

Praised be the name of the Lord. Amen? Hey, man. This is great, to see you today. I love the occasion to be able to stand as the campus pastor and preach. I also love the opportunity for our other pastor's to preach. I love giving Matt the opportunity to take a break and enjoy his family, enjoy some relaxing.

Today is a very sober word. It is a serious word like every week is. As we're jumping into 1 Peter, I wanted us, for the four weeks that we're together as a local campus, to be able to just jump into 1 Peter as much as we could. I want us to consider what it means to suffer well for Christ's sake in light of his return. Just thinking much of what it means to live and to endure well, to suffer well, to serve Christ well, to be loved well, to love well based on the gospel, thinking much about his return.

We're not going to be able to get all of 1 Peter. I'm jumping all the way to the end, because there are some things in 1 Peter 5 the Lord put on my heart for you and for me specifically. It's really a summation of the entire book, so I wanted to close us out with really the last chapter, and then Matt Younger will come back and jump in the end of chapter 1 and chapter 2 next week. There are some specific things you will hear then.

There are some things that God had stirred in my heart for us today, but before we jump in... In fact, go ahead and look at 1 Peter 5. You can turn there. Before we pray, I want us to pray today for you, for my heart. I really want to serve the Lord well in this, and I want you to hear this today, and I want us to receive it with joy today and to walk in great humility with this today. I find it (without jumping wholeheartedly into the text) beautiful how Peter ends 1 Peter really speaking to the younger, the youthful crowd of the church, to the church, that youthful crowd. In verse 5, he closes out with, "And to you who are younger..."

Of the 3,000 who attend here every weekend on this little Dallas campus on a Sunday, the median age is 24 or 25. That's half my age. But anyway, we have a few old heads, and then we have a ton of young heads. Thank you for raising your hand. Y'all do that again. We have a few old heads here. Put your hands up. That was awesome. Hey, show respect to the old heads. Let's just praise the Lord for them. Come on. This is awesome. I noticed you didn't raise your hand. I love the fact that God has given us tons of youthful-aged people on this campus. I've never seen anything like us.

The Lord has always placed me in ministries where I'm always one of the older if not the oldest, one of the oldest people there. So I'm just thankful that the Lord continues to enable me to be a part of loving and

leading and speaking into a younger generation, even though I'm not near as cool as you are, not near as relevant, not near as gifted, not near as good-looking...all of the above, all that stuff that's here today, gone tomorrow. For some reason, the Lord has just placed me over and to give eldership and pastoral leadership to a younger generation, and I love that, and I love you. There are some things I really want you to hear today.

I think Peter is writing not only to that first century church about suffering that they will endure and what it takes to endure well and to suffer well and to fight well and to go against sin well and to really do community well, but I think he also is saying something to... In fact, I don't think; I *know* he is saying something to The Village Church, Dallas during this season that God has placed us in this city. We're three and a half years old here, guys, and there are some things the Lord is absolutely wanting to say. I pray you hear it. I pray you hear these things today. I pray I do.

I want to pray for our mamas. I just want to pray for moms before we get started. I think about all the moms who are represented in this room. I think about those moms who I talked about at 9:00 who lost their mothers, who have lost their moms over the last two weeks here in our fellowship. One person lost her mom a month ago and is enjoying the Lord's day today without her mom for the first time in her life, who is with the Lord.

I think about another person who lost her mom a week ago and whose husband is here. The widower is here without his wife for the first time on Mother's Day. I think about those sweet, younger mothers in our crowd, in our ministry, in our fellowship here who have longed for and prayed for and wanted a child, and yet, because of miscarriage, have wrestled and are not celebrating motherhood today. Yet we have someone else who is down at Baylor Hospital right now, who gave birth to a little boy on Friday.

We bless the Lord. We rejoice with those who rejoice, and we weep with those who weep, right? I think about mothers like my sweet, sweet friend here. I think about moms who have suffered through children who have already gone before them. I just think about those who are praising the Lord for those children who have come back. Pastoring and eldering is almost like being a mother at times. You see the real triumphant moments in the lives of your people and the lives of God's elect.

Then you see just a child or a member, or you see a part of the body of Christ suffer, and in their suffering, as opposed to turning to Christ and coming under the means of grace God has established for them, they run. They turn from the Lord. It just grieves your heart as a shepherd, as a mother does for those who have just gone south on the Lord. You see where I am today? My heart is really hopeful in the Lord, but it is also really a mess too as I think about all we are suffering through. I want us to pray for our moms today. Okay?

Then I'm thankful for those who have graduated. This campus has over 150 of you who are involved in either seminary or you're involved in college, prepping for ministry. Did you hear that? That's a lot of young minds and hearts that the Lord is prepping. If you're a graduate... Many graduated yesterday from Dallas Theological, from Redeemer, maybe from Dallas Baptist University.

If you graduated... I know in our graduate hall I can't see you, but those who are in there can see you. If you graduated yesterday, would you just put your hand up? Come on. Put it way up there. Come on, man. Praise the Lord. Awesome. Did you put your hand up there? That's awesome, girl. Where did you graduate from? DBU. That's right. Praise the Lord. Let's pray for them and set them before him today.

Father, I do thank you, and I bless your name for the moms who are represented in this room, for the mother you gave me who is dancing in your presence, healed and whole and finally totally perfectly redeemed. Thank you for the faith she taught my brothers and me. I thank you for the mothers represented here. Bless them. Encourage them deeply. Let them know your care is for them, not just on this day the West celebrates mothers, but I pray they would know the love of God for them moment by moment.

Where there have been seasons of exhilaration, thank you. Where there have been seasons where their hearts have just been ripped out, thank you that you have been their hope. For those young mamas today who are anticipating a birth, we thank you for new lives in our midst, just like that one screaming back there. We thank you for those moms who, Lord, have given birth, and they're new moms.

We also lay before you those sweet little moms-to-be, those ladies in our fellowship who long for pregnancy, who long for children. I pray you would work in their womb and work in their husbands in such a way that you would grant them that. Yet, more than anything else, show them, oh God, like for all of us, that you are sufficient. Your grace is enough. Jesus Christ, you are enough.

For those who have graduated that you have enabled to walk through difficult, tough, good days, thank you. Bless them in the days to come. May they be faithful to the end. To your bride today, as you deliver this word through this very feeble, insignificant vessel, I pray Lord, as you have done from ages past, that you would speak timeless truth to our hearts, that you would really move by the power of your Holy Spirit and let this word fall on good soil today, enabling us to suffer well, to walk well, to endure well, to stand firm in these days by your grace. In Christ's name, amen.

Praised be the name of the Lord. First Peter, chapter 5. We didn't go through chapter 5, verses 1-4 where Peter talks about and exhorts the church and exhorts the elders what their role is to be. That's something

you can study through later. What we're going to jump in is verses 5-14 where he is exhorting the church what your role, what your responsibility is.

I love being on the front row of ministry, where as an elder and a shepherd, I get to watch firsthand what's happening by the grace of God, either directly or indirectly, in the lives in the lives of his sheep. Many of you I've walked with for years, others here just in this campus at this place, it has been a much briefer walk. Nonetheless, to be able to see you from the front row, to be able to see God move in your hearts, God move in your lives, it is beautiful, just like a mother.

There are those we have seen, and we have rejoiced in the fact that God has done an incredible, life-changing work in your heart. Right? Where we have rejoiced, where he has delivered you, saved you, healed you. He has brought you and me out of the pit. He has raised us up to a good place. He has put us in community. The things we used to do, our former lives are now indeed former lives, and there is a new life in Christ in us. Right? We see the beauty of changed lives. I get to watch that, and I love that, and it's exhilarating.

I mean, when a girl comes out of the adult entertainment world, right down the street over here at one of our men's clubs, and confesses Christ, starts coming here, brings her daughter here, that's good stuff. Come on, man. When we begin to see people lined up here from different tongues, different tribes, different nations, who have come from different parts of the world, when we begin to see that happening right here, that's good. I love that. We get to see victory. That's what a shepherd does.

We get to watch these exhilarating moments in the lives of people, but we also have our hearts ripped out. Man, you need to hear this. In 30-plus years of gospel ministry, of walking with a lot of people, of shepherding a lot of people, of serving in this city most of my life, you also see people who once were turning on to Jesus Christ. They were hot for God. They were serving Christ. They were loving his Word. They were coming under authority. They were walking in humility. They were testifying to the Lord's goodness in their lives.

Then, because maybe for some of them it was suffering, that it was too difficult, they really believed in their heart of hearts that trusting in Christ would be a pain-free life, that trusting in Christ meant that there would be no more trial, no more struggle, that once they came to Christ, everything is cool. They left. They have denied. They have moved away from following Jesus Christ because of suffering. Others have moved away because there was opposition and scorn laid upon them because they trusted in Christ.

Hear me when I say this. You know it. I want to say it again. We said it before. Nowhere in these Scriptures, guys, nowhere in this Bible is there ever the warrant or the promise that we will be loved by the world,

glorified by the world, received by the world, taken in by the world, exalted by the world. Nowhere in these Scriptures will we ultimately be loved by this world system. Do you hear that today?

Peter comes and says to those... There are others who have walked away from Christ, because they have chosen the immediate pleasures. This is what breaks my heart. This is why I preach the gospel to my own heart. They have chosen the immediate pleasures of sin, and in doing so, over time, they have hardened their hearts to God, and they have moved away from this gospel they loved and they proclaimed and they professed. They have moved away from obeying Christ and walked away.

That's the thing, those are the tragedies, and that's the wrestle that a shepherd and an elder and a parent and you suffer with at times. Peter writes this, because he comes to the very end of this letter, and he realizes... Here it is. Please, guys. He realizes that there will be some, because of temptation, who will turn away, who will grow weary, who will not stand firm. They will choose to run. They will choose the broad path, the easy path that leads man away from the narrow road of following Jesus Christ, and they will choose for them, they long to choose for them the easier path.

He writes to his listeners. I say to you, to our little fellowship right here, guys. This is why I wanted to preach this passage for us today. Primarily because we're such a young fellowship. I want you to hear these things man, because I want us to endure by the grace of God well. Do you hear what I'm saying today, church? There are many who come out of the gate going, "Yes! Rah rah for Jesus Christ! This is awesome!"

I don't want us to turn in difficult days. I don't want us to turn when we continue to suffer with besetting sin. I don't want us to run from the authority system God has placed in our lives. I don't want us to run from the little clusters and cloisters of community God's grace has provided for us and step into isolation. That's why I just really want to get after the Lord today with you, with these things in mind. He is exhorting us to stand firm. Let's read 1 Peter 5:5.

By the way, there is a man in here at the end of the service who had been pastoring since 1950. It's 2013. How many years is that? That's what I'm talking about. This old head just came walking up to me at the end of the service, this godly old man, older gentleman. He just walked up. He had just lost his wife in January. They had been married 60 years. He said, "I found him to be faithful." I love that.

**"Likewise, you who are younger..."** That's all of you, except for about 10 of us. **"...be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you..."** That's me too. All of us. **"...with humility toward one another, for 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.'** **Humble yourselves..."** It's part of God's plan for your life in sanctification and in enduring well. **"... therefore,**

**under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you."**

**"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..."** And by our sisters in Christ. **"...throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while..."** Guys, hear that. **"...the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. 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 that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. She who is at Babylon..."** That is the church at Rome. **"...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."**

He sums up his entire book in chapter 5 here in verse 12. **" By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you..."** Here it is. **"...exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it."** Before we get to that, I love how he just closes out with this passing along of peace. Every time the bride of Christ gets together, there is the passing along of peace. There is the kiss of love.

I just want to pause and say why don't we throw some more of that around every week when we're gathering. Hello. Thank you. I'm talking about the kiss of love. I'm talking about my Latino brothers. I was at a wedding I did two weeks ago, two Sunday nights ago. I go marry this couple. Hector is from straight-up Mexico. Monterey, Mexico. I go do that wedding. Are y'all here? They're still on their honeymoon two weeks later. That's what I'm talking about. I didn't see them this morning, man. I have not spotted them since I married them. Tied that knot, sent them on the honeymoon.

Okay, my wife is going, "That's enough. Stop." So, man, I go to that wedding. It's incredible. Every member of his family of his family that I met were, "Buenos días, Pastor!" Wow. Kissing me. I mean, I was mugged. I was just kissed. I had big people, little people, old people, young people kissing my face. I loved it. Right? Grabbing me, hugging me. I'm telling you what, guys. Every Sunday... Do you hear this, church? I know this isn't really where I'm trying to go today, but on Sundays, I just want the bride of Christ to be more physical, loving, passing peace to one another. Amen?

Now you don't have to kiss each other. This is brotherly affection we're showing here, so I'm not talking about single guys, "Hey, what's going on?" to the single girls. "What's up?" I'm talking about honoring

your brothers. Brothers loving each other. Girls loving each other. Older men loving your wives, man. This is an opportunity for older men. "Hey." Loving the bride of Christ. Amen? I just want more love to be expressed here.

He goes on and says here the summation of it in verse 12. He is exhorting and declaring the true grace of God to these believers who are about to face some of the most intense persecution they could ever fathom. There will be, in the days ahead, men and women, because of their faith in Christ, burned to death. There will be others who will be placed on top of poles and set on top of those poles, having their bodies go down the pole and die a very slow and gruesome death, sitting on that pole, dying, lined up in front of all of Rome.

Do you hear what I'm saying, church? The persecution you and I face today is the humiliation of saying we believe in Jesus Christ. You are being and will be iced out. You will be considered irrelevant. You will be shut down. You will be mocked. You will be laughed at. You will have family who denies you. You will have family who rejects you. That is very real in this country, and it's very real in this city we're living in. I want to say to you, stand firm.

He says in chapter 2, verse 24, we read, "**He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.**" That is the true grace of God that he is commending to his hearers. He says in chapter 1, verse 3... You heard him say it two weeks ago. We read, "**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.**" That's the true grace of God he is commending to us. Right?

Then he says in chapter 1, verse 13, "**Therefore, preparing your minds for action...**" He uses that phrase three times. "**...and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**" That is the true grace of God. He is exhorting us, "Stand firm." That's what I want to say to you. We hear it. I'm reminding you.

I'm preaching to my own heart of what that call is in these days, to take this city for the gospel and to live and endure, not just in your 20s or in your 30s, but through your 40s and your 50s and your 60s and your stinkin' 70s (not that 70s have to be stinking) and your 80s and your 90s. My dad was telling me last week, "I would love to be 105." He's 85. You know, living. As long as God gives you breath, I want us to stand firm. Amen? Let's look at that.

1. *Understand his pattern.* I want you to hear these things. Take note of these things. Understand God's pattern for us. I'm trying to really honor time, so I want to run through this. Chapter 5, verses 5-6.

**"Likewise, you who are younger..."** Hear me. The young crowd who is in here, as we consider the pattern God has established for us. That pattern is that God has placed authority over your life, systems over your life, godly authority over your life who are not perfect. We have a plurality of godly leaders who shepherd you who are members at The Village Church.

I can't shepherd all of you who are not members, but I'm responsible for shepherding you who have covenanted with us, under the authority of the elder leadership here, of which I am one of many, so I am to humble myself under the other elders so they can speak freely into my life as I speak freely into your life. In your youthfulness, realize that God has created a pattern for you to endure well, to stand firm well, to suffer well, and to live well on this side of waiting for his return.

**"Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders."** Here's the thing I love about youthfulness. This church again is full of them. Most of my ministry has been given to younger generations, and I love that. I pray that God will continue to give me that. I just love you. Here's the thing I love about youthfulness here. This is true. This is a blessing about youthfulness. It's vibrant. There is a vibrancy in youthfulness. I love the vitality you bring. As we get to the 5:00, it gets younger. As we get to the 7:15 service, it gets younger. It's so crazy. I love the vibrancy. I think about the innovation youthfulness is. I think about the stamina you bring just staying up.

We had a bunch over at our house on Wednesday night. About 9:00, I was ready to go to bed, and they were just getting started. I realize 11:00 at night for you is just getting started for the day. Challenging the status quo. When you can do that with a gentleness, I love that about youthfulness. Here's where I wrestled when I was your age. I would bum rush leadership, trying to say to leadership, after everything that I'd read in this Bible... I would want to bum rush leadership in my youthfulness and go, "Man, why aren't we doing everything in this Word now?"

In our youthfulness, we have this zeal and this love for this Word, and I prayed I would have that at 50. Now I pray I have that at 60. I pray I have that at 70. In our youthfulness, we love at times. I pray under God's authority that we can continue to challenge the status quo. Movements of God begin with you. They begin with you. Many of the great revivals we've read about historically, God began them among youth. The Great Awakening of the 1750s. I think about the Great Awakening of the 1800s.

I think about the Great Welsh Revival in 1905 with Florrie Evans who was 13 years old, who just confessed, "I love Jesus with all my heart." God took that confession and began to do a work. I love it, but I also see the challenges in being a young church. Here are the challenges. Hear this. You can burn out quickly. You

can be involved in 10 ministries at one time. Sound familiar? There is the interest where interests are shifting, it could be from week to week, as to what you feel like God is calling you to.

This week, it's this. Next week, it's that. Next week, I'll feel the pulse of God on me here. Next week... There is this shift of interest. I still, at 50, wrestle with that. It's a challenge of part of our youthfulness here. A lack of focus, a lack of patience. In our youthfulness, what we want is everything God has for us now without understanding and giving ourselves to the developmental process God has established for us. Do you hear that? We want everything God has for us now.

We want to be married now. We want to start having babies (not all of us) now. We want that adoption process to happen now. We graduate. "I want a job now. I want to know where I'm headed now. I want all of my sanctification now. I want all these things today." I personally want to be able to send out 500 people now year in and year out from this campus. I want that now. Three years ago, I wanted to start Young Life over at TJ. Do you know when we're starting it? This fall.

We want all God has for us now, instead of understanding the very process of development that God provides for us in due season. Hear me. This is part of that process, young men and women. It's called humility. Part of the process God has called us to is to walk in humility. That's the sanctification God has for you for getting you from point A to point B to point C of becoming more and more like Jesus Christ. It is this call, this walk of humility.

Look at this in verse 5. "**Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves...**" Put on these clothes. Place this apron of humility around yourself. How we grow in Christ-likeness is this call of humbling ourselves. Put the apron on. Peter saw that in John 13. He watched Jesus Christ. He watched him adorn himself in humility. Have you ever washed anybody's feet who has walked in sandals most of their life? I mean, really? Jesus Christ, getting on his knees. Here's the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, God in the flesh, Christ, the Son of God.

We're talking about having to clean toenails that, back in those days, you probably had to use rocks just to shuffle them on down. It's not like going to get a pedicure and a manicure today where everybody is comfortable. All is cool. You're just sitting there enjoying. I mean, I don't know much about what that is like, but for you ladies. Then he would grab those feet in those days, Peter writes. This is a picture of the humility of Christ, setting the example for us. He would just kind of stone those nasty old toenails down.

I want you to get this picture before you go eat lunch. Seriously. There is just a line of dirt underneath the toenails. Then, on the bottom of the feet is just gross and grime and toe jam and all this stuff, all just marinating in there with their nasty feet. Some of you are going, "Man, that sounds like my husband." Then

the pebbles would get caught in between those toes. Man, he is getting on his feet, cloaking himself in humility, and getting down, and washing those feet.

Hear me today. God has called you and me to get low, to be low. In other words, bending ourselves under his purposes, coming low. It means literally...and I want you to hear this...for us, before there is exaltation, being lifted up, there is humiliation. There is a life of humility. Understand that, church. We all want to get there. We all want to arrive. We all want to be noticed. We all want to be seen. At times, you have to be willing to lose face. That's what it means to walk in humility.

Before you get real frustrated in the Christian life and just begin to chunk it, all you have known to be what it means to follow Christ, before you get frustrated, before you decide to just put Christ on the side and walk away, hear me when I say this is God's process. It's called being called to humility. Amen? Come on, church. "Humble yourselves. Steve Hardin, humble yourself." That's the process God has provided for us.

Then he says, "**Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God...**" I'm just going to run through this. I love it. I love this. This is an expression of his power and of his sovereignty. This is an expression of placing our lives under the beautiful, wonderful, mistake-free hand of God. This God who absolutely can accomplish anything he wants. We can say, underneath that hand, "Your will be done." Accept the limits and the lines that are drawn and the authority and the established relationships God has placed into your life so you can suffer well in these days.

He goes on and says this in verse 7. "**...casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.**" I want you to hear this. This is what humility looks like. You cannot have humility without casting an anxious heart upon the Lord. In fact, to have an anxious heart, to really walk in humility means, "I'm not going to own that anxiousness. I'm going to cast that before the Lord in humility."

I have found in my own life and have been taught this especially of late that where I have struggled with an anxious heart, what that has revealed in my life is that I am a man who walks in pride. There is a direct correlation between humility and casting your anxiety upon the Lord. There have been seasons in my life and days in my life. Hear me. There are times where your anxious heart is an expression of a prideful heart.

That is true in my life. That is true in your life. It takes humility granted by the grace of God to lay our anxiousness and our pride and our fears of the future and our concerns for today and our worry and concern about shame and all the things you and I wrestle with. Guys, hear me when I say this. This is a life of humility the Lord has called us to. For us to be able to confess our need takes a heart of... What? Not pride, but humility. Seriously.

The man or woman who can say, "Help me," has been moved upon by the Holy Spirit to walk in humility. This is God's call on your life. The one who can say, "I have messed up," is the man or woman who is walking in humility. The one who has said, "Forgive me for what I have done, for the things I did, for the things I said." That's humility, right church? Being able to lose face is to walk in humility. To really be willing to not be noticed is to walk in humility, right?

This is the process God has for us. Not to belabor that. Please hear me. Let's put to death daily pride, the pride of self-satisfaction, the pride of self-sufficiency, the pride of believing, "I'm above instruction." Come under the authority of the established leadership God has placed in your life and the group God has placed in your life. Refusing to trust God is a manifestation of pride. Trust me. I've walked there. I know it. I have wrestled with it. Cast your cares.

Moving along. Hear me in this. Verse 7. "Cast your cares, because he cares for you." I just can't say that enough, body of Christ. Why? Think about the implications of the God-man, Jesus Christ caring intimately for you. That's what he does.

When I begin to believe the lies of the Enemy that Christ does not care for me, then I begin to walk in the pride of my own heart that says, "I'm to be sovereign. I'm to be omniscient. It is me who is to know all things. I'm the one who is forecasting the future. Why is it that I can't control this?" I just place myself in the place of Jesus Christ when he is the one who intimately cares for you. He is absolutely undistracted when it comes to caring for you.

Have you ever been in a conversation with anybody when you were sharing your guts with them, and they were just checking their iPhone out? Come on. I mean, you're just sharing your heart. You're struggling. You're wrestling, and they're just reading. You're sharing your heart, and they're looking at their iPhone. Christ is never distracted. I want you to hear that, church. You need to hear this.

This is what it looks like. It means casting your cares. I'm talking about throwing this stuff at the feet of Jesus. If we have to do it daily, throw it daily. This is a messy kind of praying. This is a faith-filled kind of praying. This is acknowledging every moment, every day that, "Lord, I am not the solution to this issue; you are. You have to be. You have to move." Guys, we have to find ourselves there. He will exalt you, lift you up, bring you out of that in due season. Amen?

In 1999, I was diagnosed with hemochromatosis. Just crazy. It's a blood disease in the system, primarily found among men. In fact, they call it the silent men-killer because most of the time, it goes undetected, unless you just have some crazy blood work done. For me, it was 1999. They call it the silent men-killer

because it can begin to just... Iron that has not depleted out of your system can make its way to your kidneys and to your liver. You can begin to have issues throughout your internal organs.

In 1999, I had prayed, "Lord, I would love to be exalted out of this. I would love to be taken out of this. I would love to be healed from this as opposed to having to go be drained, having to have sonograms," like I'm going to have next week on my liver. Struggling with that. Just hating to have to deal with that month in and month out.

My situation doesn't even compare to one of our brothers who has been wrestling with a brain tumor for two years. I think about God's call on our lives in those days, and I want to say to you, our prayer is constantly, "Oh, God, I am constantly trusting and humbling myself under your beautiful, provisional, loving hand in my life for you to exalt me and my family in due season." Understand God's process.

2. *Understand God's warning.* I want you to hear this. Verses 8 and 9. This is huge. **"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..."** There is a Devil who is real. This is a very real spiritual reality. There is a Devil who hates you, hates the work of Christ, hates the work of grace in you, hates all the provisions God has made in your life, the authority God has placed over your life. He hates the community God has placed you in. He hates the expression of forgiveness God has granted you through his Son, Jesus Christ. He hates all of that.

I want you to hear this. He is a fallen angel. He is a very real, present reality. He is not to be feared, but it is for us... I don't want to speak too much about Satan so we err on being too preoccupied with him, nor do I want to not say enough about him so we err on being naïve, so I want you to hear this. He is like a roaring lion. **"Be sober."** Open your eyes to the spiritual reality every day that you and I, this faith in Christ is being attacked day in and day out.

The weapon he roars with more than anything else, because this goes to his name, is he is an adversary and a slanderer and a liar. He breathes lies in your heart and in my heart about what it really means to trust in God's provision for you in Christ. Do you hear that, church? His lies are constantly being breathed upon your heart and your mind about being able to really trust all God is for you in Christ. Be sober. Don't be flippant.

By the way (hear this please), you know there are those in this city, maybe in your family, many we're praying for now who are still under the authority of the prince of the power of this air? They have not been converted to Christ yet. Can I ask you, may we continue to stay crazily interceding on behalf of this city and

for those who are under the influence of the prince of the power of the air? Amen? Come on, church.  
Right?

Can we have the intercession rooms on Sunday more full at 9:00, at 11:15, at 5:00, and 7:15? The prayer room during the day, praying on behalf of what is happening in here, and having our home groups full of more intercession on behalf of those who are listening and breathing the lies of the Enemy, interceding on their behalf? Can we do that? Hello? I want us to be about that work of interceding on behalf of one another.

**"Be watchful."** Here's what we're to do. Hear this. Resist. I'm talking about this resisting. How do you resist? We resist the Devil by looking to Christ, standing firm on the truths we know to be true in this Word. Living these words, obeying these words, looking to Christ as our hope.

I love the song we're about to sing. "When Satan tempts us to despair and tells me of the guilt within, upward I look and I see..." Who? Who do I see? "...him there, Christ, who made an end to all my sin. Because the sinless Savior died, my sinful soul is counted free." I can't rejoice over that enough. I can't sing about that enough. "For God is just as satisfied to look on him and pardon me."

Church, you resist the Enemy's call on your life by constantly looking to Christ. Then look at the very last thing. He says in verses 10-11, **"And after you have suffered a little while..."** Hey, look at me, man. There is a season in which you are suffering. It may be this week, and then next week, there may be deliverance. Then there is another suffering that is coming, and it may be in a month. Then there is going to be hope coming. He is constantly our hope. There may be a suffering season of a year.

You need to hear this while you're young. Humble yourselves under the Lord. Hear me when I say this. Guys, I pray you would endure to the end. Here is how I know the promise is sure that you and I, we in this room who are in Christ Jesus will endure to the end. What is my hope that our little campus is going to endure to the end? Your goodness? Your working really hard? Us stirring up a frenzy week in and week out in here? The perfect home group? What is my hope? What is our hope? What is your hope? He who called you will keep you to the end. Hello? Praised be the name of the Lord.

He who called you will keep you to the end. **"The God of all grace who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself..."** Here's what he's doing now. Here's what he's going to do. **"...will restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you."** That's what he's doing now, and that's what he's going to do in the final revelation of his Son, Jesus Christ. Endure well. Humble yourselves before the Lord and before one another. Praise the Lord for the authority God has placed in your life, his good grace.

Hear me when I say this, guys. Be watchful in these days of the lies of the Enemy, and then know God is faithful to his promise to keep you to the end. We can say, on the final day when Christ is revealed... Hey, we might be alive when that happens. I mean, Christ could come back tomorrow. Just think about that. Christ could come back today. Do you hear what I'm saying church? Are we slumbering in that? What strongholds are in our lives that keep us from really longing for his return, that Christ could return today?

Upon his return, my prayer for our little congregation right here, for our little church, is that upon the day of his revelation, of his revealing, of Christ coming back, I just want for us to be able to say, "To God be the glory. To him be dominion forever and forever and forever. Amen." Praised be the name of the Lord. Let's pray.

I love you. I pray for your enduring. I pray for your fighting against sin. I pray for faithfulness, and I'm most hopeful in the God who has called you to himself. As we just wrap up, and we're getting ready to get after the Lord in song, I just pray God would enable us to have an exhilaration in our hearts to sing the praise that is due his name.

I pray that where there is pride in our hearts today, where there is a self-sufficiency, where there is a hanging onto an anxious heart, I pray that where there are little strongholds, that God would reveal those things. We could come in the light even today. I pray that where we have not trusted Christ as all sufficient for us today, I pray that where we are suffering, you will not give up from standing firm.

Where you are taking it hard right now, where there is a hit on your life right now that you will see that the one who saved you is the one who is establishing you, strengthening you, confirming you, and restoring you now. Run to him, bride of Christ.

Father, thank you for your Word that is true. I believe with all my heart it will produce the fruit in due season that looks like Jesus. I pray that our songs would be faith-filled. I pray our songs would be hope-filled. I pray our prayers would be crazy prayers of hope. I pray, oh God, for in enduring in struggling difficult days, either now or tomorrow. Not all of life, Lord, I confess, is suffering, but through all of our lives, we will suffer.

I thank you for your faithfulness to the end to your name and for your bride's good. We thank you. We love you. Love your bride now in these closing moments of song and worship. In Christ's name, amen.

Praised be his name.

