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Transcribed Message

Message: Yet Not I

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1 Peter 1:6-7

Happy Senior Sunday, seniors. Give it up for them one more time. It's another service, another fun, fun, fun day, honoring their accomplishments. Of course, you know that we're not just honoring the seniors, we're honoring parents and teachers, coaches, administrators, babysitters, former MDO workers – basically all of you who have kept them alive for the last 18 years. Youth pastors, no, we're not honoring the youth pastor. My name is Riley. I am the youth pastor and it's good to see you guys. Every year when I get up here to do this, the idea is you want to speak to this rite of passage, graduating high school. You want to speak to the stage that they're walking through, you want to honor that.

Also, for the other 99% of the people in the room, we would like a tie-in, you know, so how do I find something to talk about that applies to them, but that the rest of us can understand and identify with too. And so you need to find something universal, something that's universal to all our experience. Well, what could that be? What's a topic? I'm thinking, and I'm like, well, maybe traffic, okay, like obey basic traffic laws.

You know, everyone understands and it's like, well, there's no verse for that, so no, not traffic. Let's see here. Ooh, ooh, the one true, correct way to load the dishwasher, right? Of course, that's a bit divisive in my house, right? And I don't want to split the room, right? So no dishwasher, and then it's like, okay, you need to go more basic, Riley, more basic. Let's see. The importance of a good night's sleep, right, a good night's rest. Community, shelter, you know, the basic necessities, Maslow's hierarchy. And there is a verse, you've probably heard of it from Matthew 6. Our Lord answers it pretty straightforward.

He goes, why are you anxious about what you're going to wear? Just consider the lilies, or, you know, what shall we eat? What shall we drink? And again, Christ, right between the eyes, says, if God so clothes the grass of the field, how much more will he

clothe you? So it's obvious what he's saying, and in theory, it's like, okay, I get that. That makes a lot of sense, right? And don't worry, but the application of that, that's a bit challenging. That can be challenging sometimes. So, the universal plea, or this kind of mass appeal that I'm looking for, is basically the very unpleasant experience of need and of want, felt need, maybe, but that's a universal experience, if we're being honest. I know that God will provide. When's he going to provide? I'm feeling a bit uncertain right now.

We know that we can go for long periods of time, wondering, when is this need going to get met? To say nothing of my wants, when is this going to get met, Lord? Now, the Bible uses a word to describe this experience, and it uses the word “suffering”. You can define suffering in a lot of different ways. Some words that are synonymous with suffering, which would work for this morning, would be trials. We could use the word tribulation, temptation, grief, disappointment. All of those fit, but regardless of which word that you use, and then degree to which you're walking through that experience right now, because there are degrees there, we'll talk about that in a moment.

I'd like to direct your attention to the Apostle Peter, he says in the fifth chapter of his first epistle, verse six, we must humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, meaning that we are to submit ourselves to God's timing, His sovereign plans, ultimately His care. We trust in Him to meet all our needs with His great provision. Church, it's my submission to you this morning that our suffering, whether it's based on what you could call carnal or worldly matters, I want some new pants or new shoes, or a deep, deep, sincere concern for the church, all of it has its roots in sin, namely the sin of not trusting God to provide. Unbelief.

More than that, however, our message for this morning is not just about the problem of sin and suffering, because, well, that would be a bit of a downer, right? I don't want to thoroughly depress everyone in here. The message that I believe is both universal in its application and ever-pressing, whether you're a senior in high school or a senior citizen, it doesn't matter who you are. The message that you need to hear is the hope in suffering that a Christian has, amen?

Let's look back to 1 Peter then. We'll go to chapter 1 this time, and if you'd turn there, 1 Peter 1, we'll start in verse 6 and we're going to work through verse 7. First Peter chapter 1, verse 6 and 7, it says, In this you rejoice, though now for a little while. If necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, that's the suffering, so that the tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. The big idea for today's message is simply this, in Christ we have hope in our suffering. In Christ we have hope in our suffering.

I want you to do a little exercise with me, okay? I want you to imagine that a person's life can get broken down into parts or sections or chapters, whatever works best for you. And it's not the easiest math. We're going to break them down into 18-year sections, okay? So 0 to 18 would be part 1. That's our seniors, they're at the end of part 1. Now 19 to 37, I'm 37, is the end of part 2. 38 to 56, part 3. 57 through 70, so on and so forth, okay? These are our big major sections or chapters, so think about that. Some of you are in part 3. Some of you are in part 4 and some are in part 5 and, you know, this is what I'm saying. I think that suffering is a bit of a relative matter.

What does that mean? It changes depending on the part that you're walking through. More often than not, this is the case. So, our experience with suffering changes depending on which chapter you're in. I'm not here today to downplay the sufferings or the experiences of somebody that's in part 1. I'm not saying, you don't know suffering, you're too young. That's not the point. However, what I am saying is the degree, the type, the brand of suffering that an adult comes to endure over the years, if we're not careful, it really can start to work on us. It can start to really, really, really work on us. I'm not talking about teenage angst, no offense. I mean, I had an emo phase. I'm not talking about the type of disillusionment that sets in that first summer back from college and you're back in your room and you're like, what is life? What is this? I'm not talking about that.

You may be wondering like, Riley, why are you talking about this in the first place? Of all the things that you could get up there on senior Sunday and discuss, you landed on suffering? It's weird. I mean, couldn't you have talked about, I don't know, my future

promotion, you know, future of glorification is nice. I'd like a promotion. Maybe about with good stewardship and strong work ethic, I can expect a nice house one day, a beautiful dog, a perfect spouse, right? A bright, shiny new car, something uplifting, a righteous inheritance sounds nice. But I need some hope. Did you forget? I'm going to college to get paid. Couldn't you have given me at least one Joel Osteen quote? I love Joel Osteen, no offense.

Students, what I'm saying is that your biggest promotion in your future, the culmination of all your striving, even your role as a parent, whether it's concerning choices, both good, bad successes, failures, all of it. So long as you hold fast the confession of your hope without wavering as it says in Hebrews. There in our verse for this morning, verse seven may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. And that is your prosperity gospel right there. That's the true prosperity gospel. Remember in Christ alone, we have hope in our suffering.

Three things that we're going to look at today. Number one, you probably could guess it by now. We should expect suffering. Number two, the suffering is temporary and sometimes it's necessary. And finally, number three, our hope is in Christ. We should expect suffering. Suffering is temporary. Sometimes it's necessary, but ultimately our hope is in Christ.

So, point number one, it's Christians. We should expect to encounter suffering in our daily lives. Y'all, salvation is not a fast pass through the suffering line. I love the fast pass, it's so great. You know, it's not, here's my salvation card. Thank you. I'm going to bypass all this suffering. I'm going to get on the roller coaster of success and fun. That's not how it works. Christians, we're not exempt from trials. We'll take you guys back to my part one, my chapter one.

This was in the 1900s, students. I was in the fourth grade, the sock hop dance. You guys know the sock hop? It was disco themed. I was new at my school. My parents had moved us up from Oklahoma City to Edmond. I needed to make a good impression on my peers. I was desperate for friends. And my mother who, oh, she couldn't be here today, but she's like, yay, we get to dress you up. Oh, good. Okay. We're going to go to the thrift store

and we're going to find you a disco get-up. It's going to be great. I'm like, all right, mom. I'm nine years old. So it's whatever you say. I guess I got to go to the thrift store with you. So there we went. We, we get this avocado green ruffles up the middle. Ruffles. probably just forever chemicals all through that thing. I don't even know if those were around then, but ruffles off the cuffs, just ruffles everywhere. She's like, it's perfect. And my mother loved dressing us up and we did not.

I just want to clarify something. We were not one of those households who celebrated Halloween, so I don't want you to get the wrong idea. If she couldn't dress me up on Halloween, we celebrated Reformation Day where I was from. She would dress me up as Martin Luther and I'd go around and the neighbors would hear a banging on the door and I was nailing the 95 Theses up there. They hated seeing me coming. That's a joke.

So anyway, I walk into the sock hop and some people dressed up. I was dressed up. I was doing the most, as the kids say. And oh my gosh, I wanted to leave my body, you know, and the gymnasium. It was bad. If you had asked me that night, is this the worst? I'd be like, oh yeah, this is the worst. And I was convinced of that until what? On the last day of sixth grade when my girlfriend dumped me. On the last day of school, she dumped me. Then that was the worst and it couldn't possibly get any worse. Then I got dumped in seventh grade and I'm like, gosh, I am acquainted with grief. This is tough. This is part one.

Three days before my 16th birthday. There I am looking at my car, sitting out there and I'm like, that thing needs a test drive. Yeah, I need to go test drive that thing. The rear axle lateral ball joint looks weird. I just need to make sure that everything's in working order and I, you remember granny plowed through my parents' mailbox, obliterated the mailbox, right? And then that, that was the worst.

You guys see what I'm doing here? When you feel like it can't possibly get any worse, what happens? What do we know? People in part three, four, five, what do we know? We're not exempt from trials. You know, I was like, I need to rededicate. I need to get out in front of this suffering stuff, right? No, no. Salvation does not guarantee us an easy life while we're on this earth. Now we know this. We know trials come in a myriad of ways, various kinds of trials that we're going to endure.

Don't forget our big idea, however, in Christ we have hope in our suffering. Verse six from this morning, it says, in this you rejoice. It says in this you rejoice. Now, this is not saying in the fact that you are promised suffering, it's not what it's saying. Rejoice. You're going to suffer. That's not what it's saying. There are a few verses that we look at that kind of say that, but that's not what 1 Peter 1: 6-7 is saying.

You look back at verses three through five, it's pointing us back there and it's up here on the slide. These items in red, notice what it says there. "In this you rejoice" is pointing to our future hope. It's those things right there, our future glorification that we're in fact promised. It's a living hope. That living hope is through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It says that we have an inheritance, imperishable, undefiled, unfading, and this or that is what we rejoice in.

What does it go on to say? Dot, dot, dot, though for a little while, if necessary. We'll look at the "if necessary" part here in just a second. It says you have been grieved by various trials. It's stating a fact. It's going to happen, expect it. Don't be surprised because it's going to happen. So, while yes, there is indeed a cause for rejoicing in our future, that fact is tinged just a little bit with an understanding that meanwhile, as exiles in a fallen world, we are going to encounter suffering, grief, disappointment. That's going to happen.

In summary, students, things are not always going to go your way. They're just not, and that's okay. There are going to be painful seasons. There are going to be some trying circumstances, seven years of famine, however you want to say it.

What do we know? God is still good. God is faithful. I understand that when you hear all this, when you look at 1 Peter 1:6, it's easy to let our minds go to the extremes and go, oh my gosh, Riley's telling me I am going to lose a job. You know, thinking of immense loss, unthinkable trials. My house is going to burn up. Is that what you're saying, Riley? That's what you're up here saying? No, no, that's not what I'm saying. We know that we're not safeguarded from those things. Don't we know that? We're not safeguarded from those things, but that's not what Peter has in view this morning. That's not his point.

What he's doing is he's building a case for the believer's hope, hope amidst uncertain times. What does James say? James has a verse like this. What does he say? You

guys know it. A very perplexing verse. Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds. That verse used to really stump me. What? Why? Why would I do that? Well, Peter and James see trials as purposeful – purposeful in the context of God's work in their lives, in the lives of the early church who they were writing to. And guess what? In our lives too. Count it all joy.

It's like an accounting term. I'm no accountant, but the words right there count. I've never balanced a checkbook. You guys know what checkbooks are. You guys used to balance checkbooks, right? You know, you go in there and you write it down. This is what I did. Okay. Don't want to forget that. All right. So we can look back later. So we do this with our trials so that we can go back. It's like, come to think of it. Or in retrospect, now that I'm checking the old ledger. In hindsight, now that the dust has settled. What does it say there in the memo line? God is a faithful God. It's right there for us. We wrote that. That's why we counted all joy.

What do we know about Peter? By the way, Peter who, who penned this letter today? Well, we know that Peter denied Christ three times, plenty to say about that night. Wow. What? You know, he practically swore he would or could never do such a thing. We know that Peter was part of the inner circle with James and John. And the Bible says that after he denied the Lord and the rooster crowed, he wept bitterly. That's not how the story ends though, is it? No, no. Lest we forget the redemptive purposes of Christ's work in our lives. Peter emerged a much humbler, wiser man.

How did Peter come to learn the futility of trusting in himself like that? How do we think? Through a promotion? Through a new camel? Big old new tent? No. Suffering through trials, tested genuineness of your faith. And Peter died for his faith. Same guy. You know, when the chips are down and the going gets tough, the Holy Spirit can bring back these lessons from our shortcomings in our day-to-day affairs. He can bring back the lessons into the forefront of our mind. And do you think Peter ever forgot about what happened that night? There's no way. Not a shot.

Tested genuineness of your faith. From a man who denied Christ to a little peasant girl three times, no offense to peasant girls, fast forward to what? You're going to have to

kill me before I ever deny my Savior. And they killed him. How did he go from A to B? I love these lyrics here. It says, you made a way when there was no way. And I believe that you're going to do it again. How does somebody say something like that and mean it? I've seen you move the mountains. And I believe that you're going to do it again.

Let's look at our second point. The suffering is temporary. Guess what? It's necessary. Though now, for a little while, if necessary. For a little while, what does that mean? It means it's temporary. If necessary, if need be. What a tough truth to hear today.

Part threes and fours and fives and sixes, what do we know? It's our experience with such things as this that we learn how to say what? Even if it's through gritted teeth, this too will pass. Verse six and seven accent both our joy now, if we remember that joy is not tied to present circumstance and our expectation for the future. Those two things coupled together shed a much needed new light on our experience or interpretation or understanding of brief momentary grief. Maybe it is necessary experience that could expose us to this reality. Therefore, we rejoice. We count it all joy when we face trials and temptations of many times. That's the accounting term. That's because it forces us to go back into the old balance sheet and look. Oh yeah, it's right there. I wrote that. I almost forgot. Back then I had doubt. God had a plan. That's my handwriting. God had a plan.

Those trials in our lives are what exposes genuine faith. That's a real reason to rejoice. It's not only temporary, but it's purposeful for the believer. There's a qualifier there for the believer. Both in James and here in 1 Peter, we need to understand that they're addressing this message of hope to the Christian specifically. For the non-believer, trials or misfortune are nothing more than evidence that if there is a God, He is anything but all-loving. For how would an all-loving, omniscient, omnibenevolent, omnipresent God allow such things to befall good people? How and why do bad things happen to good people? The skeptic wants to know. That doesn't make sense. Make it make sense.

What do we know as Christians? That it is only through Christ, the suffering Savior, that that type of resentment and bitterness can be replaced with rejoicing. It's about our future glorification. It's our temporary trials that can bring this into sharper perspective. It's how mourning gets turned into dancing and beauty for ashes and graves into gardens. 2

Corinthians 4:17 says, for this light momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison. It's a purifying process is what it is. We'll look later on at the idea of burning off the dross. Philippians 1:29 says, for it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ, you should not only believe in Him but suffer for His sake. Why? Because it brings us into right understanding that if we are to have any hope whatsoever, it is yet not I, but through Christ in me.

That leads us to our third and final point for the day. The Apostle Paul, who wrote Philippians and 2 Corinthians, in the first century church, his calling card was the preeminent Apostle of Faith. They called him the Apostle of Faith. And then John, you know who we've been studying in here, he was the Apostle of Love. That was John. You guys know what Peter was? The Apostle of ... any guesses? Suffering? No. Hot temper? Rocks? No. Peter was the Apostle of Hope. Our hope is in Christ. You know, the theme of suffering is found all throughout this epistle. But ultimately, it is a letter of encouragement to the believer, and in that we see, in direct proportion, the mentioning of suffering comes alongside his mentioning of grace.

Now with this connection, we find that it's in the specific language that Peter uses. The text says the Christian will undergo various trials. Various trials. In Scripture for "various" here is *poikilos*. That literally means many-colored. The only time that Peter uses this word to describe something is when he uses it to describe the various trials, but also the grace of God, which is to say, though our troubles may be many-colored or various, so is God's grace. There is no color in the human condition, in fact, that grace cannot match. Indeed, there is grace to match every trial.

Case in point, sin. It's a major problem. What do we have? Salvation through the forgiveness of sins. God's grace is sufficient, so maybe you're walking through trials right now. Maybe there's suffering. Maybe there's some uncertainty. Maybe you're beginning to doubt God's plans, and maybe you've experienced grace through salvation. You've had that experience, and you're considering the lilies, but right now you're struggling to see the many-colored grace of God. Maybe it's a sickness. I'm really struggling to see the silver

lining here. I want to honor that. I don't want to dismiss that, and we've heard that God is referred to as the great physician.

You heard that? Sometimes we start to wonder, hey, where's my prescription? When are you going to write me that prescription? When can I go pick it up? It's going to cost me what? What? I got my card. I got my Christian card. What are you talking about? Guys, sometimes there's no magic pill. There's no cure-all. There's no one-size-fits-all. You know, I'm speaking from experience here, by the way. We've walked through a lot in our marriage. Miscarriage. Not once. Five times in five years of marriage. And there were times where I'm like, God, I know how you can fix this. Very easy. Give us a kid. You can do it. It's in your power. Where are you? Just do it already.

You know, we learned through the waiting there what the many-colored graces of God can look like. I mean, y'all, this church, you showed up when we were asking those questions. On our toughest days, you guys were on our doorstep reminding us that God is a faithful God. Every time I'd see Daniel Moriassi, he'd hug me. God is a faithful God. I'd be like, Daniel, I don't think you know what's going on right now. He said it over and over and over and over 50 times. And one day I'm like, this guy really believes this. The friendships were solidified during that tough time. We grew closer in our marriage. And then what happened? Shepherd comes into our lives. That's why we named him Shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want, I lack nothing. In Him, I have everything that I need.

There have been days where I've been sitting where you are, and I'm like, that's great for you. That's nice for you. I'm not there today. That's nice for you. I'm not there today. Take heart and remember that while we may not see God's grace right now, the reason that we count it all joy is so that you can go back when doubt overcomes you, and you can refer to the records, and you can see He moved the mountain for me. Then I believe He's going to do it again.

So, as we close, our suffering will one day in fact be turned in to glory, for it was only as our Savior first suffered for us was He then able to move on to glory. And while the believer is, hallelujah, saved by grace through faith, it's true, the completion of that

salvation awaits the return of our King, and it is in this that you rejoice. Not in the absence of temporary pain and suffering.

We've spent the majority of our time working through 6, and I want to look at part of verse 7. It says, more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire. When we look closely at this idea of purifying gold, we have a few things there. We have the goldsmith, and in this metaphor, the goldsmith would be like God. God would be the goldsmith. God is engaged in the purifying process. Now the gold would be like our faith. Maybe like our faith in part one, or in part two. There are impurities in there. There's unbelief. And God will take the belief of the young believer, and what does He do? Sticks it into the fire. It's like, ow! What are you doing? That hurt! Get me out of here! Have you forgotten about me? Where are you? And in this state, the fire heats up the gold, and the impurities begin to just kind of surface. And then God brings the gold out of the fire, and He looks at it, and He starts to scrape the dross off. That would be like our unbelief. That would be our doubt. That would be our sin. And we're like, okay, I feel better now. And the gold becomes a little bit purer, and then what happens? Pops us back in. It's like, what are you doing? I thought I checked that box off. I thought I was done.

It's an unpleasant process. Gold is inanimate. I don't think it feels this way, but it's rather uncomfortable for us when the heat gets turned up, isn't it? And this process is repeated multiple times, over and over and over through each successive part of our story. That's the connection point to our faith. And the old sermon illustration here is that the goldsmith will do this until he removes the gold, and he inspects it, and what does he see? You can see his reflection in the gold. I don't know if that's true. I tried to look it up about the process of purifying gold. But for our analogy, as the gold becomes purer and purer and clearer and clearer, it is more reflective.

This is what we want to drive home here. 2 Corinthians 3:18, and we all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. What's the image? It's the image of Christ in us, in all of us. God the Father will continue this refining process in all of us until he is able to see the reflection of Christ in and through our faith.

Let's pray. Father God, we love you. We are so thankful for your word. We're so thankful for truth. We're thankful to have a place to come together and to hear about your truth. And Father, I pray that as we prepare to leave this room, that we can be reminded that truth and that hope is found in Jesus. I pray that as the seniors move on to this next chapter of their lives, that their hope is not in their job or in their home or in any of those things, Father, but that they can fix their eyes on him. I pray for encouragement as they inevitably will face trials of various kinds. And I just ask for your grace, which is already present, and your mercies which are new every morning. We love you. We're so thankful for you. And it's in Christ's name we pray, amen.