

1 Peter 3

When You're Being Attacked

J.D. Farag

1 Peter Chapter 3, I'll have those of you who are here, if you're able, stand. You can follow along for the reading of God's Word. If not, where you're seated is fine.

Our text today is *verses 13 through 17* and the Apostle Peter continues now by the Holy Spirit and says, verse 13, **"Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened." But [Verse 15] in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.**

But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. It is better, [Verse 17] if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil."

Let's pray. If you would, please join with me.

Lord, we do give You all the glory. All the glory due Your name, Your holy name, Jesus, for what You did and are doing for our sister Judy. God, You are so good. There's nothing too hard for You. You are the God of the impossible. You are the great physician.

And Lord maybe someone here in this service or watching online is going through something very similar. Would You encourage and strengthen their hearts and Lord, hearken unto the voice of their cry as they cry out to You as only You can, Lord.

So Lord, we have this portion of Scripture here before us in Your in Word and it's with great anticipation that we look forward to what it is that You are going to show us and speak to us by the Holy Spirit as You're always so faithful to.

Lord, I know many are struggling and especially with the topic that we're going to tackle today. And so Lord, I just pray that the Holy Spirit would be our teacher, our guide, as we navigate our way through this passage that we have before us today.

And so Lord, thank You in advance for what You're going to do in our time together in Your Word we pray, in Jesus' name, amen and amen. You can be seated, thank you.

Oh, I'm just so moved. Thank You, Lord. Okay, I want to talk with you today about why it is and how it is that we can be strengthened and encouraged during those times in our Christian lives when we come under attack. We may not experience the severity certainly of the attacks and the persecution of the early church to whom this was written but the exhortations that are woven into the fabric of this text do apply to us, nonetheless.

So what follows are five such exhortations, for lack of a better word, encouragements maybe better said that can just be a tremendous source of comfort and encouragement and strength especially for those who find themselves on the receiving end of vicious attacks, spiritual attacks, spiritual warfare.

And I would venture to say before we jump in that you would agree with me that as we near the end before that trumpet sounds that the intensity of the spiritual attacks are going to increase right before. And so have a nice afternoon. It's going to get worse.

[Laughter]

But thankfully the Word of God and the God of the word is going to speak to us, very practically, by the way as it relates to what we can do during those times. So the first one in *verse 13* and this is so

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important. I mean, they all are but you are attacked, you cannot be harmed. That is what Peter is saying here by the Holy Spirit. And he does so by asking this rhetorical question of **"Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?"**

You know what I mean by rhetorical question, right? In other words, It's a question you don't answer. He basically answers it for you in the asking of the question to you. Who's going to harm you? Oh, yeah, in other words if you're righteous and prove zealous and eager to do that which is right, no harm can befall you in the end. Now that's not to say that the attacks won't hurt you. Oh, they hurt. But it is to say that the attacks and the persecution won't harm you.

And in fact, if I could take it a step further and say those attacks as we're about to see may actually help you. How so? Well, the second one in *verse 14*. You don't have to be afraid. You don't have to be filled with fear.

This is actually a quote from *Isaiah, Isaiah 8:11-12*. We've referenced *Isaiah 8:11-12* in many a Prophecy Update in the past because *Isaiah* the prophet is telling the people of Judah not to call everything that is a conspiracy a conspiracy because they were conspiring which is what a conspiracy is. I know that's deeply profound. They were conspiring to attack Judah. There was a conspiracy to attack and destroy God's people, but *Isaiah* says do not be afraid of their conspiracy to attack and destroy you because no weapon forged against you will ever prosper or prevail. I'll have the final word on it.

I know you're afraid and by the way, every time you read in the Scriptures, and there are many times that you will read in the Scriptures, **"Do not be afraid."** Do you know why there are many scriptures that say, **"Do not be afraid?"** I know, again, deeply profound. Because we're afraid.

Joshua by way of an example. I love Joshua. I can't wait to meet him. I will be in that line. You'll probably be in that line too. You'll have to wait for me because I'm going to cut in front of you to meet him. Can you imagine Joshua? He takes - Moses is gone. They've only known Moses. And now here's Joshua. He's going, God, can you find somebody else? Because I cannot - those are some very big sandals to fill. And he was just riddled with fear and trepidation now because he was going to take Moses' place.

Joshua Chapter 1; I really encourage you. If you are discouraged, maybe given over to fear, spend some time in *Joshua Chapter 1*. I promise you on the authority of God's Word and God's goodness you will not be the same after *Joshua 1*.

Several times, "Do not be afraid." Joshua, don't be afraid. I know you're trembling in fear. **"Be of good courage. Be strong and courageous!"** And it's not like God just says, "Be strong and courageous." He tells us why and how.

It's the "how" of the Holy Spirit that enables us to do the "what" of the holy word. God will never command us or call us to do anything that He will not also package the enabling to be found faithful doing it. This is why it is that we actually want things to rise to the level of a command in Scripture. Because if it's a command, okay because God's commands are not burdensome.

And when God commands us, He empowers us because God cannot be party to our disobedience when it comes to His commands. So when God commands us, He says I command you. Okay, here comes the Holy Spirit now because God wants me in the middle of His will more than I even myself want to be in the middle of His will.

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And got always want to create an environment in my life that is conducive to obedience. He can't do the opposite. He cannot be a party to our disobedience. He will always lead us to the way that is conducive to our obedience.

So He has commanded us to do something, in this case do not do something, not be afraid, not be discouraged. I command you to be courageous and strong and of good courage and not afraid. And here comes the Holy Spirit, "not a Spirit of fear but of love and of power [Power] and of a disciplined mind [Disciplined mind.]

And so we're empowered by the Holy Spirit, and I love what Judy just shared. Sometimes those prayers, when we cry out to the Lord, He harkens unto the voice of our cry instantly (Clapping sound) like that. It's there for the asking.

And when you're being attacked, what is the one thing that you default to? I shouldn't - I will speak for myself, my default, I will take one for the team. My default is to become fearful. Man, I'm coming under some pretty vicious attack here and my default, I have this proclivity, this propensity to start fearing what they're going to do to me.

I love what the psalmist, the sweet psalmist of Israel, David, would say in penning that Psalm. **"Of whom shall I be afraid? What shall I fear? What can man do unto me?"**

Oh, that gives you the sanctified strength like, yeah! You can hurt me, you can attack me, you can talk stink about me. You can slander me. You can insult me. You can do whatever you want, but you can't harm me.

And here's why (Chuckling) what's that one - I know it's probably - just bear with me. You know that one - I'm sure it's a meme - is probably a cartoon. You know it's bad when the pastor starts quoting cartoons. But they got this little, you know, lion or cub. And he is like (Growling) and here is this big beast of a bear in front of him, and he's lunch and maybe be leftovers after lunch for that big bear. But then he's all (Growling) and the reason he is all (Growling) is because behind him is (Chuckling) yeah, that's why the bear is running away right now.

Listen if you got a better illustration, I'm happy to talk with you about it.

You don't have to fear. Do not be afraid.

Yeah, but they are conspiring.

I know. I know all of it.

What is it about us that thinks or fancies this notion that we somehow have to instruct God, so He's aware of our situation? He's all-knowing. In other words, He knows all. Again, I know deeply profound. He's omniscient. He knows exactly what's going to happen before it happens.

I already know about the conspiracy. I actually knew about the conspiracy even before those who were conspiring were born and even before you were born. I knew about the conspiracy. You know, you could save a lot of time in prayer, presupposing we do spend time in prayer, by not wasting time in prayer by informing God of the situation.

You know Lord, last Tuesday!

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Yeah, I was there. I'm all present too. I saw exactly what happened. I know exactly what they did, and I saw exactly what they posted, and I know exactly what the slander is.

I mean you could go on down that list.

Oh yeah, that's right; You are God.

So why would Peter quote from *Isaiah*? Because they would've known *Isaiah*. This early church suffering the persecution under severe, intense attack would know chapter and verse that Peter is referring to. So he does this to encourage them like he's encouraging us to remember that even if we were to suffer for what is right, for righteousness, it's actually a blessing. It's actually a blessing.

In fact, let me flip it around. I know we've talked about this in the past, but this is a very, very important principle. I would suggest that it's actually when we were not attacked, that's when we should become very concerned.

What do you mean?

Well, when everyone is speaking well of you, nobody is attacking you, or how about this, the Devil leaves you alone? Or worse yet he sends you a thank you card and gift card. Keep up the good work for the power of darkness, good job, thank you so much. You pose no formidable threat to the power of darkness and the kingdom of darkness. The Devil is very happy with you. And oh, he will have all of these other people speak well of you. It's kind of like oh, tell me more.

Reminds me of that conversation between two people where the guy is just going on and on and on about his favorite subject, himself, just talking about himself, the unholy Trinity, me myself and I. I this, I that, aye yi yi yi yi.

When he finally is done, it's kind of like (Gasping) And he says to his friend who's been listening to him talking about himself the whole time, he looks at his friend and says, Hey, I'm done talking about me. Why don't you talk... about me.

Yeah, really?

Oh, come on if we were honest with ourselves, we are our favorite subject. We're our favorite person. We're the first person we think about when we wake up in the morning. Come on, I've been thinking about you.

Well, I'm sure you have, praise the Lord, thank you for thinking of me. But you're not thinking of me as much as you think about yourself!

[Laughter]

Where are you going with this, Pastor?

Just bear with me. I'm going somewhere with it. You'll see.

I wonder if we're ever going to come to the place in our walk with Christ and our growing in grace and maturing in Christ where we realize that this is actually a badge of honor. Listen to what F.B. Meyer said. This is so good.

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"Not to be hated by the world; to be loved and flattered and caressed by the world is one of the most terrible positions in which a Christian can find himself. 'What bad thing have I done,' asked the ancient sage, 'that he should speak well of me?'" I'm doing something wrong."

This is what Jesus said in Luke's Gospel Chapter 6:26, pretty strong. **"Woe to you..."** A curse upon you. Notice the contrast which we'll get to in a moment. Blessed are you when you are persecuted and attacked. Cursed are you when you are not. **"Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets."**

Now for those of you that have been with us on Thursday nights we have finished *Isaiah*, and now are in *Jeremiah*. Oh, my goodness. Anyway, wow! *Jeremiah*, actually I'm going to be in *Jeremiah's* line first before *Joshua*. I'm just saying.

The false prophets of *Jeremiah's* day, oh, they were all just flattering them and tell us more and speak only smooth things to us and just tell us what we want to hear. And just *Jeremiah* is over here telling everybody it's going to be 70 years.

Did you hear him say that? His last Prophecy Update, he said it's going to be 70 years captivity in *Babylon*. So here's the false prophets that they are flocking to by the way, saying no, you're not, no. You're only going to be here for maybe a couple of years tops. Oh, okay, now that's more like it. So they would speak well of those prophets.

Now listen to what Jesus said in *Matthew 5*. I'll begin reading in *verse 10*. These are affectionately known as the Beatitudes. He said, **"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness."**

Are you sure that's, right? Is that the right translation because it seems like it's backwards.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

And it gets worse, *verse 11*.

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me."

You are so blessed! I don't feel blessed. Did you see what they just posted about me because of You, it's Your fault. They hated me because they hated You first, Jesus.

I know you're a good company, and your blessed.

Yeah, but I'm not so blessed when they insult me.

It's kind of like somebody insults you or talks stink about you or posts something against you online. Do you respond with, Wow! Thank you so much! Would you bless me some more with some more insults?

That's not what he is saying, by the way. What he's saying is it is a badge of honor because you're blessed when the world does not speak well of you. Because if the world was speaking well of you, the world loves its own. That means you're too friendly with the world, and if your too friendly with the world, James told us, remember that teaching?

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She brought up James... Never mind. That was good though. I was so convicted though. I wish you wouldn't have brought it up. But anyway, consider it pure joy when you encounter various trials. Well, this is the same principle.

And Jesus goes on, *verse 12* and says, "**Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way** [Notice again, the contrast] **they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**"

Jeremiah? They wanted to kill him. They wanted to kill him. And then contrast Jeremiah with the false prophet Hananiah.

Hananiah is over here going don't listen to Jeremiah. I'm going to bring back the people that have been taken captive in Babylon and bring back the vessels from the temple. And it's only going to be a couple of years tops. Don't listen to Jeremiah.

And his church was full. His parking lot was full too. Because that's exactly what they wanted to hear and they spoke very well of him but on the flip side of that, they were persecuting and threatening and attacking an insulting Jeremiah.

So in other words, you're in good company like the prophets before you. So I'll say it one more time then we'll move on. And I'm serious when I say that. I know I tried to insert the humor. Maybe I need to pull back on the humor. But I love to laugh which I don't have to look far. I just look in the mirror, and I laugh.

But this is serious. If the world is speaking well of you, be very concerned. Be very afraid. You've got some serious problems. And conversely if the world is insulting you and persecuted you and attacking you and speaking evil of you, whoa! It's good! It's good! You're blessed.

Number 3, *verse 15*: When you're attacked, you never know, you may actually win them over. This is that well-known verse. We've talked about it before, and it is arguably one of the most important of all, such that it offers the hope that we can share about our hope. Stay with me.

So you're attacked, you're insulted, you're persecuted and it's vicious. And people are watching. They're watching your reaction from the sidelines of that attack. And they genuinely want to see what you're going to do. Are you going to be like all the rest? It's an eye for an eye, man. Game on; were doing this!

Oh, yeah? Well that's what everybody does. But then they're waiting and they're watching and then you don't do that. Well, this is new. Wow, I haven't seen this before, especially after - and somebody would have said that to me or about me? Well, I won't say what I would do. It's not very pastoral. And then you're not reacting that way. In fact, you're not responding at all. In fact, it's kind of weird. You're weird.

By the way, don't worry about people thinking you're weird. They already think you're weird. There is a peculiarity about you. We're a peculiar people. It's very peculiar. It stands out. Boy, does it stand out from the rest.

Because you seem to be taking the attacks and the insults and the persecution as vicious as it is, and you're just taking it to the Lord and rejoicing in the Lord and you're trusting in the Lord, and you're waiting on the Lord who is your defense and are not defending yourself.

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And you're not "**Answering a fool according to their folly lest you become like them,**" lowering yourself to their level.

Now very interesting; people noticed that. How can they not notice that? You're different than everyone else when you don't react like everyone else. Now that's going to do something. That's going to prompt them, propel them to want to know what's up with you?

Can I read you what they said about you online? Yeah, I already read it. I didn't like it. Of course, they removed the dislike so I cannot dislike it either, I guess. I don't know.

Yeah, but dude, you didn't even delete it. Not only did you not respond to it, you didn't even delete it. That's really weird. You're really weird.

I know. That's another story for another time,

But why? Oh, I'm so glad you asked.

See here's the deal, Jesus is set apart in my heart on the throne of my life. And I don't have to worry about it. I don't have to respond to it because Jesus is my Lord. He's my Savior but He's my Lord. You know what that means? He calls all the shots, not me. He's my defense; He's my deliverer. He's got my back. And by the way, when someone insults me, remember that big lion back there, the line of the tribe of Judah.

So now don't get arrogant now like you're all that. You answer them but this presupposes they're going to ask. Now that's an issue because you might say well, they're not asking me.

Hmm, why do you think that is? Apparently, you're behaving in such a way that they don't need to ask because they've already seen that a million times. Why don't you give them a reason to ask?

So if you're not being asked, it must be that everyone is speaking well of you anyway so nothing to see here; move on.

But when you don't do that and you're different than that because you set apart Christ as Lord in your heart, Lord of your life, they're going to ask you.

And how do you answer? You need to be at the ready with an answer of that hope that you have. And when you do that, and this is - I don't know if it's possible to overstate the paramount importance of just these two words "gently and respectfully."

Oh, I think we do err greatly when we're obnoxious and rude, harsh and mean. The proverb says, "**A gentle answer turns away wrath.**" "**A gentle word breaks a bone.**"

When you respond gently, humbly, by the way, with humility, respectfully, be respectful. I think were so disrespectful. Be respectful, be gentle, be humble, be gracious. Let your words be seasoned with grace. A lot of times it's not what we say. It's how we say what we say. It can make all the difference.

So if they're going to ask you, what is it with you? What's different about you? And your answer is going to be I'm actually so very glad that you asked. Let me share with you why.

See I have Jesus and Jesus is my hope. He's my blessed hope. And He's my only hope. And He's the Lord of my life. And I've set Him apart and sanctified Him in my heart because isn't it true that, "**Out of the mouth the abundance of the heart speaks?**"

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In other words, what comes out of our mouth is in our heart. So if Christ is sanctified and set apart then what is going to come out of my mouth? Jesus. Jesus.

Gently, respectfully, humbly, lovingly, kindly answer, Hey, first of all, is not me. It's the Lord. It's the Holy Spirit indwelling me. It's Jesus in me. That's the answer. I don't know if that's the answer you're looking for. Actually, truth be made known it is the answer they're looking for and if you kindly allow me to, I'll explain why.

There are two questions that everyone is asking of you and me as a Christian because again, they are reading the letter of our lives. The Apostle Paul refers to it as, "**Our lives be living epistles**" [Letters].

People are reading the letters of our lives. They're watching our Christian lives. What do they read when they watch as I'm getting so convicted on this one. What are they reading? Is it a horror novel or is it a love story? So they're reading our lives.

Now they're asking two questions chiefly. Question number 1: Are you real? Are you the real deal? And question number 2: Does what you have work?

And here's why they want it to be true. Because they want you to be real. Because if you're the real deal, then they can be the real deal too. And they want it to work. They want to have that hope you have. Because if that's a real, and you have that hope, and it works, they want it too. They desperately need it and want it because they don't have any hope. They're completely hopeless. And here they see you and you've got something they don't have: Hope. I want me some of that.

And they ask you: Where can I get me some of that hope that you have?

I'm so glad you asked.

How much does it cost?

Oh, nothing. He paid the price in full, for you, instead of you. It is freely given and freely received. It's a gift that He paid for.

Would you be surprised if I told you that we, this side of glory, have no idea of the multitudes that have come to Christ as a result of just this one verse here, *verse 15*?

Verse 16, number 4: You can have confidence.

Now this is interesting for a number of, chief of which is having a clear conscience is synonymous with having confidence. Now this is not self-confidence. This is confidence in Christ and Christ alone.

Now here Peter is talking about our conduct being good, our conscience being clear.

Why?

So we can in effect silence the malicious slander. We can have that confidence. If my hands are clean, my conscience is clear and my behavior is good, I'm going to silence them. And even if it doesn't silence the slanderer, our good conduct, our clear conscience, and our righteous confidence will always prove them wrong.

Let me share with you how that looks like, what that looks like. So you've got this guy slandering you, saying, I mean, all kinds of things about you, falsely accusing you, insulting you. I mean, it's brutal. It's brutal. And then somebody sees that post - I'm picking on social media - this is in honor

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and memory of last week's teaching and Update. Because this is on steroids in social media, right? Are we good with that? Oh, that wasn't very convincing but whatever.

[Laughter]

I mean surely, we're not going to do it to somebody's face. We cowardly hide behind a keyboard and a screen or device, right? They're called keyboard cowards. You know exactly what I'm talking about, right?

So somebody else sees that post.

(Gasping)

And they're scrolling down for your reply: Nothing. And you almost want to reply for them.

But here's what you do instead. You look at that post, and you're saying wait a minute I know that guy. No, no, nice try. You're accusing him of being full of pride? Well, I happen to know that he's very humble, just ask him. He'll tell you. He's even humble about his pride.

But never mind I digress again.

But no, he's not, he's not what you said. No, you're wrong. You're posting that about him. You're insulting him. You're falsely accusing him. You're slandering him, and nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, it's the opposite that's true. Everything that you've accused him of he's innocent of. In fact, everything you've accused him of, you, yourself, are guilty of.

I'll give you a minute on that one. You know why that is? Because our sin always looks so horrific on someone else. You know where we are admonished and exhorted to confess our sins want to another? We don't do that.

Instead, we confess other sins to one another.

Oh, come on, let's be honest with ourselves. So back to this confidence being synonymous with a clear conscience. See, you know in your heart and in your mind that you're on the right side of this.

So now you're on the receiving end of all of these false accusations and slander and gossip that the Proverbs say is so delicious. Oh, did you hear? No! What? That's juicy! We like juicy. It goes down really smooth. And we get an appetite for it, and we want more of it. We'll go back for seconds. In fact, I like the gossip buffet. It's all you can eat.

But you know in your heart, yeah, they can gossip about me. They can slander me. They can insult me. They can hate me even. But Jesus likes me. And I know I'm on the right end of this thing and all of this is for righteousness sake. So I'm actually blessed. I mean yes, it hurts but it's a badge of honor. And I had that confidence. My confidence is in the Lord.

It's Hebrews, I want to say *11:6* (4:16). If I'm incorrect, please don't hate on me, okay? I think it's Hebrews *11:6* (4:16) where the writer of Hebrews says, it's so powerful -, "**Let us then boldly, confidently approach the throne of grace for mercy and help in our time of need.**"

Did you catch that? There's a holy boldness. There's a Christ confidence, not in ourselves. We boldly approach His throne, petition His throne because we're confident in Christ, not in ourself, In Christ's righteousness.

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Well, it's this last one, and I'm sorry about this, that we have to end on this one. But here's the truth of the matter, *verse 17*. You're going to suffer either way so have a nice day. No, but it's true. You're going to suffer either way. I mean those who want to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. I wish it didn't say "will," but it says "will." I looked it up in the original, thinking maybe it's no will.

Maybe it can be translated, you might, a good possibility, a chance you might encounter some persecution if you want to live godly in Christ. No, it's "will." You absolutely will. It's really strong in the original, guaranteed or your money back. You will, you will.

So the choice now, and this is what Peter is drawing out in this verse is listen, it's better if you suffer, if it's God's will that you suffer, that you suffer for good, not evil. The implication being that you're going to suffer either way. Either for evil, you're going to suffer the consequences, right? Oh, you're forgiven but you still suffer the consequences. So you're going to suffer either way.

You'll forgive me but this is again, my horrible attempt at trying to sound local like my wife who can break into the best pigeon ever, but way mo betta suffer for good. That was pretty good, pretty good. Not really actually but yeah, your gracious to me.

(Chuckling)

You guys are so gracious. Thank you so much.

But do you get the point here? I just so again, appreciate what Judy shared about the suffering and how that when it seems like your prayers are bouncing off the ceiling, and you start doubting, you're questioning, and the suffering is so intense, and the pain is so great, it's kind of like, God! Why are You not answering my prayer?

Well, you're going to suffer either way. If you only knew what I was doing in the suffering that you're experiencing, you wouldn't pray that way.

And she hit on it again, and I'm actually serious. She probably should have taught this. She would've done a better job than me. But isn't it true that in the suffering, while we would never want to have to go through it again, oh, my goodness I think about all the painful trials in my life over the years that I've been walking with the Lord, how I mean, excruciating pain.

And for Judy, I mean it's physical, emotional, but the physical pain, I have no tolerance for pain. I get a hangnail now, and I'm praying in my prayer language, man, Jesus come quickly! A hangnail, really? You wimp! I know I'm a wimp. My wife: High tolerance for pain, oh, my goodness.

Whatever, I don't have a tolerance for pain. I go into the dentist, and he says I cannot give you any more Novocain. I'll probably kill you.

I'm like no, it still hurts!

I haven't even put the drill in your mouth yet.

I know but it still hurts!

[Laughter]

Okay, that's me with pain.

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So the emotional pain, spiritual pain, physical pain, all compounded, and you're suffering. The Lord's there. He's close to those who are broken and suffering.

Have you noticed that in the Gospels that Jesus was attracted to those who are suffering? He went out of His way for them. He was attracted to them.

The people that Jesus was attracted to - when you go into the Gospels, and you'll find the common denominator every single time without exception is that Jesus was attracted to the least, and the last, those who were suffering. And He even said as much. I came for the sick. They need the physician. I'm the great physician.

So He's attracted to those who are suffering. And never ever, ever - I'm learning this - I've got a lot to learn but I'm learning this - that God is doing a profoundly deep work in that suffering, a work that He could not otherwise do absent that suffering.

Because isn't it true that when we're in those times of great suffering and great pain that we're hypersensitive to God, to every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God? That's the only thing that matters. We're never closer to the Lord than we are in those times of pain and suffering.

Don't you think the Lord knows that?

He allows us to go through these things and attacks and persecution and pain and suffering so He can show Himself faithful as only He can. Think about all of the things that you would have missed out on had you not drunk deeply from that cup of suffering. You've tasted of the Lord, and you saw how good He was. You would've never been able to taste and see that the Lord was good had it not been for what you went through. You would've never known the Lord this intimately and precious as you would have had you not going through that.

And certainly, this is the case when it comes to being attacked. I tell you, I just , and I'll close with this - so many times I've been on the receiving end of really undeserved attacks and insults and even false accusations. And it does hurt. And if it didn't hurt, then you might have a hard heart, a callous heart. I mean of course it's going to hurt. I think about how hurt Jeremiah was. Oh, it's going to hurt your heart, but it doesn't harm you. It brings you closer to the Lord, and it makes you stronger. That's just how it works. I know it doesn't make sense but in God's economy, that's how it works. He strengthens you in those times of suffering.

Kapono, come on up here. Why don't you stand up? We'll close in prayer and song.

Oh, Lord thank You so much. Lord, the takeaway from the entire day from both services has just been how good You are, how great thou art, oh, Lord.

You are so good. You are so kind, so merciful, so gracious, so patient and long-suffering. You love us so much, Lord. You'll never leave us or forsake us. You are always there for us.

And it may not be in the way that we think or how we think and Lord, we know that our ways are not Your ways. And that none of us can ever know Your mind, Lord.

But Lord, for any that might be here today or watching online that have - this is very real for them. This is what they wake up to every day. Lord, I just pray that as only You can, You would strengthen their hearts, encourage them, give them hope, be their defense, give them courage, replace the fear with faith.

1 Peter 3
When You're Being Attacked
J.D. Farag

Lord, thank You. We love You so much. Thank You for Your Word. Thank You for this portion of Scripture here in 1 Peter, so much Lord. It is so apropos for us today. And again, we give You all the glory.

We pray in Jesus' name amen.