

Harris Creek Baptist Church
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Series: Forged
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When the Enemy Prowls

1 Peter 5:6-10

⁶Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. ⁷Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

⁸Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

¹⁰And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

(JP comes out wearing a boot on his leg.) Harris Creek, how are we doing? So, I went walking the other day. I went on a walk in the neighborhood, and I went off-roading, you know, didn't stay on the path. I went on a little adventure, a little obstacle course because it's been raining in Waco, praise God! Our lake is filled 100%! Praise God! So, I'm coming down a hill, and there are rocks and mud, creating this obstacle course. I had to tap into my athleticism. You ever seen that show *Wipeout* or *American Ninja Warrior*? That's basically what's happening. I'm going boulder to boulder— smooth and graceful. I get to the bottom of the hill, and it's really muddy down there with a little trench. I'm out of rocks, so I think, “What am I going to do?” It's okay, because I look to my left and see a log. I grab the log, pick it up, throw it in the mud, and walk across it. It takes a lot of balance. So, I'm balancing across the log, tapping into all the *American Ninja* skills. I get to the end of the log, and there's another rock at a distance. I think, “How am I going to make that?” Then, I remember, “Oh yeah, I was the eighth-grade long jump champion of my small private Catholic school. No problem.” So, I jump off the log and tear my calf; my calf muscle rips. Yeah, it happens to athletes like me; it's just one of the things you have to deal with.

I start there because, as I think about this idea of obstacle courses, life's kind of an obstacle course. It throws different things at you in seasons that you don't see, that it's hard to prepare for. It's not the stuff that you know that's coming that is hard; it's the things that you're like, “I didn't see that going that way. That was a little bit of a left turn.” As you think about it growing up, when you're a child, you have all the insecurities of a child. You think, “How do I fit in? People older than me are telling me what to do, and I have to listen. It's not fair.” You feel all of these emotions, and honestly, you're trying to figure out what to do with your emotions. Then you grow up to adulthood, and you start worrying about, concerning yourself with responsibility. “I've got to support myself. What am I going to do when I grow up? I really would like to get married.” And you begin to deal with the emotions of loneliness, and if you're dating or even by yourself, the idea of purity. What does it look like to honor God in the midst of these temptations? You're surrounded by people that don't follow God, so you're faced with opportunities to do sinful things all the time, and it's hard.

If you do get married, right now, you come face-to-face with this idea of how unbelievably selfish you are. You're trying to consider, "How do I live selflessly toward someone else and give consideration to them in all of the decisions that I make?" And there's a good chance that you think, "Hey, one day we would like children." And children are an amazing lesson in how little control you actually have. Even the idea of getting pregnant—you're like, "I don't know when that's going to happen, how that's going to happen. It is completely out of my control." And if you do, then you have nine months of uncertainty. And then if they get here, you're checking in the crib like, "Are they breathing?" All the things. You just have all of these insecurities and all of these fears. And what really starts over is you start to think about and see, have a front-row seat, of all of the insecurities and all of the challenges that you faced as a child. And now you have to coach them through that, all while going through your own unforeseen obstacles. You can tear your calf any second, you know, or whatever may come your way that you don't see coming.

So, we've been in 1 Peter, wrapping up today in Chapter 5. Peter's letter has been an incredible lesson of resilience and encouragement for the church. The series is called "Forged" because, in the same way that you would put metal into a furnace and it would harden through the heating up, he's talking to the persecuted church scattered throughout Asia Minor, about 64 AD. The church is undergoing quite the test of persecution, struggles, challenges, trials, circumstances, and situations. So, Peter pens this letter, one of the 27 books in the New Testament. It's a letter where he sits down and thinks about this church and these people. He writes them a letter that the Holy Spirit preserves for us to read today and to teach from today. He's telling them things like, "Be strong, stand firm. You can do this. There are lots of challenges coming your way, but you have everything you need to get through those obstacles."

Today, specifically, he's going to end this letter talking about how to get through life's obstacles. It's going to feel like the slides are changing really fast, like the ideas are disconnected. This section is one of my favorite sections in all of the scripture; it's filled with memory verses. He says, **"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God so in due time, he may lift you up. Cast all your anxieties on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind; your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."** Like, **"Cast all your anxieties ..."** **"... enemy of the devil."** These are like, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa! Memory verse! Memory verse! Coffee cup ... You know?" That's what this reads like. As you kind of look deeper into it, you see how the ideas stack on top of each other, that the slides aren't actually changing, that he's building on these concepts. He's saying, "Hey, here are the obstacles of life: anxiety, your own mental health. You are your own worst enemy at times." And then he says, "Oh, and by the way, you have another enemy, Satan, the devil, temptation. He's putting things in front of you to trip you up. Oh, and then this other thing called the world, where it's just filled with suffering because of Genesis Chapter 3, sin enters the world." So, there are things here like death, disease, persecution, trials, tribulations. That's all here. So, that's kind of how it moves through this section of Scripture.

If you want to turn there, we'll be in 1 Peter 5. Just as a quick start with a verse from last week, he says, **"⁵ ...All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another because God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."** Did you guys get dressed this morning? Remember that from last week? I'm not talking about clothes. As you came into this place, put

on humility, right? And then he says, in Verse 6, **“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand that he may lift you up in due time. ⁷Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”** Peter is writing this letter with Jesus in his mind and on his heart. He knows Christ; he spent a lot of time with Jesus. In fact, there was this one time where Peter, who was a fisherman and spent a ton of his life on a boat, and Jesus says, “We're going to go across the Sea,” which is the Sea of Galilee. Think Lake Waco; it's a lake. We're going to go across the Sea of Galilee. They get in a boat, pile in, and they get to the middle of the Sea of Galilee. A fierce storm rolls in, which happens in this area. It can just show up really fast. The boat is being tossed to and fro, and these lifetime vocational fishermen are afraid. They think they're going to die. They look for Jesus. “Where is he? What could he be doing?” Jesus is taking a little siesta, nap time, power nap, right? They're like, “Jesus, what are you doing? Who can sleep at a time like this? Don't you even care? Do you care if we drown?” Jesus wakes up. He's like, “Do I care? Oh, man, do I care. You don't know half of it. Do I care? Hush.” And the sea is still, and the storm stops.

Peter knows this, and he wants you to know. There are going to be times in your life where you wonder if He cares—your concerns, your fears, your worries. And what I want you to do is cast those cares, cast those concerns, cast those anxieties on Him because He does care for you. In the Greek, it's, “You matter to Him.” He is concerned for you. He knows you; He's aware of what you're going through, and He absolutely cares. So, the first obstacle, obstacle one, is our anxiety. And my first point is:

1. *In anxiety, humble yourself.*

Does anxiety come from pride? Much of it does. If you struggle with anxiety, I don't want you to stop listening right here. I know that it cannot be helpful or it cannot feel helpful. If it's true, it's helpful, and the truth is much of our anxiety comes from pride. Is it possible that you have a brain injury? Is it possible that there's serotonin being depleted from this organ called your brain? Absolutely, that is certainly possible. Is much of the anxiety that we face today from our own desire to control situations? Yes, it is. The Bible addresses this repeatedly. In Matthew 6, Jesus says, “Do not worry about your clothes, what you will wear, about food, what you're going to eat. Don't worry about tomorrow.” “I'm anxious about this meeting next week!” He says, “Don't worry about tomorrow; tomorrow has enough troubles of its own.” He's saying you are not in control; that you are cared for by a God who loves you and controls all things. You need to fill your heart and mind with these things. And if that is an eye-roll moment for you, like if that's a yawn, “Pastor, okay, I got it.” Would you please try? Because I noticed, even in my own experience in meeting with others, it's like, “Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.” But we don't stop and create space in the morning to think, “Okay, let me fill my heart and mind with the idea that God loves me, that He cares for me, that He controls all things.” Philippians 4: **“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your request to God, and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”** What is he saying? You're not in control. Talk to the One who is in control. You're not the one who's in control; He's the One who's in control. And so, you weren't made to wear anxiety; you need to cast that off. You were made to wear humility; you were made to wear the hand of God. “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand; he'll protect you.”

If you have anxiety, if you struggle with anxiety, you are not alone; so do I. In early 2018, I was racing through life, often teaching one time on Saturday and three services on Sunday. I would finish that fourth service on Sunday, then turn the corner and write another message for Tuesday. I would teach on Tuesday and travel and teach other places, all while writing a book and managing young children and a marriage, and all of the things of life. Something broke, and I can't tell you exactly what broke, but I can tell you what it felt like. I just couldn't be okay. My nerves were shot. I could sit down in my chair in front of the fireplace, and my skin would crawl. It's kind of like you're sick to your stomach, but it's not your stomach; it's all over. You just feel uncomfortable in your skin, and you want it to go away, but it doesn't go away. Your thoughts are coming at you so fast you can't even grab one; they're just like intrusive and rapid. You can't really focus on anything, and you're just like, "What is going on?" For me, my heart started beating hard, not fast but hard. I would have these, what they call 'thunder beats,' and it just felt like my heart was skipping beats, and my whole body was tingling, but it wasn't a good kind of tingling.

So, I go to the emergency room. I'll just say this really quick. When I'm sitting in that chair and I'm feeling that way, and I'm like, "**Cast all your anxieties on him.**" I'm trying! I want to! "**Don't worry about tomorrow.**" I don't want to! I don't know how! "**Don't be anxious.**" I don't want to be anxious! I don't want it! I don't know! Okay, don't do it, but how? So, I go to the emergency room, and they hook me up to an EKG machine, checking my heart. The doctor comes back and she says, "Yeah, you've got some irregular heartbeats, PVCs (premature ventricular contractions) and PACs (premature atrial contractions)." And I said, "I know. Can you fix it?" She says, "No, but you can." I said, "What do I do?" She said, "You need to carry less. You're carrying too much." Well, why does anyone carry too much? Why do we do that to ourselves?

Well, you know, because we want to keep up with everyone else, and we want to be able to make our car payment. We want to be able to put food on the table. But not just food on the table, we want to eat out every now and then. We want to have a roof over our heads, but not just a roof over our heads; we'd like that roof to have a king-sized bed and nice things, and central air and heat. And you begin to play this game of catch-up, and you're so entrenched in it that you don't even really know that you are. You find significance in what other people think of you, so you begin to chase a reputation, and you begin to feed an ego through affirmation, just living for the 'atta boys' and the 'atta girls.' Before you know it, you're carrying way more than you should, and it will crush you. So, what does it look like to cast our anxiety on Him? Let me say this: What does it look like for *you* to cast your anxiety on Him?

Here's an honest answer: I don't know. But let me tell you what it looks like for *me*, because you have to do something. You can't look at that verse and think it's just ethereal, like a verse you're just supposed to know. It's telling you to *do* something; you're supposed to *do* something. And so, for me, what it looked like is I would sit still and I would try to identify what was causing me to be anxious, which is extremely difficult. You think it would be easy; it's not. It's like peeling back layers to get to a place of, "Oh, I really care what people think of me. That's creating anxiety in my life. Oh, I want to achieve; I'm trying to live for some approval. I'm trying to fill some wound that's deep in my heart." That takes some time and some work and some heart surgery. It's really hard; it's not easy. You're peeling back those layers; you're identifying those things.

Then, for me, what I had to literally do is look at it, identify it, and say, “God, I don't want that. I'm going to put that on you.” The word picture for me, as I read 1 Peter 5:7, is I would take off the anxiety, take it off like a coat, I would take it off and throw it on the coat rack. I was like, “God, you've got that.” Martin Luther says, “I'm going to pray and let God worry.” So, I was like, “God, I'm going to pray and let *you* worry. You take that.” I would take one off and say, “You take *that* one.” I'd take another one off and say, “You take *that* one.” I had to sit there and go through that mental practice. For me, that's what it looked like to cast my anxieties on Him. I don't know exactly what it looks like for you. Feel free to try that, but do something. Don't blow past the verse and just live in a fatalistic mindset of, “Well, there's really nothing I can do,” when it's telling you what to do. God loves you; He cares about you; He'll help you know and understand what it is that you're to do. Friends, this is what I want you to understand: this verse is going out of its way to say God *cares* about you. About *you*. About *you*. He cares about *you*. He's concerned for your life. He is aware. He's a Shepherd; He's watching over you; He's protecting you in ways you're not even aware of right now. He's got you. So, in anxiety, humble yourself, and God will protect you.

Verse 8: **“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, standing firm in the faith because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”** Peter, I'm convinced, continues to draw from his time with Jesus, because when Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane in that “Not my will but thy will” moment, “Let this cup pass from me, Lord,” in that moment, Peter goes deeper into the garden with him, and Jesus says, “Peter, stay alert and of sober mind. The enemy has asked me if he can sift you like wheat,” which I would be like, “I hope you said no,” but they're having this conversation, and Peter's drawing on that experience because it didn't go well for Peter. Jesus comes back and he's like, “Dude, bro, come on. I mean, I leave for an hour and you fall asleep. Don't you understand you've got an enemy who wants to take you out? You've got to stay alert, Peter.” And so, Peter's taking that admonishment and passing it on to us. Stay alert, guys. In fact, in verse 41 of Matthew 26, Jesus says, **“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation,”** talking to Peter. So, here Peter is telling us to do the same.

The second obstacle you will find in life is the devil as he presents temptation to you. “Look at that again, drink that again, smoke that again, vape that again, buy that again, compare again, look again, you don't have what they have, you don't have the marriage they have, you don't have the relationship they have, you don't have the kids they have. What's wrong with you? What's wrong with you?” Don't fall for that. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion. In temptation, resist the devil. My second point:

2. In temptation, resist the devil.

As you read this, how do you picture the devil? Did you read this verse? It says it in the text. It's not a trick question. Like a lion? Devour you, tear you limb from limb? He's a lion. It's not what it says. It's not what it says. Jesus is the Lion of Judah. Satan is... is a very important word in there. He dressed up as a lion for Halloween, okay? He's roaming the Earth *like* a lion because 2 Corinthians tells us that he masquerades as an angel of light. 2 Corinthians 11:14 says, **“...Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.”** He's not a lion. He walks around pretending to be a lion, trying to be scarier than he is, wanting you to be terrified of him, that he's going to get you.

But greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. Jesus will overpower Satan so fast, checkmate, arm triangle, tap out, donezo, right? He wins every time, over and over and over and over. He's got a plan for him, an eternal plan for him.

So, you lean into Jesus. You lean into the body of believers who are undergoing the same kind of suffering as you because what he wants you to think is that you are all alone. Who is Satan trying to find? Whoever is all alone, whoever is unprotected, whoever is anxious, whoever is trying to control the situation. Cowboy it, you got enough, man. You got what you need. You go out there. Let me show you something. (*Takes off his boot.*) Healed. No, I'm kidding, just happened. I can move around without the boot. Here's the truth: when I tore my calf last week, it's the second time I tore it. I actually tore it several weeks ago, and they said, "Hey, you need to wear a boot." I said, "I'm not going to wear a boot." And, you know, so humble, like, "You don't understand, the premier athlete in front of you!" I didn't wear the boot, right? And it healed, honestly, it healed. I was able to be mobile, and I was able to jump from rock to rock. I got to a log, and I pushed off, and everything that had healed came undone in a moment. All undone, right? The boot is the protection. The hand of God is the protection. The hand of God comes by way of your humility. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. That's your protection. You go out there and you realize, "I can't do this by myself. I am not enough. I need God-fearing people around me, reminding me of the truths of God, the promises of God, the things of God, the realities of God. By myself, I will be devoured by the one who's pretending to be a lion." You have to starve him. When you feed your pride, when you feed your ego, when you feed lust, when you feed materialism, when you feed your deficiencies with sin, making selfish choices, he eats, and he gets bigger; he grows stronger.

I'll tell you one of the strangest things I've ever said on this stage, probably. I got to interview an exorcist yesterday. True story, the leading exorcist for the Roman Catholic Church. He did three exorcisms on Friday, and he trains priests to do this. As weird as that sounds, I was actually just so encouraged by his humility and the conversation we had and his beliefs. I was really taken aback that he was a brother. I was encouraged. If that's too weird for you, keep going with me, okay? He said something that we all believe, that the Bible teaches, it is sound theology that when you sin, you invite Satan in. I don't know that you all understand that as much as you need to. You can be like, "God, protect my children," but then when you look at porn, you're saying, "Satan, devour our home." You can say, "God, would you protect my marriage and bless our family," but if you get drunk, you're like, "Satan, have your way with us." You're inviting him in when you do that, especially when you pursue habitual sin. Even as a Christian, as a believer, you're straying from the path, and you are inviting the devil to have his way with you. Ephesians 4 says, "**Do not give the devil a foothold.**" To Peter, Jesus says, "Satan has asked me if he can sift you like wheat."

Like, listen, man, I don't know if your ministry is as strong as Peter's is, but I guarantee you Satan is trying to have his way with you. Satan roams around like a roaring lion because he's not omnipresent. He's not everywhere. He's in one place at one time, probably most likely never been anywhere near any of you. But he's got an army of demons, and those demons, there's probably some demon assigned to you that is like, "All right!" They're studying you. They know your Amazon habits, your click habits, and your website search history. They know your insecurities. They studied you: front row seat. They've seen everything you do. They know when you stare at yourself in the mirror and you're not happy with what you see. They know when you

check your followers. They know when you fight in your marriage. They see you, they see your children, they see everything. They're studying you, and they can't do anything to you except try to get you to sin. When you sin, it's like you fed this lion, and he's like, "Hey, boys, lunch is right here." That's how he works. Guys, that is sound theology. That is what the Scripture teaches us of our enemies, and we just don't think about it. I don't want to just entertain you with that reality. I want it to impact the way that you live. Don't just be hearers of God's Word, but do what it says.

My neighbors have a cat, the best cat, man—an outdoor cat. So, when we go for a walk in the neighborhood, the cat will walk with us. She'll walk us home, all the way home, talk to us—all, you know, talk, we're like, "Hey, how you doing today?" back and forth. Just lots of personality in this cat. Rolls over, wants you to scratch its belly, you know? And then we'll get to the door, and the cat will go back to her house. You know what makes it her house? You know how they got this cat? It was a stray cat roaming throughout the neighborhood. They set out food, and when they set out food, that cat said, "That's my house. They feed me. That's where I live." Okay, and that's what happens whenever you sin. When you willfully say, "I'm going to do this, God. I know you told me not to, but I'm going to. I need to cope in this way. I need to look at this. I need to drink this, vape this. I need to gossip in this way. I need to feed this insecurity." You just say, "Hey, here kitty, kitty, kitty, kitty, kitty. You can have a home here. You can have a home here."

Jesus is our example. I mean, think about it—Satan is literally in front of him. He hasn't eaten in 40 days. He's in the flesh, like he's put on flesh and he's hungry, just like you would be hungry if you hadn't eaten in 40 days. Satan says, "Eat this." Satan says, "All of this can be yours." Satan says, "Here, I've got a plan for your life." And Jesus defeats the enemy with his three favorite memory verses from Deuteronomy. Do you know your favorite memory verse from Deuteronomy? If you're going to defeat Satan, just grab that. Which one are you going with? You know, you're going with Deuteronomy 2 or which one? (Audience chuckles.) He defeats the enemy. He has the Word of God. Satan is a liar. Jesus says, "Here's the truth." That's why I tell you all the time: your quiet time is not just a little self-care; it's a strategy against Satanic attacks. You're not spending time in God's word so that you can tell your Life Group you did so. You're spending time in God's word to calibrate your heart for another Kingdom that you're not fully in yet, to remind yourself that you belong *there*, and that today you're going to face all kinds of obstacles. The only way you're going to overcome those obstacles, the only way you will make it through those obstacles, is if you know the truth. The reason why this verse, this passage, means so much to me is that in that low moment, I wrote it on my bathroom mirror and read it every single day. Every day, I was like, "Okay, I've got to know what's true." In the lowest of lows of lows, it's like, "What's the truth? I've got to start my day in the truth." And you do too, and I do too, and we do too, every day. So, in temptation, resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Your only weapon, the only offensive weapon out of Ephesians 6 in spiritual warfare, is the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

Verse 10: "And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast. ¹¹To him be the power forever and ever. Amen." Peter ends his letter in worship, saying, "Listen, in your suffering, be steadfast, be patient. You're not home yet; the glory of Christ is to be revealed. He's coming back!" He said this over and over. You have to to a

suffering church. “You're not home yet! You're not there yet!” Peter had been in prison; he was in the stocks; he was in the chains. He saw God prove himself faithful; he saw Jesus get him out of those situations. So, he's telling the church, who's undergoing persecution, “Listen, he is faithful. Wait on him, trust him, be patient.” And he's on the side of the road, and you're running a marathon, and the finish line is in the distance, and you can't see it yet. But he's saying, “Church, you're not there yet; it's coming. You're almost home, you're almost at the finish line. Stay in it, stay in it, run harder, run faster. You can do it; you're almost home, you're almost there. You got this.” So, the third obstacle is suffering, the suffering in the world because of Genesis 3. In your suffering, be patient. My third point:

3. *In suffering, practice patience.*

Jesus, our example, was tempted in every way we are, but He did not sin. He suffered more than any of us ever will, but He did not sin. He endured it and got the prize. This is what Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4: **“¹⁶We do not lose heart, though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”** It's eternal.

Listen, guys, some of you have been in church for a long time. You read that verse, the “unseen seen” verse, “light and momentary affliction.” You have to fix your eyes on not what is seen. What is seen? Faster cars, bigger houses, better neighborhoods, private schools, better clothes, the comparison game. What you don't have and what they have. Because you're left out because God doesn't love you as much as he loves... That's what is seen, man. What is seen? Well, their kids are better, they act ... What? Honor roll? Wow! Summa cum laude? Wow! Okay, that's what is seen. What is unseen? How do you fix your eyes on something you can't see? Like, you can't just read that verse and not get stuck at that question. “Wait, God, hold up, how do I fix my eyes on something that I can't see?” The answer is you've got to fill your heart with this truth. You've got to read this book, know what it says, and do what it says. You've got to live it out. It can't just be like, “Oh, okay, yeah, the Chicken Soup shot in the arm. Let's go!” No, man, no, no, no, no, church, no, church. You have to understand, be soberly aware.

I told somebody the other day, I was like, “Man, we are so... I was like, our home, man, we are so weird.” I think people are afraid to be weird. I'm like, “We are so weird, you wouldn't believe it. Here's the deal, so weird. So, okay, you going to treat me different when I tell you this. So, we actually belong to another Kingdom. There's a king there; we can't see him, but I talk to him all the time throughout the day. He hears me; can't see him. Yeah, my children, they're actually royalty. We've got a prince and a couple princesses in our home. Yeah, they're going to inherit the greatest Kingdom the world has ever known. Yeah, it's going to happen; it's almost like magic. It's going to be set down here, castles and streets of gold. So weird, I know. So weird. We talk about these things all the time because we see stuff here, and we're like, 'Oh yeah, that doesn't matter, that's temporary. This is going to be toppled over; it's going to burn up in a fire. Oh yeah, though, this world is going to be destroyed by fire; it was destroyed by water the first time. Second time, it's going to be destroyed by fire. All the works that aren't done in Jesus's name, destroyed by fire. “Completely meaningless. Aren't we so weird? Big old weirdo! You're

going to think I'm weird until you see it's true." And this is what Peter is saying: you have to fill your heart with what is true.

I've got deviated septum surgery coming up, and as they were describing that process to me—going in, and grinding out, and tearing out—I'm like, "Oh man, my face hurts!" The doctor's a great doctor. He's preparing me. He's like, "Hey, that first six days, that's no joke, man. Buckle up. That's going to be hard. You're going to want to manage the pain, and this and that." He's just telling me, and he says, "But after those six days, you're going to come in. I'm going to pull out the stents, and you're going to immediately feel the benefits of the surgery. And then, the rest of your life, you're going to be able to breathe." And I'm like, "Great! That's amazing." So, what do you think I'm going to be doing on those six days? It's going to be like, "Alright, six more days. Okay, five more days. Okay, three more days. Okay, two more days." Did I skip four? Sorry about that—four more days, three more days, two more... counting's hard. Numbers are hard. I'm just going to be focused on the end in mind. "Teach us, oh Lord, to number our days," he says. "Man, you're not home yet." So, I want you to know, God cares about you, and the glory of Christ is going to be revealed, and it's going to be amazing, and you are not home yet. So, the suffering you face is momentary; it's not going to last. And in suffering, practice patience, and Jesus will restore you. Practice patience and He will restore you. In summary: in anxiety, humble yourself, and God will protect you; in temptation, resist the devil, and he will flee from you; and in suffering, practice patience, and Jesus will restore you.

When I jumped and tore my calf, it hurt, but it was just hard to walk. It wasn't the worst because then I got the boot. But then this knot, right here in my shoulder, happened, and I could not get relief. There was nothing—I mean, it was laughing at Advil. Like, I'd take Advil, like, what's that, some food? I don't know what was happening. And so, in meetings, I'm just trying to get relief. (JP raises his right arm over his head as he continues to talk.) I'm like, "Yeah, oh yeah, man, well, praise God," and I'm just trying to get my arm to a comfortable place. And I couldn't sleep because it just hurt, and it was throbbing. Your body has a really interesting response to pain. When you experience a lot of pain, it's like, "Oh yeah, you've got some pain there; well take *this*." So, then I got shingles—yeah, super fun. Shingles, if you're not aware, it's like chickenpox under the skin, and it's just basically trying to determine how much pain you can endure. So, the calf hurts, the shoulder really hurts, but then there were shingles. And what you do in that is you just—you start feeling sorry for yourself. I was really angsty, uncomfortable in my skin, and so, I don't feel like I have to be nice to you because I hurt. I'm short with everybody, and you start to think, "Hey, what can I do?" A person in pain will do desperate things. "What can I do?" "Will a second glass of bourbon make this go away?" And you start thinking, "Oh well, maybe if I just, maybe if I just buy something, I'd feel better." Or, "You know what? I need to go back to my old—you know, just some temporary pleasure that I don't have to work for, and just go and look at, and give myself to, and it would just give me a little bit of quick, like, I'll just feel a little better."

And in that moment, you've got to be like, "No." And so, then it's like this sober moment; the Holy Spirit's like, "No, no, no, you're not home yet. Let all this remind you: you're not there yet." He cares. God cares my shoulder hurts. He cares my calf is torn. He cares about the shingles. He cares about it. And the worst thing I can do is be like, "Oh, I'm terminally unique, and no one's ever suffered like me." And this is the lie that the enemy will feed us. "Look at you. Oh, poor you! You should just go cope somehow." "No! Get behind me, Satan. No, I'm not going to do

that. I'm not going to look at that. I'm not going to drink that, smoke that, say that. I want to clothe myself with humility. I want to operate in gentleness and kindness. If I'm not, I want to stop. I want to seek forgiveness. And listen, I can't just use my pain as an excuse to not be Christian." And I've got to fill my truth. What did Peter do throughout this passage? He remembered what he learned from Jesus, which means we have to constantly be learning from Jesus so that, in the moments of unforeseen obstacles, we remember what we learned from Jesus. We're always learning from Jesus, and in the moment, the way that we're going to overcome what's in front of us is we have to remember, remind ourselves, renew our minds—what we learned from Jesus. What are you learning from Jesus that's going to help you overcome the breakup, the headache, the job loss, the failed class, the professor who doesn't like you, the business deal that didn't happen, the marriage that's rocky right now and you don't even know why? It doesn't make sense to you. The kid that's hanging out with the wrong people. What verse are you going to grab onto that's going to help you endure that obstacle? We pray that we would have one.

Father, help us to practice the discipline of spending necessary time with you, reminding our hearts and our minds of who you are and how you love us and what you've done for us through your Son, Jesus Christ. Father, I pray just for a special blessing on Harris Creek, that amongst this body of believers, we would be seen faithful as your eyes go to and fro throughout the Earth looking for hearts that are fully devoted to you, may you see us as a group that you decide to do things with to bring your kingdom through in Waco as it is in Heaven, in Woodway as it is in Heaven, in Hewitt as it is in Heaven, and McGregor as it is in Heaven, and Lorena as it is in Heaven, and anywhere else that we are, that light would shine and darkness would be pushed back, and your Kingdom would be built. As we worship, I pray that you would help us to know how to overcome the obstacles, the very specific nuanced obstacles in our own lives. In Jesus' name, amen.