

# Moving Forward

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[ 0 : 00 ]     Go ahead and take your Bibles, turn to 1 Peter chapter 5. We're going to get there in a few minutes. Before we do this, this is the worst illustration I've ever decided on.

I'm regretting this already. Good night. I want to give you a few disclaimers before we get started. First of all, I enjoy preaching a lot more than I enjoy leading music. I got my worst grade in Bible college was congregational song leading.

I don't know how I got into this, but I am very grateful for the opportunity to preach. In the last two weeks, Trent has shared his pulpit more than my dad has in two decades.

I'm honored that I would have the opportunity. I love preaching. I love the opportunity to bring God's Word to you. I love it when I get a topic that I have to preach. It's my favorite.

I'm just kidding. Apparently, grief is my topic always now. Be careful what ministry you get into. In reality, I do want to give you a few disclaimers.

[ 1 : 11 ]     All grief is different. We can talk about the loss of a loved one and that kind of grief, but there's lots of grief. There's lots of grief that people deal with.

We had friends today who we just heard they lost their home in a fire. All their memories, all their photos, all those kind of things. They're going to grieve the loss of that. There are people who have lost jobs, lost opportunities, lost relationships, failed marriages, different things.

I mean, there's so many things that can cause grief in our life. One of the hardest times in my life, personally, about, I guess it was maybe 11, 12 years ago, I was working in a church.

And that is what I wanted to do my whole life. When I was 12 years old, I surrendered to preach. And that was like what I was geared up for from the time I was 12. I knew I was going to go to Bible college. I knew I was going to go be part of a church.

And that's what I was going to do with my life. That's what everybody wanted me to do with my life. Like I said, my dad, that's what he had for me. And I had a lot of good people who put a lot of time and energy into me, helped me learn how to preach and helped me grow and taught me a lot of things.

[ 2 : 20 ]     And then just like all of a sudden, that was gone. I was working in that church, and they didn't have money to keep me working in that church. And they were going in a different direction.

And I had two little kids and a brand new house that means you own a mortgage. And the bank didn't care that I no longer had that job.

They still wanted their payments. Every month, I had a little girl in preschool, had no idea how I was going to pay for it. And for the first time since I was 12, I had no idea what I was going to do.

I had no clue. What was next? My dad was like, hey, I can call some people. And I was like, please don't. I was like, the last thing I need right now is to just jump into another ministry or anything like that.

I mean, I was confused. I was hurt. I didn't know what was going on. I didn't know at the time, but I was grieving. It was an opportunity, a loss of opportunity, a loss of ministry, whatever it was.

[ 3 : 22 ] Grief is very, very different. Everyone's grief is different. I lost two grandfathers, one before I was born, and one that I was very, very close to. The way I grieved them was totally different.

I can come up to you. Maybe you've lost a father-in-law and say, hey, I know what you're going through. I don't know what you're going through. Every body is different. Every relationship is different. Every loss is different. The way they passed away is different.

All grief is completely and totally different. So to take one message and try to heal your pain is not going to work. There's nothing that I can say tonight that will fix all the problems, for lack of a better terminology.

One sermon, one statement, it's not going to fix it. That's one reason why a lot of people are afraid to talk to you when you're hurting. Because they don't know what to say. Because there is nothing to say, really, that's just going to fix it. I wish there was.

I wish I could come up to you and say the perfect thing, and you feel better. That's almost an impossibility. So I'm going to do my best to help you tonight from God's Word.

[ 4 : 24 ] I want God's Word to help you, and I believe it will. So no matter where you're at, what you're dealing with, that's what I want to do. I love the title here, Moving Forward.

I can tell you this as a matter of fact. God wants you to move forward. I can tell you with 100% confidence God has a plan for your life. The teenagers are like sitting up, because that's what I've said to them, like over and over and over again.

I mean, I was just drilling it in their head. God has a plan for your life. It's called your destiny. That's what we talked about. All right? And He has a plan for you. He has big things for you, huge things for you.

I sound like Joel Osteen right now. It's like, you have favor. God likes you.

I'm sorry. I know God has a big plan for your life. I know that. I don't know what you've gone through. I don't know how you've been hurt.

[ 5 : 24 ] I don't know who you've lost in your life. I don't know the pain that you're dealing with. I don't know what mistakes you've made. I do know God has a plan for you.

I know it. I can say that with incredible confidence. And God wants you to move forward. He wants you to move forward. You know, some people will say move on.

I don't like it. It's something they talk about in Grief Share. We don't say move on. Because that's almost like you ignore that something happened. Or you just kind of bury it. You're still hurting, but you just keep plugging away.

And you just shoulder it. And you say, I'm just going to move on. That's not what I'm talking about. Move forward is better. You know, the Bible never says move on. But it does say go forward. In Exodus chapter 14, God commanded Moses to tell the children of Israel, go forward.

And let me tell you, it was in a really, really good situation as well. They had like the greatest army on the planet right behind them. And the Red Sea right in front of them. And God says, hey, go tell your people to go forward.

[ 6 : 28 ] It's like, that's a great idea. It was a great idea, honestly. But that could be like the theme of your Christian life. Go forward. I can tell you something else.

You're either moving forward in the Christian life, or you're moving backwards. There's no neutral. There's no parking. There's nowhere to stop. You're either growing or you're dying. That's all there is to it.

There is no middle ground on this. And it is so easy to get stuck. But God tells you, go forward. Keep moving forward.

That's the Bible way. Some of you are wondering, what is this? This is the 22-volume set of tonight's sermon.

So I hope you're comfortable. I'm just kidding. This is Bryce's backpack. All right? And it smells a little funny. Seriously. I mean... Bryce is in a hybrid school, which we love.

[ 7 : 27 ] There's all kinds of benefits to it. But he does school at home some days, and at school some days. So, you know, and you have to have your books, whether you're at home or at the classroom. So he has this 60-pound monstrosity with every book, probably some smelly socks, and the kitchen sink in it.

So there's lots of benefits to the hybrid model, but I think spinal health is not one of them. And... You know, it would be silly for me to keep preaching up here with this on, honestly, because it's hot already, and it's just not a good idea.

But, you know, I'm trying to run. Another bad idea. And you can ask Abby. I hate it. I hate every step of it, every second of it. I hate carrying anything.

I can't even carry a bottle of water if I run. Like, I mean, I'm carrying like 60 extra pounds. I don't need any other ounces in my hands. But it'd be crazy for me to get on the Greenway with my 60-pound pack and decide that I'm going to try to jog.

Now, some people, like Josh Chris, are insane and do stuff like that. They need help. But that would be insane. It would be crazy. Like, you don't work like that.

[ 8 : 42 ] You don't run like that. You don't go to a ball game. You know, Bryce wouldn't go to his baseball practice and have his backpack on and be like, you know, school is really tough and I got a lot to do next week so I'm just going to keep this.

You know, it'd be pretty goofy. It wouldn't take too long before he's like on his back like a turtle. You know, just, I would pay to see this. You don't operate with these kind of weights.

You don't move forward in the Christian life with weights that you weren't intended to carry. Some of you are carrying burdens that God did not intend for you to try to carry.

To try to shoulder. You're trying to live this Christian life. You're trying to go forward, but you can't. It's because you're carrying a very heavy load.

It may not be math books and English books in the kitchen sink. It may be grief.

[ 9 : 53 ] It may be hurt. What someone has done to you in the past. It may be guilt. guilt. Some things that you have done and you just can't let go of them.

It may be a diagnosis or it may be a disability. I'm not sure what it is that you are carrying the burden of and you just need to lay it down.

It's time to lay it down. If you're going to go forward in the Gospel, there's some things that you have to learn to lay down. And that's what I hope to help you with tonight.

1 Peter 5 We'll read verse 7. Casting all your care upon Him for He careth for you.

Very simple verse. A very simple outline that I want to bring to you.

[ 11 : 00 ] I hope it will be a help to you. Again, I want you to know that I'm not going to be able to say anything that's just going to fix all your problems. And I may say some things that you might think are trite or impossible even.

You may not be ready for those. That's something that we talk about in Grief Share. It's like there's some things that people say to you that you think that might help me one day. But I'm not ready for that now.

I have a handful of minutes to preach and I hope that you can understand that with me. That I might say something that you're not really ready for and I'm not in any way trying to be hurtful or trite when I say it.

But I want to help you know that there is help. That there is a place that you can go. There's a person you can go to where you can lay your burdens down. Where you can set your cares down and you don't have to carry them alone.

Let's pray. God, I pray that you'll help me tonight very quickly in the time that I have left to bring your word to these people and be a help to them. Help me to focus my thoughts. I love you. I ask this in your name. Amen.

[ 12 : 04 ] We're just going to look at this one verse very simply, very quickly. I've actually alliterated the outline. That's for you, Greg. Number one, the action prescribed.

There's an action that's prescribed here. Casting. Cast all your cares on Him for He careth for you. This is a choice you have to make.

This is a decision. This is an action that you take. There are some things that you did not have a choice about. You did not have a choice about the family you were born into or some of the things that are involved in your life.

There are some people who have hurt you that you had no choice about. There are things that you had no choice. There are some weights that you're carrying that you had no choice about them. You didn't get to choose when that person died.

You didn't get to choose the struggles that you faced. You didn't get to choose the cancer. You didn't get to choose the miscarriage. You didn't get to choose these things.

[ 13 : 07 ] And you carry that. But you can choose to cast it at the feet of Jesus. You can choose to lay that down.

So why wouldn't people do that? Why wouldn't people do that? Let me give you just a few reasons. Number one, denial. I'm fine. I got this. I'm okay.

I am fine. I was listening to a blog one time and that was like the four letter F word that was banned from their house.

Hopefully the other one too. But that one was the one that was banned from their house. Like, hey, how was your day? Fine. It's like a conversation killer. Or, are we okay? Yeah, we're fine. And it's like, no, that's not, we're not fine.

Like, typically when someone says that, we're not fine. But maybe you're just shouldering that load and you're like, I'm okay. I got this. I'm fine. And you're in denial.

[ 14 : 05 ] Maybe it's, maybe it's despair. I, nothing can help. I have to carry this because there's no hope. There is no, there is no way out. There is no real healing.

I'm done. I mean, this is like, this is my burden to bear. There is no hope. And there's just, there's just despair. There. And then maybe it's become your identity.

Maybe it's become part of who you are. That, that, that weight that you're carrying. It's just, it's what you have, it's what you have to talk about. It's what you have to, to, to kind of cling to.

It really has made you, it really defines you now. I am depressed. I am a widow. I am divorced.

I am whatever it might be. And you've, you've made that your identity. Paul David Tripp, in one of the, the Greek shared videos, was talking about this. And he was very candid about the fact that, his hero, his dad, who was his, his hero in the faith really.

[ 15 : 08 ] And, and just a, you know, he, he loved him obviously. He was his dad. And he thought the world of him. And he found out that he was living this double life, of real sin, and, and, and, and immorality.

And, and, and, and he said that then he, he, you know, he, he always prayed and hoped that, that eventually they would be reconciled, and things would be made right. And he passed away. And he was like, there's no hope of that ever being reconciled.

And he said, I just wore that. He said, I just became who I was. And every conversation, he says, and I, you know, every thought that I had really was just consumed with the fact that he was like this, he was, he was so bitter about it.

He was so angry about it. He was a victim of it. And he said, I just, it became my identity. And it became who I am. And he said, I had to remind myself that that's not who I am. My life is not defined by that incident.

My life is not defined by that hurt, or that trauma, or that, that pain. My life is defined by Christ. He said, and I had to change the way I looked at things. I am not depressed. I am a child of God, made in His image, saved by His Son, who is dealing with depression.

[16:12] And he said, I had to even change the way I talked about it, because it's not my identity. So maybe you're not casting down your burden, because it's become really who you are, and you're just holding on to that as part of your identity. And along those lines, maybe it's just fear.

You don't want to cast it down because you're afraid. I'm afraid to heal, because if I heal, then I'm no longer hurting for that person. Maybe their memory will wane.

Maybe that bond that we had will be further separated if I heal. If I move forward. If I don't feel the pain every day, then maybe I'm losing them more.

And you're afraid of that. It's a feeling that people deal with often. Maybe you're afraid to forgive, because you're afraid if I forgive, then who's going to hold them accountable?

Who's going to punish them? Who's going to hurt them? Who's going to pay them back if I forgive? I have to bear this. I have to carry this anger, because they have to pay. But in reality, you're the one paying.

[17:16] And they're still hurting you. Maybe you're afraid to love again, because if you choose to love, then you might lose again. That's what Ziegler said.

If grief is the final payment of the choice we make to love someone, and you say, I just don't want to get too close to anybody, because the last time I was really close to somebody, then they died, and it hurt so bad, and I don't want to hurt again.

Maybe you're afraid to move forward just because being stuck is easier. You know what's here, because you've been here for a while, and you don't know what's out there.

You don't know what's next, and it's easier just to be stuck. Can I just encourage you? The Bible says, casting all your cares upon Him.

Just lay it down. You were not intended to carry that weight. Number two, the amount possible. How much did He say to cast at Jesus' feet?

[18:20] How much did He say to lay down? All your cares. There is nothing too small. There's nothing too big. There's nothing that's insignificant. There's nothing that's too personal, or too sinful, or too ugly, or too bad.

Jesus says, cast all your cares. Casting all your cares upon Him, for He careth for you. Let me move on.

Number three, because this is really where I wanted to get to. the able person. There's something to be said about comforting one another.

And it is a command from God. That with the comfort that you're comforted with, the same you're supposed to comfort others with. I didn't say that exactly right, because it says the word comfort seven times in one verse.

It is... But there's something to be said. That's what I love about the body of Christ. That's what I love. I love that about church. Like, you don't have to do this alone, regardless.

[19:29] Alright? That's what we're here for, as a church. We are to forbear. We are to get under the load with you, and help you. You know, that's one thing I love about grief share.

Especially like, when most of our grief share groups have been like our church. And I really do love that, because that's really what we intended for. I would want anybody in the community to come and be part of it. But in reality, I wanted a ministry to help our church, and our people.

And I wanted us to get in a circle, and say, hey, we're here. We're listening. We're helping. We want to help you shoulder that burden. But let me tell you something. I am not enough. I can't carry.

I can't heal you. I cannot alleviate your pain. I don't know the words to say. I'm not going to always get it right. I might let you down.

Alright? So there's something to be said about us helping each other, and we need to do that. But in reality, there's only one that is truly able. Casting all your cares upon Him.

[ 20 : 35 ] Isn't that good? Isn't that good? Upon who? Upon the Lord. The God of heaven. The Bible says that He is the wonderful counselor and the prince of peace in Isaiah 9.6.

He's the healer in Jeremiah 14.17. He's the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. I love that verse. 2 Corinthians 1.3. The God of all comfort.

When Jesus was going to leave, and His disciples were so worried and so nervous, and so, I mean, they had just given their lives to this man and spent all this time with him, and He says, hey, I'm going away.

And they're like, uh-uh. They're like, no, where are you going? We want to go. He says, I can't. You know, where I'm going, you can't go. And then, He tells them about it.

He's going to prepare a place for them. But then He says, look, I am not going to leave you comfortless. I am going to send a Comforter. The Holy Spirit of God, a member of the Godhead, God Almighty, the God, says His name is Comforter.

[ 21 : 47 ] And one of the great purposes that He was sent to this earth to indwell in you is to comfort you. Jesus Christ was our High Priest touched with the feelings of our infirmities.

Let me just tell you something. God already knows all things. He knows what you're going through. He knows how bad you're hurting. He knows what you're feeling.

He knows all things. But He wanted to really prove it to you. He wanted you to know that He knows. And so you know what He did? He was touched with the feelings of our infirmities.

He took on flesh. And He walked in this dirty world that you walk in. He knows what it's like to lose a friend and to weep.

He knows what it's like to be falsely accused. He knows what it's like to be lied about. He knows what it's like to be betrayed. He knows what it's like to be lonely. He came into His own. His own received Him not.

[ 22 : 53 ] He knows what it's like. Listen, He knows what it's like to question the path ahead. I have a hard time even wrapping my head around that one.

He never sinned, but He became sin for us. He knows that burden.

He shouldered the sins of the world. You think that you're carrying a heavy load of guilt? He carried the whole guilt of the world, past, present, and future, on Him.

The entire wrath of God, on Him. He knows. He knows what you're going through. And let me tell you something. He's able. He is the able person.

You cast your cares upon Him, and He will never let you down. He is able to heal. He is able to help. He is the God of all comfort.

[ 23 : 53 ] Quickly, number four. The affection provided. I mean, if it wasn't just enough that it was Him, we're casting all our cares upon Him, it says, because He careth for you.

He loves you. You might be sitting there, and you have the pain of your past, the loss that you've dealt with, and you're thinking, nobody loves me.

God loves you. I really believe that there's a church here that loves you. But I know God loves you. I mean, He loves you.

He loves you so much, He says, whatever you're carrying, just put it on me. The load that you have, just put it on me. He has huge plans for you.

You say, no, you don't understand. You don't know what I've done or what I've been through. You don't get it. There's no way. I may not know your story, but I do know your God.

[ 25 : 07 ] And He is a God that specializes in these situations. Have you ever heard of Moses, the murderer, or Rahab, the harlot, or David, the adulterer, Jonah, the runner, Peter, the denier, Paul, the persecutor?

Like you would think, there's no way God could use anybody after this junk. But God specializes in taking broken things and using them in a big way.

Can I tell you something? That's why He died on the cross. The cross changes everything.

That's how we can have a passage of Scripture that goes through all of the bad things that we were. That we were, but now, the cross changes everything.

We're justified. We're made right. Are you grieving the death of a loved one? It is the cross that gives us hope of eternal life. Are you shackled with the guilt of your past?

[ 26 : 09 ] It is Calvary that covers it all. Are you holding on to past hurt? The cross is our standard for forgiveness. It's the cross that is our standard for forgiveness.

How are you forgiven? It's like forgiving one another. Forgiving one another. Why? Because God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you. It's the cross that becomes our standard for forgiveness.

Did you deserve it? No. Do they deserve it? No. But the cross is our standard for forgiveness and for moving on, for moving forward. I love the Pilgrim's Progress.

If you know the story, Christian sets off with a heavy load. I mean, a heavy burden. That's really why he set off. He's like, I have this burden. I don't know what to do about it.

He says, I'm just going to... He's carrying this load. And he gets to this hill. And he comes to the cross.

[ 27 : 16 ] And the load rolls off into a chasm. And he says this, Thus far did I come laden with my sin, nor could aught ease the grief that I was in.

Till I came hither, what place is this? Must here be the beginning of my bliss. Must hear the burden fall off my back. Must hear the strings that bound it to me crack.

Blessed cross, blessed sepulcher, blessed rather be. The man that there was put to shame for me. Isn't that beautiful? The cross changes everything.

I don't know what weight you're carrying. I don't know what burden is keeping you from moving forward, but I do know that you can lay it down. You can cast all your cares on Him. He cares for you.

Maybe you're saying, I don't know what that looks like. I don't know what that means. I don't know how to do that. Well, if we back up in the passage just a little bit, very quickly. The Bible says in verse 6, Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time.

[ 28 : 26 ] It really starts with a place of humility. It's where you are honest with yourself and you say, I can't do this. I can't carry this alone. And then you reach a place of absolute trust under the mighty hand of God.

Where you say, I can't carry this, but He can. And you come to Him knowing this is not my load to bear. I'm going to give this.

I'm going to cast this to Jesus. This isn't something that I wish this was something that you could just do and it was done and you just keep moving forward.

Sometimes this is something that on a daily basis you have to wake up and you have to say, look, I've been trying to carry that again. I've been putting the bag back on. I've been shouldering the weight again. I need to go to Jesus and I need to say, this isn't mine.

I can't handle this. I can't carry this. I need you to help me shoulder this weight. I'd be remiss if I didn't acknowledge that there may be someone in this room who is legitimately carrying the guilt of your sin.

[ 29 : 37 ] Right now, you are under the full weight of the wrath of God. You are condemned already. You are dead in your trespasses and sin.

Can I tell you, my friend, Christ died for you. He loved you so much. The cross can change that. That burden of guilt and shame and sin that you are carrying can fall off at the cross.

He died. He became sin for you who knew no sin that you might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Listen, He wants to carry that guilt and that sin for you.

You can be saved today. You can come to the cross and you can lay that sin debt, that true guilt down. I would say, and I know most of you, you are saved.

You can't walk long in this dirty world without getting mud on your shoes, without picking up junk. It's just part of living in a broken world. People you love are going to pass away.

[ 30 : 49 ] That's the curse of sin. People are going to do you wrong. That's sin. You're going to be hurt. It's just, that's life.

But you do not have to carry that burden. If you're going to move forward, you need to learn casting all your care upon Him for He careth for you.

God, I love You. I thank You for Your goodness to us, Lord. You are such a good and a loving God. I want to thank You for the cross that changes everything.

every weight, every burden, every pain, every hurt, it can all be laid at the cross.

And the cross is enough. You are enough. You are able to shoulder what we can't. God, I pray that You'll help individuals in this room who want to move forward but they feel so stuck.

[ 31 : 47 ] I pray that You'll help them today to make some decisions, to bring it to You. Maybe to ask a friend next to them to pray with them right now. Help them to cast their care on You.

Help them to know. Help them to really know that they're not alone, that You care for them, that You love them. I ask this in Your name. Amen.