

# (Faith Community Chapel) the Fiery Trial Producing Genuine Faith

by Jim Bontrager

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*Jim Bontrager's sermon explores the transformative power of suffering in the Christian faith, emphasizing that it leads to spiritual growth and victory through the example of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.*

**Duration:** 55:32

**Scripture:** James 1:2

**Topics:** "Trials"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by praying for God's guidance and asks for a deeper understanding of His greatness. The speaker then mentions reading chapter 4 of a book, possibly the Bible, and expresses excitement about preaching three Sundays out of the next four. The speaker emphasizes the importance of going through trials and how they can lead to perfecting, establishing, strengthening, and settling. The sermon also mentions a promise in 1 Peter 4:1 that those who have suffered in the flesh have ceased from sinning. Additionally, the speaker mentions other promises in the book of Peter and encourages listeners to learn from their hard times.

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## Transcript

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Morning. Pray for me this morning. I think I'll probably... I don't get a headache very often.

I have one this morning. I think I'll probably forget about that once I'm going, at least, if you keep praying. And I also have a subject that I beg of you not to shut me off when I start, because I would maybe do that if I was you.

Don't shut me off. Last time I preached on prayer, you know, and it's a lot easier to keep... I feel like I have your faces and something like that. But the time before I preached on suffering, and you were with me pretty much, but I'm going to do kind of a second sermon on suffering.

And it's not going to be easy for me to give, and it's not going to be easy for you to listen to. And so I beg of you to don't turn the knob, whichever direction is off. And pray for me, because I can't do justice to this subject.

So I'm going to do the best I can. Lord God, I pray that you would preach this sermon. And I pray that you would give me... I don't even know how to pray it.

I pray that you would preach me a sermon this morning, and that you would preach all of us a sermon. And that you would talk to all of us from your very own heart in how much you care about us, and that you are not a God who makes us suffer because you like to see us suffer. But that you would help us to see how you think... I pray that you would help us to believe that at the same time that the things that you think have never entered into the heart of man, at the same time they have been given to us because we have the mind of Christ.

And I pray that you would speak your mind into my mind and into our mind this morning, and teach us truth. And teach us to look at our circumstances the way you see them. I just pray that you would make yourself glorified and as big as you are, or at least bigger than what I think of you as being this morning.

And be with those who aren't here. And bless them and keep them safe. In Jesus' name, Amen.

I read chapter four last time, last two times, because about six weeks ago, or I don't know how long it was ago... Hey, I'm going to get to preach three Sundays out of the next four. I'm kind of excited about that because I actually will be able to put a couple sermons together. You may remember what it was before that.

Two sermons ago, I talked about arming ourselves with the mind of Jesus. If you want to turn to 1 Peter chapter four, that verse one says, Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin. And I just spent the whole sermon trying to give you a good, good, solid foundation, only from Scripture and from examples in Scripture, that every Christian will suffer.

You will. And to see that that's how it is, but not so much looking at the other side of the suffering. What is supposed to happen when you get through it? And it's hard for us to think of suffering in any way other than physical.

Jeremy's mom, you know, those kind of physical. But I want to look at it this morning, and instead of separating it out... Last time I talked about some of the different kinds of suffering, and that even in the Bible, temptation is called suffering in some places. Affliction is often used interchangeably.

Same Greek number, but affliction one time, suffering another time. And Peter talks about suffering. If you follow it through his book, he talks about suffering that you can get from somebody's words at work, in church.

If you suffer reproach, what is reproach? Reproach is usually words. But you also can go to China, and you can suffer physical unbelievable stories of people being persecuted there physically. I want to take all of suffering, and instead of calling it suffering, I want to call it whatever hard time in your life that you have been through, or are in, or think that you see coming.

And just think of it as tough times. So that can be anything from your child giving you a little bit of a different spirit, and you haven't had to spank for quite a while, and they're showing their teeth in a little bit of a different way, and you end up needing to spank them. Is that easy? No.

It is a little bit of a hard time. Then there's, of course, hard, hard times. There is real physical sickness, and there's things at your job.

So first of all, I want to spend some time on that. That's going to be my second part here. The first part, I want to try to, and see, just pray for me, because I have a hard time understanding this.

God's thoughts are just so far from my thoughts, and it's so hard for me to see this the way that I believe that he sees it, and the way that I think that the Bible teaches it. And I never heard sermons on this when I was young, so I'm preaching something that I didn't read anywhere, and so, except in the Bible. So bear with me and talk to me if you think you're getting a wrong doctrine.

But I want to try to put suffering or a hard time in your life and connect it with the cross of Jesus Christ, and that all hard times or suffering are to bring about a death in you, which brings life in that area. So that anything you look at, anything right down to a spanking for your child, what does it do? If you really spank your child right, your child gets rid of the sin that you saw in there, so you put a death to that, say it's lying. You can often cure a six-year-old, five-year-old, whenever they start lying for the first time, you can cure them with one spanking.

Not always, but often. You completely cure them. They won't ever lie again.

Sometimes it doesn't work that way, but sometimes it does. Either way, you move the sin out with suffering, and you suffer more than the child does. So you also grow.

You choose whatever God's trying to slay in your life. So both of you suffer, but you're putting a suffering on the child, which moves the sin out and replaces it with, I don't know what virtue that it is. You can pick a different virtue, but almost always joy.

If you spank a child right, they're always happy. I think 100% of the time. The rest of the day they follow you around.

And so you see in a small way the principle of the cross right there in the spanking. You take the child, and it's suffering for both of you, and both of you benefit. Both of you, God can even slay a self-sin in me in the spanking.

I'm sure that he's done that in you. I'm sure that he's done it in me. I come out of there more changed than he does.

That's the idea. So that we can put it in a sequence, so that when you get squeezed at work, and I can't do this either when I'm in the situation, but at least maybe when you're out of it, you look back and you see, here was the hard time. Here was the sin that God was really trying to deal with in me.

And here's what I learned. So that without exception, every hard time can be followed with a victory. That's why they're there.

That I can prove from scripture. But I don't have a scripture except for the whole book of Peter to prove that every suffering is always going to work through with a death and a victory. But from the book of Peter, that's what's supposed to happen.

That's what I get from it. I want to make one thing very, very clear, and that is, I have observed by my mom, for one, but also by Jeremy's mom, and other people that I have seen physically suffer, and other

situations too where people suffered. My sisters at home, and times when people went through years of a hard time, don't start to think if you get a sickness in your family, or you suffer in a way that you look around at others and you think, I'm suffering more than they are, that God is dealing with a sin in you that is worse than the ones around you.

I have often, often, often seen that when someone really consecrates themselves to God, they'll deal with more suffering. And my mom was certainly, all I'll say is, a very holy pastor's wife, Christian woman. Now when I look at Jeremy's mom, I see her as the same way.

She's quiet, walking in victory, and God strikes the whole family down. She's in remission now, but I think that I could bring Virgil's whole family up here, and I could ask every one of them, what did you learn? I guarantee Liz had a victory. Even if she didn't have a sin that she was feeling like she was in, Job was the only person alive at that time that God said he was perfect.

But he learned something. He said that when God has tested me, I will come forth as gold. He learned something.

He was gold. You know, I look at somebody like my mom and some other people that have been sick, and I think, they're gold already, but they are more gold. They're more purified, and they can tell you how they were changed.

I guarantee if I'd asked Virgil, he changed. Jeremy changed. I didn't even ask him, but I know he did.

And his two sisters changed. Everyone that is around that situation comes out different. There's a death that happens in all of them, even when she gets well again.

So I want to make it, I kind of got off what I started saying there, but what I wanted to make sure is, don't you look at a family with sickness in them, in their family, and say, God's dealing with a sin that I don't have. Yeah, they're going to come out more gold. He will deal with, and by sin, I mean something that's not sin at the time, but afterwards, you're two years down the road, you look back and you see, I never do that anymore.

That would be sin to go back to. Very attitudes. You know, not being the first one to give up in your marriage.

You know, if you're the most spiritual, you should always give up first. That's all there is to it. The most spiritual one in any relationship will give up first.

You know, you can get in the ditch with that. I'm not saying that the man's supposed to be the submissive one, but anytime that there's an argument, anytime there's a time to say, I'm sorry, the most spiritual one will say it first. Well, if you learn that through a hard time, you know, that's not nearly all of us say that we're sorry as quick as we should.

That's what I'm talking about, those kind of things. You learn that through a hard time and you learn, from now on, I will be the first one to make things right. I'll be the first one.

Those kind of things. You go back, yeah, it's sin, but before you're there, before you learn that, it's not. So I'm not talking lying or anything like that that God's dealing with.

I'm talking growing issues, things that become sin as you go along and you look back. Okay, so when I say that God is always dealing with something when we suffer, you have to look at it the way I mean it and not that as soon as suffering comes to a person, God's dealing with a sin. But in the process, He will deal with and it will come out more pure.

I want to illustrate in two different ways, if I can, the principle that I see in suffering. Keep your Bibles at 1 Peter 4 and at some point we're going to read that chapter. But I worked hours and days and days on this and it never came together in something that I could walk through systematically and preach this to you.

So I don't know when I'm going to read the chapter and I don't even know what God's really going to say this morning. If I can just get us to all understand, because, well, I'll get into that in a little bit. Two examples.

One is me. I cannot get to heaven except one way. I don't mean salvation.

I'm talking I'm born again, walking in victory, but the born again Christian can only get into heaven one way, by dying. It's a very simple illustration. You only can release your spirit into the next world by a death to this body.

And see, this is where you'll shut me off. Don't shut me off. This is not sad.

Everyone in this room is going to die. My mom has already died. If she can die, I can die.

If she can go to heaven victorious, then I can too, and you can too. And it is not the end of the world. And I don't mean that tongue-in-cheek.

It is not the end of the world. It's the beginning of your world. And it is very sad.

And I'm not trying to make any kind of an argument today that you don't weep your heart out when someone in your family gets sick, much less dying. It is sad. It does take weeks and months and years to work through.

But at the same time, it's going to happen. And all I want to prove to you is no one ever yet got to heaven without dying except Enoch, Elijah, or Elijah. But all the rest of us, we only can get there through one thing.

Usually there's some suffering. Not always. Sometimes you're just taken like that.

But usually there's some suffering. The suffering moves on towards the death, and the death brings about a glorious life. All of a sudden, you are walking with Jesus the rest of your life.

It's awesome. Well, that same thing can happen every time you have a hard time. Okay? So, and I want to use Jesus' death.

See, you wrote down here, my death, my own death is going to be life. And without death, I am doomed to walking this cursed planet in my cursed body forever. I don't want to be here forever.

If Linda would stay alive forever, I wouldn't want to be here forever. I would die first 150 years from now and ask her to please die too. You know, somehow we have to get there.

I don't want to be here forever. But if I don't die, I will be here forever. I'll just be here.

Body's always dying. Back hurts. Weeds in the garden.

Everything's cursed here. The only way you can get to a perfect life is through death. Okay? Jesus, the very Son of God.

And I may have to read some of this. But Jesus' death was salvation for my soul. And this is the part that I almost feel guilty reading to you because I cannot express to you what I'm saying when I tell you that the death of Jesus Christ meant salvation for you.

And it was the only way salvation could come to you. A glorious life could only come to me and you through the death of the Son of God. He had to die before life could come to me and you.

And it's the principle I'm trying to teach you in every area of your life. Without the death of the only begotten Son of God, Jim Bontrager is doomed to hell forever. And his death began with the suffering of all of his closest friends forsaking him, two of them betraying and denying him.

That was, you know, all through his life. He never owned anything. He didn't even have a pillow to put his head on.

So his life was never an easy life. And the last week just before he died, he spent the week fending off those nasty Pharisees who kept coming to him with questions that they thought he couldn't answer. And that was how his week was.

And come Thursday, Friday, all of his disciples turn away from him and his two friends go to him, the one for money and the other one because he just thought maybe they'd kill him too and denies him in front of everybody. Just before those two friends actually did what Jesus knew they were going to do, he goes to the garden and he sweats drops of blood. And that's what I'm talking about.

He wasn't actually getting cut up. He didn't have cancer. He didn't have a sickness, but he was suffering probably more than he did the rest of the next 36 hours or 24 hours.

Sweating drops of blood by himself, he comes back and his three people that were supposed to be praying for him and for themselves are sleeping. And then he starts to suffer physically and he gets no sleep. You know, they have the Passover say from 3 to 6 o'clock.

And at 7 o'clock he starts speaking out John 14 and 15 that you love and I love to read and 16. And somewhere in there he prays chapter 17 and it's getting towards 7, 8 o'clock and they walk out through there and he's looking at the vines while he's talking about John 15. I don't know how all that happened.

He gets out there about 9 o'clock and he starts to pray. He prayed about three hours and often the Bible doesn't tell nearly everything, so who knows how much he prayed. But at least three hours because it says three hours.

And so it's about midnight and then they come and take him and take him back to Caiaphas' house and now he starts to suffer physically, real physically, not just emotionally. And the servants start to hit him with the palms of their hands and he is moving through the suffering towards what he knows he's going to end up in death. And that's why the Bible says that he did it because of the joy that was set before him, which wasn't any joy of his.

It was joy for me. It was because of what... You know, if I can get that into my head and in your head when you get into a hard time, look at what you're supposed to be learning on the other side. He did it for me.

He didn't even do it for himself. But it's a principle that's true every time you have a hard time. I just can't believe what he did.

God incarnate comes down here and he allows me to hang him on a cross, a piece of wood that he knows is going to kill him and it won't stop until it kills him. The cross even kills God. This principle is the slaying area in your life.

There's only one reason for it. So Jesus allows man to take him and nail him to a cross for six hours for one reason. Death.

And the cross won't stop until Jesus is dead. Don't turn me off. It won't stop until Jesus, the very Son of God, God Himself, who could take Himself off the cross anytime He wants to and who could decide not to die anytime He wants to, stays there.

And most of the time, you and my hard time works the same way. You don't have to stay in it. Sometimes it's a physical sickness you have to stay into.

Other times you can just switch jobs. Other times you can just get out of your marriage. We don't in this church, but that's what people do.

You can just leave your church. Brotherhood, you don't like it. You're gone.

Jesus could have done that too. But you stop the death short and you will never grow to the place where God wanted to take you that particular time if you get off the cross because that you can. The cross is to do one thing and that's to slay something.

Something. Maybe you're far ahead of anybody else. It's still to slay something.

It is still to take you to a higher level. So Jesus, six hours later, has all the life squeezed out of his precious body and he's hanging up there dead. And the moment he dies, the curtain is ripped from the top to the bottom in the temple and I can pray and I can walk into heaven a saved man.

Three inches thick, Gerard de Coy says that it would have taken six oxen on each side pulling with all their might and they couldn't have ripped that curtain. And the minute that Jesus dies, the curtain just rips from top to bottom. He walked to the cross.

Let them nail him there seeing the curtain ripping in six hours. See, if I can just get that, you know, look at your hard time. The curtain will rip in six hours.

Don't run away from it. Don't run away from it. Jesus said that the servant is not above his Lord, so I'm here to plead with you that if Jesus said that I'm not above him because I'm his servant and if he learned obedience through the things that he suffered, that's what Hebrews says, and if he was willing to go to the cross to bring life to me, then let's try to see our circumstance the way God sees it and not fight it and go on through it.

Okay. Now I want to take just a little bit of time for you. Be honest with yourself and look at where you are today, wherever you are, wherever you find yourself.

I think, you know, it takes a little bit. I could ask any of you how you're doing this morning and you would tell me right away, good. I'm doing good.

You're not really good? No, no, my job's good. Family's good. But if I would press hard enough and if I would press deep enough and if I would ask all the right questions, you all would say the same thing I do.

Somewhere, somewhere in your life you're being squeezed and you're being pushed out of your comfort zone, I guarantee it, or you're not human. Everyone. So I just want you to not think if you're in a hard time.

I want you to think about the hard time and think, identify it. And I'm just going to name a bunch of stuff that I thought of, that I have been through, that people go through and you may not admit it to anybody, but if you can see it as a six-hour period that will bring about a new life in an area and try to see what it is, what is it that God, what is the self-sin? I like to think of the sins in me that God usually deals with as just plumb self-sins. From overeating to not getting up early every morning and those kind of things.

What is your place today? Are you in a place where if you make a decision, regardless how you make it, one of two groups of people will turn against you? You know, you're in those situations often, especially with family. Someone is going to be mad at you regardless how you make your decision. That's a perfect hard time.

That is an exact place that God makes for you. It is such a great time to... And I'm not... You know, I don't cruise through those times. I cry too.

I get mad too. I question God too sometimes. It's not easy.

But if there's a reason, at least it's a little bit easier. Are you suffering physically? You know, is your back almost keeping you from working? Or do you have another physical illness that follows you around that maybe you'll have till you die? You know, sometimes it's a long time. Sometimes it's not a six-hour cross.

But if you look at it in a thousand years with God is as one day with me and one day with God is as a thousand years with me and I started doing some figuring until my mind quit. But how much actually is your... Even if your trial is from now until you're 70 years old, 80 years old, how long is it really? Is it 40 years? Is it 50 years long? Or is it actually about 40 minutes? I don't remember how I came up with this, but one time I figured out that my life is about an hour and 45 minutes if I live 80 years. You know, which is it? If I look at it through the way that God sees it, how long is it actually? And once I'm on the other side, like Jesus was when he died and he looked back at the cross and he saw Jim Bontrager could be saved now and he was just jubilant.

I can't imagine how he felt after he got through those 33 years and he stood there and he realized it really is finished. I'm standing with my Father again. Everybody at Faith Community Chapel is welcome into heaven because of what he just went through.

You know, if I can just see through it and see the other side. I don't even remember what I was saying. Perfect.

There's plenty of Scriptures. Well, I think I'm going to go on before I get to that. Is your family a grief to you because you come to this church? Is your family a grief to you because you have certain convictions? You can't do what they do.

You don't go where they go. People that you work with, are you going through a difficult time in your marriage? Are you going through a difficult time with anybody that God has placed around you? And I think probably, if you'd be honest, I would guess seven of ten of you are having a difficult time with somebody that God has placed beside you in some situation. It may not be your marriage.

It may not be church. It may not be, you know, somewhere. Somewhere there's somebody that you avoid.

You're human. I think you are. You have me fooled.

God places all these people around us. What self-sin is God trying to separate me from? What is the virtue that God's trying to bring in and replace it with? The reason I think that if you take the book of Peter, you can take every area in your life is because in chapter two, he talks about the workplace. And in chapter three, he talks about the church.

And in chapter four, he deals pretty much all through the chapter with professing Christians, giving you grief. So Peter, I think, was taking all of it and putting it all together. Let's go to 1 Peter 4, and I would like to read the chapter.

And I don't know. I'm probably going to do some moving around in the book of Peter also. Okay.

Peter just got done. You know, at the end of chapter... Well, he did a little bit at the end of chapter three, verse 18. Christ also suffered once for sins.

But at the end of chapter two, he talked about it just a little bit more, looking at how Jesus suffered. But then in chapter four, he wants us to look back at the way that Jesus suffered. And he says, Therefore, since Christ Jesus suffered for me and for you in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men but for the will of God.

Because that we spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles when we walked in lewdness and lusts, drunkenness, revelries, banquetings and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation. Speaking evil of you, they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

If I look at 2 Peter 2, I think all the sins in verse 3 is what professing Christians do. It is true that a non-Christian can also do them. But these are sins that professing Christians do that turn to you and say, It's strange that you do not run with us in the same flood of dissipation.

In fact, you think you're holier than me. You're some pious little Christian. It can also be for non-Christians, but it is mostly for the backslider or the Christian that is born again but doesn't have the power like he talked to Timothy about.

They will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this reason, the gospel was preached also to those who are dead that they might be judged according to men in the flesh and live according to God in the spirit. But the end of all things is at hand.

Therefore, be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things, have fervent love for each other. For love will cover a multitude of sins.

Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As everyone has received a gift, minister it to one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.

If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability that God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened to you.

In Psalm 23, remember David said, Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. In the New King James, I think it would say, Yes, and when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I'm going to just look it up so that I know for sure how the King James, I quote it, but I don't know if I quote it, which version that I quoted in, but it's the same. What I see is the same concept that he says in Peter.

I'm sorry. I'm going kind of long here, and I didn't realize it was as late as it was or I would have hurried a little bit more. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

It's also yea in the New King James. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me. OK? Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you.

He does not make it sound like it's something that you one time passed through, and if you really look at the valley of the shadow of death verse, I always thought it's when I die. You know, I don't, I think it is, but kind of like this other scripture is talking to backsliding Christians, Psalm 23 is talking about several different things. I think, first, while I am alive, it's talking about, yes, and every time that I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, if you think about it, that how many times did David go through a time when he had something slain in his life? Aye, aye, aye.

Year after year after year with the king of the whole land and his army chasing him around after he had been anointed by God to be king. How can this be happening to me? I think he knew what he was saying when he was saying, yes, and even when I walked through that valley of the shadow of death that I have been through 30 times, where something was slain in his life again, and it was a shadow of what was going to happen when he dies and goes to heaven. The real valley of death.

But the valley of the shadow of death could be where you're at right now. And if it's not, you probably will be there sometime. The valley of the shadow of death.

Yes, and when I am going through the valley of the shadow of death, every time I go through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. And that's what Peter is saying. Beloved, don't think it's strange concerning the fiery trial which is about to try you as though some strange thing happened to you.

But rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings. And when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. Let's go to 1 Peter 1. 1 Peter chapter 1. Remember there was a verse there.

I spent a little bit of time on it a year ago, but not very much. Verse 6 says, In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by manifold temptations or various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, or the trial of your faith, means the genuineness of your faith being much more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire may be found to praise and honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ. All over in this book, it's like you could start off with chapter 4 and you've got a spoke going out all kinds of directions where he supports what he's saying in chapter 4

when he says, Don't think it's strange concerning the fiery trial which is about to try you because it is for one reason, the genuineness of your faith.

And follow the word faith through Peter. He is trying to give you and me a faith that will not fall short at heaven's door, but it will get us in. A faith that's going to get us in.

There's so many people whose faith is going to get them to the door, but it's not going to get them in. They're going to knock just like those virgins did. They're going to get to the door, but they won't get in.

I want a faith that gets me in. And if it means some trials, I don't think there's any way around it, which is to try you as though some strange thing happened to you. But rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings.

I'm not sure what happens every time that you and I go through a hard time. But when his glory is revealed, you and I will be glad with exceeding joy. Something happens in heaven every time you go through a hard time and a death happens in your life.

And by a death, I just simply mean you see a sin, you know, I hear you, Holy Spirit, I'm going to put this away, and you replace it with a virtue. Every time something happens to the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven, there is a glory in suffering that there isn't in any other thing that you will ever face. And that's why when there is a martyr, that man can be almost boastful in his attitude.

There are martyrs who have stood out there and sang. There are martyrs who rebuked the executioner while he was doing it. Even look at the spirit that came out of Stephen.

Stephen is preaching along there, and he sees they're getting mad. He's preaching right to them. They were mad to start with.

You know, he only started preaching because they were trying to tell him that he was a false prophet and that he was lying. So he started preaching to him. At the end of his sermon, it's like he just rises up and he says to them, you stiff-necked and uncircumcised and hardened ears, you always do resist the Holy Spirit.

As you fathers were, that's exactly how you are. And they gnash on him with their teeth when he's done. Why did he do that? It's like God comes on a person like that with a glory and a power that you cannot have in any other way.

And I think in the same way when you go through your hard time, whether it is a big one or a little one, a physical one, or a situation that you're in, God wants to come in there with that same power and get you through those six hours to the other side so you can see the life that's on the other side. I'm amazed at what God did with people who really, really suffered, physically suffered for his heavenly man. That book, that book is just unreal.

You can't believe what's in that book. I didn't even read all that book. I skimmed a little bit and listened to a sermon from that man, but what a testimony.

If you are reproached, verse 14, for the name of Christ, blessed are you. For the spirit of glory and of God rests on you. On their part, he is blasphemed, but on your part, he is glorified.

But let none of you suffer as a murderer. Let's, um, I want to go through some promises yet. I can't let these go, but I can let chapter four go.

I want to look at, um, I want to look at four promises in the book of Peter, and I want to name off some other, about seven other promises to you that you just, if you want to, you can jot them down and look them up, but I won't have time to go to them. I'm going to name those off first, and then we'll go through Peter and just talk about four. These are absolute sure promises that, that, that God is trying to teach me in my little, little stumbling block.

I'm not stumbling a long walk that I'm in right now. He's trying to teach me to see the hard time when I get there. Start learning when I get there.

You know how it is. Often you're already through it. Ah, you prayed it away, you know, or you, whatever it is, you're on the other side like this, and then you see what happened.

And you see what He did. I want to learn when I see it coming, you know, and latch onto the promise that I know is in the New Testament that is connected with every hard time. It's a promise.

There's so many of these. Romans 8, just write, okay, Romans 8, it's just before, it's somewhere in the twenties, I think, it's just before, and we know that all things work together for good to those who love God. I think it's right in that area of chapter 8. I didn't write any of the verses down because I was going to turn to them.

So, you'll have to look through Romans 8 a little bit, and it says that if we suffer, if we suffer, we can be joined, er, we can be with Jesus Christ himself. If we suffer. And he's stating a promise right there as he goes, and he stops and he injects, if we suffer.

So, when you suffer, you are getting an inheritance as you suffer. And I have to believe that if he stopped and put that in there, if you are not willing to suffer at all as a Christian, you won't be in heaven. You won't be in this church.

You won't want to be here. You want an easy life? That's why I think all of you go through some hard times right here. I know that you do.

You have to. You have to, to want to meet in a basement. Hello? Okay.

Matthew 5. Um, towards the end of the chapter, he says that, um, you've heard that it has been said to those of old, um, you shall, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you.

Pray for those who spitefully use you. And persecute you that you may be sons of your father in heaven. You can use that.

Every time you're in a situation where somebody is again being mean to you or saying something about you and you pray for them, you will be a son of your father in heaven. It's a promise that you may be sons of your father in heaven. If you don't do that, can you be a son of your father in heaven? It's a promise.

Take that difficult person and he's a means of a promise to you. He's a promise to you. It's as hard for me as it is for you.

Don't think that I'm anywhere that you're not. Psalm 119 verse 67 and 71. Hebrews 12 says that afterwards it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness and that's talking about the chastening kind of suffering.

Second Corinthians 12, Paul talked about his thorn and he said the whole cause of the thorn was so that the power of God would rest on him. If he didn't have the thorn, the power of God would not rest on him. There's only one way to get the power of God.

You know, in first Corinthians chapter one, Paul said that the preaching of the cross is foolishness to the world, but to us who are saved, it is the power of God. What's the preaching of the cross? What I'm talking to you about. It's not so much salvation as it is what I'm talking to you about because you all go through a death when you get saved, but you continue to do it the rest of your walking Christian life.

It's not so much Job 23, when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold. Romans 6, whoever has died is freed from sin. To me, that is two prophecies again.

Whoever has made a death to the devil and taken in Jesus, in a way is freed from sin right there. Certain sins that God takes away from you right there. You don't have to be a murderer anymore if you were a murderer.

God will take care of all those obvious sins right there. But this verse is true, and to me means the same thing as the first verse in 1 Peter 4, 1, Since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin. That's going to be one of my promises in Peter that I want to come back to.

But I think Paul was saying the same thing in Romans 6. Every time you die, you are freed from that sin. Every time. If you allow the cross to kill you there, you won't have to sin that sin ever again.

And you can all look at areas in your life of sin that you aren't even tempted with. You know you're never going to commit that sin again. It's not even a problem.

Why? Because the flesh that wanted that died. It ain't there anymore. I think you could all point to an area in your life where that happened.

He who has died is freed from sin. It's true in at least three ways. When you die and go to heaven, you're freed from sin.

When you get saved, you're freed from some sins, whatever the obvious sins. And every time you die, you are freed from another sin. It's a principle.

James 1. It's not a whole chapter. You know James 1. Okay, 1 Peter 1. Let's go back to 1 Peter 1. I really don't mean to go long. So don't think that I think it's cool to go long or that I purposely try to go long, and this morning I was not going to go long.

And I know that you don't want me to worry about that, but I still am kind of feeling sort of bad about that. But 1 Peter 1. Okay? 6 and 7 are a promise. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials.

Okay? Though now, if need be, you are being grieved by manifold temptations. That is the state you are in. If you are a Christian, you are in that state.

You can't get away from it. So if you tell me that you're not in that state, then I would say, well, who's right? Peter or you? The Holy Spirit or you? I think you're here. I think you're tempted and tried in a lot of different ways.

I know there's days that you don't want to talk to anybody on the phone. And there's other days that you're just overflowing with joy. Maybe there's less and less of those days, but you have bad weeks.

You have bad days. So now you are being grieved by various trials or manifold temptations. And that sounds almost like same wording from James 1. So when you're looking up James 1. Okay? That.

There's my key word. That. The first of verse 7. Okay? You are grieved by manifold temptations.

We'll add the word so. So that your faith is genuine. So the genuineness of your faith.

Okay? Then he says, being much more precious than a million dollars. Though it is tried by fire, which it would burn up today, but gold. Tried by fire.

May be found to praise, honor, and glory. Or in other words, a faith that gets you through the door. So we are where we are today to make the kind of faith that will get us through the door of heaven.

So without the trials, you won't get there. Okay? So there's a promise. Let's go to 1 Peter 4. There's two of them in 1 Peter 4. The first one is that verse 1. 1 Peter 4. 1. This is an amazing phrase.

I would want to take this phrase, print it out, huge letters, and just put it on your wall and think about it for a while. What does he mean when he says that he who has suffered in the flesh has stopped sinning? Has ceased from sin? You know, I have read over this verse and decided it can't mean what it says. It can't mean what it says.

In the context of the book of Peter that's about suffering, I think it means what it says. For instance, are you going to want a beer? This is a far out statement, okay? But it's a principle. Are you going to ask for a beer on your way to the stake to be burned for your faith? Just a question.

No. He who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin. Did I make my point? The same principle is true in all of your life.

If that flesh that wants that certain sin suffers, you won't even want that sin. You won't even want that sin anymore. I think that there is just an amazing glory of power in that phrase.

You could dig all your life. I could dig all my life just in that phrase. So, okay.

Let's leave. Okay. 1 Peter 4, go to verse 14.

If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God rests on you. It says, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. Now, I don't know what that is.

But I know that every time that you are reproached for the name of Christ, every time you even get a look for somebody because of a conviction that you have, two spirits come on you. It says that. There is a Spirit of glory that comes on you that you do not get in another way, the same way.

You know, I'm sure that it's maybe like the Holy Ghost falling on a meeting. But you get the Spirit of glory and you get the Spirit of God in a different way than you had Him before you were reproached. That is a promise.

On their part, He's blasting, but on your part, He's glorified. Now, 1 Peter chapter 5, this is the best one. And I just can't exposit my way through a book.

I don't know how you say that and just stick with the verses. I got to jump all over the book because I feel like Peter, when he wrote the book, somehow, I think that's what he did. Peter, he's just my hero.

But in chapter 5, all of a sudden, he gets done talking to the church and how we should act. And then he says in verse 10, But may the God of all grace, I can't go into that, although I would love to, who called us to His eternal glory. This glory has to do with suffering.

Called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus. After we have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. So I'm giving you a verse that you can dig for the next year again.

The God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, every time you suffer, but also after you have suffered a while. See, this doesn't all happen when you're 60 years old. These things are happening every time that you suffer again.

Every time you go through another hard time. So look at the place you're at right now and identify it. And look at these four promises and say, I am there because Jesus wants to perfect me.

And He will perfect you. He doesn't just want to. If you go through that and don't run away from it, He will perfect you.

There will be a perfecting. There will be an establishing. There will be a strengthening and there will be a settling.

So take heart. Whatever it is that is tough for you right now, take heart. Those four promises are right in this same book.

They are a promise. And if I can, I think, you know, I think I could prove my point by having you all, by having all of us sit down with, Virgil's family just gained my mind over. Over and over when I was thinking about this.

There is a very plain physical sickness we could all see. And if we would all sit down with them and ask, did you get established? Did you get settled at all? Did you learn anything? What did you learn? They would, without a doubt, tell you things that they learned. Life looks so different when you just stared.

The sickness that you thought would probably or very likely be death. You stared it in the face. Life looks different.

You know, your marriage. It's not hard to say, oh, honey, this is no problem. You know, things really change.

I'm going to sit down. Thank you so much for praying. And I just so, so pray that somehow if you can just get the little principle, just forget the whole sermon and just the principle that the hard time is for my benefit.

He loves me as much as he loved Jesus Christ when he made him hang on that cross for six hours. I'm in the situation because he loves me so much, and he can see that the curtain's going to tear on the other side. Amen.

And it'll tear for you, too. Stay where you are. Work your way through it.

Don't run away from it. And let's pray for each other, because it's not easy life.

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