

Guarding Our Hearts While Sharing in Christ's Suffering

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- [0 : 0 0] I wonder if every generation of Christians since the first century A.D. have had the feeling that they were in unique times. Certainly persecution has been with us.
- All along as God's people. Not anything new there for us in our day and time. We're in 1 Peter. And God willing, we will conclude what we call chapter 4 today.
- As we have worked from chapter 1, verse 1 through to this point. Trusting God to give us breath for life to make it through chapter 5. And thus we're taken to glory.
- Today, the title of my message is a little bit longer today. Guarding our hearts while sharing in Christ's suffering. But I think that kind of captures the main idea that Peter's using here.
- [1 : 1 0] Now to start off, I want to share a couple of things with you. This summer, evangelical pastors from really all over the world signed off on the Frankfurt Declaration.
- The Frankfurt Declaration is a five-article document expressing a biblical response to an abuse of power by civil authorities around the world during the COVID, quote-unquote, crisis.
- In the conclusion of the Frankfurt Declaration, the framers of the document offered the following to faithful churches and Christians.
- And I want to share it with you because of its relevance for our text. Not only for today, but really for the last probably two months. And this kind of helps culminate the entire effort that I've been making to communicate this to you.
- To our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world, we say, Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened and do not be dismayed.
- [2 : 2 6] For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Joshua 1.9 It appears that the world may well be entering a time of testing, not only for the church, but for everyone who believes in freedom and who opposes tyranny.
- Let us stand with those who are hard-pressed, arrested, or forcefully isolated because they have chosen to do what is right.
- Now, before I move to the remainder of that quote, let me just insert this. Would you have ever in our day and time and in our generation considered that pastors would be arrested and put in jail just because they insisted that we needed to meet as Christians for church on Sunday?
- Nothing else other than that. We're going to meet on Sunday. I'm going to be there to preach the gospel, and you can come and get me if you want. And they did.
- And many pastors were put in jail. We know of some of these men. They're very like-minded men who stood for the gospel. And this just happened.

[3 : 45] The quote goes on in the conclusion, let us stand in solidarity with those whose churches are forcefully closed or who are exiled from their congregations.

Let us help and support in practical ways those who are fined or have to forfeit their employment for the sake of Christ. That's happening. And we ask our brothers and sisters who have lived under persecution all their lives to pray for us, that God would give us the grace to bless those who persecute us and to pray for them.

That God would give us the courage to stand firm in our faith as his witnesses, and that he who is Lord over all would give us the strength to remain faithful and persevere to the end.

Amen. And that's just the conclusion. You ought to read the five articles. Pastor John MacArthur is a man we deeply respect here at Grace and who has made such an impact on Suzanne and I and many of you.

So, Suzanne and I were out at Grace Community Church in 1997 into 2000, not only attending church there, but the seminary as well.

[5 : 08] Pastor MacArthur was one of the signers of the Frankfurt Declaration. And just last month, on September 6th, John wrote an article on the Grace to You website, and it was titled, Why I Signed the Frankfurt Declaration.

I just want to share with you an excerpt from John's article. Here it is. The United States government and others in the Western world have already established themselves as enemies of Christ by legalizing abortion, demanding that homosexuality be encouraged and celebrated, refusing to recognize God-given gender distinctions, sanctioning same-sex marriage, and promoting the barbaric pagan mutilation of children.

These overt government-sponsored attacks on long-established moral standards constitute a formal parliamentary declaration of war against God, His created order, His moral law, and the authority of His word.

Our current government, therefore, now stands in opposition to God no less than the Baal worshippers of the Old Testament did.

Why would we not expect them to come after people who would put their lives on the line for the cause of God and His word?

[6 : 38] There are many signs that sound churches and faithful believers are about to face a wave of harsh persecution.

That last line particularly sounds like Peter writing in the first century to Christians who were sharing in the sufferings of Jesus Christ simply for living faithfully to God.

They weren't anarchists. They weren't rebels. They weren't petitioning. They weren't gathering together with placards to speak against Rome or Nero or any other authority.

They were simply trying to keep their heads down and live for Jesus, and that was enough to get them jailed and murdered. And this persecution is growing at this particular time of Peter's writing all over Rome, all over the Roman world.

Let's look at 1 Peter chapter 4 and gain the context of what we're going to be looking at this morning together. Begins in chapter 4, verse 12.

[7 : 51] Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you.

But to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed because the spirit of glory and of God rests on you. Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer or thief or evildoer or a troublesome meddler.

That would be a busybody. But if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.

For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God. And if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

[9 : 00] And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner? Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful creator in doing what is right.

In doing what is right. Friends, in the context and flow of thought, in the emphases that Peter has been making now, really for several chapters that have to do with injustice and persecution and suffering on behalf of Jesus, even to the point of praying for the people who persecute us and who come against us and not returning evil for evil.

Realizing, as Greg said earlier, we're not fighting against flesh and blood, but against spiritual forces of evil. Peter encourages us as Christians to maintain our faith in Christ and persevere with joy so that we hold out a marked difference between how we are living under that persecution and how the people who are persecuting us are coming against us and how they're living.

The issue becomes, we would hope some of them would see that difference and be moved in their spirits, drawn to Christ and saved. What price would we be willing to pay, suffer and endure to see a sinful soul rescued from the pits of hell?

Peter challenges us with that even as we read today and move into this text. Now think about this with me, if you will. Let's go back up into verse 7 of chapter 4 and remember from a couple of Sundays ago when we were last in chapter 4 what this was all about.

[11 : 07] Let me put it up here on the screen for you. In verses 7 through 11 of 1 Peter 4, we have a highlighting of four spiritually purposeful priorities, is what I call them, to help us focus our efforts to live for Jesus with the end drawing near.

That's how Peter talked about it. Look at verse 7. The end of all things is near, therefore be of sound judgment and sober spirit. Why? For the purpose of prayer.

Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another. Why? Because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God so that whoever speaks is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God.

Whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever.

[12 : 18] Amen. In those four purposes from a couple of Sundays ago we looked at prayer, the purpose of prayer, forgiveness, hospitality, and serving one another.

And Peter's concern in giving those four particular items to us from that last time was that we would be able to persevere through persecution, through the difficulties and hardships and trials of life, and remain a serving body of believers to each other and to Christ.

That we would allow nothing to pull us away from showing the love of Jesus by showing Jesus' love to each other. Don't be distracted.

Don't be discouraged. Don't be dragged down by the hardships and the trials and the reality that we live in a hostile world. Now, here's where it gets tricky.

Most of us, when we came to faith, at some point, fairly quickly, I would think, within the first few years or so, began to realize, or maybe we were even taught if we were fortunate, that being a Christian was going to mean we were going to endure hardship.

[13 : 35] That people, not everybody is going to be really turned on to the fact that we came to Christ and we know Him. We may not have understood all of that. And so we began to have a certain expectation that maybe we would encounter some difficulty in the Christian life.

Just in the general world, here's where Jeff Jackson got boiled over and what I didn't expect. I took my first staff position out of seminary in 1995 or so.

I graduated in 92. We did a number of things in ministry and then I went on staff at a church a few years after graduating. And what I didn't expect was for that persecution to come from within the church.

Quote unquote. And it did. And it did heavily. By far, in a way, Suzanne and I suffered more for our faith by professing Christians than we did from unbelievers.

By far. And it was a long time that that happened. Now, that's a long story with lots of details. All I'm trying to make the point is I didn't expect for that to happen.

[14 : 48] For it to come from within. Now, you could probably make the case if you heard more of our story, you might even say, well, those weren't Christians. That could be the case, but I can't see their hearts.

You can't see their hearts. It's most likely that there were many of those people who came against us because we were standing for the truth. That's all it was. We're not Christians.

It's hard for us to realize that not everybody in the church is the church. But it's true. Now, I say that to you just to help us understand that we've been told from the New Testament, as I later learned, that they would come from within.

Paul told the Ephesian elders that. They will come from within. And do you know how he characterized the attack that would come from within the church itself?

They will be as ravenous wolves. Now, if you've ever watched the Nature Channel and you've seen wolves go after their prey, it's not pretty.

[15 : 55] That's the picture. That's the reality. So I'm just trying to, you know, kind of fill this out for us and help us understand that while Peter is speaking about the reality of injustice in the world and how the world treats Christians, there are plenty of places in the New Testament we're going to hear about this coming from within the church as well.

If you're attending our Wednesday night study, you heard a little bit about that last Wednesday night when we turned to 1 Timothy chapter 4 and we read about those who will fall away from the faith, not because they were ever saved in the first place.

They were never Christians. They just made a profession and it was never a true confession of their heart. This is the reality that we live in, folks, and it's serious.

It's serious and it's getting more serious. I believe, just like many of the evangelical leaders across the world believe that we are soon headed for what will be an unprecedented harsh persecution just because we believe in Christ, not because we're trying to make trouble.

Well, today we want to focus our efforts as we move into verses 12 through 19, close out chapter 4, and here's what Peter gives us for today.

[17 : 21] Four, I'm going to call them this, I don't know if Peter would have called them this, but this seems appropriate to me, four guarding insights to guide our hearts in doing what Peter has been concerned about now for many, many verses, that we would glorify God or do the will of God or another way he says it, that we would do what is right.

All of those are ways of speaking about glorifying God, putting forward the character of Almighty God in the way that we speak and live, particularly under persecution.

That's sharing in the sufferings of Jesus. That's what we're looking at. So let me hasten along and give you this first guarding insight.

Now, I hope that makes sense to you. So these are spiritual insights, biblical principles, biblical insights that this isn't like super deep, you've got to be at a certain level of deepness, woo, it's none of that nonsense.

These are insights that come right off the pages of Scripture for all of us who love the Lord Jesus and want to walk in his ways and honor him and please him. And so this first insight that's going to help us move through this hostility that's coming at us so that we're not taken aback and have to gather ourselves or be pulled out of the fight, as it were, sharing in Christ's suffering shows God's testing.

[18 : 55] So don't be surprised by it. That's his first insight and principle that he wants us to hang on to. When we are walking faithfully with the Lord and sharing in the sufferings of Jesus, our life is going to show the testing of God.

And we're not, we're not to be surprised by that reality. If you look at verse 12, beloved, wonderful, beloved, do not be surprised.

That's how he starts. Beloved is this word, *agapetoi*. It means the much loved ones, the dearly loved ones, the cherished ones, or if you want to put a little bit more of a theological point on the set apart to be loved ones, set apart to be loved, which is just how God loves us in Christ Jesus.

So here's the way that you can understand how Peter and how I use beloved. That's my favorite way of referring to you as I speak to you in the general assembly like this, beloved.

Here it is. His love has set you apart to love you. Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that rich? The love of God took you and set you apart to love you.

[20 : 20] That's the power of almighty God. God. And that's not only what you do. That's who you are. You are the beloved.

Of God. Now hang on to that. That'll go a long way under hostility and persecution and doubt and fear. The beloved of God.

Parents, don't you want your kids to know in the hottest and most heated of times in your family life that they are just as loved then as any other time?

Absolutely. You don't want your, when you have to discipline your kids, are you, are you quick and eager to tell them how much you love them in the midst of that discipline to reinforce?

Why? Because a spanking can feel like they're not loved, right? I remember that. I remember the sound of my dad's belt going through the loops. If I heard that from a distance because I wasn't the one, I went and found a place to, you know, get out of dodge kind of thing.

[21 : 31] I don't mean to make that sound all bad. It was all fine. And I needed it. I needed it in my life. So this is the term that he uses to describe these people right at the outset.

It's, it's not only that Jesus satisfied God's wrath against you so that God is no longer angry with you.

God is no longer your enemy, but in a positive way, God sets his love on you so that you, you of all people are his cherished one in his son.

And so Peter uses this term with great tenderness and great fondness. And we have to start there because that's where Peter starts. Beloved. But then he goes on to say this.

Do not be surprised. You see that in verse 12. Beloved, do not be surprised. Now, if we understand and think about that for just a moment, ponder that this punctuates Peter's concern for their godly understanding of their circumstances and the nature of their earthly relationship as aliens, strangers, sojourners.

[22 : 54] Remember that all the way back from chapter one, verse one. You are aliens. You are strangers. You are sojourners. And I'm writing to you as you're scattered across this area of the Roman Empire. And then he tries to encourage them to stay faithful to Jesus.

He says, do not be surprised. Have understanding. Grow and gain an understanding about the nature of your relationship as aliens in this world.

His concern for their understanding relates then to what he's calling. Notice in your text, beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal. It relates to this fiery ordeal among them.

And obviously it's something they are currently experiencing together as Christians doing God's will. But also something they should expect.

They should expect and consider to be an ordained part of following Jesus. In order to do what?

[24 : 05] Persevere. So expect this and realize that this is something in your life ordained by God. Wow.

Now, one of the reasons, apparently, that he is saying this to them at this point in his letter is Peter has heard or it's been reported to him or in some fashion he knows that there are Christians that he's writing to who who are not living by this.

They are being kind of taken away from a persevering faith in the Lord, a steady, steadfast faith in the Lord because they're being undone by this hostility that's coming at them just for being Christians.

And Peter wants them to get that thing right. So that they can persevere, as we'll see, with joy. With joy. You know what it's like, folks.

When you hit hard times, it's hard to stay focused, isn't it? Spiritually. It taxes every part of who you are. Now, fiery ordeal.

[25 : 14] Fiery ordeal is literally this. It's a burning ordeal. That's the literal rendering. The suffering inflicted by being burned by fire.

So any of the pain and suffering associated with you being burned by fire is the picture, the word image that Peter's using with these people. Obviously, he's referring to the suffering Christians experience by worldly injustice and hostility.

We know that by the context and the theme that's being carried through. And now the word picture that he's giving us about a fiery ordeal. Obviously, it's not something nice. This is the suffering that we will endure as Christians in a hostile world.

Now, here is where Peter draws on a critical distinction that becomes the point of verse 12. This is what he wants these readers, these beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ to grasp as they move through these trials in their life for following Jesus.

It's a critical distinction for Christians. It's experiencing the fiery ordeal of suffering for Jesus. Here it is. As the beloved of God, our fiery ordeals are designed by God for our testing.

[26 : 43] Now, beloved, listen, it is not pass or fail in this testing. This isn't multiple choice. It's not pass or fail. Don't think that's where we get into trouble when we experience these trials that come as a result of serving Jesus.

Just living faithfully to Jesus. Just being a faithful Christian. Right? I've had people say this to me. I'm just trying to keep my head down. And it still happens.

And we try to help them understand why that is the case. It's not pass or fail. Here it is. Capture it this way. These ordained issues of testing that come into your life as a Christian because you are living for Jesus and trying to be faithful and tender and kind and compassionate.

And you're trying to speak the truth in love. These trials that come on you are more about know and grow. Not pass or fail.

Now, do you have times in your life where maybe you've thought, well, I blew it. Okay, me too. I understand that. I wasn't as faithful in this moment of persecution as I could have been.

[27 : 58] I let this get to me too much. I did retaliate and respond with evil for evil. Oh, I understand that.

I know the temptation of that. But when I speak to you about these trials ordained by the Lord being more about know and grow, there's a reason for that.

That we want you to hold on to that image more than any other as you move through these trials. And I want to help you see it with this. These trials are purposed for us by the Lord.

And the fire of the ordeal is God's design to refine. Think that. God's design to refine. To establish us in our faith.

So the fiery ordeal is not strange, but arranged. So don't be put off or taken off guard by it.

[28 : 58] Peter says, expect God to deepen your devotion by you experiencing the trial. That's what he means. Don't be surprised.

Don't be surprised, beloved, at the fiery ordeal among you which comes upon you for your testing as though some strange thing were happening to you.

It's not strange, it's arranged. It's designed by God to test you, to refine you, to deepen you in your commitment to Christ, to help you sort out the pride of your heart.

Oh, ugly, ugly. And it won't be easy for you to see this stuff. As God works this in your life, this testing in your life and peels back the recesses of your heart and shows you the muck in that, it's not pretty.

The pride and the arrogance and the me and the insistence. You better not talk to me that way. You better not treat me that way. Do you know who I am?

[30 : 02] That kind of thing. That comes out. It comes out in subtle ways. Sometimes it comes out in a red face with veins bulging. There's all kinds of ways that that happens in our lives.

No. Expect, expect. Don't be surprised. This isn't something strange to you as a Christian because you think you're a Christian. That shouldn't happen to you.

Hmm. No. Now, in our Wednesday night studies, this is a little commercial, a little plug. In our Wednesday night, I'm not ashamed of that.

In our Wednesday night studies, what we're dealing with is spiritual warfare, as Greg mentioned. And we looked this last Wednesday night at many verses and passages that helped clarify for us what was going on in the screw tape letters from a biblical point of view.

And one of those verses was John 16, 33, as it relates to suffering as Jesus' disciples in our relationship to this world.

[31 : 05] And here's the verse from John 16. In the world, it's the last half of the verse. In the world, you have tribulation. But take courage. Jesus said, Jesus said, I have overcome the world.

Now, commentator D.A. Carson, one of my favorites, summarized Jesus overcoming the world on our behalf as this. This is some of the commentary Carson offers on this part of the verse.

Here's what he says. Jesus has conquered the world. That's good news. In the same way that he has defeated the prince of this world.

Jesus' point in this verse is that by his death, he has made the world's opposition pointless and beggarly. Boy, we need to hold on to that.

The decisive battle has been waged and won. The world continues its wretched attacks. But those who are in Christ, notice, share the victory.

[32 : 13] He has won. They cannot be harmed by the world's evil. You see that? Sometimes it doesn't feel like that. It feels harmful.

And they know who triumphs in the end. From this, they take heart and begin to share his peace. Beloved, look, we share in Jesus' victory over sin and death in the world.

We share in Jesus' peace. And we also share in his sufferings. As God uses that suffering for Jesus to purify us in our walk with him.

And we don't want to neglect our understanding of that insight and reality from Scripture. So, what does he say?

To the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing. That's where he goes next. You're being purified.

[33 : 26] This is all being ordained by God. God's already won the victory. Evil can't touch you because you live in the blood of the king.

So, to the degree that you do suffer for Jesus, rejoice. That's what comes next. Sharing in Christ's suffering shows God's blessing.

So, keep rejoicing in it. Man. Verses 13 and 14. But to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing.

Purpose clause coming. So that, also at the revelation of his glory, you may rejoice with exultation. Now, what does he mean by sharing in Christ's sufferings?

What's he talking about? Right? We share in the sufferings of Christ as we, like Jesus, endure the hostility of the world towards us.

[34 : 39] Just because we're living to do God's will, which is just what Jesus did, other than living to do God's will, which is what Jesus said he came for, there was, Jesus gave no reason for anyone to hate him, malign him, mock him, mistreat him.

None. The man held out tenderness, gentleness, love, and forgiveness 24-7. Come to me all year heavy laden and I'll give you rest.

You will find in me, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. These are words dripping with tenderness and invitation.

And what did they do? They tortured him and put him on a cross and killed him. Why? Hear it carefully.

Because he came to do the Father's will. And that's where we are. What did Jesus say? If they hated me, they'll hate you.

[35 : 50] That was Wednesday night. Remember? For those of you who were here, if they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. Just because you're living for me.

You do what I did, you're going to get the same thing I got. That's where we are. And now Peter looks at you right in the face and says, rejoice?

Rejoice over that reality? Yes. Because you need insight number one to help you move into insight number two. Everything that's happening to you is designed and ordained by God.

God's in control of all that you're facing as you suffer for Christ's sake. The world's not in control. The people who are persecuting you aren't in control. They think they are.

They talk like they are. But they're just like you. Prideful. The difference between you and them is Jesus is forgiving you for your pride and you have hope for heaven.

[36 : 55] They're still lost and their only hope is hell. So pray for them. Pray for those who persecute you. Do not seek your own revenge.

You see, this is why Jesus is telling us this. We are the only people on the earth that hold out hope for heaven. If we miss the message, if we sidestep the responsibility, then who's going to tell them?

Who's going to show them? And this is where we are with this point. Sharing in Christ's suffering shows God's blessing, so rejoice.

It's actually from loyalty and devotion to Jesus that we incur the sufferings for living our faith. The more loyal and devoted you are to the Lord Jesus, the more you can expect to suffer for His sake.

The first part of verse 13, but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing. That's encouraging us to consider it all joy that we would be actually privileged to suffer.

[38 : 08] Not because, listen, we're not privileged to suffer because we're proving sin's victory over us in some weird, morbid way, no, but because we are proving Christ's victory over our sin.

When we live this way, we show evidence of the power of Jesus to overcome sin. And sin is the greatest issue of death and decay that human beings face.

There is no greater threat to humanity than sin. And we serve a risen Savior who's overcome what's overcome us. the greatest threat to our race.

Jesus has removed and offered forgiveness for sin and hope of eternal life in heaven. That's what we carry in us. And it needs to get out.

We suffer because we serve the Lord Jesus and that's reason to rejoice here and now. now think about it with me. The second part of verse 13.

[39 : 19] So that at the revelation of his glory you may rejoice with exultation. That gives us the purpose of our rejoicing now. Peter tells us we're going to experience even greater joy when Jesus comes again and he brings us to himself because we have shared in his sufferings and our faithfulness to him.

You understand? We're not saved because we're faithful. We don't earn our way into God's heaven. Our faithfulness to Jesus in suffering is proof that Jesus has done his work of salvation in us and it's getting out.

Isn't that wonderful? You missed your amen moment. Yeah. Boy, this turns the whole thing upside down or maybe we should say right side up.

We're given the Bible's perspective on what it means to suffer for Jesus. It's a privilege. It's a joy. And it's proof that Jesus loves us and owns us.

That's actually what verse 14 further emphasizes. Look there with me. If you are reviled for the name of Christ now, you're not being reviled for your sin.

[40 : 38] You're being reviled because you are living for Christ. You're suffering for Christ. You're being faithful to him. What does it say? Peter says you are blessed because the spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

So being reviled now for our faithfulness to him means we are blessed by God. It's a proof of God's blessing on our life.

Boy, I wish that Suzanne and I had better understood and known this as young Christians when we were going through that time of persecution in our first church position.

I so much wish we would have known some of these principles and had these insights. It could have made such a difference. I don't even want to think about the number of opportunities that we missed because we were so beaten down.

We allowed this to have such a damaging impact on just our sense of joy and we didn't know how to capture the reality that God is ordaining this for our own growth.

[41 : 46] I remember talking to an unbeliever one time and this person said to me in so many words when they knew about this in our life in another situation and they were challenging us about it as if to almost say and you want to keep serving this God and we tried to explain to them with this greater insight that look this biblical insight look this is happening to us because it's God's will to purify us.

Oh how sadistic this person remarked. Why would you want to serve a God who makes you suffer so you'll love him more? Ugh! And our only response was whatever God needs to do to help us love him more in light of how he's loved us we can only say bring it on.

Bring it on. Do you see that this person was speaking from a sense of personal entitlement? this right here blows personal entitlement out of the universe.

No such thing. If this man could lay down all that he had in heaven in the glory of the Father to become a human being take on the image of a man and live a sinless life and then give that perfect life for us it's quite the opposite and we were able to share the gospel with this person and say we owe Jesus everything.

It is not a sacrifice for us to suffer for him. It's not. And we just don't even want to think that way. We used to but not anymore.

[43 : 38] We just we don't want to go there. being blessed by God in times of suffering hostility persecution and injustice as you live for Christ proves that the spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

Oh beloved hold on to that treasure that God is blessing you with the proof that he owns you. he's furthering and deepening your assurance of salvation.

He's giving you the rock solid way of moving with joy through that persecution. The Holy Spirit rests on us to minister to us.

That's what Jesus said. Especially in times of trial especially in times of turmoil the Holy Spirit produces in us this spiritual peace this of the Holy Spirit peace and what is Paul say in Philippians that passes human understanding it is a spiritual of the Holy Spirit peace that goes beyond people don't know how can you be so calm how can you be so focused why aren't you freaking out like everybody else why aren't you running and hiding like everybody else it's a peace that passes understanding Philippians 4 7 so Peter says rejoice and later you will rejoice with exultation why because you think now now you can rejoice that God's blessing you and growing you and refining you this is all proof that one day when he comes back you're going to have infinitely greater reasons to exult and you will because he'll bring you to himself and then the deal is sealed we're done no more sin no more tears no more injustice no more persecution no more pride

Jeff's out of the way completely and it's just Jesus now what would you let rob you of that well as much as I'd love to camp out on that bad boy let's move to the next one number three the guarding insight here is sharing in Christ's suffering shows God's glory so don't be ashamed of it that's a temptation Peter moves on to say now look make sure you got to make sure that you're not suffering as a murderer the main idea here is you say well I've never murdered anybody I don't plan to or a thief yeah I don't really steal from anybody or an evildoer well I'm trying to be better than an evildoer or a busybody well that one may be else not all the time it's not that it's just the point is don't live as a sinful lifestyle person don't get into a lifestyle of sin and non repentance unrepentance you need to live as a repentor as you become aware of sin in your life be fast to confess it and forsake it and turn away from it and deal with it in the

[46 : 49] Lord so don't don't make sure you're not suffering as a selfish sinful person but verse 16 if anyone suffers as a Christian he's not to be ashamed but is to glorify God in this name in verse 15 none of what we're talking about is true for unbelievers this verse is clear in that people who suffer for the sins listed here and all the others they are not living to do the will of God but to serve themselves so Peter says make sure that you're not living like that and then verse 16 moves us right in and says look I want to clarify the contrast here the contrast between the true Christian and the people of verse 15 anyone who suffers as a Christian as someone who's wholly committed to do the will of God you're not to be ashamed or embarrassed or to feel guilty at the fact that you're suffering the hostility of the world and being maligned and mocked and made fun of literally literally the word here means to be disgraced any of you who suffers as a Christian he's not to be disgraced no don't live in disgrace but glorify

God in this name now this is the insight that can help make the difference in you persevering in joy as you suffer for Christ as you suffer with joy on behalf of Jesus you're in the listen you're in the very best position to glorify God now we don't think that way hear it again when you are suffering for Christ's sake when you are living faithfully to Jesus and you are moving through life in that faithfulness and and the world is coming back at you with hostility you are in the best position in those moments to glorify almighty God because you're living the contrast you're not caving you're living the contrast here's the way that I said it you prove him praise him and reflect him as you humbly and gratefully live the privilege of bearing his name Christian Christian you see friends that's who you are that's who you are so you're living your new nature verse 17 for it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God and if it begins with us first what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God verse 17 speaks of

God's purifying judgment first of all with his own house that is among his own people the church grace church so this is not God's wrath we know that because we know that Jesus took and satisfied God's wrath regarding our sins right when Jesus hung on the cross and God put all of our sins on Christ then he poured out his righteous anger on his own son to punish his son for our sins and he spent his anger completely that's what this fancy word propitiation means propitiation means the satisfaction of God's wrath against sin and Jesus was our propitiation and so God is completely satisfied that his own son took the pain and the penalty for our sins and removed our sin debt and so now we are free in Christ so this is not God's wrath on his church the question that Peter asks at the end of verse 17 look what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God that question concerns sufferings endured by those who are judged by God for not obeying his gospel the gospel is God's good news that he provides salvation from sin by faith in the Lord

Jesus Christ as you turn to trust in Jesus sacrifice on your behalf then God saves you and forgives you for your sins cleanses you from all unrighteousness verse 18 helps us see the point and if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved what will become of the godless man and the sinner folks as hard as it is for you and I as those who are made righteous in Christ as those righteous in Christ means those who have been put in right standing with God through faith in Christ as hard as it is for those who have been made righteous in Christ as believers to endure the life purifying designs of God's trials now and it's hard how much more devastating will it be for the godless man and the sinner in the time of their final judgment that's the point it's hard for you right now to endure faithfully in trials isn't it and the hotter the heat the more difficult it is and

Peter is saying I get it I know how hard it is for us to stay faithful through this boy it is hard sometimes we pray and we weep and our hearts break over our sin and we ask God to help us and we plead with the Lord and we do battle against sin and pride and greed and self and the harm that others do and that we see Peter says if you think that's hard how much harder for those who are godless in the day of judgment do you see how he's using this to sober us these insights are supposed to sober us in the reality of what we're facing as his people and you know what this helped one of the ways this helps us it helps us from being clownish we take this seriously not so that we can walk around with our hands in our pockets all glum what's what's wrong with you oh man I'm reading the word right now and

[53 : 16] I'm reading all about trials and persecutions and all that God is going to do to me in this and boy it's hard and I'm just sad no what did Peter say look up and rejoice because God has given you every reason to understand and know that his blessing is on your life and that he loves you and he wants you to grow in your commitment and love for him and so he's moving you through these things to that end and then one day is going to come and Jesus is going to bring you to himself and all that God took you through will be rewarded and you can't even imagine the treasures that you will enjoy from Jesus Christ because you stayed faithful in him oh boy there's just I have to read the Bible to express it because I can't do better than that so much better that we suffer now as

Christians in God's service than to try and forego that suffering get around that suffering only to suffer for all eternity separated from God as unforgiven godless sinners God forbid and so the final one and I only have to say a few things about this one to close up sharing in Christ suffering shows God's faithfulness so trust God in it your life is showing the faithfulness of God as you move through these things oh yes they're very real and they're boy they get all over us but we're demonstrating the faithfulness of God in all of this therefore verse 19 those also who suffer according to the will of God that's the key shall entrust their souls to a faithful creator in doing what is right we trust the Lord to do what is right we trust the Lord to show us what to do as being right so this is basically a summary of

Peter's instructions in this entire passage it's basically a summary I I pulled I I pulled I pulled out to the Lord I pulled it out we are called by Christ to suffer we are called by Christ to suffer according to the will of God we are called by Christ to suffer according to the will of God by doing what is right in our daily lives that is our life so in that suffering now we are to give ourselves very fully to what it takes for us to display God's faithfulness to us even as we suffer and as we are purified so let me ask you something now as we move to the point have you suffered unjustly have you suffered by doing the will of God in this life if you say Jeff you know what I I'm looking back on my life right now and for some time now

I just I don't know that I can see that I really what you might call suffer for serving the Lord friend let that trouble your heart but take it to God and deal with it ask for his forgiveness perhaps the issue is I'm not living very faithfully so I'm not paying much of a price that could be it now look we're not looking for trouble this is not looking for trouble this is just living for Jesus so live for Christ and expect that the world will treat you with hostility and don't be surprised by it and remember that God's ordaining it for your purification and refinement so rejoice because it's proof that God's love rests on you don't suffer as a murderer or a sinner don't go out here and do your own thing and take your own revenge and brood and all that kind of stuff but entrust your souls to a faithful creator in doing what is right because that's the example of your

Lord and Savior isn't it that's what we're called to do have you suffered unjustly you say Jeff yes even even at the hands of the so called church okay I get that been there done that that was God's design beloved now did you hear that that was God's design now will you chafe at that design will you feel sorry for yourself will you demand justice will you live in the past will you nurse your bitterness will you be fearful will you run from more of the same and none of that that's Peter saying no no no no no the alternative which we are called to live out as we suffer for doing God's will is for each of us to follow Jesus and entrusting our souls to an ever faithful creator in other words we can say this we'll get the t-shirt okay Greg and I will get the t-shirt and give them all out

[58 : 27] God's got this God's got this he's got you so as we share in the sufferings of Jesus as we suffer in justice for being loyally devoted to him we need these four guarding insights to help us in showing that God God is good and faithful amen God is good and faithful now folks the last word please don't hear your pastors saying to you that it's a trivial thing that you suffer for Christ we do not believe that we know it's tough and we want to come alongside of you and support you and undergird you and we want to see you doing that for each other but it's going to take all of us working together and doing our part to pull that off as a family so don't underestimate you being here and you being involved and invested in this body life so that we can move faithfully for us to be that people now when we get to heaven there won't be any need for any of that because we're not going to be fighting anything amen now with that in mind we want to make a presentation all right

I want to do it now because I want them to be able to sit down and us to sing and Greg to pray and then we'll come over and