The Godly Pursuit of the Good Life (Part 1)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 August 2022

Preacher: Jeff Jackson

[0:00] Well, in 1 Peter, we have wonderful wisdom that Peter offers us about living in a broken world among broken people, ourselves broken and put back together by the glory of the Lord Jesus.

How do we live in a world like that, around people like that, being people like that? What in the world do we do? The title of my message is The Godly Pursuit of the Good Life. I'm keeping it positive.
This is what I believe to be Peter's main thrust in the passage that we'll look at today. He's coming off of this rather lengthy treatise about submitting, submitting to human authority, to workplace authority, submitting in the marriage, submitting to each other across the aisles and in our relationships with one another, even submitting to the Lord Jesus as we encounter people who are wicked toward us or evil toward us.
What does it look like for us to live a life submitting to the Lord Jesus as we live day to day in the various contexts and circumstances that we encounter?
So what I think Peter's doing here is speaking to the issue of what will serve to counter or what will serve to work against or root itself against our living a life of submission to Christ in joy.
[1:29] There are certain things that will seek to pull us away from that that are the natural course of this world. It's the natural fiber and fabric and tone of what it's like to live in this sin-cursed world.

But we want to remain godly in our pursuit of living the good life, which is something that Peter says is part of serving the Lord.
If you'll look with me at verse 10, the one who desires life, I think we all can say that that's what we want. I look at the young faces out here today and I think, boy, full of idealism, full of goals, full of plans.
Hopefully all of those will be grounded in your love for the Lord Jesus Christ so that you're always willing to lay down your aspirations at his feet and say, God, make the most of my life for your glory. You don't have to be older to know that that is a good thing for you to do. So Peter says those whose desire life to love and to be loved, to see good days, must keep their tongue from evil, their lips from speaking deceit, turn away from evil and do good.
[2:41] Seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous. His ears attended their prayer, but the face of the Lord's against those who do evil. This was much of what we talked about when we met last time.

And I understand that when we met last time, for those of you who were here, there was a lot that we needed to cover in the space that we had as Peter went through verse by verse his counsel for us as we seek to live that kind of life before the Lord.
A life that is a good life, a holy life, a life of love, a life of joy. He wants that. And Christians should live lives like that.
But there are issues. Issues that we have to face within ourselves and others. Now, I stated last week that pursuing, and that's an important word for us to underscore, pursuing personal pleasure and a happy life guarantees you'll miss out on both.
Now, Jesus said that. He communicated much of this when he spoke about the issue of the first will be last and the last will be first. Those of us who pursue, pursue the good life of personal pleasure will only find that it evades us, right?
[4:02] It moves through our fingers as we try to grasp it like smoke and mist. We never can quite get a grip on it. And you'll see this in the world. You've probably seen this in your life, beloved.

There have been probably times in your life when you've tried to manipulate or control your own personal happiness or personal outcomes to what you wanted only to find that they don't work out that way.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

And even if they do to a certain extent, you get to where you think the goal is and you realize there's a certain emptiness here. You understand? You with me on that? You also see this in the people around you who are not pursuing the Lord Jesus Christ.
They have to live like that. And so they're constantly moving from one thing to another to try to fill that void in their life that only Jesus can fill.
Jesus tells us why it's true that pursuing a life of personal pleasure and happiness guarantees you'll miss out on both.
[5:04] He tells us that himself. Here's what he says. And blessed or happy or fulfilled is he who does not take offense at me, who does not stumble over me.

That was from last week in Matthew 11, verse 6. A happy, contented, soul-satisfying life is attainable.
Or Peter wouldn't speak to it here. Paul speaks to the same reality. It is attainable, but only as God offers it to us in the gift of his son, the Lord Jesus.
Another way of saying this is this, folks, and I know you guys understand this and appreciate it. Jesus himself is the blessed life. He's the gift. Knowing Jesus is knowing life, having life, possessing life.
The only, I said this last week, the only truly, truly blessed people on the planet are people who are not stumbling over Jesus, but bowing to him. Those are the blessed ones.
[6:12] It's by God's common grace that your unsaved friends and family members enjoy any aspect of life. The reason that we can say that is because the Bible tells us that all unbelievers, and such were us as well, before Christ, all unbelievers live under the wrath of God, don't they?

Folks, that's not a blessed state. There is nothing blessed about living under the wrath of God. And yet, they have babies. They have marriage ceremonies. They have birthdays. They celebrate and eat ice cream. They watch their children grow up.
They have jobs. They go on vacations. They take in life. That's all by grace. So that, in itself, is a blessing from a sovereign, merciful God.
But make no mistake, they live under the wrath of Almighty God. We've come to know that truth because God opens our eyes to it. And in that moment, we embrace Christ for the forgiveness of our sins, and we're made new people.
[7:33] I say again, Jesus is the blessed life. So a life lived without Christ is not a blessed life. Not truly.

Not on the deepest levels. God defines the blessed life. And the way that He defines the blessed, happy, fulfilled life is a life that is submissive to Jesus Christ in pleasing Him in all things.
And that's what Proverbs spoke to that we read earlier. It's a life of following the Lord, not trusting in our own wisdom. Now, Peter, for our time today, Peter wants his readers to understand how their salvation, that salvation that has been brought to them in Christ, and how their submission to the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord in their life, how all of that is lived out in a life of suffering for Christ's sake.
This is what we need to teach new Christians fairly quickly, and then walk with them and embrace them carefully to help them because it's wonderful to get saved and be on your honeymoon with Jesus, and then find out that the more serious you are about living for Christ and walking in your faith and doing good to others, the more persecution and suffering that's going to come into your life.
It's true that God can make even your enemies to be at peace with you, but make no mistake, Peter is making it clear that we're going to suffer and be persecuted for trying to do good in this world on behalf of Jesus.
[9:13] We need to get that message out. In other words, for people who belong to Jesus, for people who seek, actually seek to pursue, to please Jesus through a life of loving obedience, suffering for Christ's sake, for righteousness' sake, is the natural result of their spiritual faithfulness to Christ in this world.

That's axiomatic. That's a truth from Scripture, a principle we can live by. As we follow Jesus faithfully and seek to please Him, we will suffer for Christ's sake.
And God says, you are blessed. How many of us would raise our hand and say, I feel blessed when I suffer? But that's what Scripture says.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

You're blessed. You feel blessed? Are your feelings directing you or is truth directing you? You're blessed. That's a statement from heaven. If you're suffering for righteousness, you're blessed. We're going to find out why that's true in just a few minutes. Peter's concern for us is that we suffer for righteousness because we're going to suffer and not on account of personal sin.
[10:39] Here's the problem. Personal sin leads to strained and broken relationships because of you. Beloved, this is personal.

Personal sin. When you are in sin, people suffer. and you will suffer. But you're not suffering for righteousness.
Peter's concern is that we suffer for righteousness, not because of personal sin that's putting strain on our relationships with others. Don't allow that to happen.
Scripture, in fact, tells you from last time when we met, if possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. That's Romans 12, 18.
In every instance and circumstance of your life in relationship with other people, Peter is directing us here today to bless others as we seek and pursue peace with them as a way of pleasing Jesus and that's the key.
[11:46] all of this that we're being instructed to do by Peter as we deal with difficult people, as we deal with people in a broken world, is all the result of us trying to please Jesus and submit to him.

That's what it looks like to human government, to workplace authority, to wives submitting to their husbands, to husbands honoring their wives as fellow heirs of the grace of life. All of that is based in us trying to please Jesus.
That's the grand motive of all that we do in the Christian life, to please him in all respects. He is paramount in our minds and in our hearts, in the goals of our lives.
All that we're trying to be and do is aimed at pleasing the Lord. Can I be a plumber who pleases the Lord in the way I plumb? Yes!
Can I be just a regular old person out there? Yes! Honoring Jesus. Honoring Jesus.
[12:53] Peter then directs us, be a blessing to others even as God has blessed you in Christ. And here's how we do that.

Look at where we're going to start. This is from last time. We live as Christ's blessing to our fellow Christians as we are harmonious.
Harmonious or like-minded about life and truth. As the word of God is drawing us into a unity of mind, a like-minded way of looking at what it means to be the church.
Gather as the church. Sing as the church. Pray as the church. Minister as the church. What it's like for us to live together as husband and wife. What does the word tell us about that? It's the truth of God that unifies us.
No truth, no unity. It's just everybody's opinion. And what we're most concerned with is what does God say? What would God have us be and do?
[13:53] So harmonious. Sympathetic. Sympathetic. These help us, help keep us away from hardness and legalism and coldness. So this takes doctrine and brings it into a beautiful flowering reality in our life.

Doctrine's great. Does it divide? Yeah. It divides sheep from goats. That's what it does. But it shouldn't divide sheep. All of us as sheep should be looking toward the same master, the same shepherd.
Walking in the same way together as it concerns the issues of life and pleasing Jesus. A lot of what it looks like in my marriage to please Jesus is probably what it's going to look like in your marriage to please Jesus.
Same kind of principle. I'm just trying to flesh this out with us. So to be sympathetic is to be compassionately caring and considerate. That helps us take the truth in like-mindedness and make it warm and beautiful because we're showing such tenderness toward each other.
That's where he goes next. Tender hearted. We actually have an eagerness to be helpful and encouraging so that when we move into each other's lives to speak that doctrine, to speak that truth in love, that's exactly what we do.
[15:14] We speak it with tender heartedness, gentleness, compassion, and understanding. We might use the truth to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice. But we are using it and we are living it.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

And then he says that we need to be humble-minded. That's putting others' interests ahead of our own from Philippians chapter 2. And finally, fervently expressing brotherly love.
Brotherly love should be what defines us as a people. A love for Christ is communicated in brotherly love for each other. So God blesses.
God blesses the person living this kind of life. That's what Peter tells us. The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and his ears attend to their prayer. And God blessing us makes us a blessing to others.
How? Well, as we keep our mouths from sinning. That's one way we can bless each other is just keep our mouths from sinning.
[16:30] Even if we don't speak a blessing, at least I'm not speaking a cursing. I'm not saying anything to discourage you. I'm not saying anything to tear you down or remind you of your weaknesses.

Remember, I put it up there last time. One of the best ways that we can help each other and not speaking in sinful ways toward each other is just don't rehearse people's wrongs to them.
Especially in your most intimate relationships, husband and wives, kids and parents. Be more about helping your kids understand and your spouse understand God's ways of working in their lives rather than rehearsing ways that they're falling short.
Let me encourage you folks, it's a lot easier to do one than the other. It's a lot easier to go the direction of let me tell you what's wrong and how this isn't right and how this is falling short.
That might, a rebuke could be necessary at times but more often than not we need to be concerned about speaking the truth in love and in ways that build them up. I recognize Jesus working in your life.
[17:35] I want to speak to the ways I see Jesus working in your life. I see the fruit of the spirit in your life and encourage them more in that. Encourage them more in that because they're going to go out into the world through the week and they're not going to get that most likely.

Right? They are going to be told where they're falling short. How many of you have ever been in a job related evaluation with a supervisor?
Alright? Did the job supervision thing did it start out with let me tell you about ways that I see you improving and ways that I see you bringing a positive and helpful impact to the team or to this did it start out that way?
And how long did that last? Okay, now to the bad news. Most of us I know probably enter into those things and it's all about look, this is where you need to make it work man or whatever.
God blesses us and we become a blessing as we keep our mouths from sinning as we turn away from selfishly doing wrong to God's to do God's good.
[18:55] I don't just turn away from wrong I turn away from wrong in order to do God's good to be a vessel of honor that he uses to do good in the lives of people as we tirelessly and fervently seek and pursue God's way of being at peace in our relationship.

So God sees blesses rewards and answers our prayers when we set our hearts to live like this.
This is not work righteousness. It doesn't have to be. This is faithfulness. Faithfulness to God. God sees and will not bless or favor us when we choose to live selfishly and ignore obeying him in these ways.
Look. For those who desire life, love, and good days, they have to keep their tongue from evil. Don't speak sinfully. And your lips from speaking deceit.
Don't speak deceitfully toward each other. Don't try to control and manipulate each other with your mouth. He must turn away from evil and do good. He must seek peace and pursue it fervently.
[20:04] This is an attitude and a direction of life. You have to ask yourself, am I an intentional peacemaker? I don't mean the hero.

I don't mean moving into people's lives and being a busybody, trying to fix everybody. That's not what this means. Are you seeking the peace of Jesus in your relationships with people?
For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and his ears attend to their prayer. As you are doing these things, God sees, knows, blesses, recognizes, guides.
But what does he do if you choose a course of selfishness? Well, he turns away. I don't mean he disowns you as a Christian. No, you're not going to receive blessing at that point.
You're going to receive chastisement. You're going to get a spanking. I've been spanked. You probably have two. It isn't pleasant.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[21:00] I do not recommend it. I recommend that you bow humbly before the Lord, walk with Jesus, be careful, stay confessing, stay repenting, make it an issue of constancy in your life.

Well, that brings us to Peter's question in 3.13. Will you look with me there? This is our passage for today. who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?
But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. Do not fear their intimidation. Do not be troubled, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.
That word reverence is actually fear. And keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame, for it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right, rather than for doing what is wrong.
And this is why I come back to my title where I said the godly pursuit of the good life. Peter wants us to safeguard this godly pursuit of being and doing good in life.
[22:29] Living the good life is about being and doing good. God's good. Because we've been saved to good works, Ephesians 2.10. Alright, are you with me?

Everybody's with me. We're all buckled in and we understand what's being put forward and what's at stake here. Now what we're going to do is we're going to move down with just a little bit of what I just read.
Just the first verse or two and then we'll finish it up God willing next week. Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?
We all live in a world where we get hurt, where people say mean things, do mean things, do inconsiderate things, even act unjustly toward us. There are different levels examples of what we experience from other people in the way of something that isn't right, that's wrong toward us.
Alright, the question, who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for good? If you set your heart and mind to follow the Lord Jesus and be faithful and do good to everybody, who is there to harm you?
[23:34] The answer is almost no one. Almost. Almost. But I'd like to have you focus your attention on Peter's main concern, which is this, proving zealous for what is good.

That's the main focus. Proving zealous for what is good. So this becomes, beloved, your aim, your trajectory, your course in life as you live to please Christ.
The question is, but what does Peter mean? What does he mean by me needing to prove zealous in my life for what is good? If that's the aim in the course that he's calling me to, what does he mean?
Well, look at this with me if you would. The Greek word for prove is actually in English the idea of to become, to enter, or assume a certain state or condition.
All right? Hold on to that. The sense then is for you to live in, to be about being in this certain condition.
[24:52] And then zealous, zealous, it comes from the Greek word zealotes, zealotes. You see how it looks just like our word zealous or even the word zealot.

You've heard that word. A zealot is entirely devoted or passionately committed to something. That's a zealot. For you to prove zealous for what is good means you are enthusiastically living.
Living. The living is the proving. That's where the idea of prove comes from. You are being what you are in Christ.
You're living it out. And so you're proving. You're simply being what God's made you to be. And what is that? An enthusiast for God's glory.
A zealot for the goodness of God being seen in your life. You want to be a channel of God's goodness working out of your life toward other people.
[25:55] You want to radiate the goodness of God by doing good because God has made you good in Christ. And so now you minister that good.

You're just becoming something that you're useful to God in sharing what he's given you. You see what I mean? So now what he's blessed you with you become a blessing for.
A blessing toward. The blessing that he's made you now is shining out, coming out, working out. You are proving zealous for what is good.
One of the ways to think about it is you're enthusiastic. about living in a passionate commitment to God and to what he has told you is good.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

You're not guessing, you're living by it. Well, what has Peter told us about God saying what is good so far? Will you rehearse this with me?
[26:56] I think it will be beneficial. If you go back to chapter 2, verse 12, look at this with me, beloved, just rehearse scripture with me. Let the word of God enrich your soul.

Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles. That's good in the sight of God for you to do. You need to be concerned about the good of keeping your behavior excellent among the Gentiles so that when, not if, they slander you, they will observe by your good deeds in life that you follow the Lord and it could have a saving effect on them.
That may be the very thing that God uses to bring them to a knowledge of their need for Jesus. That's good. It's good in the eyes of the Lord that you submit yourself for the Lord's sake to every human institution.
It's good in the sight of the Lord that you act like free men but not use your freedom as a covering for evil. It's good that you honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, and honor the king from verse 17 of chapter 2.
It's good for you to be submissive in the workplace so that you are gentle and people see your reasonable behavior. It's good because it finds favor with God when you suffer under injustice and you don't return insult for insult.
[28:19] That's good in the sight of almighty God. You're doing what is right. In verse 21, it is good for you to follow the example of Jesus Christ who suffered for you and bled for you and died for you for your benefit so that good could come to your life.

It is good because Jesus himself bore your sins in his body on the cross so that you could die to sin and live to righteousness. You see that? It's Jesus who's purchased this righteous life for you.
So suffer for righteousness since Jesus suffered to purchase it for you. that's good in the sight of God. Wives, it's good for you in the sight of God to be submissive to your husbands.
It's good for you that they would observe your pure and gentle behavior because you have a gentle and quiet spirit. It will encourage your Christian husband for you to live like that.
You will build him up in Christ when you live submissively with a quiet and gentle spirit before your Christian husband. Ladies, that will encourage your Christian husband in the Lord.
[29:30] It will build him up in his faith and be a blessing to him. That's good in the sight of God. And ladies, if you're married to a non-Christian and unbeliever, he will see that in your life being worked out and God will use it in your life to possibly bring him to himself.

But at the very least, your husband will be blessed by the grace working in your life. it's good husbands in the sight of God that you would honor your wife as a fellow heir of the grace of life. That you would show her high respect and serve her sacrificially because God has made her your partner and your fellow heir in all the goodness that God's pouring into your life, into her life.
And he's made you a couple and a team. That's good in the sight of almighty God. God, it's good then to sum up that all of us would live this harmonious and tender hearted life together, not returning evil for evil.
For those of us who desire a good life and to live in the goodness of that life, we need to turn away from evil and look to the Lord and trust God. That's good in the sight of God.
[30:43] And so now verse 13, in living a life like that, in having an aim and a course and a pattern and a desire like that, who is there to harm you if you prove you're living a life like that?

Who's there to harm you? Let them do their worst. Okay. Or is it?
This is what we're being called to. This is what the good life is. To submit to Jesus is to live out being a blessing of God's goodness in your relationships.
I want you to just notice with me a few other scripture references that speak to this living God's goodness to others. Be encouraged, friends.
Look at this with me. Let us not lose heart in doing good because it's easy for that to happen when we're dealing with difficult people. Let us not lose heart in doing good for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.
[31:56] So then, while we have opportunity, that means here and now, let us do good to all people, but especially to those who are of the household of faith, your brothers and sisters in Christ.

But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good. There it is again. Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds, to meet pressing needs so that they will not be unfruitful in the sight of God.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. And then finally, back in 1 Peter, look at chapter 4, verse 19.
Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful creator in doing what is good, right, righteous.
This is what we're called to. Many people, many people in your life, my life, will respond well to your goodness and your grace. they will, but not everyone, right?
[33:15] This is not a guarantee of pie in the sky, peaches and cream living. Not everybody's going to think that who you are and what you are and what you try to do in faithfulness to Jesus is a great thing.

Now you're going to say, well, why not? What is it? Well, folks, it's very straightforward. It's three letters. The first letter is S, the last letter is N, and there's an I in between.
Right? Sin. Absolutely. Because of sin. It just doesn't get any deeper or more complicated than that. People make it complicated.
It's sin. Now I realize sin expresses itself in a number of ways, but that's why. Many people will respond well to your goodness and grace, but not everyone.
Some people will respond with evil intent toward you. It'll be hard for you to remain spiritually focused when that happens. You can probably think of times in your life when this has gone on, and you can probably think of sleepless nights and trying to get your mind on your job or something else, and this thing with these people was just eating you alive.
[34:35] so it's possible for you that you will feel a sense of hurt, disappointment, possibly anger, or your sense of just becoming weary with being treated unjustly.

And so the Bible is full of these admonitions and these encouragements. Don't grow weary in doing good. Why? Because we do grow weary with the injustice and the hurt and the harm and the constant nagging, the fighting.
in my own personal life, there have been times I've experienced this in my family, with my own children, with extended family members.
There have been times in my life, beloved, when I've experienced this with friends. There have been times when I've experienced this in the church. And it's been a horrible feeling every Sunday because all through the week the texts and the emails have been coming, you know.
It's always like that. And then I walk into church and I just never know who's gonna come and let me have it. That's real.
[35:49] Now I'm saying that, don't feel sorry for me or anything. We've enjoyed a blessed, blessed drama-free life now with you guys for a long time. But there have been many, many, many times in the past where that's been the case.

And you know that feeling that you have in your stomach when you're anticipating, you know, you're gonna get confronted. Somebody's gonna jack you up. Oh, I'm gonna have to go in today and sit there and I know she's gonna look over the cubicle and start in or whatever.
And that, you just go, blah. Peter's speaking to that. That thing right there can grow in you.
Ooh. Ooh. And Satan starts using that thing. You don't want that. Don't grow weary.
In verses 14 through 16, we'll finish with verse 17 next week. But in verses 14 through 16, Peter is gonna give us three directives.
[36:53] We're only gonna deal with the first one in the time remaining. three directives aimed at keeping our hearts zealously committed to doing God's good and fighting our fears.

Fears that pull us into ourselves and away from others. This is what we're focusing on. We'll take the first directive today and that first directive will be this.
Trust the character of Christ. Again, I'm just, I'm taking what I believe here to be the theme and the aim of Peter and trying to put it, couch it in more positive terms.
So here I'm not, I could have chosen to say, don't be afraid. Instead, I'm saying, trust Christ. Trust the character of Almighty God. And this is what we're gonna do with this today.
Another way of thinking about this, be courageous. But you need to understand what being courageous means in your relationship with Jesus as you face these situations in your life with other people because it's out there.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[38:04] This is verse 14. Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? God gets to define what is good and he's done that. I took you all the way back to 212 and walked you through what is good.

But even if you should suffer in these various relationships with human authority, if you should suffer in the workplace with workplace authority, if you should suffer in your marriage with marital authority, if you should suffer in your relationships with your brothers and sisters, look, even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed and do not fear their intimidation.
You may have a slightly different translation there for intimidation. and do not be troubled. That's where we want to focus. And do not be troubled.
When Peter says, but even if you should suffer, but even if you should suffer, he uses a grammatical structure here that means doing good will mean that your suffering, your suffering will not be constant.
It will happen. But your life will not be measured by all of this martyrdom kind of suffering in your life. Suffering will come and go as you serve the Lord.
[39:25] And you may never know when God will bring you through a time of suffering for righteousness. What you need to hold on to is while you don't know, he does.

He does know. So it's all under God's sovereign control that he brings you in and out of these times of suffering for righteousness in your relationships with other people.
They may be close to you or whatever, but God is in control of all of that. All right? Now, suffering, suffering will come into your life as you follow Jesus.
Peter has made that abundantly clear. He's not finished yet. The rest of his book is going to speak in direct terms to what it means to suffer for Jesus.
Beloved, please remember, why is Peter making such a big deal of this? Why is he going on and on? You kind of hear the same things from me each week now because this is what Peter says.
[40:25] Why? Remember what these people are living under. They're living under the persecution, the growing persecution of the Emperor Nero across the Roman Empire. And in these different Roman provinces, Christians are being made to suffer because Nero has basically blamed Christians for the burning of Rome.

Things are ramping up, no pun intended, heating up for these people, literally. And Peter is writing them to say, this is what God calls you to be and do as you face this persecution in your life.
More of it is going to come. It's going to get worse. And you're going to be targeted. And the reason you will be targeted is because you're an easy target.
You are trying to live a life of purity before the Lord and it makes you an easy target. And he doesn't want them to grow weary in doing good as this persecution ramps up.
So suffering will come, even suffering from the sin of others who have benefited from your righteousness. towards them. Have you ever thought that? My goodness, I've tried to be so nice.
[41:38] I mean, I can think of these things I've done and this person is like telling these lies about me. What in the world? Yeah. Some people, some people will feel the weight.

They will feel the guilt. They will feel the shame of their sin because you have been good to them and they may shun you for what they feel.
Have you ever experienced that? And you thought, why, why would they push me out of their life and do these things toward me when I tried to be so fair and good and kind?
Sometimes it's because as you do that to them, it brings them into contact with something going on in their life or them thinking about themselves not being like, I wouldn't do that.
I don't do that. And it makes them feel yucky. And so they push you away because whenever they're around you, they feel yucky. You're such a goody two-shoes.
[42:42] You're such a Jesus freak. Nobody's that serious about their faith. We actually heard somebody say this to us one time. I'm a Christian, but I'm not that kind of Christian.

Christian. Some people will be jealous and envious of you.
Some people will build resentment towards you. And then there will be other people who will simply hate what you stand for because they hate Christ in truth.
You see what I'm saying? It just doesn't get any deeper than sin. Sin's the deepest explanation. You don't have to psychologize yourself crazy over trying to get into people's heads and hearts.
You can't do it. The darkness hates the light. And when the contrast of God's goodness at work in your life exposes and shows them for what they really are, it scares people.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[43:48] Fear and hate can drive people to all kinds of sinful expressions towards you. So the message is this. Be prepared. Don't freak out.

He's going to say later, don't look. Don't be surprised at these fiery ordeals that come upon you. When you seek to live for Christ, darkness will hate you because you're living in the light.
But even if this scenario of suffering for righteousness plays out in your life, you are blessed. That's what the text says. Even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness.
That's what I've been talking about. You are blessed. Suffering for righteousness is an indication of God's blessing on your life. I've talked to so many people and met so many people over the course of ministry and their question comes, is this happening to me because God's punishing me?
I feel like I'm being punished. So we have to help Christians distinguish between punishment and discipline. Condemnation and God loving you because He's disciplining you.
[45:14] There's a difference. There is, therefore now, no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. God doesn't punish Christians.

Jesus took your punishment for you. But God will discipline you. So Peter says, if you're going to suffer, suffer for righteousness. Not because you're sinning and you need to be spanked and God is spanking you.
Spanking you to discipline you back to Himself. There is a difference and that is real. Be prepared. You are blessed.
Here's what Peter means. Peter means, Peter means, you are seeing the proof of being favored by God and this should give you encouragement.
So that's what he means when he says you are blessed. I don't want anybody to go out of here thinking, the pastor said this morning that suffering, we're blessed in it and so we should be really happy and just giddy about anything that's going on in our lives that hurt us and wound us and break our hearts.
[46:28] No. I've cried crocodile tears over some of the woundedness I've felt in these relationships with people. And you will too.

No, what Peter is saying is when you are suffering for righteousness it becomes proof of God's favor on your life. Now, isn't that a crazy way to think about it in human terms?
It takes the truth of scripture to turn our minds around and help us grasp that. Will you take note of something for me? Will you take note of the word courage in encouragement?
And do not fear their intimidation, Peter says, and do not be troubled. I'm camping out here because I know this is where we live. I've been doing this too long and I've been living for 60 years now.
I know a little bit about what it means to live with hurt and pain and disappointment and to grow weary. Do not fear their intimidation.
[47:30] Do not be troubled. Alright, look at that in your text. That's at the end of verse 14. Do not fear their intimidation. This first clause is rendered literally and do not fear their fear.

And do not fear their fear. Do not fear these people. Do not fear what they can do to you, which is exactly where our minds go.
You see, you are actually forbidden by scripture to live in the fear of people and what they can do. The flip side of this is this.
Be courageous. Now, we need to talk in a few minutes about what it means for you to battle against this fear by being courageous. You need to understand biblically, what does it mean for me to be courageous?
What's that look like? But first of all, Peter adds this, and do not be troubled. Now, folks, this is a strong word as Peter's using it here.
[48:38] Do not allow this suffering. Do not allow the threats of these people. Do not allow the behavior of these people toward you to cause you, and let me give you several ways of nuancing this to understand it.

Do not let all of that cause you inward commotion. That's just what we experience. Inward commotion. That's that thing I showed you. You know? Don't let it take away your calmness of mind.
Your calmness of mind in the Lord. Alright? Another way. Don't let these people stir you up. Create anxiety in you.
Unsettle you. Distress you. Agitate you. Create fear or dread in you. Because this fear can dominate your life.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

And I promise you, friends, it will show up in other areas of your life. You will become susceptible and weak in other areas of your life where Satan will use fear to drive you.
[49:51] This is just so... This is a huge issue. when people make your life hard, when they say and do things that threaten you and hurt you, it can tempt you to dread what might happen to you and how it could affect your family.

people who hate Christ and hate truth who will be mean to you for you doing good.
These people will find ways to intimidate you, to try and make you feel fearful and listen to this one, and to take advantage of your humility.
They will try to exploit your humility. Put it in the bank. So this is scripture now trying to flesh out life and reality for us as Peter tells us not to fear, be courageous.
We don't want to walk out of here and say, oh, well, that's easy for him to say. No, it's not. We need to think about who this guy is, what's been going on in his life.
[51:15] This man has known fear. This is the man who, while Jesus locked eyes with him, said, with cursing, I do not know him.

That's fear, brothers and sisters. He knows what he's talking about. But even more than that, God does. You know, God wrote it through him, so.
People will try to take advantage of your humility. And so what happens is Peter quotes from Isaiah 8, verse 12.
Isaiah 8, verse 12. When he tells us not to fear, not to be intimidated, not to be troubled by these people. You are not to say, and I thought this was very interesting in light of what we've come off of with the COVID thing.
You are not to say it is a conspiracy in regard to all that this people call a conspiracy, and you are not to fear what they fear or be in dread of it.
[52:21] This is one of the main reasons I tune out the world on all the stuff that they say and weigh in on whatever's going on, the COVID thing, the presidential thing, whatever, fear because this is what they do.

They're fear mongers. They prey on people being afraid and turning in and watching and trying to get all this to come in. Oh, can you believe that?
And then they gather and they talk about it. And then it just goes all over the place and the whole country is being driven by fear.
Fear, not faith. Yes, be informed, informed, but not fearful. Not fearful. I love you guys.
I don't want y'all to live because I know, I know what Satan does with this. As soon as you start opening those kinds of doors and following all the conspiracy stuff, you're going to open yourself up to how Satan will use your life and you will become somebody who manipulates and controls.
[53:25] And you don't want that. Be informed, be wise, be responsible. Look, this is why we're gathering together in these times over the summer and talking about civil disobedience.

Right? Melanie's come, she's done a lot of work here. Because we want to be faithful to God in the way that we respond to these real issues that come through our society and our culture.
We do not want to be people responding in fear and hollering out and taking on the voice of all these other people. Sometimes they're even Christians. No?
It's almost, you almost want to step back and say, do you guys not know who owns this whole world? The cattle on a thousand hills? Listen, if God can take a person like you and turn them from death to life, don't you think he can handle the government?
Oh yeah. It doesn't mean bad things aren't happening. It means this. We don't have to be afraid. You don't have to worry. Boy, I could just go off right now.
[54:36] You see, I'm away from the, right? Global warming, right? But we're all supposed to be scared to death. Do you know that in, well anyway.

One day I want to preach on that. And I want to take you into the history of the world and ancient cultures and talk to you about global warming. and the effect that it's had on ancient cultures where millions of people in the ancient world were displaced.
Why? Because God takes the world through seasons. But God also said as long as I'm on the throne and I keep the world moving, there will be seasons.
I'll keep the seasons moving. Don't worry about the polar ice cap. It's not going to melt and flood the world. That makes great movies.
But it's bunk. And people use it to enslave people in fear. We are not to be a people of fear.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[55:38] So what is Isaiah speaking about? Sorry. That's a little bit of a soapbox for me. What is Isaiah speaking about? At this particular time in Israel's history as Peter quotes this from Isaiah.

At this time in Israel's history, Israel, the nation, the Hebrew people were divided due to civil war. So you had the northern kingdom of Israel and you had the southern tribes, the southern kingdom split across the middle of Judah.
Israel and Judah. Ahaz was king of Judah. Israel, the northern kingdom, made an alliance with their former enemy, Aram.
Aram and Israel joined together, threatened to invade Judah. If Judah did not ally with Israel and Aram to fight against an even more dreaded enemy, the Nazis of the great north at this time, Assyria.
Assyria. These were warriors of warriors. Assyria, the entire world was afraid of these people. Well, Ahaz refused to join the alliance against Assyria.
[56:55] In fact, even against Isaiah's counsel, Ahaz tried to form a secret pact with Assyria. Even though Isaiah said, God said, don't do that.

Meanwhile, see, this is what fear does. A prophet of God comes to this man and says to him directly, God said, don't do this. Trust the Lord. Don't pact with Assyria.
Don't fear these people. And fear drove him to say, well, I'm going to do my own thing. Meanwhile, while Ahaz is trying to do this secret pact, meanwhile, Israel and Aram were secretly plotting to kill, assassinate Ahaz and put their own king on the throne of Judah, who would be more amiable to their plans.
Ahaz and the people were terrified. They were terrified by all these rumors and conspiracy theories that were moving all around the people and all over Israel, all over Jerusalem.
It seemed they were doomed no matter what they chose to do. Except for one thing. What was that one thing? It was Isaiah coming to speak on behalf of the Lord and say this.
[58:11] You are not to say it is a conspiracy. Stop it. In regard to all that this people call a conspiracy and you are not to fear what they fear or be in dread of it.

Boom. That was Isaiah's message. Now, he'll say some more that we'll cover next week, but that's where he starts. Do not fear people. Do not fear people.
And this is exactly where Peter chose to begin his counsel to each of us about being passionately committed to doing God's good. So here is Peter's first command to us about what will help us fight the fears and anxieties that manage to pull us into ourselves and away from trusting God and serving others.
That's what fear and anxiety do. Fear and anxiety put all the focus on you. And you pull into yourself because fear and anxiety wants to create control and manipulation in you.
It's a trap. Don't fear man or what man can do to you. The alternative, be courageous. But what does it mean to be biblically courageous?
[59:32] If you'll just give me a few more minutes, this is how I want to conclude for today. I didn't want to just cut this off without speaking to you a little bit more specifically so that you can gain some insight and some understanding into the issue of getting past your fear and anxiety.

All right, look, like every other time I preach, this is not all that could be or needs to be said about dealing with a very serious and prominent issue of fear and anxiety in our lives.
But this is where Peter begins. After everything he said, remember, we're three chapters in now. Right? We're concluding chapter three. He's had a lot to say.
But this is where he goes to deal with this issue in specific terms. I'll wait to deal with fear and anxiety in even greater detail when we come to first Peter five, six and seven.
Look there with me. 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.
[60:41] Boy, that is so rich. So rich. So rich. So rich. And God lovingly with such fatherly care and tenderness speaks right into that area of our life.

It's saying, I know you that you have anxiety. I understand the anxiety that you are tempted with and live under in this world. And he just speaks right to that.
I care for you so much. Oh, beyond what you could know, I care for you. Look to the cross and see how much I care for you. That's where we're going.
And God will speak to that thing. But right now, right now, I want to stay in tune with Peter's theme. And I want to take you to the place that I took the men when we met this last time at Jim and Jody's

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

house.
Let me just take you to Joshua one for a few more minutes and then I'll close. OK, let me give you a little more insight into this biblical courage. Joshua chapter one. Will you turn there with me?
[61:39] This is where we'll end. Joshua one, beginning in verse one. Now it came about after the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, that the Lord spoke to Joshua, the son of none, Moses servant, saying, and here's what God said to Joshua.

Moses, my servant is dead. Now, therefore, arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel, every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you just as I spoke to Moses from the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, as far as the great sea toward the setting of the sun will be your territory.
No man will be able to stand out. Now, listen to this promise. No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Did you notice that? Why would he say specifically, no man will be able to stand against you?
I'll answer that in just a minute. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you. I will not fail you or forsake you.
Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous. Be careful to do according to all the law which Moses, my servant, commanded you.
[63:15] Do not turn from it. Don't turn to the right or the left so that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth.

You shall meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it.
For then you will make your way prosperous and then you will have success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous.
Do not tremble or be dismayed. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. What is he saying?
What is he alluding to? What does he want Joshua to understand about this task that he's being given in the death of Moses now?
[64:14] Well, Moses is dead. And so now Joshua, who's served Moses all these many decades as his personal assistant, Joshua is to take his place of spiritual leadership over Israel.

Talk about big shoes to fill. This is a huge change. This is a potential crisis waiting to happen. It's a crisis of faith for both Joshua and the people.
Look, all kinds of things that they wanted to. If Joshua wanted to, he could sit down and say, well, I'll tell you what, the first thing I'm going to do is I'm going to make me a list. I'm going to make me a list of all the things that could go wrong in this campaign.
I'm going to try to outthink God and come up with all the contingencies and all the possibilities of what might happen to us if we... Now, he could do that.
All kinds of things could go wrong. They'll march across the Jordan River after 40 years of wandering in the desert.
[65:16] They have wandered the desert for 40 years because God punished them for disobedience. What was the disobedience?

For fearing the people across the Jordan more than for fearing the Lord. Remember the report came back? For those of you men who were at the Bible study, the report came back.
We are like grasshoppers in their sight. They have big forts and big people and giant warriors and big swords.
And if we go over there, they'll crush us like we're grasshoppers. The only problem with all of that was God had told them and told them and told them, cross the Jordan. I've given these people into your hand.
Do not fear them. Only be strong and courageous. That's all through Deuteronomy. It's not like this the first time he said this. He sent out 12 spies.
[66:13] They all came back after 40 days. 40 days of spying out the land. Two of the 12, Joshua and Caleb, said, we need to go take this place. This is awesome. This is truly a land full of milk and honey.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

This is great. The other 10 said, no, we'll all die. No. And so God said, I'll tell you what, this is what's going to happen because the people in the leadership listened.
Listened to those 10. Everybody from 20 years old and up will never see the promised land. You'll all die. And I'll put the next generation in your place and they'll take it.
And so now the next generation is standing on this side of the Jordan and they need to get to the other side. And Joshua was being told to lead them. That's what's been going on.
Wow. This command is something that their fathers were afraid of. So he's giving it to Joshua and telling Israel, take the land of promise by force of arms.
[67:26] They have to go to war, folks. Joshua and the people are tempted to do just what we're tempted with, to fearfully look ahead and forecast what might happen to them.

All right. Let me ask you a question. Look at verses five and nine of Joshua. What promise does God give in connection with his command from verses five and nine?
That's the question. Just look at it. Here's the answer. The Lord promised Joshua that he would always be faithful to him, never forsake him, never fail him.
And God promised to be with him wherever he went. In other words, God's presence and support will always be with you, Joshua, as you do his will and obey him in what he's given you, which is exactly what Peter's telling us.
Do the good that God has shown you live the good that God is showing you. He says is good and trust him. Don't fear these people who will take the good that you do and twist it and pervert it and warp it and punish you for it.
[68:36] Don't fear him. Trust the Lord. This is the answer. God will be with you. What other critical element do we see in this text that God uses to connect to Joshua's success?

What other critical element? Look at verses seven and eight. Only be strong and very courageous.
All right. What does he connect to that? Be careful to do according to and you can just put the word instruction there.
Be careful to do according to what God has instructed. That's exactly what Peter's telling us. Don't turn from what God's instructed.
Don't go to the left. Don't go to the right. In other words, don't choose your own way. Don't try to manipulate. Don't try to control. Don't worry. Don't be anxious. Don't let the calm leave you so that you can have success wherever you go.
This book of the law will not depart from your mouth. Meditate on it day and night. Why? So that you may be careful to do according to all that's written. Why?
[69:44] Then you're going to have a prosperous way. Then you're going to have success. The second element that God connects to Joshua's success is this.

It's very straightforward and it's very simple. It's knowing and living out God's instruction. That's all throughout scripture.
Now here is where I told the men you encounter the spiritual principle, which is the key. To fighting your fears and to having godly courage as you follow Christ.
This is the heartbeat of what Peter is saying and what God told Joshua. Look at this. Joshua will not succeed because he obeys God's instruction.
He will succeed because God is with him to enable him to obey God's instruction. There is a huge difference in that lifestyle.
[70:43] And we can see this. In a couple of passages that will encourage our hearts.

One is in Matthew 28. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.
Now that's the good. We've been told that's good to do that. That's good to give your life to this. And what does he say? And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.
That's a promise. But he doesn't stop there. He also says this. For those of you who want to see it, it's in Romans chapter 8. Some of you probably anticipated that I might end up here talking about biblical courage.
Romans chapter 8, verse 31. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? Does that sound like Peter?
[71:58] And then if you drop down to verse 35. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Will any of these things be powerful enough to separate us from the love that Jesus has for us? Just as it's written, for your sake, we're being put to death all day long.
This is God's sacrifice. For we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered. But in all these things, we overwhelmingly conquer through him who loved us.
For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, height, depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen? That pretty much covers it. So biblical courage is not always the absence of fear.
[73:05] While we are told not to fear man, look at this, to have courage is to count on the character of Christ and obey him faithfully despite your fears.

This is what the men learned a Saturday or so ago.
That's Peter's encouragement to us. Do not fear their intimidation and do not be troubled, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts.
More on that beautiful reality next time, Lord willing. Let's pray together. Father, we honor your heart. And we thank you, almighty God, for the truth of your word to encourage us in a life of courage.
That is, counting on your character. That is, counting on your character. Counting on your promises. Even as you told Joshua, I will be with you. Jesus, you've told us that. I will be with you.
[74:29] Even as you told Joshua, count on the promises of my word. Meditate on it day and night. Don't turn from it to the right or to the left. Don't try to manipulate your way or control your way away from these circumstances or through them.

Look to my truth to guide you and bring you the confidence that you need. Father, this is what I pray for my friends. This is what I ask you pastorally now.
As I seek to be an under shepherd to them. Following the great high shepherd. Knowing that you love them. Over and over, these texts have told us nothing can separate us from the love of Jesus. So help us to be courageous. Not because we're bold people in ourselves. Not because we're putting faith and confidence in our skills or abilities or knowledge.
But because we're looking to you and counting on your character. We're counting on your promises. We're counting on the fact that you are God. And you love us.
[75:31] And you've given us hope. So help us to walk in these ways. That we might do good to other people. Even when people do us wrong.

Even when we're faced with the temptation to be fearful. Because of circumstances. And situations that are beyond our control.
And we don't know the outcome. Don't let anxiety rule our lives Lord. And rob us. Don't allow us to pull into ourselves.
And turn away from being a blessing to other people. Because we're so full of fear. Help us to open our hearts. And trust you.
And if we're going to fear. Help us to fear you. To have such a reverence. And such a worshipful attitude toward you. That it defines who we are and how we live.
[76:28] Thank you for your word. Help us to build our lives on your truth. And to minister that truth to each other. In a spirit of love of Christ. It's in his name we pray. Amen.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host