

Christ's Servant Sufferers (Part 1)

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Preacher: Jeff Jackson

[0 : 00] All right, if you'll turn in your Bibles, friends, to 1 Peter. The title of my message for this morning, Christ's Servant Sufferers.

Christ's Servant Sufferers. I decided to put it in that order because I wanted to emphasize the fact that we are servants to Jesus. And because we are servants to Jesus, as we seek to be faithful, we will suffer for his sake.

That is our calling as Christians and something that we need to be teaching new Christians as they come to Christ. As they serve him faithfully and are zealous for him in the Lord, we will find that suffering will follow.

Suffering will follow. Before we turn to our passage for this morning in 1 Peter, I want to benefit from looking at yet another instructive and formative incident in Peter's relationship with Jesus.

We've done that several times working our way through 1 Peter. We've gone back into the Gospels to look at Peter's life, something that happened between him and Jesus, that I believe and other commentators believe was formative for how he wrote in this particular letter to Christians who were being persecuted.

[1 : 22] Christians who were suffering under some type of unfair or unjust persecution or situation in their life because they were trying to follow Jesus.

Because even though there are times in our book where Peter is clearly writing about the fact that because we are sinners, because we stumble in sin, because we strive against sin, there are times when we're going to fall short in our walk with the Lord Jesus.

God knows that. We never say that it's okay for us to sin, but we recognize that we have a gracious king ready to forgive, ready to move us forward.

And Peter is a great example of that, isn't he? In the denials that we are so familiar with in his life and how God used him. I'm green. Not recording.

We're working on our issues, aren't we? Just give me a thumbs up if we go along the way. Yeah, I'm just going to keep rolling. So let me invite you to turn, if you would, to John chapter 13, the Gospel of John.

[2 : 31] And we'll begin in verse 1, setting the stage, some Peter's actual life walk situation with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, before the feast of the Passover, Jesus, knowing that his hour had come, that he would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

During supper, the devil, having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray him. Now, for those of you who are coming on Wednesday night, will you take note of that? The devil, putting into his heart. That would be our mind. Everything that encompasses our mind, will, and emotions. Putting into his heart to betray him.

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and he had come forth from God, and was going back to God, got up from supper, and laid aside his garments, and taking a towel, he girded himself.

[3 : 42] So that's four verses of introductory material, trying to lay the groundwork for what Jesus is thinking, and what Jesus' priorities are, as he vows to take the towel and the water to wash the feet of his disciples.

So don't skip over those first four verses. It tells us a lot about the heart and perspective of our Lord, as he moves into this situation. So verse five then, Then Jesus poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded.

So the picture is, Jesus has removed his outer garments, and he has girded himself with a towel, a large towel, and he's kneeling down in front of the disciples, and one by one, they are coming forward, and he is using this basin of water to take the water, and wash their feet, and then dry their feet for them, and then the next one will come.

So he's on his knees before the disciples, doing this act that only servants, the lowest household servants, would perform. So he came to Simon Peter in verse six, and he said to him, Lord, do you wash my feet?

Jesus answered and said to him, What I do, you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter. Peter said to him, Never shall you wash my feet.

[5 : 15] Now, did you catch this? Jesus just explained to him, Peter, and what does he say? Never shall, this is the same kind of spirit when he told Jesus, You will never be taken and killed as long as I'm here to stand by your side.

And Jesus said, Get behind me, Savior. Do you remember that? This is the same spirit of this man in this particular incident. Never shall you wash my feet.

Well, Jesus answered him, If I do not wash you, you have no part with me. Simon Peter said to him, Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.

Jesus said to him, He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean. You are clean, but not all of you. Now that he's speaking there about salvation, you're saved here.

I don't need to re-save you, but not all of you. Now he's speaking to Judas, for he knew the one who was betraying him. For this reason, he said, Not all of you are clean.

[6 : 24] So when he had washed their feet and taken his garments and reclined at the table again, he said to them, Do you know what I have done to you? You call me teacher and ward, and you are right, for so I am.

If I then, the Lord and the teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.

Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. Would you turn back over with me now to 2 Peter? Or 1 Peter?

I have 2 Peter on my heart. You can see that, right? Jesus was a servant. Mark's gospel is all about the suffering servant.

[7 : 39] Several years ago, we went verse by verse through Mark's gospel together. Jesus submitted. The Lord and the creator of the universe and the teacher with a capital T submitted.

in his life. He submitted to his father's will. Jesus humbled himself.

He became a man as we are, human, but without sin. And Jesus trusted himself to his father.

Peter told us that. Just as Jesus entrusted himself to the father, so you, in your suffering and persecution and difficulty, trust yourself to God as well.

He washed Peter's feet. He showed Peter the attitudes and he showed the actions of a servant.

[8 : 46] Now, he didn't just do it when he washed his feet. He did it throughout his ministry as Peter came to know who Jesus was. Jesus constantly exemplified the heart of a humble, God-trusting servant in everything he said and did.

It was all done in humility out of love for his father. When he had washed the disciples' feet, Jesus then immediately went into speaking about his betrayal.

Peter pledged his undying allegiance to Jesus and the Lord told Peter that soon he would deny Jesus three times and even in the end abandoned Jesus.

And that's to fulfill scripture that Jesus died alone on the cross because only Jesus could make that sacrifice for us. So, as we think together about sinless, humble servanthood, as we think about that as it relates to suffering, then we have our shiny example in Jesus himself.

But, when we think about sinful, flawed, stumbling servanthood as it relates to suffering in this world, we have an encouraging, we have an empathetic, we have an understanding brother, in Peter.

[10 : 38] Jesus is our shining example, and Peter is our wonderful encouragement that those of us who know Jesus and stumble along as we try to serve him, can still faithfully be used by Jesus in this life.

Serve him well. Serve him well. God so this morning, Peter begins to close his letter, always bittersweet for me.

He begins to close his letter and he does this. He begins to do what you might do if you were writing some letter or treatise to some people and you were saying profound things and trying to pour your heart out with the deepest teaching and instruction that you could come up with to help this person or people that you love.

You might come to the end of your letter and say, alright, let me just try to bring this to a close and sum up and focus in on what I've been telling you and give you something to hold on to because I've said a lot.

That's kind of where Peter is as he closes this letter out. He wants to summarize his teaching with what I'm going to call right now, this is two parts, next Sunday may be the last one.

[11:56] We'll see. Right now it is. Right now it's halfway done and it's sitting there and we'll see if I can let go. But for this first one, let's see if it will transition.

Can you do it for me? Oops. Did Nolan and Suzanne disappear? It's not letting me transition, Suzanne. This is the wand of power and it ain't working.

Well, that's all right. Let me just give it to you and then maybe we can. There it is. Let's see if it'll do it now for me.

It's it's all right. This is what I'm calling three Christlike attitudes, three Christlike attitudes characterizing the Savior's servant sufferers.

now. We're going to do these three this Sunday and then as the message transitions from verse 7 into verse 8, from verse 8 on, it starts to feel a little more like actions.

[13:07] Don't make that a hard and fast demarcation between attitudes and actions. There's some overlap here between this week and next week. But for the sake of outlining this and understanding it and getting a grip on it, we'll talk more about maybe the attitudes behind what we'll see God willing in next week's sermon.

So this is kind of the foundation. This is what you want in your heart as you begin to move out and serve the Lord in your struggle against sin and temptation.

All right? I hope that's making sense to you. So some Christ-like attitudes for the Savior's servants, sufferers. That's the first one.

And then Roman numeral two next week will deal with actions. Some of those actions. The first one that we want to deal with is submissiveness.

Submissiveness. So let's read the passage together and get a little bit more of an understanding of what we're dealing with. I'll start up in verse one because I want you to see the context from what we covered last week.

[14:19] Therefore, I exhort the elders among you as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness, nor yet is lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

And when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. So obviously, from last time, we dealt with a pastor's calling, roles, responsibilities, and what it means for us to provide oversight, shepherding oversight to the flock, to the congregation, any given local church. That's those verses. And verse 4 said, pastors, it's tough, yes, but if you will remain faithful in this, there is a crown of unfading glory waiting for you. There's some type of special reward that God would give for the kind of work that you're going to do.

And so now we're transitioning and we pick it up in verse 5 and you'll see there's a little bit of a change as you key in on that word likewise from the New American Standard Translation.

You younger men likewise, be subject, submissive to your elders and all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

[16:05] Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Now that's our text for today. Go a little further with me so that you can see the flow of how he's going to move now into what he wants you to do. Be of sober spirit.

Be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour, but resist him.

Firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brothers who are in the world.

After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

[17:12] To him be dominion forever and ever. Amen. So that's a little bit about where he's headed. Today we'll zero in on verses 5, 6, and 7.

Now here's how he begins. You younger men, likewise. That's from verse 5. You younger men, likewise. Likewise then is like the word therefore.

It's a transition word, right? Peter's used it before several times. It moves Peter's focus in this context from shepherds to sheep.

So he's transitioning from talking about the pastors in a local church to the sheep in the local church, the congregation, the people that make up the body that the pastors are overseeing and shepherding.

God instructs us about how his shepherds are to function in their role in leading the congregation shepherding. Now, Peter wants to turn our attention to the instructions that he wants to give to the congregation in their role of following their pastors and how they are to relate to each other as they follow spiritual leadership.

[18:39] That's what's going on. So in line then with Peter's concerns, the context that we're looking at for his instruction is suffering brought on by living in the will of God as a local body of believers.

We are all sharing to some degree or another at any given time or another this sense of being persecuted or unfair, unjust suffering because we're trying to live for the Lord.

It might be happening at your job. It might be happening in your relationships with your neighbors or just whatever. Whatever aspect of your life.

So how do we join together in following the pastor's leadership of a church while we're all experiencing those kinds of things and going in and out? Right now, things may be relatively calm for you, but maybe your brother or sister across the aisle or behind you is in a particularly intense time of dealing with that.

We need to rally, don't we? We need to get up under. Remember that sermon? Put your shoulder up under and use your legs and push that thing up and hold that thing up? That's what we need to do for each other.

[19:57] Because it'll be your turn pretty soon. It'll be your turn. And we'll want to rally to you as well. This is the context that we're dealing with. He has not moved away from suffering.

We're still talking about that, but he's putting that suffering within the realm of pastoral leadership, congregation relating to each other under that leadership.

What does this all look like? And then realize that we have an adversary, the devil, who is seeking to thwart every bit of that and draw us away as a body from glorifying Jesus Christ.

Now, what are we going to do about that? This is where Peter is speaking into our lives. Peter begins with you younger men.

That is so interesting to me in this context. Why does he leave the elders and go right to, why didn't he say you young women? Why are we being persecuted against, guys?

[21:02] What's that all about? Well, he identifies a very vulnerable but critical group in the life of the church.

One of the things that he's been doing is when he's been addressing pastors, he's been addressing an exclusive group, not only in the sense of them being pastors, but they're men.

They're men. That's men are called to pastor the church, to preach and teach and shepherd the church. So now I think it's very normal for Peter to shift from those men, that exclusive group of men, and look to another group of men in the church.

And so he says, you younger men, younger men become future elders, some of them. Younger men become dads who are the spiritual leaders in their homes, husbands, and deacons for the church family.

So you can see just in that brief list what's at stake with this particular group. So he zeros in, you younger men. Now I'm going to give a little caveat.

[22:14] If you're a young man in this congregation, you consider yourself a young man. Don't be offended. And please don't get on to my case. I'm going to show you everything I'm going to say.

We got to talk about why he's kind of zeroing in on you guys. All right? So pay attention to this. This doesn't have to be limited to a certain age group necessarily.

not necessarily. Nolan, will you advance it for me? This thing. I don't know if it's unjuicy or hit the next one. There you go. You younger men, it conveys the idea of men who are not among the elders, men who are most likely younger compared with the stage of life of their older pastors. elders. So think of it that way. Now, in that light, let me just offer this to you to see if this makes sense to you. It seems reasonable that this would include men perhaps in their 20s, 30s, maybe even their 40s, particularly those who had not yet reached what we would call maybe a midlife. So men in their 20s and 30s might be emphasized a little more here. Now, why single them out? I've already alluded to some of that, but think about this.

[23 : 37] I can sum it up basically in an idea. You ready? Headstrong. I'm looking at all our young men.

Headstrong. Now, I can say these things not only because I believe it's commensurate with the heart of what Peter's giving from the scripture, but I used to be one of those. Don't let the gray fool you.

Before I got gray, I was young and cool. I'm not cool anymore. Isn't that how it works, parents? Your kids, you get to a certain age and you go back and you look at pictures and your kids look at your pictures of when y'all were dating and what you were doing and all, and they kind of go, man, you guys were kind of cool.

Oh, really? It used to be. We used to have a life. Yeah. It's like that. Why single them out? Because young men tend to be headstrong.

Let me elaborate. Young men can be, can be critical, impatient, subversive, zealous, impetuous, and at times even ridiculous.

[24 : 51] I've been all those things. I can look back on my young life, my young adulthood, and I see every one of those in my life, but I also raised two of them, and I can tell you that all fits them to a T, the ones I raised.

Young men can hazard the church simply by their inexperience and enthusiasm. It's why you don't rush to put young men in positions of leadership.

So we have this vulnerable but critical group that Peter immediately turns his attention to, and we understand that a young man's greatest strength can also reflect his greatest weakness.

Young men tend to be strong. They're the guys that you want to call on when you got to move something or you got to do, you know, they've got the energy, vitality, the young muscles and all that, and the next day they get up out of bed and they're ready to go, whereas we're going, oh, where's the compressor thing?

Do my back, do my back. Not so with young men so much, but that strength can also be their weakness because that enthusiastic, strong zeal and zest for life can get them in trouble.

[26 : 10] So they can hazard the church. They need guidance. guidance. Young men need guidance. So do young women, but he's not talking to young women yet.

He's identifying the young men and we're trying to get our minds around why that is. They get this guidance and more from the teaching and discipleship offered to them by their elders, their pastors. Now that's not the only place they get it and it isn't the first place they get it. Obviously, the pastors want to equip the fathers to do that with their own children. Yes, but that isn't what Peter's talking about here.

Here it's within the context or umbrella of pastoral leadership. So young men, be submissive to your, look at verse five, be submissive to your parents.

That's not what it says. It says your elders, your elders, same context as above. So again, let me reiterate, I am not saying that the pastors assume the authority over your kids or over your young men in your household.

[27 : 20] That's not what I'm saying. I hope you don't hear that. I'm simply saying that within the context of the local church, young men need to be very careful about submitting and bringing that youthful zeal under the watch care and wisdom of their pastors.

leaders because it would be very easy for young men to get critical about why aren't we doing this? Why aren't we doing that? Why don't we have this? Why doesn't the churches down the road do this? And on it goes.

And that's the kind of thing that begins to breathe divisiveness and discontentment among the people. So they need guidance. But for the relationship to be effective, younger men need to do something that is very, very foreign to their nature.

They need to have and live out an attitude of submission toward their pastors. That's the point. Now, Peter's specific command.

See if this is going to work. Peter's specific command is for these young men to there's our word. We love it. He's used it so many times. Uputasso.

[28 : 30] That's his repeatedly used word to mean line up under. That's what young men are being commanded. This is an imperative commanded to do young men in the church line up under your pastors line up under their leadership and follow their example.

Hopefully you dads who have your family in the local church where this instruction is being given and they are expected to follow it. Your fathers have already done their diligence and put your family in a church where doing that isn't an issue or a problem.

Having you as a young man follow the example leadership and direction of your pastors isn't an issue because your dad and mom have already checked out the church and they know that the leaders are trying to follow Jesus.

See so we have no issue there. There's no conflict with how they instruct you and parent you with how the pastors are instructing and parenting you. It's a joint effort.

That's what we want. This is what we need in the church. Young men are to hupotasso with regard to their pastors. Line up under.

[29 : 41] Just as we've seen in our relationships with in previous contexts the government, employers, marriages, and in the church family because we all share in the same nature of rebellion just like the young men.

We all need to follow God's will and line up under hupotasso authority. Line up under authority prayerfully and carefully.

But that is our calling. So submission to authority particularly in this context to the authority of pastors as they shepherd God's people in a local church.

That is Peter's first attitude of obedience in our joint effort to follow the Lord as we strive to do what is right. That's Peter's recurring theme through this issue of suffering.

Do what is right in the sight of God. Do God's will. Live out God's will. That's what he wants. And that's what he's zeroing in here. But folks, there is a danger.

[30 : 44] There is a danger in all of this for all of us. Now I'm transitioning to the congregation. Look at it with me again. You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders and all of you.

Clothe yourself with humility toward one another. The danger is this. Submission can happen with a sinful attitude.

Submission can happen with a sinful attitude. You can do it, but you do it with obstinance in your heart. You follow through, but your heart's not in.

Selfish attitudes work against what biblical submission to authority is about. This is not submitting. What was the thing, Suzanne, that we heard one time? I'll do what you say, but I'm standing up on the on the inside.

I'll sit down, but I'm standing up on the inside. Kind of thing. That's that's not what we want. That's not the spirit of what we're talking about here.

[31 : 47] That works against it. The entire point that Peter's making is that young men in the church line up under their pastors and all of us all of us are lining up under human authority because God appointed that authority over us.

God appointed that authority over us. That's why you don't line up under your pastors because we're all that. We are not the Lord of the church. Jesus is.

We are his under shepherds, but we have that responsibility to shepherd, to overwatch. So we line up under that the same thing that he told us earlier with governments and the husband and marriage, et cetera.

In the job, whatever authority there is, it's the authority that God has placed in our life and we need to line up under it as God's appointed authority.

That helps us to effectively counter the danger. And it helps us to encourage godly submission.

[32 : 55] Godly submission in our lives. That's where he goes to next. Peter goes next to submission's twin. He doesn't just want us to have this hard attitude of submitting.

He wants to help us understand, all right, now, in your submission, what does that actually begin to look like in your life? How do you cultivate it?

Where does it come from? How do you nurture it in your life? So he goes to submission's twin. It's the attitude of humility.

Humility. That's what we want to look at next. You younger men, likewise, be subject or submissive, upotasso, to your elders, and then all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another.

Now he's getting all in our business in the aisles and walking up and down. For God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

[34 : 02] Now, friends, this is a beautiful, beautiful and powerful picture of what we all need to nurture in our hearts. This is not something that is natural to us.

It's a gift of the Spirit, isn't it not? Right. So if you're a Christian, you have the fruit of the Spirit working in your life, and what God has worked in, you need to work out.

So how do you cultivate an attitude of humility so that as you submit, you're not standing up on the inside? Humility is going to help you fight that in any context of your life.

Remember, who are you bowing to primarily when you bow to authority? Yes, because the Scripture is clear that God appoints it.

when do we have to mercifully, graciously, but resolutely stand against authority?

[35 : 05] When? We've already covered this. We did a whole series on it. Wednesday, in the night. When? When it's against God.

When the authorities are clearly prescribing on us that we disobey the Lord. Then we can't. But even then, we can refuse graciously.

Which is a lot of what we've covered in 1 Peter already as he brings us. So do you see why, having covered all of that, he wants now to come to these attitudes of submission and humility right off the bat.

These twin sisters, if you will. Submission and humility. And he wants to really put that out there in front. These are the attitudes that are going to help keep you on the right track of doing what I've been instructing you to do under all this persecution that you're experiencing.

This is what it's going to take. Man, I think it's powerful. So clothe yourselves with humility. It's a word picture. You can see that already. Clothe yourself.

[36 : 11] Why would he say it like that? It's a word picture that refers to putting on the serving apron of a slave. slaves would wear a white scarf or a light colored or white apron around their waists.

That sound familiar from John 13? Jesus girded himself. That's exactly the that's exactly what he did. He took on the garb of a servant to do what he did.

It distinguished them slaves from free men. So it was a symbol of lowliness. Lowliness. The picture I envision, you may have seen this too, is like that of a waiter.

You see, especially in finer restaurants, sometimes they'll have on some type of white apron or something, you know. It's like the white apron, this is what I did for him, it's like the white apron that I was required to wear when I worked in the kitchen in one of my jobs as a teenager.

I was a cook, and I was a dishwasher, and I mopped the floors, and I cleaned the machines, and I wore an apron that had a little thing, and I put it around my neck, and it went all the way down past my knees, and I tied it back here, and it was white, white, and it wasn't white by the end of my shift.

[37 : 50] That's what I envision. Clothe yourself, take on the clothing of a servant. Now, let's add to that and talk about what does he mean by that.

Well, the word humility conveys the idea of valuing or assessing yourself appropriately. humility. So, humility has everything to do with how you look at yourself, especially as you consider the reality of your sinfulness or your creatureliness.

Now, that isn't to be morbid or depress you, yes, I'm such a sinner. It's to sober you, to help you, take you down a few notches.

You're not all that. You're a sinner just like everybody else. You need God's grace just like everybody else. It doesn't matter how many degrees you have or how intellectual you think you are or how long you've studied the Bible or how many Greek words you can, verbs you can parse.

So what? So what? What matters? Where's your heart? And is all of that being laid at the feet of Jesus in submission to him to encourage your brothers and sisters and build them up in their faith?

[39 : 09] That's what matters. So Peter brings us to this word humility. So each of you, here it is now, each of you, all of you, is the text, put on humility as your serving clothes.

What is the towel that you gird your waist with as you bow on your knees before your brothers and sisters to serve them? What is that towel?

Humility. You gird yourselves with humility. In this context, it's a way of emphasizing putting on humility to show your servant's submission to each other.

Your humility demonstrates your willingness to be a servant to each other. not to step out into the foreground and put yourself forward.

Now, here's the rub, here's the question. How do you put on humility? Now, there's many ways in Scripture we could go about answering this. There are several ways I thought of to emphasize it.

[40 : 22] This is a quick but poignant way to do that. Philippians 2, 3, and 4, if you'll go there with me. a familiar passage to us.

I'm trying to give you some practical guidelines from Scripture that would line up with Peter's spirit here about putting on humility, clothing yourself, putting on the garment of humility as a servant for the Lord.

Therefore, Philippians 2, 1, if there's any encouragement in Christ, that's what he's concerned with, if there's any consolation of love.

So I want you to be an encouragement. I want you to be consoled in the love of the Lord. I want you to be in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit together. I want you to share in the affection and compassion of Jesus together and know that kind of life together as a body.

Make my joy complete by being of the same mind. There you go. Share the same heart and focus and perspective in your spiritual life together.

[41 : 32] Maintain that same love. Be united in spirit together. Be intent on that one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind.

So that's a humble heart. Regard one another as more important than yourselves. Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, which we are all so much we do that really well, but also for the interests of others and have this attitude in yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus.

This is what I talked about earlier, where Jesus humbled himself and became a human being.

That's maybe a good start. If you wanted to do some devotional work in that, you could take that and you could look at it and you could take it apart phrase by phrase and ask yourself, all right, what does it look like for me to do nothing from selfishness or pride, the empty conceit of my life? How do I identify that, address that? What are ways in my life that I still put myself forward and I'm still too quick? Maybe it's impatience.

Maybe you say, you know what, it's just so prideful for me to be impatient, impatient when I drive, impatient when I deal with this or this person or that or this context. You see what I mean?

[43 : 05] How do I begin to repent and build into my life this attitude of humility so that I have a much more patient spirit in these contexts?

Maybe that, you see, that's just one. I talk too much. No, you say that. I'm too quick to speak. I'm too quick to want to tell the story. I'm too quick to want to one-up the other person.

Oh, yeah, they tell the story and then I've got a better one. If I stop and sit back and ask myself, what did I just hear over the last five minutes?

I heard four and a half minutes of my voice. Ugh. Now, depending on the context, that could be not a good thing. Do you see what I'm doing?

All right, or maybe Dale, what Dale shared with us last week from Romans 12, 9 through 21. I'm not going to go through this one with you because Dale already preached it.

[44 : 06] I won't re-preach it, but look at this. Look at Romans 12. Let's start right out with verse 9. Now, this is how do I apply humility? How do I clothe myself with humility?

humility. Your problem is going to be in answering that question, how to narrow it down in the New Testament. Let love be without hypocrisy. Now, you can ask yourself, in any aspect of what I feel like I am doing as a loving person, is there any bit of that that's hypocritical?

On the outside, I'm saying and doing this, but on the inside, abhor what is evil. Do I abhor what is evil, or am I drawn to it? Cling to what is good.

Do I have a spiritual plan to cling, to stick my life to what is good? Be devoted to what, you see the list, be devoted to one another in brotherly love, give preference to one another in honor.

Doesn't that sound like Philippians 2? Don't lag behind in diligence. Don't be the squeaky wheel or the one wandering out there on the periphery.

[45 : 23] No, don't lag. Be fervent in your spirit about these things. Be resolute. Serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope. Okay, if I keep going, I will preach it.

And then finally, turn to one of my favorite passages, as you know, Colossians 3. Long ago in my Christian life, for some reason that I don't remember, Colossians 3 became the go-to for me. I read this more often and think about it more often than probably any other passage in the Bible. It doesn't mean that it's super spiritual, it just means it speaks directly and pointedly to my heart in every area.

If you just go down to verse 12, as those who've been chosen of God, now right there you have your criteria for why this is critically important for you as a Christian, because God chose you, because God has given you the gift of spiritual life as his child.

Don't cheapen it. Don't waste it. What's the first thing that he says? You are a holy and beloved child put on a heart of compassion.

[46 : 32] If you don't know what compassion means in the New Testament, ask one of the men who were at the breakfast. They should be able to know. Kindness. Look at the third one. Humility, gentleness, patience.

So you go down through that list and ask yourself the same questions. In my life, what does this look like? How faithful am I being to this particular thing, to gentleness?

Am I a gentle person with people? Do I bear with people? Am I a forgiving person or do I hold grudges? Do I rehearse wrongs against my spouse?

Whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord forgave you, you should forgive. And beyond all these things, put on love. Each passage that we looked at spoke about the emphasis of love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

So when we think of Peter's direction, now, all of you put on, where, humility. When we think of that, the greatest motivator in all of that is your love for Christ as you try to love each other.

[47 : 43] Your love for Jesus will bring you forward in doing this and keep you honest about it. So that's my shot at how do you put on humility.

I'll give you a few more in just a minute as we move forward. Peter gives us then a biblically, I think, straightforward but sobering reason for being humble towards each other and for applying these passages that I've just given you.

If you go back to 1 Peter, and what does he say? You younger men likewise be subject to your elders and all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another.

Why? For God is opposed to the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. That's why. Here's how we would flesh that out, friends.

Suffering can produce, now please, please hear this, because this is how Satan will tempt you, brothers and sisters. This is where your pastor is trying to offer you some anchors and handholds to strive against the temptation for your suffering to do what I'm about to say in your life.

[48 : 55] You ready? Suffering, unjust suffering, the right kind of suffering, suffering because you're trying to do the right thing in the Lord and you're struggling to do it with a humble, submissive, loving heart.

I'm trying. I'm trying not to have an attitude about this. I'm trying to move forward in the Lord.

Suffering like that, even suffering like that can produce, here it is, self-righteousness.

Now you all know this, so I'm not going to camp out here, but I am going to mention a couple things. Self-righteousness, this is the attitude. Look how much I suffered.

Tell me your story. Tell me your story because I got a story. I'll tell you that. I'll listen to yours first. But when you hear how I suffered, that'll tell you a lot about why things are going the way they are for me.

It's that. It's a self-righteous, it's just dripping with kind of a I'm special. My suffering's unique. No, it's not.

[50 : 05] I hate that. It's just not. Or it's twin, which sounds a lot like it, self-pity. This kind of suffering can produce self-righteousness where you look down your nose at everybody else and think your suffering is unique.

Your suffering has brought you to a special place. Or self-pity. Yes, yes, it's my lot to suffer. But why me? Why does this always happen to me?

I know we kind of laugh because we see ourselves in the mirror and go, oh gosh, I've done that. Oh man, that's ugly.

Yes, it is ugly. It's ugly. It's not Jesus. It's ugly. And that ugly gets on all the people around you. So if I can help you see that in me like that and go, oh, I don't want that.

Right. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. I don't either. Pastors aren't appealing to this. Pastors suffer, man.

[51 : 11] The ministry is just one long thing of suffering. Now I'm starting to sound like that, aren't I? So, you know, we can get self-righteous about that.

Pastors suffer at a special level. Or pity. I've pity partied before about that. So, where does Peter take it all?

Look what he says in the next part. Therefore. You see? Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God.

There's your prescription for self-righteousness in your suffering, for self-pity, or anything else that comes along the pipe related to that. Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. Zero in on that. Don't zero in on that that he may exalt you at the proper time yet. We're not there. This is the attitude we need toward our suffering and our humility. It is under the mighty hand of God.

[52 : 16] Folks, realize God opposes the prideful displays of your heart because your pride opposes God and his will greed.

God opposes what you oppose toward him. So God is beating down what you would use to beat down your God.

Does that sober you, friend? We need to learn to hate our pride. It is the ugliest thing on the earth. My pride and your pride. Our pride would have kept Jesus from the cross. We see that in our brother Peter. Lord, that will never happen to you.

Get behind me, Satan. What do we know? We need Jesus to tell us that he has spoken in his word. His word will slay our pride.

[53 : 18] The Holy Spirit will use it to do that spiritual surgery and cut down into the joint marrow of our lives. In the entirety of our lives, but especially in our sharing in the sufferings of Jesus, we need to humble ourselves under God's mighty hand.

And that probably is most difficult for us when we're suffering under his mighty hand. In other words, we need to humbly receive and obey what God marks out for us and our suffering for his sake. So don't let suffering make you proud or bitter or resentful or fearful. And now this last one, or anxious.

Anxious. Why do I go there? Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety.

Does anybody have a different word than anxiety in your translation? What is it? Okay. Do you know what anxiety means in the Greek?

[54 : 38] What the Greek word for that is? Anxiety. Deep. Deep. Deep. Deep. Deep. Deep. Deep. Deep. Deep.

Casting all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Because he cares for you. How do you humble yourself under his mighty hand?

How do you humble yourself? Melvin, will you progress it for me and stop again? I think it might be I'm a little low on energy here. How do you humble yourself under his mighty hand?

All right. Let me give you four quick ones. You ready? I'm just trying to help you get a jump start on the practicality here. Don't think this is the end all of what we can do. Advance it for me again Nolan, would you please sir?

Realize his sovereign mighty hand in suffering. Now what does that mean? These are all ours.

Realize. What am I talking about here? One of the hardest things about suffering for any reason but especially as we suffer for doing what is right that might make it where we go, this doesn't make sense.

[55 : 49] Is coming into this prepared? Having a heart attitude that isn't shocked and awed by the reality that we're suffering as Christians for doing the right thing.

Look, how does Peter say it over in chapter 4 verse 12? Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you which comes upon you for your testing as though some strange thing were happening to you.

But to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, that's why you're suffering because you're sharing what is in Christ, keep on rejoicing so that also at the revelation of his glory you may rejoice with exultation.

When you're reviled for the name of Christ you're blessed because the spirit of glory. Now look, in all of that, how much of that is actually in your heart and mind making you ready in the moment that the suffering begins to hit you full face.

You see what I mean? That's what I mean when I say realize. Take scripture's perspective on what this suffering is and be ready so that when it does come you're not shocked and awed and surprised.

[57 : 07] You understand God's bringing this into my life for testing. Sometimes that suffering is so hard, folks, you just wonder if you're going to make it. Isn't that what Peter said?

Humble yourselves under whose hand? His hand, God's hand. And what kind of hand is that? Mighty. Mighty. Nothing comes into your life that doesn't pass through his hand ordained by him. Nothing. No aspect of suffering. All right? And then, so realize. Realize his sovereign hand and then, you'll have to advance it for me again, if you would.

I think I've just run out here. Receive. Receive his call and purpose for your suffering. Very akin to what I just said. In other words, have a receptive heart.

Have a receptive heart. Let me say it another way to see if it'll communicate. Live the bigger picture of God's plan. Do you understand what I mean here?

[58 : 15] We tend to do this. We suffer and we shrink that bigger picture down into this little pinhole focused right on my own forehead.

And so, that's all I see. I just walk around and, you know, it's all about me and my suffering. And I can't get away from it. Do this. And see, there's a bigger picture.

And ask this. How does God want to use me? What purpose does God have for my life and beyond to the lives that I'm connected with?

Do you? There are times when you might suffer in your life, friends, and it'll have a lot more to do with someone else or else's in your life than you. The lesson isn't so much, as much for you as it is maybe for her or him or them.

You say, how do I know? Hear me. You won't. That's God's domain. So don't go there. You're going to try to walk where there's no light. You're going to get really frustrated.

[59 : 24] So here's what I do. I treat every single one of them like, God, what's the lesson for you? What are you trying to teach me? I don't walk four by four upside the head, so I'm listening.

I'm receptive. I'm tuned in. You have enough of those four by fours and I promise you it'll get your attention. And he'll circle you around and keep you there until you learn.

Nolan, next for me. Repent. Repent of your pride and all of its cousins. You see, that's the one thing that happens. That's why do I get now?

I'm just I'm getting it all out of the bag here. Why do I get anxious in suffering? Why do I get fearful? Pride. Pride, period. The root is always pride.

I know you probably don't associate that right away, but I'm telling you that's exact. Why do you think Peter is saying humble yourself and cast all your anxieties? don't fight.

[60 : 34] Don't flee and don't fear. Brothers and sisters, repent. Do these in the order.

Realize, receive and repent. And then finally, Nolan, the last one, rejoice. Rejoice that God's spirit and glory rest on you. That's what we just read in verse 14 up in chapter four.

If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you're blessed because the spirit of glory and of God rests on you. Only make sure that you're not suffering as a murderer or thief or for some kind of sin in your life.

Rejoice. Again, these are these are counterintuitive. And as you do this, the blessed reality is this. You have the assurance of God's own promise that in his perfect timing, God will bring the season of suffering to an end. Having accomplished in you or whatever, what he's designed for your growth and your good.

[61 : 44] That's what he says. Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you at the proper time. You don't get to pick the time when the suffering hits or when it ends and you don't get to pick the the intensity.

So the duration isn't up to you and the level of intensity isn't up to you. You're called to respond in faithfulness. Let me give you this quote.

We'll click on the next one, brother. This is from Dr. MacArthur. It might it might help bring this to a focus then I'll do the last one and we'll be done. If the foundational attitude for spiritual growth is submission, what we just covered, humility is then the footing to which the foundation is anchored. To become proudly rebellious, fight against the Lord's purposes or judge his providence as unkind or unfair is to forfeit the sweet grace of his exaltation when the trial has fulfilled its purpose. You don't want to miss that. We actually sang about that in one of the songs. You don't want to miss the wonderful joy that comes as you've been faithful in the trial and God's effected his purposes in your life.

[63 : 01] The trial ends. You've learned. You've grown. People around you've been blessed. You say, Jeff, what if I stumble in the trial? That's what repentance is. Go to God and repent.

Put yourself back on track. Remind yourself that you're under the hand of a mighty God who loves you and calls you beloved. All right.

We have every good reason to trust ourselves to the Lord as we suffer for his sake. And that's why Peter wants us to go to the Lord. And that's what he wants us to do with our hearts.

He wants us to trust our hearts to be in Jesus' mighty hand. That's the last one. There's no one back there. Would you advance that one for me? Trust. Trust.

Casting all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. So this is what you need to see. Here's the issue.

[63 : 58] Nolan, if you'll do the next one. This is, I think, the last one. This is what we need to see. When it comes to God's mighty sovereign hand designing and sending suffering into your life, you will either react as a worrier or respond as a worshiper.

those are your two choices. You're either going to condition yourself to go through life just kind of getting bumped around and beat around and just, and then you react.

Or whatever you do. Maybe you do this. Some of us react to that kind of stuff like this. We fight back. We go after it. That's our personality. Others of us do this.

Maybe in between. That's a lot different from somebody who's learning to respond to life as a worshiper.

In other words, you're saying, God, this isn't about me. You're going to do things in me. You're going to teach me things. But this is about you. This is, this is about an opportunity for me to glorify you.

[65 : 06] That is, this is an opportunity for me to show forth your character at a time when people are probably looking at me and thinking, man, why are you falling apart?

Why aren't you full of trepidation and worry? Aren't you concerned about this? Yeah, I'm concerned. But I know I'm under God's mighty hand. Now, that's not trite. That's true.

I'm under God, and it's making a difference in my life. Now, personally, real quickly, my wife and I, I've experienced a super duper heavy trial that started a while back, and God's been taking us through it.

And we were praying and talking about this yesterday. And the only way that we have been able to move through it and stay focused is going to these passages and reminding ourselves that we are under the mighty hand of a good and gracious king.

And this all has purpose, his purpose written all over it. We may not understand it. And yes, it's hard. Yes, it's grievous. But it's not grievous to the point where it takes us out.

[66 : 12] Do you know how reassuring and wonderful it was when all of this first started to happen to us? And I'm being vague for a reason. It's intentional. I'm just asking you to trust me. When all of this started to come down in our lives, I just don't know how to tell you how wonderful it was that in the midst of all the pain, we knew why we were going to get up the next morning and what we were going to do.

We knew. We're going to get up and love Jesus and we're going to get up and service people and we're going to be servants of his word. And that doesn't look any different than what it's looked like for the last 38 years.

Oh, I don't have to pity party. I don't have to find myself. I don't have to go out and have a knee retreat. I just get up the next day and look to Jesus, be under his mighty hand, trust him and step forward.

Now I'm not saying it's easy. I'm saying it's real. And it is more powerful than grief. It's more powerful than sin because that's the grace of God.

That's the grace of God. And that's where we want you to live. Live anchored in the reassurance that you can cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

[67 : 33] Now you look back to the incident when you're suffering, you go back in your past or whatever it was, and you say to yourself, that was God loving you. That's powerful.

Anxiety here refers to concerns. Okay. Okay. David prayed, when I am afraid. And then prayed, don't let me be afraid.

Right? So this anxiety can cover concerns. It's okay to be concerned in these situations. But it moves, the word captures this, it moves to the other end of the spectrum to worries or to things that make us fretful.

So it's an inclusive word for things like this. Maybe this will capture one of the words that you struggle with when it, when this stuff happens. It's like this. It can be fearful, distressed, depressed, despondent, discontent, despairing, or it can be the nagging feeling of questioning and not knowing or of knowing and feeling helpless.

So what do we do with all of that during suffering? Especially when we're suffering for sharing in the sufferings of Jesus for doing what's right. What do we do when we cast something?

[69 : 02] Look at your text. Casting all your anxiety on him. Here's the picture. What do we do when we cast something? We throw it. It's as simple as that.

That's what it means. It means to throw. So we are to cast or to throw the issues of our suffering onto the Lord. The issues of our suffering would be our concerns, our temptation to fear or to be worried or to self-pity or to be self-righteous or whatever it is.

Suffering for any reason produces a certain level and kind of anxiety in our hearts. So we need to take our hearts to God. It's just part of being human. So friends, look, we battle worry and we worship God when we throw these issues of our hearts on the Lord.

Why? Because we know in our hearts that the Lord deeply cares for us. He cares for you. It's stated plainly in Scripture. Or he wouldn't ordain suffering in your life in the first place.

So I want to close with some lyrics. I'm not going to put them up on the screen. But this is this is from a song that from very early in our, I think, married life.

[70 : 25] It's beautiful. And if you haven't heard it, it's just a beautiful song. But the lyrics themselves are so sweet and speak to this. It's from Michael Card.

And it's called The Basin and the Towel. Just listen to this. In an upstairs room, a parable is just about to come alive.

And while they bicker about who's best, with a painful glance, he'll silently rise.

Their savior servant must show them the way through the will of the water and the tenderness of the towel. And the call is to community.

The impoverished power that sets the soul free. In humility, to take the vow that day after day, we must take up the basin and the towel.

[71 : 28] In an ordinary place on any ordinary day, the parable can live again when one will kneel and one will heal.

Our savior servant must show us how through the will of the water and the tenderness of the towel. And the space between ourselves sometimes is more than the distance between the stars. By the fragile bridge of the servant's bow, we take up the basin and the towel.

And the call is to community. The impoverished power that sets the soul free. In humility, to take the vow that day after day, we must take up the basin and the towel.

Let's pray together. Dear Lord, this passage challenges many of the conventions that our world teaches about dealing with fear and worry and anxiety, especially when it comes to suffering in our lives.

[72 : 51] So I ask that you abuse your word, drive it deep into the hearts of your people who are your beloved, and that you would calm them even as you care for them under your mighty hand, that you would reassure them that any suffering they have ever experienced or will experience in their life is ordained and purposed for their good and their glory, and that, God, you have it all under control.

You will ordain the duration. You will ordain the intensity. And you will make sure that nothing is happening to them, that you don't provide the grace for them to move through it with love and with joy and with a calm reassurance that you are in charge and you're serving me.

That's what I pray, Father, because I know our enemy, he would seek to uproot them and distract them and build despondency into their lives.

Father, please protect them. Please watch over them and help them to gird themselves with the servant's garb of humility. Help them to wrap the towel of humility around their hearts.

Help them, Father, in their desire to submit to you and to pastoral leadership and to the authorities that are in their lives. Help them to be discerning and wise as they do that so that they know when to say no and how to say no but more often how to say yes.

[74 : 34] And then we pray, Father, that you would help us to trust you. To trust you. Not to trust our own hearts but to look to you and trust you for being our God and our King.

We thank you for your goodness and your grace in our lives. We see it in so many ways that we want to be thankful. Make us ever more thankful, God. Help us to be more aware of all the ways that you bless us and guide us and keep us in the providence of your love.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.