

Good morning everyone! My name is Caleb Farrow and I serve as Student Pastor here at Grace Auburn church and it is my joy to share with you this morning. We continue our series through 1-2 Peter, A Living Hope. If you have your Bibles, will you turn to chapter 3?

Last week, our lead Pastor Matt Dean shared with us from chapter 2 and into chapter 3 about relating to authority and relating to one another as the people of God. The key concept from this text was the idea of submission. Everyone's favorite word. A word that just warms the soul. If we are honest what it really does is heightens our defenses.

David Helm asks of the text from last week and the word submission in particular – "Does the sum and substance of one's Christian life come down to some blind adherence to a principle called submission?" The answer is NO. ... Helm also rightly observes that the principle of submission is not our foundation as Christians. He says, "submission defines the Christian's ways because "being like Jesus" describes the Christian goal... our goal is not blind adherence to a rigid principle, but submission to the law of sacrificial love for those we have relationships with.

This is the framework and foundation of this morning's text. Peter knows submitting in this way is not easy. Peter knows this will be hard, and there will likely be suffering due to the Christian giving up our own desires for the sake of others. As we will see he reminds us, that we have one to look to for a perfect example and for sustaining strength. In his giving of himself for the glory of the Father, and salvation of his brothers and sisters, you and I, Jesus is both our perfect example to look to and our strength to lean on and abide in as we suffer for righteousness' sake.

So as we enter into Chapter 3 starting in verse 8, suffering as it relates to courageously and faithfully giving up our own rights and freedoms for love of the Father and love of others, and as we see it done for us in the life death resurrection and victory of Jesus, should be in the front of our minds and hearts.

Pray into sermon.

Have you ever been told not to ask the Lord for patience? Why? Because he will teach it to you right?! Because God might make you go through things that will teach you to have patience. Certain Bible translations write this word out as "long suffering".

The Biblical idea being where we sit today is not comfortable, but the end in sight is worth it. That end being glory received with Christ. Assurance of salvation and redemption one day. Confidence and peace in obedience while things in our life today may not be as we desire, but our hope is that one day all will be made right.

As we move into today's text that truly is the heart here. Long suffering well with eternity in mind for the sake of righteousness...

⁸ Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹ Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.

"**have unity of mind**" is not a reference to agree on everything, but to submit the trivial differences and unify on the things that matter most to the heart of God. One commentator said, "cults slavishly force all people to adopt all similar beliefs." So it is certainly not what Peter has in mind, but that we would discern what are the theology concepts with salvation implications, and agree on those.

In some sense, agreeing on everything is easier than agreeing on some things and letting the others sit in the tension.

And we see this tension still as Peter continues by calling us to sympathy. The original language meaning here is to "share feelings or passions." As we raise high the doctrines of salvation, our necessity to be right in arguments around tertiary concepts because lesser. Only then are we truly able to sympathize with others who are different than us, and walking a different road.

unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind:

R.C. Sproul comments on this list that "Humans are constantly seeking to gain the esteem of others, rather than give it."

When we cling tightly to these attributes of Christ, our need to affirmed by human lips is loosened. Our confidence and joy is overflowing knowing God sees the imputed righteous work of Christ when He looks at you and me, God can say, "This is my Son/This is my Daughter, with whom I am well pleased." He said it about Jesus. He says it about you who are in Christ.

Vs. 9: Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.

Reminds me of the words of Jesus from **Matthew 5:39-40** "But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.

This helps us get a full picture of what it feels like and looks like to suffer for the sake of righteousness sometimes. Like a slap in the face. Like someone suing you and you giving them more than what is asked of you. It is interesting to consider that Peter is hitting humanity where it hurts most right? Our pride and our wallet. They often are the indicators of where our hearts and treasure lie. They are often indicators of idolatry in our lives.

As we get these rightly placed and submitted to the glory of God, the ability to bless and be generous in the midst of another persons evil becomes possible. Is this not exactly what Jesus gives us? Blessings for our evil? How then could we not give back to the Lord then turn and give to others the same grace and mercy given to us?!

That is the place we obtain a blessing.

But what exactly is this blessing? Love of life, peace, joy!

Peter takes us Psalms 34 to have King David reaffirm this idea:

¹⁰ For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; ¹¹ let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

David wrote this during the time he had been named king by Samuel, but Saul began to pursue David to try and kill him. In the midst of this, David resolved that if he were to enjoy life and see good days, he would not speak evil of Saul, in fact he had an opportunity to kill Saul several times, but chose not to and honored the authority God had established.

So if there is ANYONE who understands the suffering involved with living righteously and **not repaying evil for evil**. It's David.

David Helm says it this way: "A proper fear of God results in a proper respect for human authority."

Not much of that perspective exists in election cycles these days does it? Or at least not on social media. Constant mocking of the president. Disregarding the authority given to that office by God. Christian, would be wise to be like David here and be more mindful of our words, memes and videos shared that they do not denigrate the trust you have in the Lord's sovereignty, and the perception of your trust in God from the unbelieving world that is watching.

The call is to seek peace. Pursue it. Go after peace.

If that is our aim, David says that even in suffering, the Lord sees the righteous and hears them. He knows their plight and trouble. But the ones who share only divisive and deceit, the Lord turns away from them.

So brothers and sisters, pursue righteousness, fight for peace, and the Lord will be with you in your suffering if and when it is to come.

Peter puts it this way:

¹³ Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, ¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy,

So there may be persecution ahead if we live this way. Generous and kind to all people. Living and loving in a way that communicates you fear the Lord only, not man. This way oddly enough could and often does lead others to lash out. Maybe in words, or maybe in deed. But we know that as we seek to pursue righteousness, there will always be a rub and tension with the culture around us. But do not fear.

Isaiah 8:13 But the Lord of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

Do not fear the recourse of this world as we do what God has called each of us to do. Namely love. So do not fear those who are bound to the idols of this world.

We are able to do this by shifting our focus towards Christ. **in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy** and in so doing fear of anyone or anything else fades away. Those that fear the Lord are delivered from their own fears in this world. The Lord is rightly made larger in our life and the suffering is rightly placed as temporary.

¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

This is a trademark verse and argument for apologetics in the church or reasoned arguments for justification of doctrines.

R.C. Sproul says of this verse: "When we become Christians, we do not leave our mind in the parking lot. We are called to think according to the Word of God."

While this is certainly true, Peter doesn't seem to intend on this verse becoming a proof text and defense for all apologetic study, but rather an encouragement to share the hope that is in us while we suffer with patience and faithfulness to the Lord.

Wayne Grudem: "Peter must be assuming that the inward hope of Christians results in lives so noticeably different that unbelievers are prompted to ask why."

Is that true of your life? why not? What's missing? Joy/Peace? Are you more concerned with the comforts of the world? Is your greatest aim to achieve temporary success and void of eternal glory?

Some of you may be ignoring the grand step of faith God is asking of you. It may be out of fear of the unknown. It may be out of fear of your families response. Whatever it is, be certain that you first honor Christ in your heart and with your life, second, share your reason with any and all that will listen.

We must expect push back from all sides as we walk faithfully with the Lord and sacrificially trust in the Lord over the ways of man, while at the same time, being fully prepared and studied to articulate why we suffer with such grace and mercy for those that are causing the suffering.

Why are we not getting back at the ones who wronged you? Why not rub their face in it? Heap shame on them. Why are you so quick to forgive and let go of recourse?

Well Christian, because Jesus does not do that to you.

Why are you not cursing God? Your life from the outside looks like it is falling apart. You may even feel like it is and that God has abandoned you.

Hold firmly to the Gospel! Do not let this momentary affliction in light of eternal glory change who you know God to be! Stay with me, because its going to get better. In todays sermon and in your life as well! It's going to get better.

Peter continues:

¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

The ultimate question here is do you trust that God will vindicate? Do you believe that your the one who must exercise judgement or that God is fully just and will bring judgement on evil doer? Do you trust in the Lord? Peter did. David did. Do you? If so, then endure with patience. Bless those who curse you and cause your suffering. Bless, not curse.

If you must suffer, suffer while doing good. Suffer well.

That suffering may look like holding your tongue. Not revealing gossip in return for gossip about you. The hard road of honoring authority that does not represent your view. It could look like losing a client at work because of your resolve to maintain integrity. Or the loss of friendships because you are unwilling to join in a lifestyle unfit for a follower of Jesus. That suffering could look like divorce, or the betrayal of someone close to you.

Have a good conscience friend. Glorify the Lord with your life. In your good and keeping a good conscience the Lord knows the truth and will judge rightly. Trust and rest in that as you suffer while bringing God glory.

Don't suffer for your sins. Jesus already did that and it was enough.

Peter says it this way:

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

Jesus' death then, covers your sins past, present, and future. Repent brothers and sisters. Don't let what Jesus already suffered for cause more suffering. His death on the cross and resurrection was enough. No more suffering for sins are needed. Trust that it is enough and that his perfect righteousness is now yours and that is worth suffering for. That is worth holding our tongue, restricting our actions from cultural norms to honor the Lord.

Heres where the text gets a little tricky so hang with me:

¹⁹ in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.

3 Popular thoughts here:

1. Jesus descended to hell and preached the gospel to the souls there. This is the most straight forward and how it reads in English translations.
2. The text is referring to the spirit of Christ in the days of Noah and that during Noahs day he preached through Noah to those that did not believe and only Noahs family trusted Him.
3. Jesus went and preached to the fallen angels (referred to as spirits often in the Bible) from Noahs time that had rebelled with human women.

Reformer Martin Luther: "A wonderful text is this, and a more obscure passage perhaps than any other in the Testament, so that I do not know for a certainty just what Peter means... I cannot understand and I cannot explain it. And there has been no one who has explained it."

So we will let that be what it is, but what we do know for sure is here, God is perfect in His timing and faithful to save, whatever the means, His will is accomplished on earth in His timing. In the day of Noah He used water to both exercise wrath on humanity with the great flood and that same water was a means of salvation for Noah and his family, and in our day continues to use water in a unique way...

²¹ Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

Baptism saves us in the same way that in a few moments when participate in communion together we are going to consume the flesh and blood of Jesus.

Dr. Derek Thomas: "It's not baptism that saves. It's what baptism is a sign and seal of that saves—namely, faith and repentance and adoption, regeneration, resurrection... So, I think how the Reformers understood what Peter is doing here, it's a sacramental union that the one is so closely identified with the other that, as it says, the effects of the one are attributed to the other."

So Baptism represents the saving work done by the Lord and is a sign and seal of that work done by God, and the work of salvation was being connected to Baptism.

Similarly to the way Peter relates the water in Noahs day as saving them. We know it is God that saved, not the water. Being buried with Christ in Baptism and raised to walk in newness of life as you come out of that water, so are you brother and sister saved from the rebellion of your sin, because Baptism is worthless without the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And without faith in Jesus, given by the grace of God we have no hope to hold onto in our suffering for the glory of God and righteousness' sake.

Paul talks about it this way in **Romans 6:3-5 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his**

So Peter ends here, reminding us all of the victory found in Jesus and vindication that comes through his death and resurrection... Do not miss that.

Wayne Grudem: **"This passage, once cleared of misunderstanding, should also function today as an encouragement to us to be bold in our witness (as Noah was), to be confident that, though we may be few, God will certainly save us (as he did Noah), and to remind us that just as certainly as the flood eventually came, so final judgment will certainly come to our world as well, and Christ will ultimately triumph over all the evil in the universe."**

So if you are here today and you have no assurance that the blood of Jesus spilled and thereby you are not certain that the victory of Christ over sin and death is yours, you can be certain!

If you are here today and the pressures and fears of going all in for the sake of Christ are holding you back, Jesus is calling you forward.

Maybe you are here and you just aren't sure that the sacrifices you are going to have to make are worth the suffering, be certain today from the mouth of Peter and David, that he is worth it all!

Submit to Jesus' wonderful and magnificent reign over your life! Submit to his lordship over your pride, your resources, your time, your rest. Give it all to God that he may show you the way of living with peace and joy through the difficulties and injustices of this world.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

May your hope, being a future hope in eternity with Jesus Christ, strengthen your feet to stand firm as you suffer for righteousness sake!