this? It's not, how much more, can I love God, through this?

How much can, these circumstances, enable me? Or how can I, love God more, through, or because of, these circumstances? That's not the question. Or not the main question, although that's not, a question detached from it.

[25 : 26] The main question is, how can I experience, more of the love, of God, through this? How can I experience, the love of God, towards me?

In these circumstances, because that's really, what God is about. God is about, loving his people. And even in these, trying circumstances, as Peter is saying to them, they are to rejoice, because, they are, under the love, and the provision of God.

And the sufferings, that they are enduring, the sufferings, they're experiencing, is not contrary, to that love. It's part of, it's outworking. It's part of, God's wisdom, dealing with them, and preparing them, for the inheritance, that's kept for them.

In other words, they are being kept, even by means, at times, of these sufferings, as God uses them, in their lives. Now, let's put that together, the present trials.

There are various trials, there are painful trials, there are short-lived trials, but there are trials, in the midst of which, they can rejoice, in what God, has already provided, for them, and what they are, and who they are, as God, gives them to look forward, to that horizon.

[26 : 49] The present trials, the purpose then, of these trials, let me see if I can do this, in a few minutes. He says, if necessary. In this you rejoice, though, now for a little while, if necessary.

And he's not saying, if necessary, in a way that questions, whether or not, it's necessary. You mustn't think that, if here means, well, maybe they're necessary, and maybe they're not. It really means, they are necessary.

They are necessary. They are indispensable, in God's dealings, with his people, and God's preparing them, for this inheritance. Now, of course, that's one of the questions, isn't it, that comes up, when we're experiencing, trial and pain, and suffering, as Christians, we often, perhaps, find these questions, such as, why, not so much, maybe why it's necessary, but why, this particular one, is necessary, and why should it be, this hard, and why should I, have to go through this, when it appears, that others don't, as Christians, why?

Well, here is Peter saying, they are necessary, because, God, in his wisdom, measures, whatever it is, we have to experience, in this life, towards this inheritance.

John Owen, has a great illustration, one of his writings, where he compares, the exact same, experience of suffering, in the person, who trusts in God, and in a person, who dismisses God, and doesn't live by faith, in God at all.

[28 : 23] Now he says, they are exactly, the same set of circumstances, if you imagine that. But what's the difference? Well, the difference he says, is this, in the person, who is a believer, and trusting in God, these sufferings, are like a surgeon, using them as bandages, dealing with them, in their own needs, and in their soul, so that eventually, and ultimately, they come out from them,

made whole, absolutely, healthy, spiritually, morally, when they are ready, to go to glory.

But he says, take the other person. The same set of circumstances, the same sufferings, but in that case, he says, it's like an executioner, just putting the bandage, around the head, of the person, about to be executed, and leading them, out of the scaffold.

That's a graphic illustration, but think of it this way, the sufferings, of God's people, are preparing them, for a glorious, peaceful, inheritance with Christ.

The same sufferings, in someone, who dismisses God, are a foretaste of hell. They are just, the precursor, the preparation, for unending suffering, in a lost eternity.

See the difference. Now how vital it is, for me tonight, and for you, to have faith in Christ. To have faith, that realizes, that though we don't understand, all our sufferings, or anything like it, we understand, that God is using them.

[30 : 09] That they are necessary, in the experience of Christians, as God uses them. That they have an outcome, of their own, as God uses them, in the purifying of life.

In the purifying, of that Christian life. They are necessary, he says. And then he brings in, this wonderful imagery, of the crucible, that vessel, in the old days, where you had, metals actually put to the test, and purified.

How do you actually, purify gold, in the days that Peter, was living anyway? And sometimes, of course, it's still the same, essentially. You put it into a vessel, and you heat it. And you heat it, and you go on heating it, until all, the impurities, the dross, is burned off.

And you're left, with nothing but, the pure gold. Peter is saying, that in a sense, spiritually, is what God is doing, in terms of, these sufferings, of his people, these trials, this heaviness, this grievous, experience, that you're going through.

So that the tested, genuineness of your faith, or your faith, will be found, to be genuine. Though it is tested, by fire, as gold, may be found, to result in praise, and honor, and glory, and honor, at the revelation, of Jesus Christ.

[31 : 31] Think just for example, of Job. A man in the Old Testament, who suffered, more than anybody else, who's brought before us, in the teaching of the Bible. And in chapter 23, of Job, he says, Today is my complaint bitter.

My hand is heavy, on account of my groaning. Oh, that I knew, where I might find him, that's God, that I might come to his seat, I would lay my case before him, and fill my mouth, with arguments. He's seeing, seeking God, in the midst of his troubles. He lost, members of his family, he lost his livelihood, he lost his health, virtually everything he had, in terms of this life, he lost.

And this is now, where he's searching for God, and searching for meaning, searching for an answer, and this heaviness, that's come upon him. And of course, we know from the early part of Job, that the devil's strategy, as he's tacked on to, these circumstances, is, as indeed came through, the mouth of Job's wife, curse God, and die.

In other words, she was saying to him, as an instrument of the devil, surely you're not going to go on, trusting in this God of yours, now. Surely your circumstances mean, you're just going to be done with this.

[32 : 49] Surely you're going to say to God, I can't be bothered with this anymore, I don't want any more of you. And in that same chapter 23, Job goes on, and comes to say this, But he knows the way that I take, and when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold.

My foot has held fast to his steps, I have kept his way, and have not turned aside. I have not departed from the commandment of his lips. I have treasured the words of his mouth, more than my portion of food.

Far from capitulating to the devil, and his plan, and his strategy, he actually comes to the opposite, to realize that God knows what he's doing.

Even if he doesn't. And at the end of the process, he will be a pure believer, and God will have put him through the tests, whereby his faith is being refined.

And you can find examples of that elsewhere as well. There are plants and trees in nature that are given the name of pyrophytic plants, or trees, and that really means that they cast their seeds when a fire breaks out, and through intense heat, they're usually relatives of pine trees, or eucalyptus trees as well, I think some of them, and all, but what happens is this, that the cones, or the pods containing the seeds, contain a very heavy resin rounded, there's a very heavy resin round the pod that contains the seeds, and it requires the intense heat of a fire to burst that open so that the seeds

are scattered.

[34 : 42] And you can actually see photos, if you Google this, you'll see it, where you'll find lush, lush ground, or long, a large field with lush green growth, and sticking out of it are these long like telegraph poles, blackened, and that's the original trees that were burnt in the fire.

And when they were burnt in the fire, bang, the pods opened and seeds were scattered for new growth. And really Peter is saying, essentially spiritually, that's in a sense what happens, and what's happening to these people, he's writing to, the tested genuineness of their faith, as they are being put through these tests.

So it's just like that pod that's ready for scattering its seeds. And sometimes in this world, you'll find film of this as well, it may take something like 10 or more years.

And these pods are just lined, they're closed. And nothing's happening. And then a fire breaks out. And as the fire envelops that tree, bang goes the pod and the seeds are scattered.

And the fires of our testings in this life can be very heated, very difficult to contend with, very difficult to endure.

[36 : 10] But we're being assured that the successful outcome of it is this, that this genuine faith, tested and found to be genuine, may be found to result in praise and honor, glory and honor, at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

And I think he means by that both, well, primarily, praise, glory, and honor to Christ himself. As well as being honor and glory to us who are being purified by the fires of testing in this life.

If you're anywhere in the vicinity of Perth, you've probably, most of you maybe have been here before, there's a factory there that produces caithness, glass, paperweights particularly.

There are other objects as well, but they're mostly paperweights. And when you get there, you can actually go on a tour of the factory there, and you're introduced, first of all, to where the initial work is being done, where you find these skillful workers of glass and a long, long pole.

They take a blob of glass that's just molten on the end of their pole, having had it in the fire, they take it out of the fire, and then they start working on it. They plunge it into water. They actually rub it through with various cloths and kinds of paper to bring it into shape.

[37 : 32] They actually put wonderful other colors into it at times, and then they put it back in the fire, and out it comes again. And the process then is really all the way through until you get closer to where the showroom is.

And when you get to the showroom, you'll find all these wonderful polished objects, these beautiful glass paperweights with all these striking colors, and the lights from the shelves as they're lit up.

It's just absolutely stunning. And you say to yourself, isn't that really what I saw being put into the fire? Can it be the same thing? Yes, it is.

Because that's how it is with God's people, with the testing that God puts them through. this world is the workshop. The showroom is upstairs.

But you don't understand the showroom until you first understand the workshop. And the workshop contains the testings that lead to the showroom where the final glorified people of God shine most perfectly on the glass shelves of heaven, if you like.

[38 : 55] Now then, am I a Christian tonight? Am I in Christ tonight? Am I amongst these blessed people who have suffering working for them?

Am I really in a position of having this living hope in the midst of my present trials? Am I the kind of person who through faith is able to draw the horizon of eternity near me and say, that gives me a measure of comfort?

Are you in Christ tonight? Are you born again to a living hope? Do you have this prospect that after this world is done, you'll be found in God's showroom?

There's another place downstairs as well. Not a nice place. Not a place you ever want to go to. It's the opposite of the showroom.

It's all to do with ugliness and pain and torment and the company of devils and blasphemous outrage against God.

[40 : 14] It's what the Bible calls hell. And it's important to mention it and never to leave it out of our thoughts or our preaching.

But it's also important to mention it in comparison to heaven. Because what we as preachers of the gospel urge you is not so much to avoid hell but to gain heaven.

Because if you set your heart on heaven you will not end up in hell. You'll be a splendid shining object and trophy of God's grace for all eternity.

Let's pray. Lord our God we pray that as we know from your word these great issues of life and death and as we learn of how you deal with your people even through the sufferings that you bring into their providence we pray gracious one that each of us who knows of these elements of the gospel will be found tonight in a right relationship with you.

Deal with us Lord in your patience and kindness we pray. Help us we pray in the stubbornness of our heart to accept your will and to accept that your will be done.

[41 : 40] Grant that we may know that as we are assured of the truth of your word so grant that we may be assured of our place in your kingdom. Hear us we pray for Jesus' sake.

Amen. Well we'll conclude our service this evening singing in Psalm number 66.

Psalm number 66. We're singing verses 8 to 13 on the tune of Zurich. That's on page 83.

O people's trust praise our God his praise and song repeat he has preserved our soul alive from slipping kept our feet. Psalm 66 verses 8 through to 13 to God's praise.

Amen. O people's praise our God his praise and song repeat he has preserved our soul alive from slipping kept our feet you tested us O God as silver is refined you laid sore burdens on our backs in 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 our hearts desire with hope and all offerings your temple courts

[44 : 04] I'll tread I will fulfill my vows to you the promises I made I'll go to the main door after the benediction 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 ever more Amen