

Living in the Spirit

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 February 2020

Preacher: Matthew Capone

[0 : 0 0] 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.

Special welcome if you're new or visiting with us. We're glad that you're here, and we're glad that you're here not because we're filling 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 back week after week to look at the Bible, God's word, to hear what he has to say. We've been studying the book of 1 Peter, and you'll remember that 1 Peter is a letter.

It's a letter written by a man named Peter, and he writes it in the 60s A.D. to Christians in Asia Minor, what is now modern-day Turkey, and he writes it to both instruct and encourage them.

[1 : 0 2] He needs to do this because these are folks who are feeling out of place in the world as Christians, and they're facing opposition from the world as Christians. Peter writes to encourage them that Jesus is worth it.

Jesus is worth living for, and he's worth loving for. He's worth suffering for, and he's worth dying for. And he also writes to instruct them. He writes to instruct them how to live in the world as Christians and how to respond when they face opposition from the world.

We're in a larger section about suffering, and you'll remember that there are three kinds of suffering, and it's very important for us to keep these three categories clear, even today as we come to this passage.

There's, first of all, suffering, type 1, suffering for personal sin or foolishness. For example, if you're in school and you cheat on an exam and someone catches you, you will suffer.

You will suffer for your own personal sin. Second, there's suffering because of the general presence of evil in the world. So we're in Colorado. There's a hailstorm, and it hits your roof.

[2 : 0 8] You will suffer. Now, you're not suffering. Yeah, I heard some amens. You're not suffering for your own personal sin. You're suffering because of the presence of evil and destruction in this world.

And then finally, there's the type of suffering that Peter is talking about and only talking about, and that is suffering for righteousness' sake, suffering for the name of Jesus Christ. This is what happens when we do what's right, we do what God has called us to do, and we suffer because of it.

That's going to continue to be what Peter is discussing in this passage, which is 1 Peter 4, verses 1 through 6. Now, you remember last week, we talked about hope and comfort in suffering.

And we saw that God supplies this. He supplies this hope and comfort through Jesus' pattern. Jesus suffered and had victory, and so our suffering will end in victory as well. And then we had some examples.

Jesus was the example. His victory was so complete that he declared it over fallen angels and demonic forces. And then we had the example of Noah, who suffered for a long time and then experienced victory.

[3 : 13] This week, we are turning away from hope and comfort towards the relationship between suffering for doing what's right, type 3 suffering, and our battle with sin.

We're looking at the relationship between suffering for doing what's right and our battle as Christians with sin. And so it's with that we turn to the very beginning of chapter 4, and 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. 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 it, starting with verse 1. Verse 3.

Verse 5.

[4 : 36] I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's Word.

Our Father in heaven, we praise you once again that you instruct us. You don't simply leave us to make foolish decisions or destroy our lives, but instead you've given us guidance.

We ask for your help this morning as we talk about some difficult topics. But we also thank you that you don't avoid hard things in your Word.

And so we ask that you'd send your Spirit now, that you'd give us the ability to hear from you and to believe. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

In his book, *Black Flags, The Rise of ISIS*, Toby Warwick tells the story of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who is the founder of the Islamic State.

[5 : 53] And he chronicles his life even before he was this internationally known terrorist. There was a point before that when he was in prison. And while he was a hardened criminal, there was also some strange things about his personality, or maybe we might say some quirks.

He was known for his compassion on certain people. And there was one man in particular that he had especially a strong sense of duty to, and this was another prisoner who had no legs.

Now, Zarqawi would take responsibility for washing this man and making sure he was cared for. He would carry him around. And it was an example of sort of this selective heart for humanity that he had.

Now, this raises the question, why did this man have no legs? This man had also been a terrorist. And during his time, he'd been part of a group that would go after what they considered to be dens of sin.

So they would go and they would destroy liquor stores or pornographic theaters. And this man, at one time, had been assigned to be in charge of a bombing of a pornographic theater, an adult theater.

[6 : 59] So he goes in, he walks in with his bomb. He puts it underneath his seat in the theater. And then he sits down and becomes so engrossed in the film that he forgets that there's a bomb under his seat.

And then it goes off and it blows his legs off. No one else in the theater is harmed. And I tell you this story, and I love that story, not because I have a dark sense of humor, but because it highlights the danger and the power of certain sins, especially sexual sin.

Here's a man who, on paper, was opposed to this theater, right? Finds himself in it, cannot resist the power of what's in front of him.

It is so powerful and so alluring that he forgets, literally, that there's a ticking bomb underneath him. It is possible to believe something is wrong and still face the temptation of it.

It's possible to disapprove of something so strongly that you're part of this radical group to eradicate it. And yet that doesn't remove the temptation or the attraction. Peter, in this section, is talking to them about something that's been hinted at earlier in the letter, which is turning away from their former lifestyles, which involved these types of sins.

[8 : 32] And so this has come up before. In chapter 1, verse 14, he told them, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance. Then in verse 18, he tells them that Jesus has ransomed them specifically from the futile ways inherited from their forefathers.

In other words, you had family members, potentially, who were involved in these kinds of sins. Now God has brought you out of them. Before you knew Jesus, you were involved in these kinds of sins.

Do not be conformed to those anymore. And that wasn't the last. In chapter 2, we were told the same thing. He tells us that the passions of the flesh wage war against our soul.

And so this has been coming for some time in this letter. And finally, in chapter 4, we receive a full list of these sins, sins that he's been commanding them to put off and that hold a special type of power, a special danger and a special power.

And it's with that that he begins by telling them the relationship between suffering and putting away these sins. And so that's where we find ourselves in verse 1 with this very confusing statement.

[9 : 42] Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin. Which sounds like the opposite of what Christians teach.

Right? We would say that you have an ongoing battle with sin. We will battle sin for the rest of our lives, even as Christians. We don't believe, as some people do, that there's a point that we can reach as Christians where we're finished with sin.

Now, there are some people, even in this city, who believe that. It's called Christian perfectionism. And it's the idea that you can become so holy and so sanctified that you no longer have sin in your life.

Imagine being married to that person. Imagine having someone who believes that they are done with sin as your boss.

Imagine someone who believes that they've finished with sin being one of your elders or your pastor. As they say, not a good look.

[10 : 50] So what is Peter saying here? In what sense, what type of suffering is he talking about? In what sense can someone who's suffered be done with sin? This is where our categories of suffering are extremely helpful.

This is suffering category three. The one who has suffered specifically for doing what is right is done with sin. We know that because that's what's come before.

That's the section we're in. And also in this passage, Peter makes it clear that's the kind of suffering he's talking about. Verse four. First of all, verse three, you're putting off these sins, right?

Verse four, when you do, what's going to happen? People are going to be surprised and they're going to malign you. You will suffer for doing what's right.

So we're not talking about general suffering. It'd be tempting to think that this passage teaches in general, people who have faced suffering have moved on to a point where they don't struggle with sin as much.

[11 : 48] You know, it's given them this perspective. Maybe they had a battle with an illness. But of course, as one person has pointed out, actually sometimes those things create sin, right? Sometimes you become more bitter, more hateful when you go through suffering in life.

There's no guarantee that those other types of suffering are going to protect you from sin. What is the type of suffering that relates to sin? It's suffering for doing what's right. Think about it this way.

If there was any time where it would be a good idea to sin, where it'd be convenient, it would be when you're faced with suffering for it, for doing what's right. Someone says, hey, if you don't stop being a Christian, you're going to lose your job.

That would be a great time to stop being a Christian. And so, just at a logical level, when you suffer for doing what's right, you are proving that there has been in your life a definitive break from sin.

When you suffer for doing what's right, you are showing that there has been a definitive break from sin. To put it in the words of this passage, it's clear that the orientation of your life is no longer for human passions, this is verse two, but for the will of God.

[13 : 03] There's two orientations of your life. It can be for human passions, it can be for the will of God. When you suffer, you are demonstrating that there's nothing more important to you than living for the will of God.

Because that would be the time to jump ship, right? And so, it's clear, not that you're done with sin in a full and final way, but you are clear that you and sin are not together anymore.

You are done with sin in a Taylor Swift sort of way. You are never, ever, ever getting back together. You are not done with sin fully and finally.

So, there's a definitive break from sin. Now, in what sense? So, that's the sense of which suffering creates a break from sin. In what sense do we no longer struggle with sin? It's helpful to remember not just our three categories of suffering, but our three categories of sin.

Sin has a penalty, it has a power, and it has a presence. Sin has a penalty, which is at the center of what we believe as Christians in the gospel, which is that we deserve death for our sins.

[14 : 05] That's why Romans says in chapter six that the wages of sin is death. That's the penalty of sin. We believe that God in Jesus' death and resurrection removes the penalty from sin.

So, we don't even need to worry about that. We're already done with sin in that way because of Jesus. Then there's the power of sin. The power of sin means that if you have not had Christ come and regenerate your heart, give you a new heart, that you are not capable of not sinning.

As Christians, when Christ gives us a new heart, we believe we actually have the capacity to do what's good. But we still have the final P, the presence of sin. Peter is not telling these people that they no longer have the presence of sin.

He is telling them that their suffering for doing what's right makes it clear that the power of sin has been broken. It has been proved once and for all that Christ's work in their life is real.

They can be confident that the power of sin is broken. Doesn't mean they don't still struggle with the presence of sin. Galatians 5, 17 talks about the battle between the spirit and the flesh.

[15 : 18] Christians continue to struggle with sin. 1 Timothy 1, 15, Paul says near the end of his life, Paul's an apostle, by the way, says that he's the greatest of all sinners, so clearly he doesn't believe in Christian perfectionism.

If there's anyone who could claim that, perhaps it would be Paul, but he knows that the presence of sin continues. And so that's what's going on in this confusing verse. When you suffer, specifically for doing what's right, it's clear that you've made a definitive break from sin, which shows that the power of sin is broken in your life, even as the presence continues.

In other words, when you suffer for righteousness' sake, it is a sign that God is at work in your life now. His power lives in you.

There is a decisive turning point in the battle, and sin will not win. The orientation of your life is no longer towards what Peter calls human passions. The orientation of your life is towards the will of God, even as you struggle with sin.

Also, to highlight, there are two ways to live. As I mentioned before, there's living for human passions and living for the will of God.

[16 : 37] And Peter here outlines for us in verse 3 a list of sins that are the type of sins that these folks need to put off that show their willingness to live for the will of God.

And he gives us a list. And I'm going to say as we come to this discussion, we're going to talk about some hard things. And as I say, every time we talk about something hard, I'm not going to say everything, I'm going to say something.

I'm not going to say everything, I'm going to say something. There are a thousand different things we could talk about with this list of sins. And this is not the end of a conversation, it's the beginning of a conversation.

So we're not going to say everything, we're going to say something. It's not the end of a conversation, it's the beginning of a conversation. So we're going to focus on a few things this morning. If you would like to talk about it more, I am more than happy to talk about it more.

With that being said, verse 3 gives us a list of this overlapping complex of sins. If we were to boil it down, there is a focus here on sexual sins and sins related to alcohol.

[17 : 42] And he tells us the time that's passed suffices, which is, as some have pointed out, an ironic understatement. For doing these things. Sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.

In other words, he's talking about people who have an unrestrained activity when it comes to sex and alcohol. And they're doing this not just by themselves, but they're doing it in these groups. There's parties where they'll get together and both of those things will be present.

There's this unrestrained lawless sin that's occurring. And it's focusing around two areas that are especially prone to be causes of addiction.

These are especially powerful sins. It's part of what that story about Zaqawi's friend illustrates. No matter how much he believed something was wrong, he still came up against the incredible power and attraction and temptation of sexual sin.

If we were to, we could expand this, by the way. if this were written to Colorado Springs in 2020 rather than Asia Minor, we could of course include all these things and we could add some other things.

[18 : 49] We could add internet pornography, all forms of sexual sin, anything that's a sexual relationship that is not between one man and one woman who are married. We could include fornication and adultery.

We could add marijuana and hallucinogenic drugs. By the way, Denver, psychedelic mushrooms are coming in. We could add those to the list. These are the unrestrained passions, the things that are especially oriented to create addiction in the life of the believer.

Now, as I said earlier, there's a thousand things we could say. We can't say all of these and so our focus this morning is going to be the focus of the passage and it's this. How do we arm ourselves?

That's what Peter tells us in verse one. He says, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking. How do we fight? Addictions to pornography.

How do we fight alcoholism? How do we fight the sins in this world that are especially strong, especially and especially addictive? We can think about this in a broader category as well.

[19 : 56] How do we fight sin in general? You might be thinking now, these aren't things that I struggle with, so this isn't for me. And yet, as I say many times, we're one community.

And so if there's a member of our body who struggles with these things, there's a sense in which we as a whole body struggle with them. Not that you receive their sin, but that we are part of the process of change.

And as people walk away from addiction, as they walk into the light, they're going to need the rest of the church to walk with them. And also, never underestimate the power of these things.

We need to arm ourselves whether we are actively struggling with them or not. And so how do we arm ourselves? First of all, verse one, we know that it's a battle.

If it weren't a battle, we wouldn't need to turn to Jesus' example. But there's a mindset here. We're arming ourselves with the same way of thinking. There's a determination and a discipline.

[20 : 59] There's a focus that comes with fighting sin. Now, Jesus was without sin, right? So it's not a one-to-one analogy, but we know that Jesus required determination and focus.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, he asked God to take the cup away from him. And yet he set his face to the cross. We're told in the book of Hebrews that Jesus learned obedience through suffering. Jesus' faithfulness to us was not easy. He armed himself for it. He knew that he was in a battle.

He did not take it lightly. And so the same is true for us as well. It is not going to be easy for us to fight sin. There are many people in the church who will claim that if you are a Christian, then the next day you're just done with sin.

sin. That is a lie from the pit of hell. Sin is a battle. We need to have the focus and determination of Jesus whether we're in one of these struggles right now or we're not.

[22 : 07] I had a student when I was teaching, and he shared with me at one time that he had become aware of where some of his friends would go in town when they wanted to smoke weed together.

He knew where their cove was. Of course, he assured me at the end of this conversation, but don't worry, I'm not tempted by this at all, and I'm not going to get involved in it in any way. And I said, hold on.

It's that kind of mindset that's going to result in you falling into that with them. I'm worried about the person who says, I'm not tempted by these things. I'm much less worried about the person who says, I am tempted by these things, and so I know that I'm in a battle.

I know that I need to be on the guard about these things. I know that I need a filter on my computer. I know that I need to stay away from people and places that cause me to drink.

There is a mindset, and we have to arm ourselves. Second of all, addiction is real and very powerful.

[23 : 16] that's why Peter has hit this multiple times. Verse 14 of chapter one, it's passions that we're up against, passions of your former ignorance. Verse 18, and I'm going to keep coming back to you, back to these.

They're futile ways that come through our family. If you know anything about families, you know that the patterns that they create are hard to break. And finally, verse 11 of chapter two, these passions are waging war against our soul.

We are at war with sin. When we come up against these kinds of sins, it is not a little arm wrestling match. It is a battle.

And so going off of that, how do we wage war? If we've armed ourselves, we know that the challenge and the struggle is real.

What are the strategies that we have? Some of this I'm going to pull from first Peter. Some of this I'm just pulling from our beliefs as Christians because Peter does not go into depth about all of the ways that we would fight these sins.

[24 : 19] First of all, though, we can notice what Peter doesn't do. Peter does not begin by pouring a bucket of shame over the readers of this letter. Doesn't begin by posting a video on YouTube of him yelling and losing his self-control as he is a preacher screams at them about how in the world could they think about doing such things.

He doesn't tell them that they're clearly not Christians. Christians. And that their struggle with sin reveals that God's not at work in their lives. In fact, he addresses these people as Christians.

He also doesn't tell them the story about that one guy who never struggled with sin the day after he was converted. Now, I believe those stories, right?

There are some people, they face addictions, they come to Christ, and the next day they're done with addiction. That is not the normal story of everyday Christians. And we do tremendous damage to people in this church when we create those stories and we present them as normative.

Our struggle with sin is real. So Peter doesn't pour shame on them, doesn't tell them they're not Christians, doesn't tell them stories about an unrealistic pace of change.

[25 : 40] Instead, he recognizes some of the factors. First of all, he recognizes this is something that runs in their family. Again, chapter 1, verse 18, the futile ways you inherited from your forefathers.

Some of us struggle with the sins that are in this list, and our parents struggled with them too. It's no surprise, right, that they're present in our lives.

He also recognizes not just things in their family, but things in their past. Remember, 14, the passions of your former ignorance. He's reminding them, these are things that were normal to you before you became a Christian.

That's going to make it hard to battle them. Sin patterns are real. One thing I was going to mention later, but I'll mention now, that the journey in is often the journey out.

If you hike 10 miles into a forest, how many miles are you going to have to hike to get back out of it? 10 miles. There is a journey to our war and struggle with sin.

[26 : 52] Peter realizes that. He acknowledges the influence, family influence, personal history. All of those things matter. And then he acknowledges that these things aren't easy, right? He calls it suffering.

Jesus suffered in the flesh. Arm yourselves with the same way of thinking. You're going to suffer if you fight against sin. It is going to be a real battle. Now, having noted what Peter doesn't do and what he does do, what are the tools that we have as Christians?

If you have clothes and you put them in the washer, and then you leave them in the washer after the cycles run, and you keep the lid closed, and you don't put them in the dryer, what's going to happen?

It's going to mildew. Sin grows in the dark, and it dies in the light.

Sin grows in the dark and dries in the light. Addiction grows in the dark and dies in the light.

[28 : 04] Addiction grows in the world. If you want to wage war against these sins, you cannot do it by yourself.

If you want to wage war against these sins, you cannot do it by yourself. That's not the way God has designed the world, and it's not the way that these sins work.

This is how the Bible talks. Ephesians 5 talks about walking in the light. Psalm 32 says, when I kept silent, my bones wasted away. It was when the psalmist confessed his sins that he was able to find healing.

And I don't just mean confessing privately to God in prayer, and no one else knows, although that's good. Necessary, but not sufficient. If no one else knows about your addiction, you will not have victory over it.

If no one else knows about your addiction, you will not experience victory over it. Sin grows in the dark and dies in the light.

[29 : 21] If you are fighting a private battle against sin, you are fighting in vain. sin begins to die. We need other people.

We need the church to walk with us. Sin begins to die. The process of sin dying begins when we confess it, not just to God, but other people. By the way, this is the proof that we believe the gospel.

We know when we confess to other people that our only standing is based on Jesus' blood for us. God is. And we lay aside all pride and claim to everything else.

If we confess it only alone in prayer, but then avoid sharing it with anyone else, we have failed to experience the gospel, which is the confession that we are broken.

And it's Jesus' approval of us that matters and no one else's. And so we're no longer afraid of the fear of man. Application would be this. If you are struggling with addiction, the first step, and I'm not trying to make addiction simple in any way, it's very complicated.

[30 : 32] So don't hear me oversimplifying anything, but the first step of many is sharing it with a believer that you trust. Until you do that, I cannot offer you much hope of victory.

God offers hope to anyone and everyone who confesses their sin. Finally, or not finally, but next, I mentioned this last year.

The opposite of addiction is not sobriety. The opposite of addiction is connection. Problems and solutions go together, by the way. There's a logic.

If you create a mess, if you pour out a bunch of water on the floor in the church kitchen, you're not going to solve that by running into the bathroom and turning on a faucet. That problem and solution have no connection to each other.

Addiction is a problem. It's a dysfunction of our relationships, especially sexual addiction. sexual addiction relates to how we view and relate to other people.

[31 : 44] Good luck solving that, addressing that, without changing how you relate to and interact with other people. I have a friend, I think I shared this last year, who's going through an addiction recovery program.

And he was the one who highlighted this for me. And at one point, he was really struggling. And so he sent out a text to several of us saying, hey, I really need to talk. I ended up being the one who was available and free to talk.

And so I called him that evening and he shared with me that he was in the midst of a struggle with temptation. And he remembered that the opposite of addiction is connection.

And so he called someone. This goes along with point one, that things die in the dark. We conquer these sins together as a church.

And by the way, if you're not struggling with this, one of these sins right now, the application for you would be this. Think through how you're going to respond if someone comes to you as a trusted friend.

[32 : 54] You want to be a first Peter kind of a Christian. And to let them know that you'll be with them as they do that.

They can call you when the battle becomes fierce. Again, I'm not going to say everything.

Addictions are always the tip of the iceberg. So there's all kinds of different factors that could play in. I can't address all of that. Problems and solutions go together. Relational problems have relational solutions.

Sin grows in the dark. It dies in the light. Path in is the path out. The longer you're involved in a type of sin, the more challenging and difficult it is to remove it.

Just simple logic, right? This is how the world works. The longer a weed grows in your yard, especially on some of those zero-scape sections, the more challenging it is to get rid of it.

[34 : 14] And so if I were going to summarize our tactics like this, how do we address these sins? We begin by addressing them. And remember, addiction is not easy and I don't mean to present it that way. We address it first in relationship with other people as we confess our sin together.

We're people who confess our sins. We're also people who are able to receive those confessions. And so we all have a role. This church is not what they say, a hotel for saints, but a hospital for sinners.

And so if you find yourself in verse three, you are in the right place. God knows that these are the solutions and so he's provided not just a relationship with him, but a community.

Now there's much more that we could say, but that's where it begins. It begins in confession with other people in relationship. Finally, Peter ends verses five through six with some encouragement.

By the way, this was all in the context of suffering for doing what's right. The folks who are up against this are going to suffer because the friends that they used to hang with are going to malign them.

[35 : 33] And so Peter ends with the theme that he's given us over and over again, which is that judgment is coming. And so even now, as you maybe feel like Noah from last week, know that there's hope and God is coming back to make everything right.

Verse five. They will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. Our obedience, our war against sin is not in vain.

God is coming back. This is everything we saw in first Peter chapter one with obedience. We obey the father. We walk in the ways of the father because we're sons and daughters and we know that he's coming back for us.

And finally, there's this strange sentence in verse six. This is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that they're judged in the flesh the way people are. They might live in the spirit the way God does.

And I'll simply say this. So this is not referring back to what we talked about earlier, the spirits in prison. This is simply making the point that even after you die, you have to answer to God.

[36 : 46] And so the gospel was preached to people while they were alive. There are some people who are dead now that when they were alive, the gospel was preached to them. And that's important because the gospel has implications for their life after death.

In other words, all of us will answer to God. And God's judgment and his coming and is real. But God offers hope and salvation from sin in general and these sins in particular to anyone and everyone who repents and confesses and recognizes that they are without hope outside of Jesus.

But that Jesus, through his death, through his resurrection, as we saw last week, offers the solution. That he pays the penalty of sin for everyone who has faith and hope in him.

I'll end with this. God gives us his grace. He also gives us his weapons. And God changes the way that the battle is fought.

If you're familiar with the story of the Iliad, the siege of Troy, you know that the Spartans had no success as long as they sieged the city from the outside.

[38 : 06] It wasn't until they were able to get the Trojan horse inside the city and fight from inside that they had any victory. When we fight sin apart from Jesus Christ, we are fighting it from the outside.

And we will not win. But God comes and changes our hearts so that the battle is now on the inside.

That's the hope that he offers in the gospel. That as we fight with sin, as we wage war, we know that we will win because Jesus is with us and he has changed our hearts.

He has given us the kind of heart that can live for the will of God rather than the passions of the flesh. And it is when and only when we embrace that hope that we will have victory not from outside our hard and cold hearts, but from inside with the new hearts that Jesus gives to those who believe him and follow him and have faith in him.

We're going to end with a hymn that expresses that hope, tells us that Jesus stands in victory and so sends curse. has lost its grip. That's the battle from the inside, not the outside.

[39 : 35] And so no matter where we are in our battle with sin as we wage war, we have no guilt in life and no fear in death because the power of Christ is in us. Jesus commands my destiny and so no power of hell, no scheme of man can ever pluck me from his hand.

That's the hope of all of us who have faith in Christ. And so I invite you to pray with me before we sing that song together. Our Father in heaven, we thank you that like a good father, you have hard conversations with us.

And we thank you that you offer us real hope in our battle with sin. We ask you for this community, for Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church, that we would be a hospital for sinners rather than a hotel for saints.

And that this would be a place more and more where because of the war that you are waging, because you are fighting from the inside, giving us new hearts, we would confess our sins to each other.

We ask that this would be a place of safety and challenge and growth for all of us as we fight our battle with sin.

[40 : 49] And we thank you that we have hope because Jesus has won that battle for us. And so we ask this in his name. Amen.