

**“The Culmination of Our Hope” Bible Studies for Life July 12, 2020**

When has the destination been worth the journey?

- getting married    building a new house
- having children    taking a special vacation
- saving for a car    getting a college degree
- hiking up a mountain trail                                    getting a new job
- walking to the altar to make a profession of faith

When faced with trials and tribulations and a person is invested in this life alone, they may experience anger, sorrow, and despair. Because the Christian is invested in eternal life, he or she knows that the trials and tribulations are only temporary. One day we will experience peace and joy as we celebrate with Jesus Christ. When we begin a “journey” we hope it will be worth the effort. When we accept Jesus Christ, we know our journey will be worth it.

**Today’s Point: What we hope for in Christ will one day be fully attained.**

Peter encouraged his dear friends to respond to their trials with humility. In verses 5:1-5a, Peter gives instructions to the elders who led the churches in the region. Then he gave guidance to the younger members to “be subject to the elders.” He wanted them **all** to work together in unity and harmony.

Listen for Peter’s instructions on how to humble ourselves.

1 Peter 5:5b-7 All of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you.

What did Peter tell the people they needed to know?

- clothe yourselves with humility
- humble yourself under God’s mighty hand
- cast your anxiety on God
- know that God cares for you

Peter told the believers to “clothe themselves with humility.

- humility was associated with lowliness, insignificance
- the Jews believed that those who humbled themselves would prosper
- it is a recognition of one’s sinfulness before a holy God
- Jesus was the perfect embodiment of humility, and He called His followers to be the same
- the night before Jesus’ crucifixion, He washed the disciples’ feet. He told the disciples to use the same kind of humble servanthood toward each other

To humble yourself to God is to

- trust God
- talk to God about your needs
- realize your own limitations
- realize the gifts and skills God has given you
- use your gifts and skills and depend on God's working

When we are not humbling ourselves, we say

- "I can do it on my own"
- "I worked hard to get this done"
- "Me, Me Me!" It is all about me
- I don't need to pray about working in the church, I can't do it

What kind of cares and anxieties do we have that we try to handle in our own pride?

- our finances    our family relationships
- our emotional struggles                          bad habits
- our jobs

Why should we trust God with those things that make us anxious?

- God loves us
- He is sufficient for all our needs
- He wants us to come to Him, to trust Him, to put ourselves in His hands
- He wants to meet our needs and then receive the praise and worship He deserves

What is the danger of trying to handle things on your own?

- you can easily mess things up
- you can become proud, taking the attitude that it was your own cleverness that accomplished things
- you end up feeling you don't need God

Casting means to throw something onto something else. Peter said to cast all your cares on Jesus because He cares about you. Jesus warned the disciples against worrying. Worry is a sign that we don't trust His love. We are to give our worries and fears to God. We are to trust that His grace is sufficient to help us in all circumstances.

These Christians were suffering just as we are experiencing suffering today. God allowed these bad things to happen. He wanted them to be more obedient to Christ and to experience His love and joy. God is still in control, therefore we can remain loyal to Him and resist Satan.

Listen for warnings about Satan.

1 Peter 5:8-9 Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for someone he can devour. 9 Resist him, stand firm in the faith, knowing that the same kinds of sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world.

Peter warned his readers to be  
sober-minded – wary and cautious  
alert – pay attention, stay awake

Who is the devil?

- one who engages in slander, one who tells lies about someone, the accuser
- hates humanity
- becomes our adversary when we put our faith in Jesus
- prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour or destroy
- moves around the earth to thwart God's purpose and plan to redeem fallen humanity
- never satisfied
- inflicts suffering on believers to scare them and cause them to deny their faith and turn away from their trust in God

What is the responsibility of the believer in the face of opposition and suffering?

- be self-controlled    remain firm in the faith
- be alert    resist the devil
- don't go places where you will be tempted to sin
- don't hang out with people who are making bad decisions
- realize you are not alone in suffering

How does the devil work in our culture?

- material temptations – advertisements
- visual and situational temptations in entertainment
- confusion of current events – pandemic, attacks on our society, extremes between political views and news reporting/opinions
- despair over financial, physical, relational crises

What can we do to resist the devil?

- regular Bible reading and meditation on God's Truth
- constant prayer and communication with God
- applying God's Word to your life
- listen to and heed what God is saying to you through His Word, preaching, Sunday School

None of us want to suffer, but as we remain faithful to Jesus the devil will attack us. All believers in Christ will experience suffering at some time, but our confidence in God's protection and deliverance will enable us to endure such trials.

Listen for God's power at work.

1 Peter 5:10-11 The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you after you have suffered a little while. 11 To him be dominion forever. Amen.

Peter identified God as the God of all grace. Grace means the free and unmerited favor of God; it is a gift which He shares with those who respond to His call to repentance and faith in Christ. Grace is the means of both entering into a personal relationship with God and our being held eternally secure in that relationship.

While we receive a taste of His glory in this life, we will enter into the fullness of that glory when we pass through death into our full resurrection existence (glorification). We will share in His glory. The only way to God and His glory is through faith in His Son Jesus Christ.

Peter says that believers will share in God's glory, but they must suffer a little while in this life. Peter listed four terms to emphasize what God will do for the believer. God will strengthen the Christian, enabling the believer to endure sufferings and bring them through these trials to eternal life. Our trials will help us to mature in our faith.

Restore – God is able to mend anything that may need repair. Equipping the saints for service to God and others.

Establish – Ground someone or having a firm footing. Jesus challenged Peter to “strengthen” the other disciples.

Strengthen – In our weakness, God exhibits His strength through us.

Support – God has laid the foundation of our lives with Jesus as our cornerstone.

From what perspective can it be said that suffering is only for a while?

- most physical ailments are not terminal – a cold, a broken limb, a childhood bout of chicken pox or mumps
- the loss of a home in a fire or tornado can eventually be replaced
- a financial setback need not be forever
- ultimately all suffering ends when we go to be with Jesus ... Heaven is a safe place to be

Peter ended this section with “To him be dominion forever. God is sovereign and omnipotent. No matter what our sufferings are nothing will separate us from the love of God. God will carry us through the trials and tribulations of this life, bringing us safely into our eternal home.

## Application

Write.

- Review what this session—or the whole six-session study—has taught you about hope.
- Write down your understanding of hope and its impact on you.

Pray.

- Write out 1 Peter 5:5b-11 and use it as a guide for praying.
- As you pray, surrender to the Lord and His eternal purposes for your life.

Pray together.

- Pray together for the persecuted church.