

Do Not Be Surprised at the Fiery Ordeal Among You

An Expository Journey Through **1Peter** **1Peter 3:18-22**

38- Peter Prepares Us For Suffering- Part 2

December 2, 2018

1 Peter 3:18-22

18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the just for the unjust*, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

19 in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits *now* in prison,

20 who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through *the water*.

21 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you — not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience — through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

22 who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

To the Glory of God

Now as I told you last time the *main* Point of the Passage that Brother Vern just read to us is the Apostle Peter is helping us to get ready to suffer with Jesus “for doing what is Right, rather than suffering for doing what is wrong”, because Peter said that is “better”. So, even though Peter uses some very graphic imagery here, the single most important thing you need to take away from verses 18-22 of **1 Peter** is that the Apostle is seeking to help us arm ourselves with the Faith that we need to suffer for the Sake of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. And that is simply *not* a very popular subject to preach to Americans in the 21st Century.

And here, in this Passage, there are at least five ways that Peter strengthens us for that possibility.

1. Remember That Jesus Himself Suffered (Unmercifully and Unjustly).
2. Jesus Has Triumphed Over Everything and Has Decisively Brought Us Safely to God.
3. Remember the Days of Noah.
4. Know the Meaning of Baptism.
5. Look to Jesus at God's Right Hand, Sovereignly Ruling over Everything, Including our Suffering.

.. so, let's examine these five ways:

1. Jesus Himself Suffered Unmercifully and Unjustly

1 Peter 3:16b-18

... keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. For [Because] it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong. For [Because] Christ also died for sins once for all, *the just for the unjust*, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

Throughout the entire New Testament, the mindset of believers and of the Faith they have embraced is this:

Jesus, our Lord suffered. We are not better than our Lord. Therefore, we will follow Jesus into Suffering, without Complaint or Murmuring.

The Apostle Paul said:

Romans 8:16-18

The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

... and in **Philippians 3:10-11**, we read the earnest Prayer of this great Apostle:

... that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

The writer of **Hebrews** challenged us to leave the comfort of our surroundings and suffer with Jesus, when he said:

Hebrews 13:12&13

Therefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

... and Jesus Himself said:

Mark 8:34b-38

... If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

We just remember that the very *first* encouragement to prepare ourselves for "Suffering for doing what is right" didn't come from Peter. This is *exactly* what happened to Jesus. But, unlike us, Jesus was perfectly sinless. He was truly the greatest, most loving, most caring, most truthful, and most holy Man Who ever lived. And yet, He suffered *unmercifully*. And Jesus said:

Matthew 10:24-28

A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more *will they malign* the members of his household! Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear *whispered in your ear*, proclaim upon the housetops. Do not fear those who kill

the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

... so, the notion, that is so readily believed today, that believers will somehow be able to *escape* Suffering because we are "in" Jesus Christ, is foreign to the Bible.

That kind of *self-centered* "twisting" of the New Covenant was not even conceived before the United States was formed some 242 years ago, and *guaranteed* certain "basic human rights" along with a "favored/preferred status" for the Church. But history tells us that *all* of the Apostles, *all* of those who led the Church after the death of the Apostles, *all* of the great men of Church History, *all* of the Puritans, the greatest Christian thinkers and theologians in our history, *all* of them, personally suffered *horrific* treatment and yet never considered themselves to be abandoned by God. They considered "suffering for doing what is right" to be nothing more nor less than:

Normal Christianity

... and so should we. Even the man who wrote this Passage, the Apostle Peter, was captured, imprisoned, tortured, beaten, and then crucified upside down. We need to constantly remind ourselves that there is no indignity, no pain, no agony, and no suffering that we could possibly conceive in our mind- that would even come close to what Jesus experienced on our behalf. And that knowledge will help us to suffer to God's Glory.

2. Jesus Triumphed Over *Everything*, and Has *Decisively* Brought Us Safely to God

If it is true that our biggest Problem is our Sin and the Wrath of God that our Sin has deserved, if that is true, then being forever set free from God's Wrath and being brought to God is truly the greatest News in all the world. And that Reality trumps everything else, *including* the level and amount of Suffering we are exempt from in this journey on earth. But as humans, we tend to become dull of that Reality. And we periodically come to expect only "good things" here on earth, precisely because we have been saved. And more times than not, we begin to

define "good" by what would please us, not *necessarily* what would bring God Glory.

And as I told you, that perversion of the New Covenant is a relatively new phenomenon. So, even though it is true that God loves us so much that He was willing to suffer and die for us, what is the logic that would cause us to believe that we can expect only "Good" from God on this earth and in this life? Because Job said this:

Job 2:10b

... Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?...

... so, who among us believes that God favors us more than He did this man, whom the writer describes as:

Job 1:1b

... blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil.

Now some would say, *"But Job lived under the Old Covenant and God has much better things for those who live under the New"*. But, technically, that isn't true, because Job lived during the "days of the Patriarchs" which was back during the time that **Genesis** records, which was at least 400 years *before* God ever gave the Law. But aside from that, there is *nothing* in any of the 27 Books of the New Covenant that would allow any honest reader to come to the conclusion that "being saved" and "having our sins forgiven" and "being loved and chosen by God" also means that we are exempt from suffering on this earth. You simply can't get there from here.

Others would say, *"We don't have to suffer today because God loves us and has a Plan for our lives."* O, yes, child, God absolutely *does* love you, and Yes, His Plan for you is almost beyond belief! But God loves *all* those who chose to save. And the Reality is that right now, as we are sitting here in Church this morning, very safe and very secure, 9/10 of the believers all over the world are suffering horrific persecution, not to mention going through many of the diseases and physical problems and others trials that we face here. So, as we have discovered, the degree to which a genuine believer suffers has no connection at all to the amount of Love the Father has bestowed on them.

But we also have to understand that *part* of God's Plan for those

He saves is that He loves you so much, He's not about to allow you to remain the way you are. So, God has determined to *discipline* you and *try* you and *test* you and *prove* the validity of your love and devotion to Him. And people always ask, "*Does God do that to everyone?*" And my answer is always the same, "*No, He only disciplines those whom He loves*".

And the way that God has chosen to change you and me is through the "Fires of Suffering". And this Fire may include *external* things like Persecution, or it may include *internal* things like:

- ✓ Doubt
- ✓ Illness
- ✓ Pain
- ✓ Injury
- ✓ Death or suffering of a relative
- ✓ Bad decisions

... or a combination of all the above. But what is so amazing about *this* kind of Fire is that, unlike a fire that *we* might set, *this* Fire is holy. *This* Fire is godly. *This* Fire is a Gift from God. And it is working *only* for *our* eternal Benefit, not to destroy us. And this holy, godly Fire is very specifically *designed* and very specifically *focused* by God the Spirit Himself for each individual believer. And so, what God is burning out of you is for you alone. And this holy, godly Fire is managed by God to the extent that it will only burn away those attributes or habits or mannerisms or attitudes or actions in us that would hinder us from sharing in God's Holiness.

So, yes, God has a Plan for your life. And God's Plan, God's Will for all those that He saves, is *not* to merely forgive us and then turn us loose so we may pursue our own dreams. No, that isn't true. That isn't Christianity.

Christianity has to do with Jesus Christ actually *buying* you, *owning* you, *purchasing* you, lock, stock, and barrel. So, all genuine believers have been "bought-and-paid-for". You no longer belong to *yourself*; you are the Lord's Personal possession. And *by* God's Grace and *through* the Gift of Saving Faith, Jesus has now made wicked rebels to be His "bond-slaves". That is biblical Salvation.

And so, the language of Christianity, for all those forgiven and made righteous, is the language of a slave. And slaves have no "Rights". And whatever "Authority" a bond-slave of Jesus has is only to be used to further God's Kingdom, not yours. And so, like all slaves, the Master, Jesus Christ, is in charge of things like:

- ✓ What you eat
- ✓ What you wear
- ✓ What you do
- ✓ Who you marry
- ✓ How you act
- ✓ How you spend your money
- ✓ How you raise your children
- ✓ What you own

... and whether you live or die. And slaves do all that they do, they say all that they say, for only one reason, to bring all Glory to their Master. And there isn't any way to "opt out" of this. Not choosing to participate in the life and mentality of a "bought-and-paid-for-bond-slave of Jesus Christ" is to die in your sins. And so, if this isn't attractive to you, you may want to consider converting to Islam or Hinduism or some other false religion that lies to you about your relationship with God. So, those who think that being saved "frees" us to "do our own thing" haven't read or understood the Bible very well. Being saved "frees" us to live the rest of our lives to God's Glory.

Now I fully realize that far too many in the modern church don't teach this, or even believe it, but the Truth is that the concept that we are free to do whatever is in our hearts to do after we are saved simply can't be found anywhere in the Bible. No, God's Plan and God's Will involves much *more* than just forgiving you. It also involves you and I being made Holy.

Now someone might ask, "*Why in the world would anyone want to become a Christian if their status in this world will probably get worse for them and their lives will be at risk?*" And the Answer is that the greatest human need is *not* to live long on the earth and be safe and secure and prosperous. No, the single biggest human need, and one that makes all other needs pale by comparison, is two-fold:

1. How in the world can I have my sins forgiven and overcome my Separation from God, and pass through His Judgment on my life?
2. And how may I live forever with unimaginable Happiness in God's Presence rather than living forever in misery in Hell?

... nothing else matters compared to those two Issues. The Apostle said:

1 Peter 3:18a

For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the just for the unjust*, so that He might bring us to God ...

.. and I want you to notice four things about this:

A) Christ died "**for sins.**" My Sins are what separates me from God. And that means that having my sins forgiven is my biggest need, by far. But that also means that it *isn't* political liberals or ISIS or the Federal Bureaucracy or even satan that are my biggest enemies. My own Sins are my biggest enemy. **Isaiah 59:2b** says:

... your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden *His* face from you so that He does not hear.

So, the Federal Government taxing Churches, or me being persecuted because of Righteousness' sake, or being mocked or even being imprisoned or beaten doesn't even compare in danger and fear and importance to standing before God and being found wanting because my sins have not been forgiven. Peter said Jesus died "for sins." And this is the greatest News in all the world. Because it means that I do not have to die in my sins in the lake of fire! It means there is Forgiveness, even for me! And this News is why, all through the 2,000-year history of the Church, people believed on Jesus, even when it cost them their lives.

B) Christ died "**the just for the unjust.**" This means that Jesus' Death was "vicarious". It was "substitutionary". Jesus took my place, not just on that wooden Cross, but underneath the Wrath of God. What Peter says here means that Jesus stood under the Just Penalty that I deserved (for the many, many transgressions) and bore all of God's Righteous Fury against those Sins, for me!

So, Jesus' Death was *not* for Himself. Jesus was *not* saved by Grace or through Faith. Jesus didn't need God's Mercy. And that's because Jesus was utterly Innocent. So, all that Jesus suffered and died for was for other people, not Himself.

C) Christ died "**once for all**", that is, His Death was final and all-sufficient to accomplish the Forgiveness of all who believe on Him. He does not have to ever offer another sacrifice. It was finished! It was all that was necessary to take away the guilt of my sins. The debt is paid in full!

... and all of this brings me to God.

For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God...

And this Truth is the great Comfort of all martyrs and suffering Christians. Our worst enemy, Sin, has been forever defeated! And Jesus has made sure that we will be at home safe with God! He has brought us to God! The separation has been removed! God is near us, and He is now for us! Our lives are hid in Him!

Now just how does this help us to suffer? Because one of the terrible temptations of the devil in suffering is to make us think that God has forsaken us. So, what Peter is saying here is:

Suffering does not mean that God has forsaken us and turned against us! Christ has carried our sin; and absorbed all of the Wrath of God; and has brought us safely to God!

3. Remember the Days of Noah

1 Peter 3:19&20

in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits *now* in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through *the* water.

Now there has been some pretty fierce controversy over the centuries about just what this statement actually means. And while trying to figure out why Peter got into Noah and the “spirits in prison” in a discussion about Suffering is *hard*; trying to figure out why he said in verse 21, that “**Baptism now saves us**”, is even *harder*, because we know that Baptism does not save *anybody*. So, I’m going to divvy these issues up. I’m going to deal with Noah and the “spirits in prison” today, and deal with Baptism next week, so I can do them both justice.

So, to begin with, let’s try to look at this Statement *in context* with all that Peter has *already* been talking about. Because if you just take a verse or even a Passage out of context, you can just about make the Bible say anything you want it to. So, one of the most important aspects of biblical interpretation is the idea of “context”.

So, we need to begin with the premise that the Apostle Peter is *not* conducting a Study on “Noah and the Ark he built” or the “spirits in prison” *by themselves*. So, while it is true that the Apostle used these words, and therefore, we have *some* license to develop *some* areas of Doctrine from these statements, the *main* Point, the *Context* of *everything* Peter has been talking about in this whole Chapter (even this entire Epistle), is why God’s people Suffer. And specifically, why “suffering for doing what is right” is “better” than “suffering for doing what is wrong”. *That’s* the main point. *That’s* the *context*. And so, Noah and his Ark and the “spirits in prison” are *secondary* and simply serve to help make *that* point, and *not* some *other* point.

Now about 1,450 years before Jesus was born, God the Holy Spirit “moved along” Moses (probably while he was in the Mount getting the Ten Commandments), and God *sovereignly* revealed to him the Book of **Genesis**. But all of the people that we read about in **Genesis** lived and did what they did many *hundreds* of years *before* Moses was ever born. And the inspired narrative in **Genesis** surrounding Creation happened several *thousands* of years *before* Moses was born¹.

The Apostle Peter is referring to the time when people in Noah’s day were disobedient, mocking him as a righteous man obeying God

¹ It is my firm conviction, based on everything I know and read in Scripture- that the Universe is somewhere between 6,000-10,000 years old. If God used Moses to write down the first five Books somewhere around 1,450BC, that would mean that Creation occurred somewhere between 4,550 and 8,550 years before that time. For more information, you may wish to go over the Sermon Series that I preached in January of 2018, “*In the Beginning... An Examination of the Genesis Account of Creation and the Fall of Mankind*”

(which was similar to the situation in the lives of Peter's first readers), and that Jesus, *in the spirit*, was sent by God in those days to preach to those people *through Noah*. Remember back in **1 Peter 1:10& 11**, the Apostle said:

As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.

... so, back then, Peter laid out for us the Reality that the Spirit of Jesus Christ was *in* the Old Testament Prophets as they heralded the *partial* Revelation that God gave them. And here, in verse 11, Peter is *re-enforcing* that by saying that, in the Spirit, Jesus was sent by God to preach Righteousness to the people of that day, *in, by, and through* Noah.

So, while the Spirit of Jesus was in the Old Testament Prophets, prophesying the *first* "Coming" of the Messiah, so, too, the Spirit of Jesus was *in* Noah preaching to the disobedient people of Noah's day and giving us a natural example of a spiritual Truth.

So, Noah was a "type" of Jesus Christ. He heralded true Righteousness, even as Jesus is *Himself* the Righteousness of God. And the Ark that God sovereignly provided *in, by, and through* Noah, was a "symbol" of what true, genuine Salvation looks like. So, the Ark "saved" or "rescued" or "delivered" unworthy sinners from the *specific* Wrath of God by the 40-day Flood, even as Salvation "saves", "recues", or "delivers" unworthy sinners from the *overall* and *eternal* Wrath of God against our sin. So, from that standpoint, even the Ark itself is a "type" of Jesus.

And Peter's point is that by Grace and through Faith, Jesus has *already* "saved" or "rescued" these "suffering saints" from the most *horrific* and *important* Suffering, which is suffering in Hell underneath God's Wrath. And since God has *already* done what is *most* important, it is very easy for God to "rescue" or "save" or "deliver" them from a *lesser* type of Suffering, at the hands of evil men, *if that is God's Will*. But even if it *isn't* God's Will to deliver them from the immediate torment of their enemies, the knowledge that God has *already* been

gracious to them in saving their souls from *Eternal Damnation* brings tremendous comfort. Now look again at verses 18b-20:

... He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits *now* in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through *the* water.

Now many very godly people take what Peter says here to mean that when Jesus died, He went into the "Place of the Dead" and preached to the spirits who were there. I was taught this when I was first saved. But I no longer believe that. And the reason I no longer take that position is because Peter didn't say that Jesus preached to *all* the spirits who were in the "Place of the Dead", but only those:

... who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark ...

... so, if Peter's point was that Jesus went to preach to *all* who had ever died (and were now in the Place of the Dead), why would he say that these people:

... were once disobedient on the days of Noah, while the Ark was being built?

There were literally *millions* of spirits who had *not* lived during the days of Noah, who were there for Jesus to preach to at the time that Jesus died. So, *why* was Peter being very specific here? And the reason is that Peter was simply saying that Jesus went to preach in those days, because Jesus' Spirit was inside Noah as Noah preached Righteousness to them. And since these people were disobedient back then, they died in their sins and they are NOW in Prison awaiting their *final* Judgment.

But what has this got to do with Peter encouraging us to stand faithful when we are suffering for doing what is right? Well, at least three ways:

A) This assures us of the Greatness of Jesus Christ. Jesus is not bound by space or time. Jesus was there, in Noah's day, preaching thousands of years before He was ever born, and He is here speaking today. He will be with you, to the end of this age, in China and the Congo and Bangkok and Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and Japan and Papua New Guinea and Siberia and the Philippines and Ivory Coast and Austria and Cyprus and Germany, and Gulfport, Mississippi, wherever you may suffer, both now and forever, Jesus is there!

B) It is better to obey Jesus, even if we have to suffer, than it is to disobey Jesus and be cast into the "Prison" of verse 19. That is what happened to the people back in Noah's day. They thought it was foolish to heed the Call of God that Noah gave them, until it started raining. So, they stayed comfortable and respectable until the water began to fall. And this explains why people can be converted with a Message that calls for Suffering. Because it is a Suffering that will keep them out of an *eternal* Prison.

C) It is no disadvantage to you to be a small rejected minority. That's the point in verse 20 where it says that in the Ark "a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water." It must have felt pretty foolish to side with such a madman as Noah, until it began to rain. And then it was the smartest thing they ever did. But the point is: if you are a minority with God, you will be saved, and the tables will be turned. So, when the Suffering comes, don't throw away your Confidence that has great Reward.

4. Know the Meaning of Baptism

The fourth way that Peter strengthens us for Suffering is by describing the true meaning of Baptism.

1 Peter 3:21

Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you — not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience — through the resurrection of Jesus Christ

The flood waters that brought Divine Judgment on the world in Noah's day reminds Peter of Christian Baptism. Now back in Verse 18, the Apostle said:

... Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God ...

... in other words, Jesus saves us. But the question is: "Who is the **"us"**, in verse 18, that Jesus saves? Whom does Christ's Death actually save? And that's what verse 21 answers:

... those who are baptized.

But Peter knows that this Statement will be misunderstood if he does not qualify it. So, when he says, "Baptism now saves you," he adds:

... not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience ...

... which is virtually a definition of true, biblical Baptism. Now I'm going to get into this in much greater detail next time, but suffice it to say that Baptism is an *outward* expression of an *inward, spiritual* "Appeal to God" for a "spiritual cleansing". In other words, Baptism is a way of saying to God:

"I trust You, God, to apply the Death of Jesus to me for my Sins and to bring me through my own death and Your Judgment into a new and Everlasting Life through the Resurrection of Jesus."

So, while Baptism may very well cleanse the physical body (since it was by complete immersion), and wash away any literal dirt that may be on the body, that is *not* why Peter says that Baptism "saves". It saves sinners for only one reason: it is an *outward* expression of an *inward* Reality that has already taken place. So, Baptism is an "appeal of Faith". In **Romans 10:13**, the Apostle Paul quotes from the Teachings of the Prophet Joel from about 750-900 years before Jesus was born, where the Prophet said:

Romans 10:13

... WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.

... Baptism is just such a "Calling". It is an "appeal" to the Lord.

But how does knowing this about Baptism strengthen us for Suffering with Jesus? When we have come through the waters of Baptism, we have "passed through Death and Judgment". We have been "buried with Christ" and we have now been "risen with Him". We have now "passed from death to life". God's Judgment against us is now past. And that means that the Suffering we may be experiencing right now has nothing to do with any Condemnation from God. Because all of God's Wrath has already been experienced for us by Jesus Christ. And we have received that Truth "by faith" and we have expressed that Faith by our Baptism. So, the fact that we have been baptized stands as a constant reminder that the worst possible Suffering (Hell) has been forever averted. Jesus took that for us. And so, we will never have to come into Judgment again. The Apostle Paul said:

Romans 8:1

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

... so, we have already died that Death "in Christ". And we have been raised "in Christ". Therefore, whatever present Suffering we might be experiencing, is *not* the Wrath of God. It is merely the loving Discipline of our Father, for the preparation for Glory!

5. Look to Jesus at God's Right Hand- Sovereignly Ruling over Everything- *Including our Suffering*

1 Peter 3:21b&22

... through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

Now one last way Peter strengthens us for Suffering is by showing us that Jesus is at the Right Hand of God, ruling over all Angels and all Authorities and all Powers. And, again, we can use that Knowledge to help prepare us for our own Suffering. Because this means that no evil man, no demon, and no Government is free to do as they please. All

Angels, all Authorities, all Powers, all people, all evil spirits, all demons, and even satan himself, are subject to the Power and Supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ!

So, when Peter says at the end of his letter (5:9) that the devil prowls around like a lion seeking to devour, resist him firm in your faith, THIS is the Faith he has in mind. The Faith that all Angels, and all Authorities, and all Powers are subject to King Jesus. And *this* is the Faith that we rebuke and resist the devil with:

- ✓ The people or the demons that are *causing* our Suffering are subject to Jesus Christ
- ✓ Jesus reigns at God's "Right Hand" and they are completely under His Control
- ✓ Therefore, they can do nothing to us- without His Permission
- ✓ They are entirely limited
- ✓ They cannot touch us- unless Jesus allows them to
- ✓ And Jesus will only let them- to the degree that their hurtful touch against us- will turn for our Good and for God's Glory.

So, stand firm, dear friends. Stand firm in this great Faith, and arm yourselves with the Purpose of Jesus Christ. The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His Life as a Ransom for many. So, may we follow Him- all the way to Glory!

Amen. Let's pray.

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