

Christ's Servant Sufferers (Part 3)

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[0 : 00] I know. It's a burden. Who won? I don't even know.

I hid behind the sofa last. I didn't watch it on purpose. Okay. Well, friends, if you turn in your Bibles to 1 Peter, if you're not already there, we're closing out, God willing, we're closing out this wonderful book that we've been in now for a number of months as Peter has encouraged our hearts to live faithfully to Jesus in a hostile world as we suffer unjustly for being faithful, for living a life that wants to please and honor Jesus and receiving in return the hostility of those around us who hate Jesus.

They may not use those words. They may not consciously be aware of the fact that they are in rebellion against God. Nevertheless, that is the case, according to Scripture.

If you don't have faith in Christ and trust in Christ, you're his enemy. And so that's why we evangelize. That's why we seek to live a life that is glorifying to God as we live among those who are in rebellion against the Lord.

The title of my message for this morning, Christ's Servant Sufferers. It is a part three. As we've looked into chapter five, after we finish the first four verses or so, I've been trying to move through these final exhortations that Peter's giving to his readers to encourage them, stay faithful.

[1 : 37] Don't give up. Don't surrender to self-pity. Don't surrender to pride or fear or any of the other things that you would be tempted toward as you live faithfully to Jesus and the world doesn't pat you on the back for it.

They actually want to put the dagger in the back instead. So what do you do? How do you live? This is what Peter's dealing with. And as he comes to these final exhortations, he's trying to summarize and leave in their minds what he believes to be the more salient points for living that faithful life under the Lord.

That's what he's trying to do. Now, as we come to these final exhortations, friends, let's remember that we need to keep the context in mind. We need to be very, very careful that we hold on to what Peter's been saying and track carefully with what he's trying to encourage us to live out.

So all this instruction, all of these exhortations that he gives come under the context or within the context of chapter five, verses one through seven.

Now, if you'd read there with me, therefore, I exhort the elders among you. So he's talking now to the pastors of the local churches that this letter would have been circulated to in the modern, what we would call the modern area of Turkey.

[3 : 07] He says, as your fellow pastor, your fellow elder, those are synonymous terms, and witness of the sufferings of Christ. That's where Greg and I differ with Peter.

We're not apostles. We did not see Jesus personally. We did not walk with Jesus. We didn't see him resurrected. Those are all elements of being an apostle. He says, I have witnessed the sufferings of Christ.

I am also like you fellow pastors, a partaker of the glory that is to be revealed as we trust and hope in the Lord. He says in verse two, 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 as 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. Those were his exhortations to pastors. Now he turns to the congregation. You younger men, likewise be subject or in submission to your elders, your pastors, and then all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another.

For God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he might exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

[4 : 45] So he starts with the pastors and he speaks to them about submitting to God as they serve the congregation and provide leadership and oversight with the congregation.

That was several sermons ago. We unpacked all of that together. Then he speaks to the people and he encourages them. Submit to your pastors. Submit to one another and serve one another in the fear of the Lord out of reverence for the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's what he wants these folks to do as he guides them through how to be faithful in suffering or sharing in the suffering of Jesus, the sufferings they're experiencing.

This is where it left us a couple of sermons ago. Attitudes of the Savior's servant sufferers. That's that first section in those first seven verses.

And we highlighted these particular items. Submission, humility, and trust in the Lord. Those are the three hard attitudes for faithful spiritual service.

[5 : 53] Those are the hard attitudes that we live out of. So those serve as the foundation for what comes next. And then, I believe it was last week, we turned to the first part of this one.

Actions of the Savior's servant sufferers. As we nurture those hard attitudes, we need to translate those into practical everyday living.

Or we might think of it this way. I need to take those hard attitudes of submission, humility, and trust and translate those into spiritual action. How do I activate those hard attitudes in the way that I speak and live?

That's what we're dealing with. That was last week, and then we'll close it up this week talking about that. All of this that we talk about today has to do with humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God.

What does that look like? How do I know when I'm humbling myself under God's mighty hand? And the idea is that you are under God's mighty hand as you suffer unjustly in this world for living to please Jesus.

[7 : 05] Now that's going to hurt. That's going to cost you something. And the temptation is toward pride or run away. We either exalt ourselves, that's the fight or flight thing.

Those are the temptations. This is all, we've covered all this in previous messages. What Peter is telling us is stay under the mighty hand of God and realize you are still under that mighty hand even as you suffer, even as you feel that pain and that tension from trying to live a holy life in a hostile world.

Stay under God's mighty hands best place you can be. And these actions help us do that. These heart attitudes help us do that. So let's look at these actions now in verse 8 and following.

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 brethren who are in the world.

[8 : 19] 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.

To him be dominion forever and ever. Amen. That's what we're looking at in these actions that we want to live out faithfully each day.

And it, these actions are going to help us put into play this resistance that Peter's calling us to now. They reflect his instructions on how to take submission, humility, and trust and, and translate that into practical deeds of serving God and God's agenda for you.

He has a design and an agenda in your suffering. You're not suffering alone and you're not suffering without purpose. And when I say purpose, folks, I mean earthly purpose and eternal.

So it's a win-win for us as Christians all around. We are receiving an eternal design and purpose and reward and we are receiving a earthly design and reward and purpose for all that we're going through.

[9 : 42] It all comes together. Now you understand that unbelievers can't say that. Have you ever wondered how unbelievers in your family and your co-workers and your friends live through the crises and tragedies of life?

How do they do it? Well, you know exactly how they do it. How do they do it? They distract themselves, don't they? They run up their credit cards. They run, they run by going off and trying to hide and come back and think it'll be different.

They move, they change jobs, they drink. They find all kinds of ways to try and cope. Listen, friends, Christians are not called to cope.

We have been made more than conquerors. Amen. We're not called to cope. We're not called to just manage and get by.

We're called to be stewards and we are serving as adopted children this great king who has purchased us away from sin and made us holy unto himself.

[10 : 52] That's who we are. And we can rejoice in it. Now, Peter comes to this particular section of scripture and it's his way then, as I've said, of summarizing what is involved in you casting your anxieties on the Lord and trusting that he cares for you.

that's from verse 7. How do I keep myself under the mighty hand of God in a humble way as I go through this? How do I cast all my anxiety on him knowing that he cares for me?

Well, he's summarizing how you can do that right now. The first one that we talked about from last week, this first action, self-control. He says, compose yourself. Be of sober spirit.

The New American Standard Translation. Be of sober spirit. Compose yourself. The English Standard Version has an excellent translation of this.

Be sober minded. You might be able to get your hands around that a little better. The Greek word here is nepho. It literally means to be sober.

[11 : 59] This was from last week. Just a quick reminder. So the idea here is for you to be restrained. disciplined. Self-controlled.

That's why I've used the word compose yourself. Very important. The next one that we dealt with, again, these two were from last week. Watchfulness. Watchfulness.

Be of sober spirit. Look, be on the alert. Be on the alert. So this is a conditioned response.

So this isn't you reacting and panicking and trying to figure out what to do in the moment. This is a conditioned response. With watchfulness, you've trained yourself, you've learned, you've practiced responding like this to life circumstances because you've made responding to life circumstances first and foremost about responding to God.

You're all with God consciousness. You're thinking in terms of moving into this context or situation and your whole heart is given to, Lord, what would you have me say and do?

[13 : 11] Now, don't you see that in the life of Jesus? I came to do not my will but the will of my Father. My Father has given me what to say and what to do. Now, if Jesus said that, how much more for us, right?

that's where we need to live. We're not reacting to circumstances. We are responding to life by responding first and foremost to the God who loves us and has designed these circumstances in our life to make us more like Christ.

So, we want to walk into that carefully, attentively, watchfully, alert. He's going to throw another thing in the mix here in just a second.

He's going to tell us why. Be spiritually watchful. Be on the alert. It's literally rendered from last week, you'll remember for those of you who are here, be on the alert is literally rendered as be awake.

Wake up. Don't be caught napping in your spiritual life. Don't be caught unaware. Be then vigilant. Vigilant.

[14 : 24] I think a couple of translations has. This is what's needed for us, hear me carefully, to do battle. This is a call to doing battle on God's terms against a very powerful enemy committed to our ruin.

This is a spiritual vigilance. vigilance is the chilling reality, as I mentioned to you last week, that you and your loved ones are being hunted. So Jeff, how do we know that? Well, let's read on in verse eight. Be of sober spirit. Be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. That's why. The reason for our self-control and spiritual vigilance is its life and death. Now, just think about it. Let me get you right into the swing of this, if I could. I'm going to try anyway. Your adversary, okay, we're going to note that, the devil. I'm going to note that one too. Prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. And the picture there is a ravenous predator gulping down the prey after tearing it to back.

It's pretty graphic stuff, but that's what it is. Now, let me ask you, let's say Greg and I come to your house and sit down with you and say, look, we've got some really sobering things to tell you. We want to offer you a warning. And we're in all seriousness. We know by overwhelming evidence that someone is stalking you and your family. And we know without a shadow of a doubt that their intention is to catch you unawares and they want to murder you. They want to kill your kids. They want to kill your wife. They want to kill your husband. And they want to do it in a wicked, sick, psycho way.

And we know this for sure. And we've come here to warn you. Sober up and be watchful. Now, if I did that, if Greg and I did that, I know that's heavy. Stay with me. If we said that to you, what do you think would be one of the first questions that you'd have when we shut up talking?

What would you want to ask us? Absolutely, Mike. See, this is the protector coming out. Who? Who is it? See, he's thinking, I know this man. He's thinking preemptive strike here, right? He's thinking, get the jet in the air, lays the target, and let's put the nuke on it, man.

[17 : 37] Right. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around seeking someone to devour.

That's the word of God. You don't get any more credible than that. You and your family, your children are being hunted.

Whether you like it or not, or whether you want to acknowledge it or not, that is scripture's promise. You are being hunted. What are you going to do about it?

Well, Peter says that there is something we can do about it. And it has nothing to do with running away and hiding or pretending like it's not there. Again, I say to you, the reason for our self-control, the reason for our calling to watchfulness, to vigilance, is that this is life and death.

It's life and death for us. It's life and death for those around us. So, going on Mike's question, who is this adversary? What can we glean from what Peter tells us about our adversary to help us in our struggle against him?

[18 : 53] All right. Well, let's look at that real quickly. The first thing that we're told is that he is our adversary. Your adversary, the devil.

It's a term that comes from the courtroom. It refers to the antagonistic or accusing party in a legal action. So, it refers to a hostile enemy, an opponent.

The word that I'd like for you to zero in on is accuser. When you think of adversary in terms of Satan, think of accuser. That's the best description we can apply to him with this particular word.

And then this, devil, diabolos. He is a false accuser. The primary emphasis here is that he is a false accuser.

In other words, he's a slanderer. Adversary and devil paint Satan as our hostile enemy who constantly accuses and slanders us.

[19 : 55] Those are the two terms you need to hold on to. Accuser and slanderer. Now, any of you who've walked with the Lord for any amount of time can immediately resonate with the sense of temptation and feeling that you have from being attacked by demonic forces.

He's constantly accusing. He's constantly slandering. He's working on your mind and your heart. He's trying to pull you away from devotion to Jesus. That's why we wrestle with all of that.

Now, friends, think of this with me as well because this is the word picture that he uses. A lion. We all know what a lion is. Think of on the prowl.

A lion on the prowl. And then think of seeking. Lion, prowl, and seeking. You're out in the bush and you're on foot and by yourself.

Those are not words you want to hear. Lion, prowling, seeking, right? I don't. All of those words tell us Satan is actively hunting us.

[21 : 03] He's waiting for. He is creating opportunities to attack and kill. Now, lions roar. It's interesting to me.

A roaring lion. I think that's just supposed to make the word picture more vivid for us. To see this. You've seen it. To see this big creature that could easily overpower any of us.

Opening that big mouth with those fangs. Ah, you know. And you see. You see the threat. You're looking at it. And you're thinking, I don't want to go in there. Right?

I don't want any part of me in that. And that's a good thing. That's exactly what Peter wants you to think about as you think about Satan coming after you.

I don't want him to get any part of me. I don't want him taking a bite out of me anywhere. I like everything I have. It's all vital. So it all needs to stay here. But what does he want to do?

[22 : 02] He aims right here. He wants to mess this all up. Your devotion to Jesus. Isn't that what we said? 2 Corinthians 11 3.

Paul's concern was. I am concerned that just as Satan deceived Eve and drew her away. He will also draw you away from a simple and pure devotion to Jesus.

See, we don't need to think too much of ourselves and think, oh, we're all that. I'm under attack. I'm important. You know. What he wants to do is rob you of giving God what God deserves from you.

Worship. He wants that. He's a thief. He's a liar. And he's a murderer. Hence, you need to be sober and realize what's really going on here.

And how we're supposed to deal with it. As I think about lions roaring again, they do that to create fear and panic in their prey.

[23 : 06] That's sometimes why they roar. They also roar to announce their kill and their dominance. You've seen this. I've seen this.

Either way, we can say this. A roar is bad for everyone else. You don't want to hear a roar, a lion roar. He's either getting ready to do something or he's already done it.

Bad news. Now, I think we can allow, if we just go a little bit further with this, just to impress into our minds. I think we can allow nature to show us how this predatory scene can play out in our lives.

So, I do this. I picture the nature films where we have some predators like wolves, a pack of wolves. They follow and they panic their prey.

Then they look for the weak. They chase and they wear down their prey and then attack them. Right? That's what you see.

[24 : 10] They can look along for a long period of time. And they just watch. And they wait. It's an amazing thing.

I saw, I'm not going to get all graphic on you, but I saw one time I had to turn away from. They were a pack of wolves that caught a coyote out in the middle of the snow.

I think it was at one of the national parks. And man, the viciousness and brutality of that. It was awful.

Awful. This is what Paul speaks about. When he talks about false teachers, it's no accident that he uses ravenous wolves as the picture for them.

So if you think about these nature films where you see that kind of thing, that would be one scenario that could play out. Here's a second.

[25 : 06] A second scenario involves a slightly different but still vicious, still very deadly strategy. Lions. That's the one Peter used? Let's go to that one.

Lions can follow their prey for long periods, patiently planning their attack. They just stay off on the peripheral out there and they just watch.

And they walk along and they look. I've watched the films show us this. And it is such an incredible thing to watch those predators.

You can see them thinking. You can see them. And they do this coordinated. The lionesses, it's amazing and chilling.

It's scary as all get out. They follow them for a long time. They patiently plan. They watch for the weakness to exploit. They're crafty. They use the terrain and the vegetation to sneak into position.

[26 : 03] And then they ambush their prey. So they're using everything they can to their advantage. Think of it this way. In the nature film, the camera zooms in on the lion's eyes.

As they lock on to a specific target. And it's a laser-like focus. And you can see them lean in.

And then they start moving. And they get lower. And it's as if they're saying, I'm going to have you.

You. Not that one. Not that one. Or that one. You. That's your enemy. He's locked in on you.

And he wants you. And he will do anything to get you. He has no scruples. He has no morals. He has no caring.

[27 : 07] He has no conscience. He is a cold-blooded killer. That's your enemy. That's your adversary.

That is the devil. Do you realize when he tempted Jesus, he would have ruined humanity for eternity?

Don't go to that cross. I'll give you the kingdoms of this earth. All you have to do is bow down to me. You'll have everything you want.

And more. Boy, that would have been the hopeless end for us, wouldn't it? That's what they do.

Well, these scenarios and truths do something for us. They tell us about our enemy, and they put each of us into one of two categories as we live out our spiritual lives.

[28 : 11] We either belong to those who are prey or to those who persevere. You're either prey or you're persevering, and you're in the fight. It's one or the other. And so since Peter uses the lion analogy, we need to connect his warning here with what he tells us at the beginning of verse 8.

What does he say? Be of sober spirit. Be on the alert. So be self-controlled. Be composed. And condition yourself to respond to life because you have conditioned your heart to want to respond to God.

Satan is crafty and wants to ambush you. He's subtle and he's scheming. So your self-control and spiritual vigilance are critical aspects to this persevering spirit that you need to have as you live out your life before the Lord.

So here's the thing. Be a learning. Be a learning, growing, devoted Christian in your daily walk with Jesus. I'm going to say more about that in just a moment.

Now, before we leave this point from verse 8, I'd like for you to look at one other place with me. James chapter 4. James is just before Peter. The book just before Peter.

[29 : 36] James chapter 4. Now, look at how similar James' exhortations are to what Peter says. James here in this context, he's encouraging us and admonishing us about how to deal with worldliness.

And he's telling us in so many words, look, one of the reasons that you guys fight and quarrel is because you're all caught up in yourselves and you're looking to the world for those answers and for the direction that you...

No, don't do that. So he comes to verse 6. God gives a greater grace. A greater grace for what? A greater grace to stand against these schemes. Against this worldliness.

Against this pride in your heart. God gives a greater grace than the power of those things to tempt you away. Then he says this. Therefore it says, God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Church, where have you heard that before? Where else have you heard that? Go back if you would. Hold your finger there. Go back to 1 Peter 5. And look at verse 5.

[30 : 42] You younger men likewise be subject to your elders and all of you, all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another. For God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble.

These guys are in lockstep together. Once again, back to James. Submit. Submit. Verse 7. Submit, therefore, to God.

Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Now look what he tells us about resisting. Draw near. Isn't that interesting? Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.

Cleanse your hands, you sinners. Purify your hearts, you double-minded or you doubters. Be miserable and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.

Why? Because this is serious business. You need to deal with sin. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord and he will exalt you. So again, you have a recipe here from James that involves what it looks like for you to resist Satan.

[31 : 49] I want you to take note from James what's not there. What you can't see between the white spaces and all that. Take as careful note as to what you're being told is not there, not to do in terms of resisting the devil.

I'm going to hit that in just a sec. So look at what he's telling us. The first thing that he tells you is submit therefore to God. Submit to God. The next thing that he tells you in verse 8.

Draw near to God. This is all a way of telling us to walk in the Spirit. To put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's what submit is. When you pray, Lord help me to walk in the Spirit. Help me to be filled with the Spirit. Help me to live according. What you're asking God is to help you obey.

Help me obey the Lord. Help me to obey the Holy Spirit. Help me to get under, submit, to line my life under the truth of the Word of God.

[32 : 54] Because that's what the Holy Spirit ministers to you as your counselor. That's where James is pointing us. I wish I could say more there but I'm not expositing this section. Let's go back to Peter.

Let's go back to Peter and look at what he says next. I think James will help you and you can do more with that. But look at this one. Obedience. This is the third action that I want to highlight for you from verse 9.

Obedience. What does he say in this one? But resist him. He's prowling around. He's seeking. He wants to devalue. Resist him. Firm in your faith.

Knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished or experienced by your brothers who are in the world. So commit yourself.

Commit yourself. But resist him. Peter moves us from a ready resistance through this self-control and spiritual vigilance to a responsive resistance.

[33 : 56] Now, within the context here you might want to think about this. It might be helpful to some of you to think about this as hand-to-hand combat. Now I'm going to qualify that. Hand-to-hand combat.

I'll tell you why. The Greek word that's being used here for resist it means exactly what you would think it would mean in the English language.

To set oneself against. To withstand. Or to oppose. But it's active. This is active opposition. Not passive.

Active opposition. You have fixed yourself to stand against and to turn back and attack. You've readied. You've prepared. You might remember a sermon or two ago when I was dealing with the previous context I talked about a readied and steadied heart.

You need to ready and steady your heart in this process. And that's what those heart attitudes help you do. Submission, humility, and trust help ready and steady your heart.

[35 : 03] And now you're in fighting position. You're ready to receive. You're not walking around with your hands. Like nothing's going on. Like, I promise you if somebody dumped you out in the middle of the African whatever it is, Sahara, whatever, and you knew there were all these predators out there including hyenas, I hate those things.

I don't know why God made hyenas. Anyway, you wouldn't walk around the Sahara like that, I promise you.

That's what we're involved in. Active opposition. Now folks, all of this that we're talking about now, all this concerns guarding our hearts, getting into the fight, while under God's mighty hand.

This keeps us under God's mighty hand. It keeps us in the fight, spiritually speaking. So you can see this as God's way of how we are to oppose the cunning sneak attacks and ambushes of our accuser.

This slanderous, vicious, prowling enemy. Now, I promised I'd qualify the hand-to-hand thing. Here's me qualifying the hand-to-hand thing.

[36 : 27] Look at this. We can resist Satan, but we cannot command him or kill him. So Greg and I are not encouraging you to go out here and look for opportunities to confront Satan or call up demons or, you know, don't do that.

I promise you, he will find you. You don't have to go hunting for this. He's looking for you. So you need to be ready. Don't go looking for him.

Don't be looking for a demon under every rock. Don't do that. What does that do? It draws you away from looking for Jesus under every rock.

You want to look for Christ working in the lives of other people. You want to listen carefully to that unbeliever. Is God poking his heart? Am I hearing the possible drawing of the spirit in this person's life?

Oh, maybe this is a brother or sister. Am I listening carefully to ways I can affirm Jesus working in their life? Am I looking for opportunities? Am I watchful and alert to opportunities to speak truth and Jesus into this context?

[37 : 41] You see the difference? The other one puts you in seeking mode for something you can't handle. So don't do it, beloved. Do not go out there looking for demons.

Don't do it. Instead, instead, Satan and demons, Satan and demons, we can't control them.

We don't need to be running around trying to cast them out and we don't need to be trying to conciliate them or pacify them or manipulate them or strike deals with them. All this nonsense I hear.

I think people do this because they don't read the scripture and they don't understand who this adversary is. They truly don't understand what they're dealing with.

So now, the question in all of that, if we're not called by the Bible to control them or cast them out or conciliate with them, how do we resist? What does resisting actually look like scripturally?

[38 : 52] All right, well, I want to be real clear here. Peter, Peter, is talking about the opposite of passivity and ignorance. You're not passive or ignorant.

Now, please hear me carefully. As a Christian, you can be uninvolved but not unaffected in this ongoing spiritual battle. It's true. You can try to be uninvolved.

You know, we're not going to join a church. We're not going to get involved. We're not going to do this. You know, we're just going to... Well, that's fine. Actually, it's not. But if you do that, you just need to understand that uninvolvedness does not insulate you from spiritual attack.

Ignorance, apathy, and naivete will not protect you from being hunted and ambushed by the devil. Friends, so what does Peter prescribe?

Well, once again, if you look at your text with me in verse 9, resist him. What does he say next? Firm in your faith. Good night.

[40 : 03] He could have said a hundred different things. He could... The Holy Spirit could have led him to say just about anything next. That's what he said though. Firm in your faith.

Be resolute. Resolute. Do you see, this is... This Christian life thing, it's not for the weak and the wimpy, is it? You're called to this as a Christian.

So while I say don't go out there looking for demons, I'm not saying don't go out there and deal with wrong and sin and evil.

Just know how the Bible wants to characterize that involvement in your life so that you don't become part of the problem. All right, let me just... Let me show you one.

Galatians 6. Let me give you an example of what I just said. This might help. So as you go out and you're dealing with this, you say, Jeff, you're telling us don't go out hunting for demons and opportunities to cast them out and confront them and talk to them and command them.

[41 : 09] Don't do that. But what do we do? Well, here's an example. You're dealing with a demonic attack for a brother or a sister, another Christian, something going on in their life.

They're being tempted in their flesh. In Galatians 6, verse 1, brothers, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, all right, so in the event that you find a brother or sister caught up in sin, what does it say?

You who are spiritual, that is, you who are spiritually mature, you who are clear-minded in that context, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness.

Well, that's certainly not what Satan wants. Each one looking to yourself so that you too will not be what? Tempted. There it is.

That's the kind of sneaky nonsense that goes on in Satan as he attacks. So this is an example of you being able to wade into a context and make a spiritual difference with gentleness and truth and love in the life of a fellow believer.

[42 : 20] But at the same time, being wary that whatever they're facing in life may be tempting to you. That very thing may be something that is your Achilles heel.

Or just dealing with it. Satan might use it to get in your head and in your heart. So be careful. Do you see the vigilance and watchfulness and alertness that's going on?

Well, that's just one example that you might find helpful in all of this. Be solid. Be strong. Be steady. Be immovable. Be steadfast in your trust, confidence, assurance, convictions regarding the Bible's teachings about God and His Word.

So if I shortened all that up, it's this. Be steadfast in your trust of God's sufficient Word. Believe the Bible is sufficient. And stand on the truth.

People don't need your opinions like they need the truth of the Word. Amen? So give them the truth. Be ready to give them the truth. Your enemy is a scheming accuser, a slanderer, a liar.

[43 : 34] So He will try to control you. He will try to manipulate you by keeping you off balance in your knowledge and application of the truth.

He doesn't want you to be confident in the Word. He wants you to make all kinds of excuses in your own mind. What if I say the wrong thing? What if they get mad at me? Blah, blah, blah. Do you see in those statements who's at the center of everything?

Stand strong, beloved, on what God says. This is Peter's counsel to us. Being passive about your spiritual walk will only guarantee that you become Satan's prey.

You stay passive and naive, you're prey. You're not persevering. Straightforward as that. Now, right on the heels, notice what he says. But resist him, firm in your faith.

The next word in my Bible is knowing. Knowing. Now, I'm going to get to what he says about knowing. But let me just camp out there to tie that.

[44 : 34] I want to tie that back into what he just said about being firm in your faith. Just to make the firm in your faith thing a little bit more elevated in your mind. Think about this.

Knowing that. Be knowledgeable. And I'm just going to borrow from the Apostle Paul. Therefore, be careful how you walk.

Vigilance. Not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time. Because the days are evil. So then, do not be foolish.

There's your naivete. There's your ignorance. There's your passivity. There's your pride. Don't be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Ephesians 5, 15 through 17.

That's the Apostle Paul. What's he saying? You need to be careful how you live. Don't be foolish with your life when you know, when you know in your heart the days that you live in are dangerously evil.

[45 : 40] faithful. So be biblically wise and understand how to apply the truth in your life. That's your responsibility. Now, what I'm saying is this.

We're talking about being knowledgeable as part of the foundation of being firm in your faith. That's where he went first. Be firm in your faith.

Know the truth. Know God's will. Know the scripture. Stand firm in it. You with me? A significant part of this wisdom and understanding is knowing then now the bigger picture of God's redemptive work among your fellow Christians.

What this helps us do next is lift us out of ourselves to get all of the attention and all because when we suffer when pain when people are upset with us when people are persecuting us or whatever people are mad at us whatever there's a tendency to just get fixated on that thing and to think about how to get out of it you know how to resolve it okay that's one way to think about it but what what Peter wants us to do now is he wants us to get out of ourselves and look at a bigger picture scope of what we are a part of yes God has designed this in your life but now let me widen the view a little bit and help you see how you're a part of a bigger thing you are a part and that's important but you're part of a bigger thing it's not just your little thing over here isn't that what we do we just draw that circle real tight and make it all about and Peter lifts us he brings us out of that here's what he says the same experience well basically the same experiences of suffering for faithfulness to the Lord Jesus are being accomplished or experienced by obedient fellow believers trying to steward the pain and challenges of a hostile world all over the place in other countries other places in the United States all over the place

God has designed your personal involvement in a brotherhood of shared sufferings for spiritual faithfulness to Jesus we're suffering because we're seeking to be faithful so this is the encouragement it's that all true Christians experience the injustices of being spiritual pilgrims in this hostile world spiritual pilgrims living for Jesus experience this period you're one of many many you see there's a whole bunch of folks he's hunting and wants to take down you're just one but you are one your experiences are not unique and you are not alone no temptation has overtaken you such that is not common to all of us man that's why we can say that your brothers and your sisters in Christ have the same experiences because because you share the same Lord you share the same calling to follow Jesus in faithfulness to the gospel so persevere persevere that's the next one perseverance console yourself this verse is packed with so many wonderful truths but the main idea is this unlike an antithesis to the devil the God of all grace isn't that wonderful unlike the devil who's a murderer and a liar an accuser and a slander the God of all grace that is undeserved favor being poured out on us will himself personally perfect confirm strengthen and establish you isn't that good look at verse 10 with me folks after you have suffered for a little while the God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory some of you some of your translations will say who chose you in Christ will himself perfect confirm strengthen will himself do all of those things it's just so pointed and so encouraging these truths about God doing this in your life they are true now as and after you suffer for a little while for his sake that's true now you can apply that now he will give you grace and it's true for your eternal future friends after you've suffered a little while at least for what amounts to a little while you think about your life and any of the suffering that you're going to experience if you live you know to be 80 years old compared to eternity relative to eternity isn't that just a little bitty tiny thing so keep it in perspective

[50 : 53] Peter has already told us earlier that God has designed this in your life to take you through this to make you more like his son and that he will exalt you in time he will bring you that will have an end it will have a terminus and then God will and so you want to be able to move through that come out on the other side be able to apply that spiritual hindsight and honor the Lord and thank the Lord and say Lord I didn't try to squirm out from underneath that thing I listened to you I prayed I tried to stay faithful and humble I served my brothers and sisters I tried to stay focused I'm so grateful God for what you're showing me about my own heart in that the way that you used it in the lives of these two I see that now I didn't see it then Lord see this is this is God exalting us now as he conforms us and rewards us and helps us see those things and then the promise that I will perfect you

I will glorify you you see you are on a win-win-win-win-win you win now you win then you win for all eternity keep it in perspective see the bigger picture Satan wants to narrow your flesh wants to narrow that thing so that you start immediately thinking about how do I get out of this pain instead of how do I move through this pain faithfully under the Lord so God calling you to his eternal glory in Christ that refers specifically to your sanctification that is your personal holiness both now and in eternity here and now God is making you more like the Lord Jesus through your suffering what about eternity in eternity it means God will complete this work of spiritual transformation into Christ likeness as he glorifies you and then there's no more graduated degrees or glory to glories 2 Corinthians 3 18 it's you're in front of him and you're made like him and you're with him that's the goal

God promises he will complete it no more need for trials but here you've got to persevere friends here's what I'm saying your most precious reward both now and for eternity is your likeness to Jesus Christ and that's what this is all designed about let me give you just another one before we do the final things that he says consecrate yourself here's another action consecrate yourself so this this hope and joy should lead us in and to worshiping God folks that's always going to be the issue as you move through this are you maintaining a worshipful heart to the Lord if you begin to notice that you're not being thankful you're not worshiping you're not exalting you're not

God conscious you need to back up take some deep spiritual breaths and get focused God wants us to worship him with all of our hearts as we move through this we live before him that's why Peter breaks into this doxology this word of praise in verse 11 to him be dominion forever and ever amen he can't help himself he thinks this stuff is so wonderful that God's moving us through this spiritual reality he breaks out into this praise it's no accident that he chooses in this praise to emphasize God's look dominion his dominance isn't that what you want to hear his grace is greater than my sin his grace is also greater than the devil you see ultimately while he hunts you he can't have you if you're a Christian can he but he wants to make you feel like he's got you doesn't he and discourage you well don't let him poke him in the eye how do you do that draw near to God he hates that he hates that he hates it when God's people are in these moments and they draw near to the

Lord even though they don't understand hey you C.S. Lewisers isn't that a quote from C.S. Lewis isn't that what he said and they still obey they don't get it they're hurting they can't see God anywhere and yet they still obey that makes the demons tremble why because that's called faith we walk by faith not by sight I don't have to understand I've used this analogy with you before where would the Israelites have been God said you get on the edge of that sea and you take that staff and you raise those hands and you command and that sea is going to part and so he starts whoa wait a minute do what how are you going to do that what about the mud you don't worry about the mud what did he want Moses to do obey do you think

[56 : 30] Moses understood what he saw no way we're going to have the sea part and we're going to walk across on dry land we're all going to get away and when the soldiers come after us you're going to close it all down on them that's a big God that's your God he's given us all kinds of evidence through scripture he can handle it you can't but he can and he gives a greater grace God rules not Satan God's sovereign reign establishes us in our efforts to honor and please him as we share in the sufferings of Jesus so let me move toward the closing remarks let me give you a couple of things just to just to cap it all off let the attitudes of your heart be submissiveness humility and trust in the Lord as you live under his mighty hand guiding you through these trials those are the attitudes that you need to cultivate and nurture as you move through this suffering for

Jesus sake and then let your actions be to compose condition commit console and consecrate yourself that's not too much you just go back and look at it as you cast your anxieties on him knowing that he cares for you so you're you're taking verses verses six seven eight you're pulling all that together and saying all right now what does it look like for me to resist Satan as he wants to thwart me in faithfulness to Christ remember please also the context of this final series of instructions and exhortations remember what all of this is set in I think I've got this here it is all these spiritual attitudes and actions are nourished motivated and activated in the life of a local church by the shepherding of pastors who feed the church on sound doctrine this ought to tell you how dangerous it is for you and your family to be in a church where the scriptures are not preached and taught and you're not expected to obey you need pastors who will shepherd you by feeding you sound doctrine the good word the clean word the pure word of the

Lord Jesus Christ that is the greatest asset that we have in our shepherding of you as we seek to protect you provide for you as we seek to serve you that's what we need shepherding pastors who feed the church all right let me just hasten in the next few minutes closing remarks isn't not a whole bunch to say here this could have been another sermon but I had mercy on you that would have looked too much like I just couldn't let go so closing remarks beginning in verse 12 through Silvanus our faithful brother for so I regard him I've written to you briefly exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in that wonderful folks you just have such a testimony here this is the truth you can trust this stand firm in it of all the things stand firm in it she who is in

Babylon chosen together with you sends you greetings and so does my son Mark greet one another with a kiss of love peace be to you all who are in Christ now as you look at that Silvanus is Silas he's a faithful brother he's Peter's companion he's Peter's personal secretary who takes down a bunch of this for Peter Paul used the same kind of person in his life this Silas recorded much of this letter for Peter now Peter goes on to affirm that what he's written is sound trustworthy doctrine instruction so it's from God and it honors God and he does this he exhorts he encourages exhorts these believers to stand firm in this sound truth this rich pure truth from

God that honors God in other words don't buckle don't betray your faith when suffering for Jesus sake then in verse 13 verse 13 Babylon is code for Rome Rome makes sense that if he's writing a letter to persecuted people and this letter is circulating around the local churches we don't want this reality to get out and people know where this is coming from because then the persecution might land there so there's a little bit of code here Babylon is code for Rome she in my translation that's the local church in Rome those are fellow believers so these are greetings from those who like Peter's believing readers they've also been chosen chosen by God brought into the family for salvation sharing in the sufferings of Jesus they've been chosen to share in those sufferings as spiritual pilgrims like they are and then

[61 : 57] I don't have to say much about Mark do I Mark Peter's friend Peter's apprentice influence benefiting from Peter's instruction and influence Mark will eventually write the second gospel that bears his name the gospel of Mark Matthew Mark Luke and John much of what we believe Mark was able to write was by the influence the direct influence and dictation of Peter recounting different things in his life and then finally in verse 14 verse 14 Peter he makes his final wish and prayer for them in this letter he wants them to know the peace of Christ even while they experience the hostility of the world so greet each other with what was common in that day a kiss of love that was just common in their culture both for men and women this is how Peter closes out his letter he wants the best for these people he loves them dearly and he does not want them to become victims of their own pride or of

Satan's schemes so resist the devil and draw near to God and realize that your suffering has a design and a purpose and that design is to make you more like Jesus thank you friends God bless you thank you for praying for Greg and I as we've marched through this together we'll wait and see what the Lord has in store keep praying let's pray together now Lord God your word is tremendous we are so grateful that you condescend to help us understand the truth that is far wider and deeper and richer than we really can know right now one day we'll know but even with what we do know Lord we are transfixed and we're odd and what I pray for your people now father is that they will be full of thanksgiving in their hearts that you speak to us so plainly and clearly about what's going on in this world and why things are the way they are we have an active enemy and so you call us to an active response spiritually so please help your people to be wise ready and steady their hearts help them to remember

God that being uninvolved is not a guarantee that they will not be affected by the hunting and the schemes of the devil they will and so help them to draw near to you father to trust you to believe you and to honor you in their lives we thank you for the time that we've had in first we thank you that you've got 65 other books that we can turn to and continue on we give you the glory that in this lifetime you call us to this kind of faithful study and obedience help us to be those people who heed your word even as we hear it in Jesus name we pray amen