

Suffering as a Christian

Part 1

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Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:00] Read several portions from Peter's first epistle, but before I do so, I would just like to read those two verses that the Lord said to Peter at the end of John's Gospel. John chapter 21, verse 18. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou art young, thou girdest thyself, and walkest whither thou wouldest. But when thou shalt be old, thou should stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee, whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, follow me. Now would you turn to Peter's first epistle. Chapter 1, [00:01:07] I'm going to read a few verses from each of the chapters, well-known verses. Peter's first epistle, chapter 1, verse 1. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. Now we'll just drop down a few verses. I have before me particularly verse 11, but in order to get the setting of that verse, [00:02:04] we'll have to read from verse 8. Whom having not seen, ye love. In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you. Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. And now in chapter 2. Verse 11. Dearly [00:03:09] beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Verse 15. For so is the will of God that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Verse 19. For this is thankworthy, if a man put conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults ye take it [00:04:05] patiently? But if, when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again. When he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judges righteously. Who his own self, bear our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live under righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed. [00:05:05] For ye were a sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls. Chapter 3. Verse 15. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear. Having a good conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good

conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be served, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evildoing. For Christ also hath once suffered [00:06:01] for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. And now in chapter 4, verse 1.

For as much then, as Christ hath suffered for us in flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind. For he that hath suffered in flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the glory of God. Verse 13. But rejoice in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. Verse 19. Wherefore let them that suffer according to the [00:07:02] will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator. The elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Verse 10. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto the eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. I shall reign as a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose I have written briefly, [00:08:03] exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.

The reason why, beloved brethren, I have looked into the first epistle of Peter this evening is because it views the saints of God in a particular character that one feels keenly in regard to one's own life, and also perhaps in regard to our gatherings and the saints of God that we know a feature of Christianity that we are in great danger of losing. And this feature [00:09:07] is the feature of pilgrims and strangers. Now the idea of a stranger is a foreigner. It's the same word. One who has not been born here. One whose origin is in another land. And the idea behind a pilgrim is one who permanently doesn't live here. This is not his permanent abiding place. He is, as it were, just passing through. Now I think if you examine these two things, dear brethren, you will see that they are a very vital part of practical Christianity. Not just theoretically [00:10:08] to understand what it is that we've been born of God, that we've been born from above, that we are heavenly men by birth. That is the meaning doctrinally of the fact that we are strangers here. We belong to another sea. But you will see, beloved brethren, that that must of necessity have very important practical implications upon our present life. And also the fact that this is not our home. This is not our resting place. We are but passing through a scene. And according to the nature that we have as born of God, and according to that which we have learned of God, [00:11:04] and according to the pathway that the Lord Jesus trod when he was here in manhood. The pathway, beloved brethren, that obviously is diametrically opposed to the present course of things in this world. Now we have, we read, did we not, in this very epistle in chapter 2 verse 11, Peter uses these two words, dearly beloved I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims. Now the reason why I read those verses at the end of John's gospel was this. I have always been very much struck in my own mind with the wonderful fact of what is involved in those words that the Lord Jesus said to Peter.

[00:12:04] We know that what the Lord was saying in rather obscure words in verse 18, that there was a time in Peter's life when he pleased himself. But there would be a time later on in his life when he would be taken by another. And another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. And the Spirit of God has told us clearly what the Lord meant by these words. He was indicating to Peter that whilst it may be true that he would live to be an old man, that he would terminate his sojourn here. He refers to this, does he not, in his second epistle. How that the Lord had shown him that he [00:13:01] was shortly to put off his earthly tabernacle. But the Lord Jesus had not only told him that he was going to die, but the Lord Jesus had indicated to him that he was going to glorify God in his death. I want you just to consider for a moment the wonderful effect of the work of God in our souls,

that can produce such an effect in a man. Surely if we just cast our minds back over the life of Peter, remind ourselves the sort of person that he was. Impetuous, bold, often running when he should have walked, often doing when he should have done nothing. And yet such a one who had obviously an ardent affection for Christ. And yet a man who naturally had much about him probably [00:14:09] that it was the result of sin, naturally. And yet to realize that because of the work of God in his soul, at the end of his life, when he comes to that moment, when as far as man is concerned he's at his weakest, when sin has run its course and death is there, at that very moment Peter was going to glorify God. What a wonderful triumph that is. Isn't it something that groups the soul as we realize the wonderful power of Christianity, the power of the love of God, the power of the death and resurrection [00:15:02] of the Lord Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit of God in a believer, that can produce such a result that a man can glorify God as he dies. Of course we understand from historians that Peter was in fact crucified. Some have said he was crucified upside down. I'm not concerned with that. Obviously he died as a martyr. But I'm concerned that this wonderful triumph of the grace of God, that a man whose life was once controlled by sin, purified by the death of Christ, taken control of by Christ, a man empowered of the Holy Spirit, and at the end of his life goes out of this world into the next, glorifying God. That's a wonderful triumph. A wonderful triumph. [00:16:05] But also there is indicated in these verses the fact that Peter was going to endure opposition from the world. And you know when we get through to his epistle, we can see how the pathway of those who would follow the Lord Jesus Christ must be prepared for something. Because in this first mention in chapter 1 of the sufferings of Christ, we have the establishment, should we say, of a divine principle. We are told that the testimony of the prophets of old, as the Spirit of Christ energized them, spoke thus, the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.

[00:17:11] Can we not remember the words of the Lord Jesus to those too on the way to a mass? Ought not Christ to have suffered, and to have entered into his glory? So we see clearly that suffering precedes the glory.

Now of course the life and the death of the Lord Jesus is fully exemplified there. The suffering that he endured from men, and also from the hand of God in regard to the matter of sin, has led for him up to the glory of God. But you know we read in these, this very epistle, [00:18:06] that there is an aspect of the sufferings of Christ that the believer is called to follow. He has left us an example that we should follow in his steps. Now there are one or two other things that I want to point out to you about this epistle before I just go through these references to the sufferings of Christ that are found in each chapter. It's a helpful point to notice about Peter's first epistle that there is a reference to the sufferings of Christ in each of the five chapters. That's well known. But what is not perhaps often commented upon is this.

There are two other things that are mentioned in this epistle, not in every chapter, not five times but four times. [00:19:10] And they need to be taken into consideration when we think of these five references to the sufferings of Christ. Now in the second verse, I only read those opening verses just to get the setting of this little expression in verse two. That in one sense the saints of God have been called unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. The obedience of Jesus Christ.

Now in connection with the obedience of Jesus Christ, there are in this first epistle four references to the will of God. We've read of some of them. In order that you might perhaps think about them and look them up afterwards, I'll just point them out to you. [00:20:10] Chapter 2, verse 15, we read, Chapter 3, verse 17, Chapter 4, verse 2, Chapter 4, verse 19, Suffering according to the will of God.

[00:21:03] Now, this again is something that has been fully exemplified for us in the sufferings of Christ.

Have you considered, beloved brethren, again that that well-known portion of scripture, Philippians chapter 2, is in actual fact an exhortation to obedience? Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus, who, and then it goes on to say, missing out the middle bit, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Now his obedience to the will of God went even to the death of the cross.

[00:22:02] That is the character of obedience that the Spirit of God would bring before us right at the beginning of this epistle. One of the central features of Christianity in a practical way is the truth of obedience. And in this epistle, we have four references to suffering according to the will of God.

And we'll look at those shortly, we'll come to them as we go on to them. The other thing is, that if we view the pathway of the saints of God as being one of suffering, as being one of rejection in following the pathway of the Lord Jesus Christ, as being one that might involve suffering as we seek to carry out the will of God in the face of a world which is directly opposed to God, [00:23:14] and if we accept that we do not belong to this world, and if we understand that we are just passing through and that this is not our abiding place, the heart must of necessity have some bright object before it that will enable it to accept all this, the suffering and the rejection.

What is it that is held out before the saints of God that will enable the true follower of the Lord Jesus to accept such things in his individual life? [00:24:05] Well, there are four mentions also in this epistle of the appearing.

I've just run over them for you. In chapter 1, verse 7, the trial of your faith, going to the end of the verse, might be found under praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Also in this chapter, verse 13, wherefore gird up the loins of your mind and sober and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. We've got to turn over a bit now, chapter 4.

[00:25:08] Yes, we read the verse, chapter 4, verse 13, but rejoice in as much as ye are for takers of Christ's suffering, that when his glory shall be revealed ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. And finally, in chapter 5, verse 4, when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. So what I'm trying to demonstrate to you, beloved brethren, it may have seemed a little bit so far detached and broken, but that which was true of Christ, the sufferings of Christ and the glory that shall be after this, has been seen clearly in the life and the death of the Lord Jesus. [00:26:04] But that now is presented in this epistle as a pathway that the follower of Christ has to walk in.

There is, in regard to this present course of things, the preparedness to suffer as a Christian.

Have you ever thought of that expression? It's in this epistle, to suffer as a Christian.

Now you know, beloved brethren, we don't really know much about this, do we? Not if we just for the moment limit ourselves to the open, brutal persecution of men and powers and governments who are

absolutely opposed to Christianity.

[00:27:05] But thank God, we do hear and we do know of certain ones in communist lands and other lands, who in a very real way are suffering as Christians.

Persons, beloved brethren, who have honestly sat down and counted the cost, and they must have asked themselves the question, is it worth it?

Some of you may have read the last report, the last letter that our brother Ray Trang may have passed round. Think, beloved brethren, of what it is for young men of 18 and 20, of seeking to be true to Christ, and in being true to Christ, are refusing to take on oath allegiance to the communist regime, [00:28:21] and because of that are suffering torture and death.

It's happening today in this world. What is it that will make a man, a young man, a young woman, think of that young woman Galina who has been so long in prison in Russia. What is it that makes the sight of God suffer as a Christian?

It's not stoicism, it's not physical ability, it's an understanding of the sufferings of Christ.

[00:29:16] And the glory that shall follow. Now we don't see suffering like that very much in this land. But that doesn't alter the fact, my dear brethren, young and old, that there is a pathway to be walked through this world that is true to Christ. Now it may not involve going against the authorities and being prepared to stand the brutal buffeting. That word is used here, you know, it's used in this epistle, being buffeted. That word means being struck with a clenched fist. It's the literal meaning of the word. [00:30:06] We may not be called for that, beloved brethren, but you know, are we prepared honestly to accept what is involved? We don't belong to this world. We have a life that has got nothing to do with this world at all. We have a citizenship, Paul tells us, that is heavenly, that is altogether of a different character and has something else as its life stream. You know, it's a very real and practical thing, isn't it? You know, it's a very real and practical thing, isn't it? As to how much we are prepared to give up in regard to advancement in this world in order that we may follow Christ.

[00:31:11] You know, we were reminded, some of us, just this week, and there's nothing wrong in speaking about these things. But to give demonstration of this very thing, some of us heard on Monday of a man of God who was offered something that would give him a position socially in this world, as a reward from the quill.

And obviously, he was a man of God whose eye was on the glory of Christ, not on the glory of man, and he had the grace to say, meekly and humbly, no thank you.

That, my dear friend, is, in a nutshell, what is involved in strangership in this world and being a pilgrim.

[00:32:11] A preparedness to plough a course which is completely opposite to the world with all that it has to offer, drawing on resources from another sin, having the eye upon Christ, and realizing, think, beloved brethren, almost the last verse that we read in this epistle, how little, I say to my own soul, have I realized the implications of this verse, verse 10 of chapter 5, but the God of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal glory. Think of it, beloved brethren. The grace of God has called us to the eternal glory of God.

[00:33:11] Now is that not something that should have a very, very loud word to say to each one of our hearts in regard to our pathway to this present world?

Well, let us just look very briefly at these references to the sufferings of Christ that we have in this chapter. I've dealt with the first one, testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. We turn over to chapter 2. We've already considered. I'm not going, beloved brethren, into these straightforward exhortations. They perhaps are portions of the word of God that we don't realize as much as we do.

[00:34:10] Dearly beloved, think of the love that is behind that. As this aged servant of the Lord, Peter, as he looked upon the saints of God, as to what they were in the sight of God, remember how the Lord Jesus said to him, feed my lambs, feed my lambs. And here is Peter, probably getting an old man when he wrote this first epistle. I'm not sure, I don't know when it was written. But I can see behind this expression, Peter having imbibed those words of the Lord Jesus, my lambs, my lambs, my sheep. Something that was precious to Christ. And here he says, dearly beloved. Here was Peter looking upon the saints of God in a similar way that the Lord looked upon the saints of God. [00:35:13] And he says, dear beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. Difficult verses I've been asked to speak about. Difficult words to speak about. We all know what they refer to. Fleshly desires that are not Christ's, that are not spiritual things.

If we're honest, I believe all of us, especially those of us who are young, how much of our lives is taken up with things that are not Christ's, that are not spiritual things. [00:36:02] They may not even be sinful things, but they're not spiritual things. They satisfy the first man, the natural man. They are connected with what we are as natural men and women. War against the soul. They're destructive to spiritual growth and the enjoyment of the blessing of God in our soul. Have your conversation honest.

To such a degree that men may take account of us as standing out in this world by our very manner of life.

You know, what a tremendously practical thing it is today, especially if you're in business in the world or you rub shoulders in the world, to really sit down and ask yourself the question, am I known as a righteous man in this world? [00:37:04] Do my companions at work, do my friends, do they know that I'm a Christian? Can they see a life of righteousness and honesty? Because that's what's involved in these verses.

If they can, there's an intimation in this verse that God will even use such a thing for the getting to himself glory from men, because they can take account of godly piety, righteousness and honesty in the hearts and lives of the saints of God. He says in verse 15, If we think just again for a moment of what is going on in other lands, as we think of this awful persecution against the saints of God, what should we pray about, brethren? [00:38:09] What should be our attitude toward men who ill-treat Christian souls?

Well, I believe the true attitude with us should be, and I'm sure it's true with many of these dear souls who are enduring torture and persecution, they're seeking to suffer as a Christian, to the end that their manner of life might affect the consciences of those that oppose and oppress them. Nothing there, you know, of revenge or hitting back, of preparedness to suffer as a Christian, that doesn't involve hitting back. We'll see how that was seen in the Lord Jesus when we get to the end of the

chapter. [00:39:03] But, beloved brethren, these are real things. For them, it might be the enduring of physical suffering. For you and I, it might be just a matter of being laughed at. Do we pray for men? Do we carry on seeking to be like Christ to such an extent that they are affected in their consciences as they behold our manner of life?

If we want to be subject to the will of God in our daily living, this is one of the things that we've got to learn, a preparedness to suffer for Christ and let the world do what it will. Well, this is thankworthy of a man for conscience toward God and dear grief, suffering wrongfully. Conscience. Don't hear much about it nowadays, do we? Conscience.

[00:40:10] Those moments in your life when you come up against something that you may be involved in, you perhaps can't get out of it, but you know in your conscience it's not right in the sight of God, what do you do? What do you do? What do I do? Endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it if ye be buffeted for your faults? There's no glory for God in that.

If I get caught doing something wrong and punished by the authorities, there's nothing for the glory of God in that, it's a dishonour to Christ. But he goes on to say that if, when you do well and suffer for it, you take it patiently, for this is acceptable with God, doing well and suffering for it, oh dear saints of God, have you ever felt like giving up?

[00:41:18] That little service that you're doing for the Lord that often goes overlooked and you don't get much encouragement, you perhaps get a lot of sticks and stones and hard looks and grumbles and grunts, do you feel like giving it up? When you do well and suffer for it, take it patiently, this is acceptable with God, for even here unto where ye call, think of that.

You might think that that sort of thing is not right in the sight of God, that what I'm doing in seeking to serve the Lord is not getting the results that it should.

[00:42:16] Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps. And now here we come to some of the most beautiful words in this epistle, because you know, we probably aren't going to have enough time to go through all these references, but it doesn't matter. But you know, what I want you to take away with you is to realise that in this epistle, every time the Apostle Peter brings about a circumstance in the life of the saint of God where he may have to suffer, where that course of things will involve him in suffering, [00:43:02] I want you to notice that every time he does that, he directs the gaze to Christ. He directs the affections to Christ. And you know that, beloved brethren, is the answer to what I may be presenting to you tonight are things that are inexplicable and may be difficult to accept. But you know, the simple answer is this. It is only as one's heart is engaged with Christ, and one is feasting upon him, that one will have the moral courage and the moral power to suffer as a Christian.

It doesn't work any other way. It doesn't work any other way.

And so here, when the Apostle Peter has brought up the matter of the will of God, and the matter of my conscience, and the matter of well-doing, and that very thing involving me in suffering, as soon as he gets to that point in these verses, he speaks about the Lord Jesus Christ. [00:44:26] He says of him who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Here he brings before us the absolutely perfect man, and he substantiates the fact there that there was nothing in him that warranted, that warranted the treatment that he got.

He says of him who when he was reviled, reviled not again, read Matthew's account of the crucifixion, read Matthew's account of the crucifixion, and you will read how men reviled him, reviled him.

[00:45:19] What did he say? Nothing. Nothing.

When he was reviled, he reviled not again. When he suffered, they smote him on the cheek, they plucked the hair from his face.

They put a crown of thorns on his head, they butchered him, they slapped on him.

Did he threaten?

Did he threaten?

[00:46:03] He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, as a man done before a sheep.

You know those men in Pilate's judgment hall and in Herod's palace, they sought to divest him of everything that outwardly was beautiful and good.

They sought to humiliate him, and I suppose it is true they did.

But he stood there in all the glorious dignity of a perfect subject man who was going through it all, accepting what men did to him, and accepting it because for him it was the will of God.

[00:47:05] So, when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. There's nothing in that verse about revenge. There's nothing in that verse at all. If you read Mr. Darby's note about that verse, he's got a footnote, if you've got Mr. Darby's translation, read it. There is nothing in that verse that indicates that he was even seeking to his God to avenge him upon those men. That's not the thought in that verse. He just committed the whole matter, himself, his honor, his glory, to the hand of his God and accepted those circumstances and suffered.

Who, in his own self, bared our sins, in his own body, on the truth. [00:48:06] But we bring death to sins.

If you can live unrighteousness by your stripes, you are healed. You see, beloved brethren, we owe everything to the sufferings of Christ. Here is a reference, at the end, to that stroke of divine judgment.

Those hours of darkness into which no man can look. We may look upon what men did to him and see the dignity of manhood that, in perfect obedience, accepted those circumstances because they were the will of God. And that's the example that we have to follow. It is accepting the will of God and then having that moral courage to accept what those circumstances may involve.

[00:49:09] That's the example that we have been led. But at the end of the chapter, he refers to that stroke of divine judgment that we can know nothing at all about, that fell upon him, the result of which is that we have been cleansed and healed. We were a sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls. Well, wonderful verses to ponder.

Verses of scripture that put stability into the soul and give moral courage to stand for Christ in the face of an evil day.

Again, at the end of chapter 3, [00:50:01] For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing and for evil. We've dealt with that, I'll not go on to it again, but here again, For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. We'll just have to pass on, I see the time has gone. So when we get to chapter 4, For as much then, as Christ hath suffered for us in flesh, That refers to the fact that he suffered here as a man, in a bodily condition. He suffered in this world. Isaiah speaks of him as a man of sorrows, acquainted with weak grief. You know, it was not just at the end of his life that the Lord Jesus suffered. If I believe we have the piety and the affection to sit down quietly and study the likes of Luke's gospel, [00:51:04] And John's gospel, and also Mark, You'll come across again and again of little incidences, Where, if you look at them carefully, you'll come to the conclusion that the Lord Jesus suffered. I'll only just refer to one or two. Remember the incident in Mark, when they brought to him a man that was deaf, and he had an impediment in his speech. It says that the Lord put his fingers into the man's ears. But have you ever noticed that it also says he groaned? He groaned.

Why did he groan?

Why did he groan?

At that moment, there was no outward persecution. There was no reviving. But as he put his hands upon that man's condition, He felt in his spirit before God, the condition of that man. [00:52:05] It says he groaned.

In that same chapter, a bit further on, the Pharisees asked for a sign. And the Lord is confronted with their unbelief. And it says again, he groaned. At the grave of Lazarus, At the grave of Lazarus. It says again, that he groaned. It's a different word there, actually. And again, it says later on, that he shuddered. Shuddered. Peculiar expressions, beloved brethren, when you think about them. Expressions that we would never dare use about the person of the Lord Jesus, Were it not for the fact that scripture uses them. [00:53:01] As he stood there at that open grave, It says he shuddered. There, my beloved brethren, are feelings. Scriptures that tell us of the inward sufferings of Christ, As a man that was moving through a world that had been marred by sin, Where everything was opposed to God. Do you know anything about those sufferings? Do you ever feel in your own life, The true condition of this world? The true condition of men? The Lord felt it. The Lord felt it. Toward the end of his life, we read that he became sore amazed, And deeply troubled. One of you should be troubled. These are the sufferings of Christ. [00:54:04] Now those are what I believe is referred to at the beginning of chapter 4. For as much then as Christ has suffered for us in flesh, Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind. He entered into these things, beloved brethren, Because they were what had come upon us because of sin. He was sinless, But he entered into those circumstances where sin had brought you and I. And in those circumstances he felt for God. It made him a holy sufferer.

When you and I are confronted with a circumstance, beloved brethren, Do we first of all think for God in those circumstances? Or do we think for ourselves? It's a real exercise to go through life, [00:55:04] To think for God in the circumstances he did.

Arm yourselves likewise with the same manner of thinking. The same manner of thinking.

Looking at everything in the light of the truth of God. Seeking to understand how God would feel about this. Seeking to be in fellowship in communion with God. That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lust of men. To the will of God.

You can't get away from the will of God in this epistle. But rejoice in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's suffering. Well that was probably true to those that the apostle was writing. To those that the apostle was writing this epistle to. [00:56:02] They'd been scattered abroad. They had endured persecution. And as Peter could take account of these features of the sufferings of Christ that he had been outlining in this epistle. I believe he could take account of those saints of God in his day who were walking in the same path. Are you and I? Am I? Am I? Could I put myself in this verse?

Am I a partaker of Christ's sufferings in the character of which we have been speaking about?

The verse goes on to say that when his glory shall be revealed. Oh beloved brethren we can't finish this little discourse without referring to the end. His glory shall be revealed.

[00:57:04] This world has witnessed his sufferings. The last of this world saw Jesus Christ as a man on a Roman cubic. Wearing a crown of thorns. But one day his glory will burst upon the sea. He makes reference to it you know in the gospels. He says as the lightning strikes from the east and to the west. That's the whole horizon. The whole horizon. How graphic sometimes scripture is. What a joy it is to consider dear saints of God that there's going to come a moment in this world when the glory of Christ will burst upon this world. And everyone's horizon will be filled with the glory of Christ.

[00:58:05] What a wonderful thing to know and have in the soul. This verse says of those who down here have known what it is to share in the sufferings of Christ. When that marvelous event takes place you may be glad with exceeding joy. Exceeding joy. Yes we've been endures for the night but joy comes in the morning. Wherefore he says at the end of this chapter. Let them that suffer according to the will of God. Here is the confidence. Here is the trust. Those that would go along this pathway of suffering according to the will of God. He says let them commit the keeping of their souls. To him in well doing as a faithful creator. [00:59:02] There is a trust and a confidence in God that will go on to the end.

Well finally here Peter says the elders which are among you I saw. Who am also an elder so he must have been an old man. And he speaks to himself as one who actually witnessed the sufferings of Christ. I'm not quite sure in this verse whether it actually means that Peter actually witnessed the sufferings of Christ. Which to a certain extent he did actually. He saw the Lord suffer. Or of course it could mean that he was a witness to the sufferings of Christ. It was something that was part of his testimony. That Christ had suffered in this world. Well take it what way you will. I don't think it's important. Perhaps our brother at the back will tell me which it should be after the meeting. [01:00:02] However a witness of the sufferings of Christ. But he speaks of himself also as a partaker of the glory that will be revealed. Isn't it wonderful to know in the soul. Here is Peter. With this assurance in his soul. That as he has borne witness to the sufferings of Christ in his life. He can look onward to that day of glory. And realize. That he's got a part. In that glory soon.

I wonder if we think about these things. The realization that you and I have part. In that glory soon.

When Christ shall be revealed. To a wandering universe. And so finally. He ends with those verses that we have commented on. [01:01:02] For the God of all grace. There is that mighty reserve of divine

power that's available to each one of us. That grace that has called us unto his eternal glory. Do you know it's hard almost to conceive. Of a more wonderful expression of scripture. Because we have trusted the Lord as our saviour. That's the way we got into it as far as we were concerned. But to realize. That behind it all.

That behind it all. Is a mighty God.

Who's called us. To his eternal glory. To realize beloved brethren. That we have a part. Individually. In the eternal glory of God. What a wonderful thing that is. What words can describe it. [01:02:03] Thank God we have the power of the Spirit of God in our lives. To give these words. Some moment of importance. That after you have suffered a while. Make you perfect. Established. Strengthened. Settled.

We know how words we need don't we. There's a line of S's there aren't there. Established. Strengthened. Settled.

I wonder if each one of us sits here before the Lord tonight. We can take account of these things. And say honestly. I'm established in the truth of God. To such an extent that I'm prepared to suffer for it. That I am strengthened. Because I can draw upon that grace of God. And I am settled in the disposition of my mind. That I am going to set my course through this world. [01:03:02] Following the Lord Jesus Christ. And so wonderfully. As the Apostle thinks of these things. He bursts forth in this doxology. To him be glory. And dominion forever and ever. Amen. That's the end of it. A glory.

And a dominion. That will go on forever. And ever. And ever. That's the end. That's the home beloved brethren of the saints of God. That's where we've been called to. That's where God will have us. And the glory of God will demand it. Because of what Christ has done. Oh that we might be taken up with what God will have us. In and at the end. In order that such truths might have a practical effect. On our lives down here. That in our individual lives. We might be enabled by the grace of God. To suffer according to the will of God. [01:04:04] And to suffer as a Christian.