

1 Peter: Hope and Suffering

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[0 : 0 0] So we have been going through 1 Peter. We have been looking at different things in 1 Peter. Last week we had interesting conversations. We talked about how God developed these relationships in our lives and in our world.

That we fit underneath those. We said there are institutions, our relationships. We said there's our relationship with God, our relationship with our government, our king, our relationship with our family, our relationship with our church, and our relationship with work.

And all these things. Some people are kind of said they're like umbrellas that are underneath us or above us that protect us. And we said with each one of these structures there's an authority set up in it. And this authority structure is for the good of the people in it.

And so what we've talked about was that there are some people who have authority and some people are under authority. And remember the idea of authority was always to protect and to respect and to bless and to serve those under the authority.

The people who had authority were always supposed to protect, bless, and serve those under the authority. Because of the fall then we see people who have authority abusing the authority.

[1 : 1 1] But that is not the way God meant for it to be. We talked about the S word which people didn't want to talk about. We talked about submission. And what did that look like? And we said that submission was an attitude of our heart. And it was something that we had to deal with in our heart.

And it wasn't something we forced upon another person. But it was something that they did within themselves. And scripture continually pointed out that the person who submitted wasn't the inferior person.

That to submit was actually a position of power and of strength. And we talked a lot about the women last week. And so a lot of men were thanking my wife and all these things.

But I wanted to really briefly talk about the men because I want to come back to the men because it's so important. Along this idea of authority and structure because we're going to move into it today. Because the structures are going to get broken.

And bad things are going to happen today in the passage. And we're going to talk about suffering. But the passage last week said in verse 7 that the husbands in the same way are to live with their wives in an understanding way.

[2 : 1 3] It meant according to knowledge. According to study. It means that as a man you're to study your wife. To be a learner of her. To know what she likes. What she doesn't like. To know how to encourage her.

You're to study her and to live with her as a weaker vessel. It doesn't mean worse or inferior. But it means delicate like a piece of china.

It's something that's very valuable. And it says because she's a woman. In Hebrew the word actually means. One of the variations means she's your rescuer. The man is a servant leader.

The woman is a servant follower. But it actually in Hebrew when I do weddings sometimes I say that the word actually means that the woman is the rescuer of the man. The man needed rescuing. And God created the woman.

And so the guy is to take care of her. And then he says this very interesting thing. He says at the end of it he says or your prayers will be hindered. And what he's actually saying there is that as our relationship with our wife goes guys.

[3 : 15] So our relationship with God goes. Did you hear that? What Peter says and what Paul says and what the Bible says and what Jesus says is that. As our relationship with our wife goes.

So our relationship with God goes. Peter in Ephesians says that just as Christ loved the church so you men should love your wives. And sacrifice for her.

And die for her. And give yourself for her. You should love your wife as you love yourself. There shouldn't be a difference. You're on the same team.

You're both wearing the same jerseys. So I can't say to myself when a buddy asks me how are you doing? And I'm saying I'm doing really good spiritually. I'm going to BSF.

And I'm in Bible studies. And I'm in accountability groups. And I'm studying God's word every day. And everything looks good. I'm just really deep in God's word. And then he goes well how's your marriage doing? And you go well my wife and I aren't doing too good.

[4 : 10] We just can't connect. That's a total disconnect in the structure and in the authority.

A guy can't be doing good spiritually with the Lord and be in Bible studies and studying and memorizing and having accountability. And then not being good with his wife. Because if he is, the passage says that we read last week that that is a brokenness.

And his prayers are hindered. And he can't even talk to God because he can't get his relationship right with his wife first. Does that make sense? And I'm very passionate about this because I struggle with this.

And when we do marriage counseling I'm usually pretty hard on the guy. Because the scripture passage says because of this institution, this structure that when men get to heaven, God's going to look at you and he's going to ask you what did you do with your family?

Did you protect it? Did you bring it to a place of nourishment? Did you allow your wife and your kids to flourish? Did you take care of people? Because you're the leader.

[5 : 13] You're the servant leader. You're the authority. And that's your job. God's not going to ask your wives that. He's going to ask the men that. He's going to say did you serve yourself in your marriage?

Sexually, physically, your needs, whatever. Did you serve yourself or did you serve your wife? Because as the authority figure, you're to serve yourself.

And I talk to guys often. I talk to myself. You know, we have a way of kind of deceiving ourselves. And we can say sometimes, yeah, I'm doing it all for my wife. I'm doing it all for my kiddos. I'm working hard. I'm doing all these things.

In reality, if we're honest, what we're saying really is that we're doing it for ourselves. And we're doing it for our egos. And Peter says that's not good.

And that's not right. And your relationship with God is broken. Your relationship with your wife is broken. So that's why we're promoting the love and respect class.

[6 : 13] Because we want to encourage you guys to be a part of that. Because we all need help. Love yourself. Love your wife as yourself. Love your wife as Christ loved the church.

As your relationship with your wife goes, so goes your relationship with God. Hopefully that's enough for us guys to think about. And ladies, you can thank me later.

I hope. You know, we're talking to this passage today. And sometimes when I get to this passage today, it drives me crazy. There are certain passages in the Bible that drive me crazy.

I don't think I've actually heard this passage ever preached again. Just like last week. There are certain passages you want to skip over. You don't want to go to them because they make you struggle. This passage today is on suffering.

Because it's what we've been following about. That these structures are broken. And we're struggling against our community. We're struggling against our government. We're struggling against God. We're struggling against our marriage.

[7 : 10] And in the midst of these things, suffering comes. And you know, to be honest, I don't think people like talking about suffering. I mean, people don't talk about it in the church hardly at all, do we? I mean, we talk about, well, if you're suffering, come to Jesus.

And he's going to make everything okay. We talk about that all the time. And that's how most people come to church. Is that, well, God's going to make my life perfect. And I'm not going to make more suffering. And it's going to be okay. But that's not what he's talking about here, is he?

He's talking about we're suffering because we are Christians. And we're walking with the Lord. And that's scary for people.

Because we want to think, well, I come to Christ and everything's going to be okay. And I'm never going to have troubles. And nothing's ever going to be difficult again. But Jesus, when he talks about these things, he says, that should be our current reality.

That if we're a Christian and we're in the world, we're a minority. And this world is going to hate us. Did you know that? We talked about it the last couple weeks.

[8 : 12] We've said, and I've tried to say it different ways and different focuses. And let me try one more way. I don't know if this will work. But what he says, I've said that when we become Christians, God's spirit comes inside of us. And it changes us. And we begin to think differently.

And we begin to talk differently. We begin to act differently. We begin to spend our money differently. We begin to treat our wives differently. And Peter says that whole same thing again. And he says it in his passage. And he says that when we come to Christ, it's like this baptism.

We enter into Christ. And we enter into his life. And that's why we baptize people. And what we see is that when you get baptized, that all of your life is changed.

The God's spirit has come in and he begins to change you. And now, instead of being white, you're blue. The spirit has come inside of you and he's changed.

I could have used any color. It's the only one I found that maybe everybody could see here. You know, another reason I don't like to talk about sufferings, especially as Christians, is I don't think that I've ever really experienced it.

[9 : 18] I mean, not the way that some of my friends have. I mean, I've seen some friends. When I first went to Asia, Graham and his two sons, Philip and Timothy, 11 and 6, were ministering in a local village.

And they had set up a camp there. And they went back every week to share the gospel to the people. And one night as they were there, they were grabbed by an angry mob of people who didn't like what they were sharing.

And they put them in their car. And they burned them alive. Because they were teaching God's word. The next day they came and they found the bodies.

And Graham had his arms surrounding his son. Because they were preaching God's word. When I read passages like today, I'm like, wow, I've never suffered like that.

I've never struggled like that. But Peter is writing to all of us, whether we have done that or not, or will we do someday or some other way. He's writing to all of us.

[10 : 24] And he's saying, if we're changed, if God's spirit has come into us, then we're going to have troubles. We're going to have struggles. And the passage says, these are things that we want to do.

These are things we have to do. Not things that you shouldn't do. When scripture tells us to do things, it's not saying, well, if you do this, if you like it. But what God is saying, in the current reality of the world, this is the best thing for you.

And if you don't do it, then you're not doing the best thing. And so I want to talk really briefly just about suffering as Christians. I want to talk about the passage that says there's two things that we need to be careful of.

There's two things we don't do, we should not do. There's several things we need to do. And then I want to talk about how we do it. How do we have the power to do it? How do we do it in the midst of suffering? What does it look like for us?

Two things we don't do. What we should be doing in suffering. And then how do we do it? What's the power of it? What gives us the strength to live out our life after we've come into Christ?

[11 : 23] And I don't know what your suffering is looking like today. If it's like most people, it's probably taking place either in your home or your workplace. I mean, it might not be like Graham's, but the passage says that if you are a Christian, if you're, play with me here, if you're blue and you're living in a white world where everybody else is white, you're going to look different.

You're going to cause people to be uncomfortable and things are going to happen. I mean, maybe at work, maybe you refuse to gossip and stab others in the back. Maybe you don't want to talk against people.

You don't want to climb over people. You don't want to move up the order. You have information on people that you could dish it out and they could be fired or you could move above them. But because of your faith, you've chosen not to.

You've chosen the Lord to be in charge of that relationship and you've taken the hit. In your character, maybe in your payroll, maybe in your position, you've chosen not to do those things because as a new creation, as a blue person living in the world that's not blue, you want to honor the Lord.

I mean, some of us, we're going to suffer in work because we're going to refuse to change the numbers. Our boss is going to come to us and want us to cook the numbers or change the numbers and we're going to say, you know, I used to be able to do that, but now I just can't.

[12 : 44] Because it's not what God has called me to do. Some of us are going to suffer because we're going to be told and asked to sell product or stuff that's junk. I know that never happens in Hong Kong, but it happens in the rest of the world, in the markets that you're going to be asked to sell junk and crap and it's going to be worthless and you're going to know it's worthless.

And if you don't sell it in the bank or wherever you're at, you're going to get in trouble. And you're going to feel pressure and tension and suffering because of your faith. And Peter talks about that.

Some of us are going to suffer and I know for sure several friends who have suffered because they refuse to take clients to places that the world wants to go. Their clients want them to take them to all these places and they've decided in their life, that's just not who I am.

God's changed me and I'm different than that. And they've suffered because they don't get the high paying clients anymore because they don't want to go to the strip clubs. And they've suffered for the gospel and for what it means to walk with the Lord.

You know, some of us singles in here, some of you singles in here, you are suffering right now. You're compromising. I mean, you're suffering because you don't compromise. You've refused to get into the dating scene.

[13 : 56] You refuse to just marry somebody because now you have these different standards and you have these values and you don't do the things that you used to do in Leng Kui Fung or wherever you go to hang out. And your peers and your friends think you're odd.

And they mock you. Because you're waiting for someone who's like-minded, who has the same values and the same heart. Can I share something really important with you?

There's a lot worse things than not getting married. I mean, the worst thing is when you marry the wrong person. That's so much worse than getting married, not getting married.

And some of you singles in here, man, you're facing it. And we talk and you just feel the pressure and you feel mocked. And Peter's talking about that in the passage. Some of you married, you're going to suffer.

You're married to your spouse whose only God is himself. Some of us in here are married to spouses whose only God is himself. And you're blue and you're walking with the Lord.

[15 : 06] And it pains your heart to figure out, how can I walk with the Lord and also love my spouse? And we've talked about that last week a little.

You know, some of you students, you're going to suffer. I mean, you're going to be in this academic situation and your peers and your teachers are going to say, study, study, study.

Don't take any breaks. Grades are the most important. And you're going to say, you know, I'm different now. I've changed. And I realize that I have this relationship with God and I'm trying to honor Him and I'm trying to love Him. And I can't skip church.

And I don't want to skip the community. And I don't want to skip the fellowship. And I don't want to skip reading God's Word. And all of your friends and all your relatives and all the people in your classes are going to say, you're a fool.

Because you love God more than academics. And that's what Peter's talking about. When we walk with the Lord, we're going to be mocked because we're different.

[16 : 12] Our friends are going to call us religious. And the passage gives us some warnings here. It says, if we walk with the Lord, if we're walking in a world that's broken and not baptized in God's Spirit, if we are, there's a high probability that a couple things are going to happen.

And he says, be careful of these things. There are warnings. Because on this faith journey, you and I are going to have it happen to us. And we're going to make mistakes. I'm not saying be perfect. I'm just saying be careful.

Because I make these mistakes. And that's why I'm sharing these things. Because I make these mistakes all the time. Verse 14 says, when we suffer as a Christian, we will be tempted to fear men more than we fear God.

We're going to be tempted to be in awe of status and power and wealth and influence. We're going to be tempted to see the things that we can see with our eyes.

And we're going to be tempted to fear those things more than we fear in awe of God. The passage is a quote from Isaiah 8. And it's an amazing passage.

[17 : 17] It's a very relevant passage for today. Isaiah 8, the people of God are not in good shape. I mean, it's bad. The leaders are all corrupt. There's this massive army from the north.

And they're about to invade. I mean, it's bad news. The Assyrians for hundreds of years have taken over cities. And every time they take over a city, they chop everybody's heads off and they just leave them at the front gate and said, if you defy us, this is what's going to happen to you.

So everything in the people of God's eyes, they look around and they say, terrible, terrible, terrible, no hope, impossible. What are we going to do? I mean, they don't even pray because it's so bad. And then the king, Ahaz, who is totally corrupt and his authority structure is about him, he says, well, let's do this.

Let's go to Egypt in the south and make an alliance with Egypt and maybe Egypt can come up and they can help us defeat our enemy. And God is watching all this and he says, no. And he sends Elijah to him.

He sends Isaiah to him. And Isaiah goes to him and says, hey, guys. He doesn't say, hey, guys. But in Hebrew, he says the equivalent of, hey, guys. Don't do it.

[18 : 27] God is with you. No matter what you're doing, no matter how you're suffering, God is before you. Don't fear what you see with your eyes.

Fear and awe God who you know with your heart. God even tells Isaiah, hey, you guys can ask for a sign. Ask for any sign.

I'll do it. I want to show you that I'm there. I'm your God. I'm going to do it. And the people are so distraught. They're so fearful. They don't even ask for a sign. And God says, okay, I'll give you a sign. There's going to be a child, a virgin.

She's going to be born with a child. His name's going to be Emmanuel. It's God with us. We read a passage every Christmas. The passage is about God's people who are in terrible trouble because they're suffering because they're Christians.

And they're wondering, is God there? Does he hear me? Does he know? Is he listening to me? And the passage in Peter says, yes, he is. And yes, he does.

[19 : 32] And he's already gone before you. And don't give in to the fear. Don't give in to the suffering because God is there and he's working in your life. He's working in your marriage.

He's working in your work. He's working in your families. He's working in your classrooms. He's working with your professors. God's already in control of all those things.

Are you going to trust him with that? Are we going to release it and pray to him and be blue in the world that isn't like blue people? Or are we going to fear?

Verse 15 says, don't fear. It actually says, sanctify the Lord. The word there means to hold Christ up, to set him apart, to trust him. It means to remember all that Christ has done before you.

Chapter 4, verses 1, it says, arm yourself. The idea is to put on armor, but what it means is to remember all that Christ has done. When you're in the pain, when you're in the suffering, when you're fearful, when things look out of control, when it looks like there's no hope, arm yourself.

[20 : 39] Remember what Christ has said. Remember what Christ has done. Remember what he's been for you. Cling to those things. Remember those things. Hold him tight.

Trust him in your journey, especially when you start to suffer. A question for us might be, what do we suffer?

What do we trust when we suffer? When suffering happens in our life, what do we run to? What do we cling to and say, well, I just have enough of this.

I can maintain it. Is it enough salary? Or enough drugs? Or enough connections in the business world?

Or enough better grades? What is that? And here, Peter is saying, sanctify Christ. Remember in his heart what he's done. Put him on as your honor.

[21 : 39] Trust in him in your faith journey. Remember that he's working through those things. Verse 15 goes one step further, and he says, hey, and as you're doing that, be ready to share what's going on in your life.

He says, be ready to share the hope of Christ in your suffering. As you're struggling, and as these things are hitting you, the word's actually there. It doesn't say you.

It says you all. So it's a southern Hebrew person writing in our southern Greek person. But he says, as a community, when there's suffering all around us, all of us be ready to apologia, to make an excuse, to present the hope, to apologetics, to share why we're blue.

And what does it mean to us? Be ready to do that, because people around us need to hear hope, especially in difficult times. They need to see what's going on.

And it happens all the time, right? It happens in our homes. It happens at work, doesn't it? I mean, my kid comes home, and they say, well, you know, my teacher says it's stupid for me to believe in God, and that if I do, I'll never get past the MIT or Harvard interviewer.

[22 : 54] That a belief in God and academics is inconsistent, and I'll never get into that school you want me to get into, so what do I do? What do we say to the kid? Maybe you should listen to your teacher.

Well, that's just how we live. Peter says that we should be prepared to share that hope with our kids and to talk to them about why we're changed and what it means in our lives.

I mean, in work, you're going to get made redundant. You've been playing by all the rules. You've been the model person and Christian employer, employee in the office, and all of a sudden, the note comes down, and you're made redundant, and you've gotten fired, and people above you who are not nice, people who don't play that by the rules, who cheat, who stab you in the back, they're still there, and they're still moving.

How do you react to that? When one of your friends comes up to you and asks you, well, how are you doing from the office? What do you say? You say, well, you know, stuff happens.

Or, yeah, I don't know. But what Peter says is no. You use this suffering to come into people's worlds and you share with them the hope that you have why you entered into a relationship with Christ.

[24 : 21] What does it mean in your life? And why you do it? You know, I've seen so many people's lives changed by people in the church who've had terrible things happening in their work, and they've refused to go after the people.

They've refused to bury the people. And some of them have been fired and they went to other jobs. And I've seen people actually seek them out in their new job, especially when the people's lives got difficult and trouble and suffering were happening.

And they sought them out and said, dude, when you did that, that was amazing. I knew you believed in this God thing. Can you tell me more about that? What does that look like? I need that.

I need that hope because right now I don't have any hope. Now, if these things that I'm sharing with you, they seem like, well, that's the right thing to do, but I just can't do it. Well, you know, we're having classes starting in two weeks about how to do that.

Chris is gonna be teaching about how we live out our life and how we understand God's word and what does it look like to present the hope in our workplace and how do we respond to our kids and how do we respond to our friends if you're still struggling with that because I think we all do at some stage in our life because we just do.

[25 : 34] Come join the classes and be a part of that because that will help you on your journey. Verse 16 says, keep a good conscience. As you're suffering and as these things are happening, the conscience was this window to the soul in Hebrew culture.

It was where the filter, where God's light came through and it touched our heart and where God's light came out of our heart and touched the world around us and sometimes our consciences are dirty.

It's the filter before which we turn right and wrong and sometimes in our brokenness, we've made so many wrong choices that we've never just realized that we don't understand what right is anymore.

and sometimes the things we think are right are wrong and Peter's warning us and he's saying, hey, be careful and repent and clean up your conscience and make choices with each other within community and don't allow your conscience to become dirty because then when you suffer, it's because you're suffering as a jerk or you're suffering because you're lazy or you're suffering because you are backbiting.

But what Peter says is we want to suffer because we're walking with the Lord. He says, just as Jesus suffered physically and he triumphed spiritually, so will his people.

[27 : 07] I don't know how it works, guys. But there's just something about God's spirit that when it enters into us as his people, sometimes it just thrives on holy suffering.

And you see it in people's lives, man. I've seen it in pastors in China who've been in prison for 30 years and they come out and there's just a difference in their life. I've seen it in holy marriages where women have been suffering for years and years and all of a sudden the guy comes to Christ and there's just a difference.

I've seen it in holy workplaces where people have been suffering and suffering and doing the right thing and God has been meeting them and they change and there's something that God uses in the midst of physical suffering as Christians that changes us if we allow him to do that.

Peter warns us one more time. He says, in the midst of the suffering in verses chapter 4, verses 2 through 4, in the midst of the suffering, in the midst of all these things going on, we are going to be tempted to go back to our old life.

We're going to be tempted to identify with our old life. We're going to want to indulge in the things of the world. We're going to want to do all these things that we didn't do before we were baptized. We're going to want to do that because it's going to be, the draw is going to be so passionate and so hard and he says, don't do that.

[28 : 32] It's one of the reasons we stay in community in a church because we realize in a community it's harder for us to get broken. And what Peter says here in his passage is that you just look at a person's actions in the midst of suffering and our actions are always going to point towards what our hope is.

And he uses an example of Noah. And you know the story. He tells the story in verse 20. He says that in the book of Noah, God looks at the world and the world's out of control.

There's no one whose heart is after the Lord. And it says a very interesting thing. It says God found favor on Noah. Not because Noah was a great man. Not because Noah was doing everything good. We're told later that Noah is a pagan.

But for some reason God finds favor in him and through mercy and grace he comes into Noah's life and he gives Noah a plan and a purpose and he says, I want you to build an ark because I'm going to do something amazing.

And as you build this ark it's going to be a testimony to all the people around you. I mean all the people around you are against me. They hate me. They don't want to have anything to do with God.

[29 : 44] They want to be the God. But I want you to build this ark as a testimony and an obedience. And so Noah starts to build and 120 years later he finishes it.

120 years later. Can you imagine 120 years of mocking in the workplace? I mean some of us don't want to stay for six weeks of mocking in the workplace or in a family or in a marriage.

But for 120 years Noah is faithfully carrying out what God's called him to do. He's suffering. He's being persecuted. He's building an ark. Everybody's hostile to him.

And what verse 4 says in chapter 4 is that if you don't run to the people everyone's going to mock you. I always thought that was so interesting to me.

This happened to me as my junior year in college. I came out of my room one day and we just had this crazy party. I don't want to say too much because kids were but they were just it was just it was just Sodom and Gomorrah would have loved our party.

[31 : 04] There were naked bodies everywhere and people had vomited all over the apartment. My roommate was still drunk and he's trying to clean up the vomit and it was so bad that instead of cleaning the vomit up he just took out a pair of scissors and he started cutting holes around the carpet and he'd take the carpet and just throw it out.

And so the next two months you walk into our house and there's just holes all over the carpet. And I walked out of this into my room and I'm like what am I doing here? And when am I going to grow up?

When am I going to start living like the person God has called me to be? When am I going to be different? When am I going to take care of myself? And I stopped doing those things.

And you know what? My friends got angry at me. They mocked me. They said I was stupid for not doing drugs and drinking and getting out of control trying to take care of my body.

They thought that was terrible. They were angry. I mean they were angry because I wanted to walk with the Lord and be different.

[32 : 14] And the passage says the same thing happened to Noah and the same thing is going to happen to you and to I. The ark was this physical evidence of Noah's faith to God and this ark showed everyone that Noah was serving something different.

and every time people saw the ark they had to make a choice. They had to say am I going to go this direction or am I going to go that direction? Every time for 120 years.

And people got angry at that and probably Noah didn't even have to say anything. and they just saw an ark and they got angry at that. But what we see in this passage is that Noah's what he did today wasn't just focused on today but it was focused on a future event.

That he wasn't just living for today or next week but his hope was focused on a future. What Peter says is if we live like we're supposed to you and I are going to look just like Noah in our workplace.

You and I are going to look just like Noah on the university campus. You and I are going to look just like Noah in our marriages and in our families and our family reunions. We're going to look different and people are going to be angry and we're going to suffer.

[33 : 44] And the passage said God uses that he's going to change you. He's going to change the people around you. So the question I want to end up with the question I just want to ask us before we finish this time here is what does the ark look like that you're building with your life?

If you're a child of God and God has come to you and he's given you his spirit and he's asked you to change and do stuff and be different what is the present thing that you're building with your life that is a focus on the future hope of reality?

If people were to look at your marriage and your life and to see how you're living what does that ark look like? What is that hope pointing towards? What is it pointing towards? The question that Peter asks us and the Bible asks us is if it's pointing towards something besides the ark if it's pointing towards something besides Christ is that really going to be enough?

Is that really going to be enough to save you? Is that really going to be enough when the difficult times hit? Is that really going to be enough to sustain you? What do our present actions point to as our future hope?

How? How do we do this? How do we get the power to do this? I love war movies. I haven't seen a good war movie in a long time. The last good war movie I saw was Saving Private Band of Brothers and I watched it with Kip and we talked about it.

[35 : 29] But there's one that sticks out in my mind because there's certain scenes that I kind of burned into my head and it's Saving Private Ryan. Actually I don't watch it very much because it's so intense.

Some of the scenes are so intense I just can't handle it. I just keep thinking about my son and would I have him fight in a war? I just can't handle it. But the most intense scene in Saving Private Ryan is the first scene.

And it begins on a beach in Normandy in modern day. And this little old man is walking up to the graveyards and his wife is behind him beside him all his grandkids and his kids behind him.

And he's walking through this cemetery and he sees Star of David something else a cross and he stops at the grave where the person who saved his life because the story is about this one guy who gets parachuted behind lines he gets lost he has three brothers and all three of them die and so the military says you've got to find his kid because we're not letting four boys die on the same day.

So they send all these guys to save Private Ryan and in the end they all get killed. And in the last scene of the show the guy's looking at him and it's Tom Hanks he's about to die and he says to Matt Damon Private Ryan he says don't waste this do something incredible with your life.

[36 : 53] And I watched that first scene and he looks around and he looks at his wife and he goes was I good? Is that worth it?

Did I make a difference? I mean that to me that's the whole movie right there. And you know what the passage says? You and I come to a cross where it says the just died for the unjust so that we might go to God.

The passage says that any other arc that you're building your life on right now success, fame, relationships, marriage, kids, schools, academic, whatever that arc is you're building and you're saying this is going to get me through the flood, this is going to help me through life, I'm going to survive, this is going to be great.

The passage is saying that every other arc that you're building on if it's not on Christ, you're doomed. And everybody looking at your life and if your kids follow that same building plan, they're doomed.

But we have an arc that we can cling to. His name is Jesus. No matter what you're suffering, no matter how difficult your life is, no matter what the pain and the sorrow and the frustration and the anger and just the humiliation and the stupidity you feel, no matter what that is, the Bible says that Christ has already experienced those things, he's already felt those things, he's already gone through those things.

[38 : 47] he's waiting to take you through those things. He's the only arc that can save us.

Which arc are you trusting in today? Today? How you react to suffering points to it. If you go back to your old ways when suffering hits, it points to it.

My prayer is that all of us in here would consider Christ and realize that he is the only thing that will sustain us.

That's a message that everyone around you needs to hear. And they're going to hear that message and see that message not just by your words, but by the arc that you build with your life.

You're going to know what you hope in and what you're focused on. Okay? Father, we just thank you for this day.

[40 : 11] We thank you for your mercy and your grace. We are so humbled that we have a God who's gone before us. We have a God who's submitted. We have a God who's humbled.

We have a God who's gone to the cross so that we as broken, selfish people might be saved.

Lord, I know that there's some of us in here right now who are building arcs that are not of you. There are arcs of their career, their ability, themselves.

Sometimes we just do it because that's what we saw our parents do. And that's what they saw their parents do. Sometimes we do it because that's what our peers do and the people that we look up to, that's what they do.

And so we figure if they do it, it must be right. But when I pray for them, I pray for them who are building an ark and a hope on something different, that they would consider the claims of Christ, they would realize that they have a God who came to them, for them, to die for them, who suffered everything and was exalted to the right hand of God the Father in heaven.

[41 : 28] He crumbled physically and on this world so that we might be exalted spiritually with the Father. I pray, Lord, that they who are building an ark on something else will not leave here this day or this week without considering what they're doing and is it true and worthy and will it really save them.

Lord, I pray for those of us who've been baptized, we've been washed with your spirit, we've been cleansed, we're being changed and we're being made different but sometimes we suffer because of this in our workplace and in our homes and wherever you have us and we fear, we wonder, are you good and will you take care of me tomorrow and will you take care of me next week?

Yeah, I know you're going to take care of me for eternity but what about next week? We fear your goodness as we look at men around us in their lives and I just pray for us, Lord, I pray that we would remember the lessons of Noah who continually focused on you and what you've already done.

I pray for us as a church, I need people around me, especially when suffering happens and difficult times hit, I need people who continually remind me of the hope that we cling to.

I hope that we all have people who remind us and show us and help us cling to Jesus in the difficult times and in the hard times and in times of suffering, especially as we suffer as his followers.

[43 : 09] Lord, may we be a people who confess and repent and turn away from our old life of debauchery and things that you've already said, the time is up, it's time for you to grow up, you've done that enough, now walk with me.

you've feared this person and you're in awe of what they have and what they can do and how they do it, but that time is up now, be in awe of God.

Lord, help us to be in awe of you and to walk with you as your people. Lord, let's pray for us as a church that we would be a different church, that in the midst of suffering in Hong Kong and the pain and the brokenness that we see, that we would be able to speak a message that's different than all the other messages.

It's not a message of education or structure or new governments, but it's a message of your son, Jesus, who's come to heal our brokenness and to fix all those broken things.

May we lean on him and trust him and point people around us to him because we're not just building an ark for today or tomorrow, but we're building an ark for eternity and it has to be able to get us there.

[44 : 35] Lord, we love you and we desperately, desperately need you. We pray these things in your son, Jesus' holy name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.