

# Suffering and Glory

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone, and I'm the pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church, and it's my joy to bring God's Word to you today.

If you're new or visiting with us, welcome. We're glad that you're here, and we're glad that you're here not because we're trying to fill seats, but because we're following Jesus together as one community.

And as we follow Jesus together, we become convinced that there's no one so good that they don't need God's grace, and no one so bad that they can't have it, which means that God has something to say to everyone in His Word, and so that's why we come to it in this portion of our service, week after week, to study what God has to say to us.

If you've been with us, you know we're in the book of 1 Peter, and the book of 1 Peter is a letter, and it's a letter written by a man named Peter to churches in the first century that are in what is now modern-day Turkey.

At the time, it would have been called Asia Minor. And these churches are struggling, and they're struggling because they're living as Christians, and as they live as Christians, it's causing them to feel out of place in the world, and it's also causing them to face opposition from the world.

[ 1 : 13 ] Peter writes to these churches to instruct them and to encourage them. He writes first to encourage them, to let them know that Jesus is worth it. Jesus is worth living for, He's worth loving for, and He's also worth suffering for, and He's worth dying for.

He doesn't just write to them to encourage them, but He also writes to instruct them. He instructs them how they should live as Christians in this world, and He also instructs them how to respond when they face opposition for following Jesus.

And if you've been with us, you know that this beginning of the letter where we're at has been mostly, if not exclusively, encouragement rather than instruction. Knowing that these folks are facing opposition, He wants to start out from the very beginning, encouraging them of everything that's true about them and everything that's true about God because they belong to Him.

And so we've looked at this encouragement in verses 1 and 2. We saw that He helps them understand their identity. They're chosen by God. They're elect, but they're also exiles. It's because they belong to God that they feel out of place in the world.

And then after that, we saw He talks about the fact that they are sons of God and daughters of God. God's their Father, and so they have benefits from that. God's coming back to rescue them, no matter how bad things get now, and He has an inheritance for them.

[ 2 : 29 ] And then last week, we began to talk specifically about the topic of suffering, and we asked how can we find joy in our suffering? Peter shows them that because they suffer, when they suffer, they can find joy because it confirms the fact that they belong to God.

They're not with God. They're not following Jesus for the snacks, for what they can get, for the benefits that they can receive, but they're following after Him because they have true faith. We're going to continue on that theme a little bit this week.

We're ending up this section of encouragement. Next week, we're going to head into the instruction. We're going to continue talking about suffering. Remember, there are three kinds of suffering. There's general suffering that happens because of the brokenness in this world.

There is specific suffering that happens because of our foolishness and our sin. Maybe we do something stupid, and so we have to suffer the consequences. And then there's the third type of suffering, which is suffering specifically for the name of Jesus Christ.

Now, all three of those kinds of sufferings matter. If you were with us two summers ago, in the summer of 2018, we looked at the book of Ruth, which is all about type one suffering. Type two

suffering, suffering because of our sin, shows up from time to time.

[ 3 : 37 ] In fact, we talked about it with at least one of the Psalms. And then type three suffering, suffering for the name of Jesus. And you were with us last week. You know that I talked about the fact that we have to be clear about the kind of suffering that we face here in the United States, that it's nothing like the suffering that's faced by people all around the world.

And in fact, this is one of the easiest times and the easiest places, most comfortable times and the most comfortable places to be a Christian, which raises a question. Why are we talking about suffering for the name of Jesus Christ if this is one of the easiest places to follow Jesus Christ? And of course, there's several reasons. One, this is God's word for the church. He's given us the book of 1 Peter for the church in all places at all times. Second, there are Christians all around the world, our brothers and sisters, who are facing suffering because they follow Jesus.

I mentioned last week that one in nine Christians around the world right now are facing intense persecution. But the other reason is similar to the reason I mentioned to you all over and over again when we looked at the book of Ruth, which is that even if we're not suffering now, we probably will one day.

And so God gives us his word to prepare us. We have to have a theology of suffering. We don't wait until suffering comes and then go back and try to figure out what's going on.

[ 5 : 00 ] But God's given us his word, as I mentioned in the very first sermon in Ruth, now over a year ago. He's given us his word to prepare us for situations that perhaps we don't face, but we will one day.

Just like you read stories to your child to help them understand situations they haven't encountered yet and talk through it with them, God also does the same thing in Scripture. And so it's with that word about suffering, we're going to ask a slightly different question than we asked last week.

Last week the question was, how do we find joy in suffering? And this week we're asking the question about, how does the story of the Bible encourage us in suffering? How does the grand story of the Bible help us when we're facing opposition for the name of Jesus Christ?

Christ. We're going to be starting in chapter 1, reading verses 10 through verse 12. And as we come to verse 10, this is in your worship guide printed near the end, as Jim mentioned earlier.

You can probably load this up on your phone, or you can find it in your Bible. As we read this, remember that this is God's word. And God tells us that his word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

[ 6 : 08 ] In other words, God has not left us to stumble alone in the dark. But instead, he's given us his word to show us the way to go. And so that's why we read now, starting with verse 10.

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves, but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preach the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.

Things into which angels long to look. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word.

Father in heaven, we thank you that you are a loving Father who wants us to not be ignorant, but to know how to live in this world.

[ 7 : 14 ] And we thank you that you want to prepare us for what may await us in the future, that we wouldn't be caught by surprise. And so we ask that you do that with your word this morning.

That is where people who want to follow you and people who love you, that you teach us how to think through what happens when that leads to hardship and suffering.

And most of all, we ask that you'd help us to understand your grace, the grace that's mentioned in this passage that you've been telling the story of for generations.

We ask these things not because we have earned them or deserve them, but because Jesus has earned them for us. And so we ask them in his name. Amen. A few years back, a theologian proposed a thought experiment, which has now become quite popular and I'm going to pose to you as well.

Imagine that there was a work of Shakespeare, a play that we did not know existed, and suddenly we found it. We discovered this great work. People have been studying Shakespeare for

generations, but this was something that no one was aware of and it came out of the dark, except there was only one problem.

[ 8 : 30 ] This Shakespeare play, let's say it had five acts. The problem was that the fifth act, you could do four acts if you want, the final act has a large section that's missing.

We have the beginning of the act and we sort of have the ending of the act as well, but we don't know what falls in the middle. And so what are we going to do? One option would be to write what goes in between those missing parts.

And of course, how would we write that section if we had to? We would have to be faithful to what's come before. We'd have to look at what happened in Acts 1, 2, and 3.

What are the characters like? Whatever the characters are like, that's going to bind us, right? We're not going to suddenly make the characters radically different than what they've been in the previous chapters. And we can't write it in such a way that the ending doesn't make sense.

And so what's happened before is going to bind us, it's going to direct us. If there's themes that have showed up at the beginning in the first two acts, those themes are going to have to carry through all the way to the end. We're going to have to remain committed to what's actually been given to us in this play.

[ 9 : 40 ] There could be another scenario. Another scenario would be not that we have to write what's in between, but that we suddenly find another copy, and perhaps this copy doesn't have the first several acts, but it has the last act.

Well, how are we going to determine that this last act is actually authentic to everything else in this lost play? We're going to have to compare it to what's come before. Do the characters that show up in this section, are they faithful with what's come before?

Are the themes the same themes? Is there something that disrupts what's happened? Now, you may be tracking with where I'm going here. Of course, this is proposed by a theologian to help us understand what it's like to be the church right now.

We live with a story that's come before us, and we have some idea of how the story ends. And yet there's a gap in between.

We live after the time that the book of 1 Peter was written, and we also live before the time that the book of Revelation talks about.

[ 10 : 46 ] And so there's a sense in which we are part of this play, except we're the parts that have not been written yet. We're in the part that's being written. That's part of what Peter's getting at here in this passage.

He tells us that there is a story, verse 10. First, concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully.

So there's prophets who are telling part of the story. He's talking about Old Testament prophets who would have written books like Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel. And these prophets are the storytellers in part.

Now, God's the great storyteller, but he's using them as his instrument to write sections of the Bible, and so they tell us things, and they tell us certain themes. They know, verse 11, that there's going to be a time when there's a Christ who's going to have sufferings and glories.

And we'll get to later what they're doing when it says they're inquiring, but here the first point is this. There's a story, and there's storytellers. And these storytellers have been telling something, and this play that they're telling us about has themes to it.

[ 11 : 55 ] It has a consistency. It has ideas that run throughout it. What are those ideas? Verse 11, they're predicting something, the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

In other words, they're telling us, they're predicting what is going to happen later in the story.

There's foreshadowing going on among the prophets as they talk about what's going to happen later with Jesus.

And there's these themes here. It's the three themes, the grace, the salvation of the grace, and the sufferings and the glories. And so you might be wondering, what does it have to do with suffering for the name of Jesus Christ?

And the question that we're asking is, how do, how does the story of the Bible encourage us in our sufferings? It encourages us in this way. When we suffer for the name of Jesus Christ, we can have confidence that we are living in the right story.

This is not a mistake. Recently, I went to go see that great cinematic triumph, Toy Story 4.

[13:09] I joke, but some people say it's the best Toy Story. I'm not going to ruin it for you. But I will tell you, at some point in Toy Story 4, Woody comes up against evil toys.

At no point while I was watching the movie did I say, this doesn't make sense at all. This is Toy Story. This is the perfect world where evil toys don't exist.

And why didn't I say that? Because I've seen Toy Story 1 and Toy Story 2 and I've seen Toy Story 3. I know that part of the story is that there are going to be toys in this world that have evil intentions.

And so there wasn't a point at which I thought, man, they really switched up the writers for this one. Something's wrong. Maybe I walked into the wrong movie. No, this is how the story goes.

And so I shouldn't be surprised, as the story progresses, that that's going to be one of the themes that keeps on showing up. Peter is telling these people who are suffering for the name of Jesus Christ, you are in the right story.

[14:24] You should not be surprised when you suffer because that is part of the theme that has come before. The theme is suffering to glory.

That is how the story works. That's how this narrative arc has been going. That's what the prophets prophesied. This is nothing new.

And this is not a mistake. You shouldn't be wondering at this point, is Jesus actually the Messiah? I was thinking this Messiah was going to come and he was just going to bring victory, right? There wasn't going to be any suffering.

No, this character is exactly the character he was supposed to be. Peter hits this home when he tells us something somewhat strange.

Verse 12, Now we think of these Old Testament prophets as coming to their audience in the Old Testament, right?

[15:26] God's people Israel, and giving them God's prophecy at that time for their good. In other words, for the good of people in the Old Testament. And that's true. But Peter tells us there's even a greater good here, that they don't have all the details of the things that they prophesied, but even in not having the details they are serving, these people living now after the time of Jesus, how are they serving them?

By confirming for them that this is how the story works. They can look back and go and see what has come before in the Old Testament and say, Aha!

There's nothing surprising about suffering. This is what it means to belong to God. If we're following after Jesus, we are going to follow the same pattern that he follows.

Jesus was predicted to experience suffering and glory. Jesus experienced suffering and then glory.

There's a pattern. We who follow him will also experience suffering and glory.

We are in the right story. And we're in it because we follow after Jesus. This is not a mistake. I put it in a different way.

[16:40] If there were not suffering, then we would know that we were living in what is called fan fiction. And there are fan fictions that exist in the Christian world.

One of them is called the prosperity gospel. That is fan fiction. It's not written by the real author.

There's another fan fiction. It's called the Book of Mormon.

That was not written by the real author. And that's the next point that Peter makes here. Not only is this the same story, but it's the same author.

Verse 11. The spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. Jesus, who suffered, his spirit was the one in the past who inspired these prophets to write down this story so that you would know what is to come and that you would know that what has come is true.

The story is the same and the author is the same. You all know sometimes if you follow a book series, perhaps sometimes someone makes the choice to keep the series but change the author.

[17:57] Things can get a little weird. Maybe you followed a television show and they had a certain writer for two seasons and then they switched the writer and suddenly the characters changed as well.

Some of the themes changed. The overall feel of the show was different. That is not what's going on with the Bible. We have the same story and the same author.

And so as these people are suffering, they know this is not a mistake. This story is being written by the right person and that person is Jesus.

And so even as we are facing opposition from the world, we know that we're living in the right story. We know that it's not a mistake. It's more than that though.

It's not just the same story and the same author. It's also a new chapter.

[ 19 : 09 ] We hear that these prophets, they know that they're predicting something. They don't know exactly what it is and how it's going to work. They're inquiring into what person or time is being indicated.

In other words, they're trying to figure out. We know that this is a going to be a Messiah. It sounds like he's going to suffer. That doesn't sound quite right. So we're going to try to figure out what time is this going to happen?

What kind of world events would be occurring that this could take place? What kind of Messiah would this be? The kind that's not just going to come in and conquer for us but the one who would suffer. And they're trying to figure this out.

They have clues in the Old Testament. They can't find the solution. Same thing happens today. Just a few weeks ago, Apple did their annual unveiling of all their new products.

And if you followed tech news beforehand, you know that there were many prophets who were searching and inquiring, carefully inquiring what type the new iPhone might be.

[ 20 : 10 ] Of course, they didn't know, right? They had many different hints to work with, hypotheses, guesses. I saw one article that said everything that we know about the new Apple Watch.

And you open the article, there's nothing that they know. It's all guesses, conjectures. Oh, that's clickbait. Okay. These people are revealing, these prophets are seeing a story that's now been revealed.

And so they don't just know that they're in the right place and the right time and the right story, but they're also at a specific time in the story. So I'm going to ask you a question. If you had a major illness, at what time would you want to be alive?

Would you want to have that major illness in 1989 or 2019? Easy, right?

You're going to want to have it in 2019. If you are a college student and it's the night before a big paper is due, would you like to be living in the age of the typewriter or would you like to be living in the age of the computer?

[ 21 : 23 ] Some of you are going to say typewriter just to be ornery. The answer is computer. We live in a time that is privileged medically and a privileged time technologically.

We experience and know things that people in previous generations longed to look into. And we have things and privileges and benefits that people in previous generations could only dream of. Peter is telling these people that they live in a time spiritually of incredible privilege. Because they know and experience the full benefits of God's grace which previous generations could only dream about and wanted desperately to know.

In other words, if you were going to choose any time to be a Christian or someone who belongs to God, when would you choose? Do you want to be in the time of Moses? Would you like to live under the time of Abraham?

Do you have some nostalgia about being in the desert for 40 years? What time would you choose to be in the people of God?

[ 22 : 44 ] Peter is telling them, despite what you're facing, you are in a privileged time spiritually. You are in the time that people want to be. Now you might think or say, well, you know, if I was going to choose a time, I would choose when Jesus is walking on the earth.

That's the time spiritually I would want to be. That's the real highlight. Okay, let's work with that. You want to live in the time when Jesus walked on the earth. That's great. You are in Western Europe. You never meet Jesus. You're in Northwest Africa. You never meet Jesus. You're like me, some kind of Western European mutt.

Wow, you never meet Jesus. You live in Israel, but you live kind of in the southern part of Israel, far away from Galilee. Odds of you meeting Jesus, very low.

These people receiving this letter lived after Jesus and never met him. It's the time after Jesus returned that is the time of spiritual privilege.

[ 23 : 52 ] Remember, Peter told them earlier that they love Jesus even though they haven't seen him. That wasn't because none of them were alive when Jesus walked the earth. It's because Jesus didn't visit Asia Minor.

And so it was after his death that the gospel was carried out from the place where it started from Jerusalem and it's taken to these believers. And so you're not just in the right story, you're in the right place.

Everyone else in redemptive history, those who came before you, only got to read the beginning of the mystery novel. And they got to see all the clues but they didn't see the answer. You now live in the part of the story where you get to see the answer.

You get to see how that suffering Messiah was revealed. You get to see the goodness and beauty of the gospel that it was more than anyone in the Old Testament could imagine.

And so Peter's telling them in one sense, yeah, it's stressful. But what a great time to live. No one in the history of the church would trade places with you.

[ 25 : 12 ] And there's a sense in which no one in the history of the church would trade places with us. Because even more than the recipients of this letter we've been able to see how the gospel has expanded throughout the world.

And we can find on the internet in five seconds more information about the revelation of Jesus Christ than anyone before 33 A.D. could have. Feeling out of place in the world and facing opposition from the world, Peter reminds these people that while the world may feel like a place that's not their home, spiritually, they live in the best time possible.

And they live in the best time possible because of this grace, the salvation, verse 10, that the prophets who prophesied searched and inquired carefully about. Things into which angels long to look.

People are longing to know, angels are longing to know, the reality of this grace. And what is the grace that they're longing to know that we understand the recipients of this letter embrace and know and have as their confidence and their hope?

It's the reality of this suffering servant. And so I'm going to turn back to Isaiah 53, which you'll have in your worship guide. We read it as our Old Testament reading this morning. This is what the prophets prophesied that they did not understand that the readers of this letter did.

[ 26 : 36 ] Isaiah 53. Who has believed what he has heard from us and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground.

He had no form or majesty that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire him. The prophets didn't know exactly what that was talking about. We do. It's talking about Jesus who is a real man in real time in real space and actually came and lived on this earth.

Lived a perfect life that we couldn't and died the death that we deserve. And by doing that he was a young plant and a root out of dry ground.

He didn't have the former majesty that he would have had had he stayed in heaven. Verse 3. He experienced the themes of this story. He was despised and rejected by men. A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised and we esteemed him not.

Even those who follow after God did not see Jesus for who he was sometimes. And Romans 5 tells us that it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us. And so part of the privilege that these people have is they know how it's going to work.

[ 27 : 43 ] The grace comes when Jesus dies for people who hate him. Verse 4. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows yet we esteemed him stricken smitten by God and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray.

We have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. This is what the readers of 1 Peter understand and we understand as well that those who came before them did not.

The full reality of God's grace that he comes for sheep who have gone astray and he lays all of our sins on Jesus as that sheep to take them away.

And so as they're facing suffering in this world for the name of Jesus Christ the readers of 1 Peter know that they are in the right story. That story is written by the same author and they are in the most glorious chapter that has come so far.

[ 28 : 56 ] And they're in the most glorious chapter because they finally understand Jesus that he's the one who comes and dies for his enemies. And those who are his enemies can turn in faith to

Jesus Christ and experience this same salvation.

And so that is how the story of the Bible encourages those who are facing suffering for the name of Jesus Christ. Christ. Please pray with me.

Father in heaven we thank you for the privilege of living in a time when we understand and know the gospel that we're not wondering or searching but we know about Jesus and we have the privilege of having access to your word.

We ask that you'd encourage us with it that when we face the themes of suffering and glory we would know that we're doing it because it's part of the story and it's part of what Jesus has done for us the pattern he sets and the way we follow him.

We ask all these things in Jesus name. Amen.