

Sermon Series: Resilient Faith: Standing Strong in the Midst of Suffering
To be used with: Session Six: Victorious Faith
Sermon Title Possibilities:
 Waiting for Glory
Scripture: 1 Peter 5:6-11

Connection To Unit Theme: *Resilient Faith: Standing Strong in the Midst of Suffering* is a six session study from the book of 1 Peter. These text-based sermon outlines will cover the same Scripture passages and topics as are being studied in the small groups, but with a different perspective. This will allow you as the pastor to reinforce what small group leaders are talking about, without “stealing their thunder.”

Session 6 of *Resilient Faith* is called “Victorious Faith.” The Point is “God will strengthen and restore me.”

The Bible promises that we, as Christians, will suffer. But it also promises that our suffering is only temporary. Our God will eventually rescue and restore us.

Introduction Idea: J.R.R. Tolkien coined the term *eucatastrophe* which he defined as a sudden happy turn which pierces a reader with joy. He said, “It [eucatastrophe] is the mark of a good fairy-story, of the higher or more complete kind, that however wild its events, however fantastic or terrible the adventures, it can give to child or man that hears it, when the ‘turn’ comes, a catch of the breath, a beat and lifting of the heart, near to (or indeed accompanied by) tears, as keen as that given by any form of literary art, and having a peculiar quality” (*On Fairy Stories*, 89).

The promise of the Gospel is that God will one day renew all things. He will write into a history the great eucatastrophe. He will set all things right and fully redeem all that has been lost, broken, and marred by the curse of sin. This is what we as believers have to look forward to. A time when God will “wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away” (Rev. 21:4). This is our great hope. But for now we wait. And our text today is about how to wait for this restoration. Let’s read it together.

[Read 1 Peter 5:6-11]

Peter is very clear as to how we should wait for God to restore us. Let’s consider what he says under three headings.

Point 1: Rest in God’s care (vv.6-7).

Peter knew that suffering has a way of making us proud and independent. We, for numerous reasons, feel we should not be suffering, and that in turn can make us distance ourselves from God. This is why Peter says we should humble ourselves “under the mighty hand of God” (v.6). But this humbling involves something else. We are to cast all our anxiety on Him because He cares for us (v.7). God is concerned about every part of our lives. There is nothing He is indifferent to. He loves us and wants us to bring everything to Him.

As we wait for God to restore us, it is important that we let Him care for us now. Many of us have a hard time with this. Anxiety has a way of growing in our hearts as we dwell on our concerns and fears. But Peter knows that anxiety really is a version of pride. Anxiety is caused by us looking into the future and thinking that we know the best outcome. When that outcome is threatened, we get anxious. How insightful is the Word of God?! This is why we must first humble ourselves and then cast our anxiety on God. He cares for us. Let us rest in that care.

Application: Have you ever considered how anxiety is a species of pride? Let these words sink down and move you to resting in God's care.

Point 2: Resist the devil (vv. 8-9).

Modern readers of verses 8 and 9 might be somewhat put off at Peter's mention of the devil. But rather than merely a symbolic reference to evil or some primitive belief of the ancient world, the devil, according to Peter, is real. He is alive and active in this world. He hates Jesus, and he hates the followers of Jesus. His goal is to devour us and destroy our faith in God. He will use any means necessary. Therefore Peter says to be sober-minded, watchful, and to resist him.

Peter is not suggesting that we look for the devil under every rock. But he is suggesting that we understand, as Paul said, "We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12). While our culture—even church culture sometimes—doesn't want to face this fact, we must. We must remember what the narrator of the *Hobbit* said, "It does not do to leave a live dragon out of your calculations if you live near him" (*The Hobbit*, 216). As Christians, we live in a world with a live dragon (Rev. 12:9). He is seeking to devour us and set us against our great God and Savior. Let us resist him! We do this by standing firm in our faith and remember that "the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world" (v.9).

Application: Many of us are suspicious of any talk about the devil. We need to be careful that we not undermine what the Bible has to say about this issue. Stand firm this week and know that you have an enemy who wants to devour you.

Point 3: Receive God's restoration (vv.10-11).

The final two verses of our text today are worth reading again. "And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen" (vv.10-11). What a glorious promise! Our God will not leave us helpless in our suffering. He will come and restore us.

Peter likely has in mind here the "grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:12). We look forward to a day when God will ultimately and eternally restore us. But we can also take heart in the fact that God will restore us, at least in part, in this life. He is active and intimately involved in our lives now. Therefore we can trust Him as we wait for His plan to

unfold in our lives. But we can also say with Job “Though he slay me, I will hope in him” (Job 13:15). For we know that our suffering is only temporary.

Application: Many of us grow impatient as we wait for God to restore us. Often our suffering seems to go on and on. But this text promises that God will do a glorious work in our lives. Will you trust this today?

Conclusion Idea: *To End All Wars* is the true story of a group of Allied prisoners in a Japanese labor camp during World War II. In one scene the prisoners discuss what they will do when the war is over. One soldier will get married, another plans to be a teacher. But when they ask the Colonel what he will do, he simply says, "Start preparing for the next war." One Day, God will end all the wars and battles we face. For now we wait. And our waiting requires a daily commitment to pursue our God and trust in Him.

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