

Resistance

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[0 : 00] I want you to take your copy of the Scriptures and open up to 1 Peter chapter 5. We are going to finish 1 Peter this morning. And for those of you who have not been here consistently or at all over the last several months, we have been walking through 1 Peter for several months now.

And we're finally this morning coming to the very end of this great letter penned by the Apostle Peter. And so we're going to pick up in verse 8 and read all the way down to the end in verse 14.

I want to ask you guys to stand with me as we read from God's Word. The Apostle Peter writes to us, Be sober-minded, be watchful.

Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

[1 : 04] To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. By Silvanus, a faithful brother, as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring to you that this is the true grace of God.

Stand firm in it. She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings. And so does Mark, my son. Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

Father, thank you for, through your spirit, inspiring the Apostle Peter to write this letter for our benefit. And I pray that we would listen carefully and respond appropriately to what you revealed to us this morning.

It's in Jesus' name that we pray. Amen. It's really starting this morning especially to feel like, feels like fall, doesn't it?

It's actually, it feels a little bit more like October this morning. And I don't know if you guys noticed, but before we even hit October, I started seeing in the grocery stores and in other places, I already started seeing fall decorations and especially all sorts of Halloween things.

[2 : 13] I mean, the Halloween costumes have been on sale at Kroger for a while now, for several weeks now. And in fact, we walked in a few weeks ago, and I can't remember if it was Calvin or Eli. One of them asked me, why do they already have that stuff out?

Why is it already here? I don't know why, but it's here. And it's going to be here for several weeks now. And the funny thing about Halloween, when you begin to think about this time of year and this season and those who are celebrating and doing all those things and decorating, is the way in which our culture, you can see it very clearly at this time of year, the way in which our culture thinks about and handles the idea of evil.

It's usually in one of two ways. Usually Satan or the devil or evil in general is presented in a way that's comical and funny. And so that's why we've had, and it's not a new thing, we've had this for centuries, you always have these depictions of the devil with his little red suit and his horns and his pitchfork because it looks funny and it's humorous.

And so on the one hand, you have this approach to evil that wants to simply dismiss it as a sort of outdated, outmoded thing that we can just laugh that people actually used to believe that the devil existed.

That's one approach to dealing with it. The other approach is to present evil in such an ugly, grotesque form that we begin to feel like in our everyday lives.

[3 : 36] We don't really encounter things like that. That's been a trend over the last, I don't know, 10 or 12 years or so in a lot of the horror movies. I don't watch any horror movies.

I just don't find them interesting at all. But I see the commercials for them. I see the trailers for them when they come on TV. And what you've been able to see is that there's a difference between the kind of horror movies that came out in, say, the 80s as opposed to the kind that are coming out now.

There's more of an overt, sort of gross presentation of evil. The more disgusting you can make it, I guess the better it is these days. And I think part of the reason for that is so that we can comfort ourselves with the feeling that maybe evil does exist.

But if it does exist, if there is a personified form of evil, it looks like this. And we don't often encounter things that are quite that dark and gross in our everyday lives.

And so whether we want to mock the concept of a personalized form of evil, or whether or not we want to dress it up in this grotesque garb, the idea behind both of those approaches is to deny that evil has a personal form in which it can intrude into our daily lives.

[4 : 49] We want to pretend that the devil is not real. We want to pretend that he's a myth from the past, that we have evolved beyond thinking in those sorts of ways, and we don't have to bother with those kinds of things.

And then we come along in a letter like 1 Peter, where he simply references it as if it's common knowledge. He just refers to the devil. It's just known. It's just there.

If you read through the Gospels, Jesus himself is not shy about talking about, mentioning Satan, demonic hosts, and all those sorts of things. Jesus is never shy about talking about them.

In fact, we know that the Apostle Paul says in Ephesians chapter 6, that our fight, our battle, he says, we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places, so that the biblical, and especially the New Testament approach to evil is that evil is not only real, but the devil himself is real, and we are, all of us, engaged in a continual, daily struggle against evil, against temptation, against real, personified evil sources.

They exist. Satan is real. Demons are real. And the writers of the New Testament would have us know that, and have us be prepared for that, and not dismiss these things as outdated, not dismiss these things as mere mythology, but to know what we are really and truly up against.

[6 : 26] It's not a funny, comical, pitchforked figure. Neither is it some grotesque thing that we're rarely going to encounter. But Satan himself is going to daily assault us.

The demonic hosts will every day come against us. And it is interesting to me that Peter has waited until the very end of his letter to make any mention at all of the devil.

Read through the letter. He makes really no mention of the devil, which is a bit surprising in a book that focuses primarily upon our suffering and the evil that we have to endure in this world.

Over and over, we have seen throughout 1 Peter that he confronts head-on the reality of suffering in our lives. He doesn't call us to hide from it. He doesn't call us to close our eyes and pretend that we don't hurt.

Pretend that the world does not ever come against us. Pretend that bad things don't happen. Peter confronts it head-on as if to say, you know it's happening. You're experiencing it right now.

[7 : 32] It's coming, and it's going to come in ever greater forms into your life. It's real. Suffering is real. Hardship is real. The world around you is filled with all sorts of evil. That's a reality.

And yet, Peter, in emphasizing that, does not bring up the subject of the devil, of the evil one, until we get near the end of the book.

I pondered that this week. I thought and thought, why would he wait? Why would he hold off? And I found, I think, that the answer to that is in looking and seeing how so far throughout this letter he has dealt with the pain and the suffering and the evil that's happening to us.

And throughout this letter, if he has highlighted a cause, if he has pointed to what's going on behind the scenes, he has pointed us to God in his sovereignty.

So that, for instance, in one of the clearest examples, he says near the end of chapter 4, at the very end of chapter 4, he says, Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful creator while doing good.

[8 : 42] So far throughout this letter, Peter has viewed our suffering from the perspective of God's will and he has assured us that the painful things that are happening to us are not happening to us by chance and that they're not happening to us outside of God's sovereign plan for our lives.

In fact, they are God's working out of His plan in our lives. We suffer according to God's will and because of that we must entrust ourselves to Him.

He's in charge. He's in charge. And so, here we come to the end of 1 Peter where we have, if we had sat down and read this letter all at once, which is the way that it would have been experienced in the first church.

You remember, of course, that people, the average Christian didn't have a Bible. They didn't have anything to put on their cell. Number one, they were very expensive to have anything bound in book form. But beyond that, most of the various letters and books of the New Testament are written on scrolls and copied down and then collected and stored by church leaders because the average person simply didn't have access to these things.

And so when you came to gather as the body of Christ, you came primarily to hear the Word of God because you didn't have daily access to it unless you had committed it to memory.

[10 : 00] And so they would come and they would sit and listen to entire books being read. And so as Peter wrote this letter to the churches scattered throughout Asia Minor, the expectation is that copies of this letter would have been taken to every one of those churches and that when the church gathered, the primary preacher would have stood up and he would have read through all of 1 Peter.

And so they would have been able to sort of see the connections a little bit more clearly than the way that we do it. We come and we do a few verses each week and it takes us several months the way that I preach to get through the letter.

But they would have heard it all at once before any of it was really broken down for them. And so it would have been ringing in their ears as they came to the end of 1 Peter that God is sovereign.

That the sufferings that come into our lives are not purposeless and that He's in control of them and nothing happens to us apart from His sovereign will. All of those things would have been fresh on their minds as they come across this statement about the devil prowling around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.

So what is the connection between God's sovereignty over our suffering and even over the temptations that come into our lives? What is the connection between that and Satan's involvement in our suffering and the temptations that come into our lives?

[11 : 22] We can get a glimpse in a couple of other passages. In fact, there are a number of passages we could go to. But I just want to point you to two places. I want you to turn to the book of Job and then we'll look in 2 Corinthians where we can see this interplay, this connection between God's sovereignty over all things, including our suffering, and Satan's involvement in our suffering.

So, of course, in the book of Job, we have the story in which Satan approaches God and claims that he is able to cause almost anyone to deny their faith in God.

And God says, Have you considered my servant Job? In other words, God is saying to Satan, You cannot, no matter what you might bring into Job's life, you will not be able to cause Job to deny me, to forsake me.

And so, of course, in the first couple of chapters of Job, you have this sort of litany of sufferings that God allows Satan to inflict Job with. And it begins with harming, with taking all of Job's possessions, and then it stretches into harming Job's, and taking the lives of Job's children, and then it moves into Job's personal well-being.

He's sick and he's miserable, and he's just, I mean, he's just in a sad, sorry state when you get near the end of chapter 2, and so sad and sorry it's his state. I mean, he's lost all ten of his children.

[12 : 44] He's lost all of his wealth. He's sick. He's just got sores oozing all over him. And finally, if you look in Job chapter 2, verse 9, his wife, who's had enough of it, comes and says, You still hold fast to your integrity?

Just curse God and die. It's like saying, Job, everybody else would do this. Just do this. And Job responds in verse 10, it says, But he said to her, You speak as one of the foolish women would speak.

Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil? Now pause for a moment there. Job recognizes that the ultimate source of the suffering in his life is God.

God is the ultimate source of all the good that Job had been blessed with. Wealth, numerous children, wonderful family, his health, all of those good things had come from God, and so had all of these great calamities that had come upon Job's life.

Shall we receive good from God, and not receive the same? The evil that comes from the same source, shall we not? And you might think to yourself, well, Job is like his friends, who come to counsel Job and offer him bad advice.

[13 : 55] Perhaps Job, perhaps Job doesn't know what he's talking about. Maybe Job is saying things that are not true and are not right. Except that, the writer of the book of Job comes and says, right after Job says that, he says, In all of this, Job did not sin with his lips.

Now in the context of a book in which God judges Job's friends because he says, You have not spoken of me what is right. It should stand out to us when the writer of this book says, What Job has said, and all that Job has said, he did not sin with his lips.

In other words, Job's statement is true. Job's assessment of the situation is right. Shall we not receive good from God and also evil? But we've seen, if we read through this book, that the immediate cause of Job's problems is Satan himself.

Satan bringing a whirlwind, causing a building to collapse on Job's children. Satan causing people to steal Job's cattle and wealth. Satan causing Job to become sick.

And yet Job rightly recognizes, as we can see, because we're given the behind-the-scenes picture, that God is sovereign even over Satan, and he can't do anything, he can't harm us in any way that God does not himself permit.

[15 : 25] Which means that God must have purposes. God must have designs in the suffering that he allows Satan to bring into our lives. Which is exactly what we see if you turn to 2 Corinthians.

I want you to see another passage in which we see this interplay between God's work in our suffering and Satan's hand in our suffering. 2 Corinthians chapter 12, another well-known passage in which Paul tells us that that he was given a thorn in the flesh.

And that three times, the Apostle Paul prayed to God that that thorn in the flesh, whatever it may have been, that God would remove it. And every time, God told the Apostle Paul, no, he would not.

Take a look at verse 7 in chapter 12. Paul has recounted these great visions that he's had, and then he says in verse 7, so, to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.

Do you hear what he said? To keep me from becoming conceited and boastful, a thorn in the flesh, which was a messenger of Satan, was given to me.

[16 : 42] So Satan has a role in this. The thorn comes to Paul as a messenger of Satan. Satan has a purpose in Paul's sufferings, and yet God has a greater purpose in these sufferings. God's purpose is to keep Paul from becoming conceited and boastful.

So you have the same event, the thorn in the flesh, the same event purposed by God to keep Paul humble, but brought into his life by Satan.

So the picture that we find in the Bible of the relationship between God's sovereignty over our suffering and the devil's involvement in our pain is that God is not directly causing the pain, but God is sovereignly ordaining, decreeing, permitting the pain to take place because he has purposes in it.

So in the exact same event, Satan can be at work to accomplish one purpose, and God can be at work overruling his purposes to accomplish his own goals in that event.

And that's how we are, I think, supposed to view our sufferings in this world. I don't think that we're supposed to approach our sufferings and say, well, you know, if God wants it to happen, it's just going to happen, and I should just not worry about it and just kind of move on with life.

[18 : 00] I don't think we should approach our sufferings that way. Neither do I think that we should approach our sufferings and say, God doesn't want these things to happen to me. God would never want anything bad to happen to me. This must be the devil's work.

I don't think either of those approaches are biblical. Neither of them take into account all that the Bible has to say about God's sovereignty over our suffering and Satan's involvement in our suffering.

God is sovereign, orchestrating, decreeing, and permitting all things that come to pass, and Satan is at work attempting to accomplish his own purposes in our lives.

So what are those purposes? In what ways are they at odds with one another? Well, Peter tells us very explicitly what Satan's purposes in our suffering are.

He tells us, if you look back again in Peter, he tells us that the devil is seeking someone to devour. Seeking someone to devour.

[19 : 01] That word devour really means sort of to swallow whole or to drink down whole. The devil is seeking to destroy us. He's not seeking to wound us.

He's not seeking to hurt us. He wants to destroy us. He wants to ruin our faith. He wants to bring us to a point to where we forsake God, where we forsake Christ, and walk away from the Gospel, and walk away from God's people.

That's what the devil wants. That's his purpose. In all of these painful things happening in our lives, he wants them to drive us away from Christ. That's what he's doing.

That's his plan. There's no other purpose in it for him. There's no other goal in it for him. It's destruction. He wants to devour us wholly and completely.

And yet, God has a plan for our suffering. He has a plan. He has a purpose. We see it appearing.

[20 : 07] We see it cropping up a few times throughout 1 Peter. I'll just point out a couple of instances to you. Look back in chapter 4, where Paul tells us, in verse 12, he says, Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you.

So Peter's saying that there's trials that are coming upon you. They are coming most assuredly, but they're coming upon you for a purpose. They're coming upon you to test you. So don't act like something strange is happening to you.

Understand and know that suffering is going to come. God has a divine purpose in it, and that divine purpose is to test you. What exactly does he mean by that, though?

Turn over to chapter 1. What kind of testing is it? Chapter 1. He says, In this, verse 6, In this you rejoice, though now for a little while if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials.

Here it is. 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.

[21 : 17] Do you see what's happening here? The sufferings sufferings that come into our lives come into our lives by God's will so that they might test and prove our faith. So that they might show our faith to be genuine.

You know, the easiest way to discover whether or not somebody is a genuine follower of Christ is simply to take note of what happens to them and what their attitude is when suffering comes into their life.

Is there a reaction to get angry with the Lord and move away from Him and run away from Him? To lean upon Him and depend upon Him and fall down before Him.

What is our reaction? What is our gut instinct? He's testing our faith so that we might see and know whether or not our faith is real. Satan, on the other hand, wants to destroy our faith.

Two diametrically opposed goals. When you think about this theologically, either our faith is real and genuine or it's not real and genuine.

[22 : 27] That's already the case. You either have real faith or you don't have real faith. You have a counterfeit faith. And when suffering comes, it's simply going to reveal. It's testing it. It's going to reveal and prove either that your faith is genuine or that your faith is false.

So why would Satan bother? Why would Satan bother to participate in this activity which is only going to reveal what's already there? I think it's because he doesn't know what's there.

We should never picture Satan as some sort of equally opposed force to God. He is not. He is limited. He is finite. He does not possess all knowledge. He does not know whether or not our faith is genuine and real.

He doesn't know. And so he brings trials in the hope that he might crush us and wound us and show our faith to be false and fake.

In all that Satan does, you might say that it's maniacally suicidal. Everything he does. It doesn't have to all be logical. It doesn't have to all make sense because it never does.

[23 : 35] Why would he rebel against God in the first place? If you know that God is infinite, that he possesses all power and all wisdom and all goodness, why would you rebel against him?

It's maniacally suicidal. Why would he bring trials into our life if the reality is that those who have genuine faith will only be proven to be real?

Why would he do that? Not because he thinks that he can actually thwart God's plan. He knows he cannot. But because he rejoices in any opportunity, any opportunity to see someone deny Christ.

To see someone either by their words or by their actions curse God. That's his goal. He doesn't have any hope of actually destroying the people of God.

But he rejoices and delights that he might give the appearance of destroying the people of God in the world. It's suicidal. It's maniacal.

[24 : 44] And yet, in all that he does, that is his goal. Destruction. Devouring. And as we approach thinking about how do we deal with real evil manifested in our lives?

How do we handle it? What sort of approach ought we to take? We need to recognize both God's hand in it and be thankful that God is at work to test and prove our faith and Satan's role in it in recognizing what his goals are.

And then we need to take our stand. We need to take our stand. Notice what Peter says. He gives us some direct commands. What do we do when the spiritual forces of evil come into our lives?

How do we respond to that? What are we supposed to do? He gives us very clear, direct commands. He tells us, first of all, be sober-minded, be watchful.

Be sober-minded and be watchful. In other words, stay awake. Don't be blind to the things that are happening around you. Don't be unaware that Satan is at work.

[25 : 52] Stay awake. This is not the first time that he's used this kind of language to talk to us. Chapter 4, verse 7, he says, the end of all things is at hand. Therefore, be self-controlled and sober-minded.

Be clear-headed. Don't let the busyness of the world, don't let the busyness of your life and don't let the fear that can come with these sufferings, do not let them blur your vision.

Do not let them distract you. Do not let them cloud your mind. Be sober-minded. It says in chapter 1, verse 13, therefore, preparing your minds for action and being sober-minded.

Be prepared. This is warfare language. Be ready. Gird up. He says literally, gird up your mind. Get rid of all the loose ends.

Grab it and grab your cloak. Pull it up like a belt, like you're going to war. Get ready. Be prepared. Because the place in which we do real spiritual battle is primarily in our minds.

[26 : 58] The place where you will really enter into warfare with Satan and the demonic hosts is in your thinking. Will you allow them to sidetrack you?

Will you allow them to point your eyes to the things around you rather than to Christ? Peter says, you begin this battle by being sober-minded, being watchful, being aware, never having your spiritual senses dulled.

And what are we to focus upon, though? Well, he tells us pretty clearly. Move down to the end, move down to the middle of this paragraph. He tells us in verse 9, resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

So know, remember, know that you're not alone in this. This is common to all of God's people. And then verse 10, here's the key. And after you've suffered a little while, the God of all grace who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

Everything in that statement, everything in that verse is life-changing, if you understand. He says, after you've suffered a little while, none of our sufferings in the moment feel like they're happening for a little while.

[28 : 26] Feels like eternity. When you lose a loved one, the days just crawl by in pain. When your family begins to crumble and fall apart, it feels as if things will never be set right and you will be in pain for the rest of your life.

When you're fighting against illness and you're lying in bed on your back and you can't do anything else, it never feels like you're only sick for a little while. And yet Peter says, all, all of our suffering, every bit of suffering you experience throughout your entire life is but a little while compared to the glory that we will receive one day.

You could, you may be one of those people who live their entire lives with one event after another, one painful moment one after another.

They just keep coming for 30 or 40 or 50 years. It feels like every year or two there's just another major catastrophe in your family, in your life, something is, it just feels like it's always happening.

Peter says, it's just a little while. It's just a little while if you remember and you keep your eyes fixed upon what lies in front of you.

[29 : 58] Look at it again. Look at what he says. Think about these words. After you've suffered a little while, the God of all grace who has called you to his eternal glory, he's called you to it, it awaits you.

If you belong to him, eternal glory awaits you. And what will happen? He will restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

He will put a foundation under your feet. He will make you well and whole. He will restore you. He will give you more than you ever possessed in this life.

so that when the clock begins to tick more slowly and the painful days begin to inch their way along in your life, the first thing that Peter says that we ought to do is remember.

Don't be clouded by everything that's around you. Don't have your eyes moved from Christ onto the pain immediately around you. Remember. Be sober-minded.

[31 : 04] Be watchful. Keep your eyes fixed upon Christ and the glory that is to be yours in him. And then you will be able to endure all that the enemy might send your way.

And the good purposes of God will be accomplished through the suffering that he allows to come into your life. So the first thing that we do is we fix our eyes upon Christ and we remain fixed there.

But there's a second thing that he tells us to do that's equally important. Verse 9, resist him firm in your faith. Which means that our involvement, our engagement in this spiritual warfare is not passive at all.

It's not as if we just look to Christ and then we just kind of let everything else happen around us and we just don't worry about it. We don't pay any attention to it. We just let the storm rage around us and we look at Christ and everything's fine.

No, that's not what he says. He says, look to Christ. You have your eyes fixed upon Christ but with your eyes fixed upon him you begin to stand your ground. You begin to march forward.

[32 : 16] You are in active resistance against the enemy's warfare, against your soul. You are active in this battle. You are actively resisting him.

You do not simply sit by while he just rains down terror in your life. You are constantly claiming the promises of God. You are constantly fighting against the temptation to give up.

You are constantly going back to the Lord. You are identifying yourself with the body of Christ so that they might strengthen you and encourage you and hold you up.

You are spending your time in the Word and you are wielding this sword well as his lies fly at you from every angle and tell you that there is no hope in your situation.

You are fighting, fighting, fighting in the battle. You are not passively standing there while it all happens to you. We should never approach life saying, well, if God is sovereign and He's in control, we just don't have to do anything.

[33 : 17] We'll just let everything unfold. We don't approach life that way. We say, because God is sovereign and in control, I will trust Him to strengthen me. I will trust Him to build me up and enable me to continue walking and continue to fight.

Over and over, we're told that we are to fight the good fight. We are to stand firm and not be moved by the attacks of the enemy. Peter says, you want to know how to deal with this.

You want to know how to face all of the suffering that I have been talking about throughout this letter. You want to know how to thwart the devil's plans in your suffering so that at the end of the day your faith is proven genuine.

You know how that works. You fix your eyes on Jesus and you fight. And you fight hard. This is not complicated.

This is not difficult. We simply forget the simple things that we're called to do. These aren't things that happen only in the great horrible moments of suffering in our lives.

[34 : 32] This is how we fight spiritual battle every day. This is how we approach every day of our lives. We fix our eyes upon Christ and whatever might come our way, we stand firm in the faith.

We cling to what we believe and we hang on. And as if at the end of this letter to remind us that this is not simply about how to endure the great moments of suffering.

This is not how you endure say those lions in the midst of the Colosseum type moments. That's not what Peter's readers were dealing with at this time. They weren't dealing, we've seen over and over, they weren't dealing with this massive government persecution at this point in time.

They're not being thrown to the lions, they're being socially ostracized, they're just experiencing the same kinds of sufferings and being slandered by people, the same kinds of things that we experience in our families, in our workplaces today.

It's normal everyday suffering that Peter's writing about in this letter and as if to sort of remind us of that, he tacks this information about the devil's involvement onto it right at the end of his letter right before he enters into a very conversational tone.

[35 : 45] Just a really conversational tone at the end of the letter. Verse 12, By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring to you, this is the true grace of God.

Command again, stand firm in it. Stand firm. You see all the themes are kind of coming together just in his passing conversational closing greeting at the end. And here's Silvanus who brought you guys the letter.

I had him go around all these churches and drop off these copies of this letter that I've written to you. And I regard this man, this very real flesh and blood man who's just coming by and he's giving you a letter and you're going to have to provide him with a place to stay tonight because that's the way it worked.

And he's just a real regular guy that I'm sending out with this letter. I regard him as a faithful brother. In other words, I think of him as the one who's passed the tests that I've spoken to you about.

But he's just a normal guy delivering you a letter. Then he says, this is the true grace of God. All the things that I've spoken to you, these things are true, so stand in it.

[36 : 52] Stand firm in it. Then another greeting. She who is at Babylon, Babylon is Rome here. The church in Rome, in which I'm a leader at this point in time, the church at Rome, she's sending you greetings.

So does Mark. You all know Mark. He's like a son to me. He says hi too. Mark says hi. And then he says, this is part of your daily life. Just your normal gathering together.

Greet one another with a kiss of love. Just be like me saying, guys, when you come in, hug each other and give each other a handshake. It's just normal, just normal, real life sort of stuff that Peter's ending his letter with.

And then peace to all of you who are in Christ. In other words, it's as if he climbs this peak near the end of the book and he gives us insight into Satan's involvement and God's sovereignty over our suffering and what Satan would want to accomplish over against what he's been talking about as God's purposes in our suffering.

He gives us this insight, he climbs his peak and then he just sort of drops down right at the end to remind us, but these things aren't happening only in the major events of your life.

[38 : 03] They're happening while a well-known brother visits you. They're happening to us here in Rome while you're reading this letter. People that you know, Silvanus, Mark, people that you know, real flesh and blood people just like you, we're all enduring this together.

Know that your brotherhood throughout the world was experiencing the same kinds of things he has said. We're in this together, people. And if you think that these instructions that I've given to you in this letter, if you think that these are things only to be clung to, only to be remembered for when the really bad times come, then you've missed the point.

Because I've written this letter to you, normal people in normal churches enduring very normal run-of-the-mill suffering from the people around you.

And I've written this letter to tell you this, stand firm. Let's pray. Father, I pray that we would hear the words of your spirit spoken through the Apostle Peter this morning, and that whatever it is in our lives, whether it be small or great, whether it be something that threatens to undo us, or something that just irritates us, that we would see that the enemy has a plan for that, and you have a greater plan, and that you would strengthen us so that we might keep our eyes fixed upon Christ through whatever storms pass through our lives.

Let us never become dull and deaf and blind to the spiritual realities around us, but let us never become paralyzed by those things. But just fix our eyes on Jesus, and fight the fight, and stand firm.

[40 : 14] I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.