

Following His Steps



1 Peter 2:18–25

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I remember, probably the first time I got a little bit of ridicule and resistance about my faith, it was in college. I had a professor who didn't like the Bible very much and when he found out that I did, he didn't like me. I was a new Christian so I kind of had a little bit of truth, not a whole lot of truth, but right off the bat he would say things that I knew were not correct. I would bring those to attention, and typically, your professor doesn't like it when a student bring things to his attention that are actually true that he thinks are not true. So, class just did not go well for me. We'll just say that. So as his class continued, it just got worse and worse and worse. At the end of class, I would actually have students apologize to me on behalf of the professor, "Man, I'm so sorry he said that to you. He didn't mean that." I would say, "I think he did, but thanks for taking up for me." So, what do you do when you're a student and your teacher is kind of ridiculing you? I mean, I wasn't *exactly* stuck (I could've changed classes but that would've required some effort and different things) but I was a little bit stuck in that situation.

So what do you do when you're suffering for doing what's right, for doing what's good, for doing what the Lord would want you to do? What do you

do in that situation? Well, I think Peter is going to demonstrate to us what you do in that situation—you continue, you endure suffering in the footsteps of our Suffering Savior. We're going to see that Jesus is actually our example in this. We actually look to Him and we follow in His footsteps. Maybe you find yourself in a situation where maybe the person who pays you or teaches you or in some way is over you in authority, and things aren't going well, and you have a little bit of suffering in your life because of them. What do you do? Well, Peter would say stay the course. Continue to do good even though you might be suffering for it because you're going to point people to the Suffering Savior. We are going to read Peter's advice, his command to servants who are serving masters.

Scripture

"Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly. 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. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."

Peter is addressing servants who are living under masters, and some of it's going well and some of it's going poorly. He said if you're serving a master who is unjustly treating you, you should continue, continue to do good because God is watching, God sees it, and you're following the example of Jesus who walked before you. So you're limping in His footsteps but you are leaving justice to God who is the just judge. You don't have to retaliate, you don't have to get back or get even; you can trust God in your

circumstance. I think by doing so you are going to help people to see your Suffering Savior, who is Jesus.

Let's go first to this idea of obeying unjust masters. This is like obeying bad bosses; that is kind of how we're going to frame it. But first of all, we need to address that when you are studying the Bible the first thing you do when you read a text is to put on a different set of glasses. Anytime you're getting ready to study Scripture, you're going to grab glasses, you're going to put them on, and these glasses are what I call them/then glasses. When you're reading the Bible, you never just read a text and apply it directly to your own situation or own life, because it was not written to your particular circumstance. Instead, there was an audience that that text you are reading was written to, so you have to put on those them/then glasses and you have to ask the question, what did this mean to them back then? Peter is obviously not addressing you and me. He's not saying, "Dear Hardin Baptist Church." He's addressing the elect exiles, that's *them* and he's addressing it back *then*. That's first century Roman culture and abroad, as the Roman culture is kind of spread out. So, he's addressing people of the Roman Empire (that is the them) back then, and he's giving them instruction. It's really important for us to remember these words are for them, then.

Then after we figure out exactly what Peter says, then we think about what does it mean to us now. But we don't first ask what it means to us now; first, we ask what it meant to them then. That's really important because we see in our Bibles this idea of servants and masters. Some of your translations will say slaves and masters. So for us, we automatically think about American slavery and that Peter is addressing American slavery. That's just kind of how we view it, but that is not the context that Peter is addressing. Instead, he is address servants and slaves in the Roman Empire. For instance, people see terms like slave in the Bible and say that Christianity condones slavery, that it's okay with it. But we see the writers never condone slavery. They're writing to people who find themselves as slaves and servants and they're trying to figure out how to be Christians under a social order they can't get out of. Of course, we see that it's actually Christianity that brought upheaval to the whole American

slavery institution. So we know it's an horrific evil, and Peter's not saying it is an okay institution. No, the Scripture is very clear that subjugating human beings according to race is evil; all people are created in the image of God. So, we need to deal with what exactly were servants and slaves in Roman culture in the Roman Empire.

Now, there are a few differences on how we think about slavery and servanthood. Number one is it was never based on race. In the Roman Empire, slavery was not a race-based system. It's not based on the color of your skin. Secondly, it was never a permanent institution. You could always rid yourselves of being owned by somebody. There were ways you could get out of it, or you could pay for your own freedom. Also, slaves in Roman culture were very well educated, oftentimes. They were the doctors, musicians, teachers, so they were basically just the working class. Most of Rome was in some way a servant or a slave. That is who Peter was writing to then, and it's not exactly how we see it. New Testament scholar, Wayne Grudem, would say when we come to the term servant we need a stronger word than servant but we need a weaker word than slave. When we think about a servant or a slave, there's not really a one-to-one correlation to our culture today, so we have to go back to what was happening back then. For our purposes, think more Downton Abbey when you think about this address to servants. Think about bottom floor Downton Abbey. Now, it's not exactly one-to-one because yes, these people were owned by their master, but for the most part historians and scholars would tell us these were great working relationships. Servants in the house were treated well, most of them had really good masters, they were educated, and they could pay their way out, but they were also servants under a master. Now, sometimes these masters were not good. Sometimes these masters would be mean and cruel, mistreat and malign, and make their lives really miserable.

So, the question is, if you're a servant in the house of a master, what do you do if your master is creating suffering in your life? This word, servants, or slave in some translations, is actually the Greek word that is not like slave or servant in general, but a servant in a house. This is a person working in a house so it's been the daily life of probably most people in the

church. Most people in the church have been servants in some way in a house somewhere, and in the church some of them have a good master and some of them have a really bad master. Peter says what you need to do is be subject to your master with all reverence. In other words, you need to bring yourself under your master. You need to obey their authority. You need to have reverence, respect, and honor and have this fear towards them, and it could be towards them or towards God. I think it's both together; you're fearing them because you have a fear of God. You have a proper reverence for them. Notice that it's not only "to the good and gentle"—that's when it's easy, that's when it's great. Your master's great, life's great, your work's great. Everything is happy. But Peter says "also to the unjust." So it's also when it's really hard. In that situation, when your master is not kind, when they're not encouraging, when they're not giving you a pat on the back, when they're not cheering you on, what do you do in that situation? You also obey them out of reverence and respect.

So, we've got ask a lot of questions like, how do we do this? Why do we do this? What is our motivation for this? How do we actually make this practically happen? You could say that it's not a one-to-one ratio, but you could say that this addresses our relationships because most of us work for somebody. A few of us have our own business and we're our own boss, or we're retired, but for most of us in here, we work for somebody. We have an employer, a manager, a team lead. We have somebody that's over us. Maybe you're a student and you have a teacher that's over you. So what do you do if that person over you is not really that great? What if she's mean...what if he's not nice...what if they're treating you in a way that's not kind and encouraging, what do you do? Well, you're going to still come under their authority out of reverence and respect for who they are.

Why is that the case? Why are we to be subject to the unjust? The command is to be subject, to come under, and we're going to see the reason is because suffering in that situation is actually a beautiful thing in the eyes of God. When you suffer in this sort of a scenario, it is this beauty, the beauty of suffering. Look at me in verses 19–20. It says, "For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while

suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God." Notice, twice it says this is a gracious thing. What is a gracious thing? It's when we are doing good, doing what's right, and in doing what's right we are suffering sorrows. In other words, we're living, and we're working, and we're doing what God has called us to do; we're doing what's right and good and we are getting wronged for it. John Piper would say, "It seems to imply in this text that the reason the person is suffering is because of their Christian worldview and their Christian principles."

Now, the text gives us a couple of clues here. For one, you're being subject to your master and you're doing good, you're doing what they're saying, you're doing right, but they are counting it as wrong. They are not liking it. They are actually giving you wrong for the right you're doing. So, it wouldn't make sense if you're obeying your master and then they're being mean to you. It would seem to be the good you're doing is actually good that's aligned with the gospel or a biblical worldview, and your master disagrees with it—he doesn't think it's good; he actually thinks it's evil. So I think what's happening, most likely, is there is a servant in the house who is a Christian, a follower of Jesus now, and some of things the master is doing is probably not okay with God. It's not in alignment with the Christian worldview so there's some tension going on. This servant is trying to do what's right, good, and true, but the master is viewing their actions as evil though they are actually good. So what's happening is there is a suffering that's taking place. There's suffering for the sake of doing what's right in God's sight because their employer is viewing it as wrong in his or her sight.

So we see that suffering unjustly is a gracious thing, but notice when and how it's a gracious thing. It's a gracious thing "when mindful of God." Now, it's a really important phrase in this text. In other words, it's not a gracious thing in God's sight when you, as a student or an employee, are somewhat suffering at work or school and gritting your teeth and getting through it, but it's really not because of God it's just because of you. You're thinking I'm going to endure this, I'm going to fight through it, I'm strong; I can

make it on my own. Well, that's not gracious in God's sight. No, it's gracious when you are mindful of God. In other words, when you have God on your mind, God is your motivation. You are obeying, you're doing what's right, and you're doing it through the gospel, for the sake of the gospel. God is your motivation. God is the one sustaining you and bringing you through that. In other words, this is gospel power not flesh power. It's not try hard and do good and it will all be okay. Well, God's not pleased with that. No, He's pleased when we rely on Him, when we think about Him, when our motivation is Him, then it is grace, it is His favor, it's His goodness. So, what is this thing that is gracious? It's when you endure sorrows while suffering unjustly. You're suffering but it's not your fault. You did nothing wrong but you're suffering for it.

Then Peter sort of gives a caveat and says this is not what I'm talking about. He says, "For what credit is it [what gain, what fame, what celebration] if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure?" If you're having a hard time at work or school and it's your own fault, like you're not turning in assignments and you're getting a bad grade, and you're like... *God thinks this is gracious, I'm just suffering*. No, you didn't turn your assignment. No one's cheering you and God's isn't saying well done, just stay the course, just keep not turning those papers in, keep enduring suffering. That's not what Peter is talking about. He's saying it's a gracious thing when you do *good* and suffer. So it's when you're doing good, you're doing the right thing, you're doing what God wants you to do, yet the very good you're doing is causing suffering in your life. Some of you are in this situation. Maybe you're a student, maybe you're employee, maybe this is outside of work relations, just a social relation with buddies or with friends or marriage...whatever it is you are doing good, and the more good you do, you're actually suffering for it. People don't like it. They're ridiculing you. They're calling your names. You are experiencing stuff for doing good. What does Peter say? Endure. In other words, keep doing good. If your goodness leads to suffering, he's saying don't stop doing good, continue to do good. If it's causing suffering, that's okay, keep doing good. You might think if you stop doing good, then you wouldn't have to suffer—yeah, but that's the opposite of what God wants you to do. God wants you to keep doing good even when the goodness that you're doing is causing suffering

in your life. Keep doing good. Keep doing what He has commanded and what keeps your mind fixed on God, and keep the course.

Remain—that's what he's telling these servants with masters who it seems like their Christian worldview, their Christian perspective, is now causing dissension in the household. Keep doing good. Keep being a gospel witness even when you're suffering for it because this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. See, here's probably what a lot of these servants are assuming...*I'm trying to live out the gospel. I'm trying to do what's right and my master is unjust. I'm mistreated now, I'm maligned now, I'm getting put outside, things that are happening for me. My life is going worse and nobody knows it! I mean, I'm in this house and nobody sees the suffering I'm going through. So, why should I even keep going? If nobody's going to see, if nobody's going to notice, why should I keep doing good?* Peter says because God sees it, because God's watching, because God always sees. And when God sees you doing good and suffering for it, and enduring and continuing to be that witness even though it's costing you a little bit, it is gracious in His sight. In other words, it is beautiful and you're inviting God's favor and God's power in your very life. So, the servant who thinks I'm just in a house and nobody sees it, Peter says God sees, so keep going because you're bringing a smile to God's face. Some of you feel like you're in a work relationship, you're in a student relationship, and something's happening where you think I'm trying but nobody sees this, I'm isolated...and Peter would say no, God sees so stay the course. Keep doing good even if good is actually costing you things.

So, how do we do this? Well, we have to remember our suffering is actually following the footsteps of Jesus. Notice with me in verse 21, it says, "For to this you have been called..." For this, that's this suffering. What you've just experienced, to this, to suffering, "...you have been called." In other words, he's trying to give us a perspective that your very salvation includes some amount of suffering. It's sort of part of the deal for all of us as Christians. We are going to suffer if we follow Jesus. And we should get that, because we're following a guy who got put on trial and crucified—that's the guy we're following. It didn't go well for Him, so it might not go well for us. It's kind of like our medical release form. It's like

here, sign on the dotted line, you might get hurt as a Christian. You might get maligned, you might get mistreated, go ahead and sign it because it's part of the deal. You were called to this in a sense; the world is not going to like everything you do. That is part of the deal. It's about taking up our cross and following in the footsteps of Jesus. But often, as we walk with Him, in His footsteps, it's more like a limp than walking, because man, it hurts. It's painful, and those strides aren't always bliss and joy. Sometimes they are limping in sorrow and hurt, because the very thing we're standing up for is getting us in trouble.

Peter says we are following the example of Christ. Notice, "...because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps." So think about that. You're a servant in a house and you're suffering because if you're doing good, you're trying to do what God says and you're suffering for it. Maybe you're an employee doing what's right and you're suffering for it, or you're a student, you're suffering for it, you're trying to make Christ known, you're suffering for it, Peter says remember Christ's example, Christ suffered for you. Peter is connecting their suffering with the Lord Jesus. Suffering was part of the deal for Christ. Do you know why Christ suffered? It wasn't because He did anything wrong; He also suffered unjustly. He suffered for you and He from me. In other words, Christ endured the cross for you and me. He suffered. So I think what Peter is trying to do is connect our suffering to the Lord's suffering so that in our suffering we would suffer well, so that we could show others the Suffering Savior. That's what he wants us to see. It's what he wants us to do, just cherish and see the example of Christ and follow in His footsteps. So, as these servants are under bad masters, they're remembering Jesus and they're following His footsteps. For us, as we suffer, we're limping with Jesus, we are suffering with Jesus and in doing so people are going to see and notice and they're going to be able to see our Suffering Savior.

Notice what Peter says about Jesus. He's going to start quoting Isaiah 53. He's going to allude to this passage about the Suffering Servant. Here's what he says in verses 22–23, "He [Jesus] committed no sin..." So we're going to see Christ's example. In other words, if we're going to follow His

example, what did Christ do? "He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly."

That's what Peter wants these servants to do, to continue to entrust themselves to God who judges justly. You don't have to plead your own case, you don't have to fight your own personal justice, what you need to do is endure and let God deal because He is the one who judges justly.

Now notice that we get some things about Jesus that are really important. Number one is Jesus was completely innocent. Peter alludes to Isaiah 53:9 when he says, "He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth." Just think about this. Jesus committed no sin, the Bible says. That's one of the things Christians believe; we believe that Jesus was sinless. He's the only one on the planet who never sinned. Can anyone in this room say they have never sinned a day in your life? It's hysterical even ask that, right? When you got out of bed this morning, did any of you have another thought besides I love the Lord God with all my heart, all my soul, and all my mind, and I love everybody else like myself? Did you think that when you woke up? Or, were you like, I love coffee the most. And my kids? I'm going to treat them how I want to treat them, not how I want them to treat me. We are so prone to wander and sin, but Jesus never missed the mark. Four-year-old Jesus never sinned, ten-year-old Jesus never sinned, thirteen-year-old Jesus never sinned, sixteen-year-old Jesus never sinned. He went all through the teenage years never sinning, not even deceit in His mouth, not even sarcasm to His mom! Can you imagine that? Never sinning—and not just in His action but His attitudes? His very words, His very thought, completely sinless. So if there is anyone who should not suffer it's Jesus. The point is Jesus doesn't deserve any suffering because He is innocent. So Jesus actually suffered unjustly on the cross, and it was not for His sake it was for our sake.

Notice number two, Jesus didn't retaliate. Notice it says, "When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten..." Jesus never retaliated I mean, think about that. Think about how many times Jesus was wronged, and He didn't try to wrong back. He

didn't return evil for evil; He returned evil with good. When He suffered, He didn't threaten; instead, He returned evil with good. That is our great example. Think about that when you just look at the cross of Christ. When you look at the trial and the execution of Jesus—they scourged Him, they put a robe on Him, and a crown of thorns on His head, and they mocked Him, made fun of Him as the king. They spit on Him. They tortured Him. They caused Him to bleed in agony and they nailed Him to a tree. Then they mocked Him saying go ahead and save yourself if you really are the guy you say you are. I mean, the King of the cosmos who made everything, who could just by thinking it, annihilate everybody! Yet Jesus just takes it—well, He doesn't just take it, He says, "Father, forgive them for they know now what they do." With all of this mistreatment towards Him, how could He do that? Why did He not fight back? Why did He not try to get even, or at least threaten? I mean, think about how many relationships we have, right? If we're wronged, we want to wrong back. Think about a marriage, if our spouse says something, I'm going to get her back, or I'm going to get him back. I'm going to do the cold shoulder or I'm going to speak that unkind word, I'm going to buy that thing. We want to get back, get even, or at least threaten. We want to get justice. If we're wronged, someone else needs to be wronged too. Not with Jesus.

So, how did Jesus do that? It says He continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly. How in the world is a servant going to live under a master who is mistreating them and how in the world are they going to sustain that? They entrust their very lives to the one who judges justly. How are you going to walk through work tomorrow when you know there's going to be a hard meeting, a hard thing that you're going to suffer a little bit because you are doing good? You're following a good God. There's going to be some opposition there as a student, or whatever situation you find yourself in, how are you going to endure that rather than reviling and fighting back and speaking up? How can you keep walking? It's because you're entrusting, not yourself, you're entrusting God. And guess what God is—He is a judge who judges justly. In other words, He's going to make sure all wrongs get treated with justice. He's going to make sure that justice is served. It's not that we don't care about justice. We do. We care for justice, we fight for justice, we want justice for everyone, we are

passionate about that. But when it comes to our personal being, we can suffer injustice because we're leaving it to God because He's the judge who's going to judge justly. He's going to figure this out. We can absorb a few blows because we know that God has got this.

Number three, Jesus entrusted His Father. Instead of getting even, Jesus said I'm trusting justice to God. I'm going to keep doing what's right. That's what Jesus did. He's trusting God to be the one who judges justly and then He brings in the actual sufferings of Christ. Notice the sufferings of Christ in verse 24, "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." It is another illusion to Isaiah 53:4 that Jesus bore our sins. So, the question is why did Jesus suffer? He's innocent. He didn't deserve anything. Why did He go to the cross? He died unjustly He suffered unjustly, why? It was for you and me. He bore our sins in His body, He took your wrong, He took my wrong, all of our rebellion against Him, and He assumed it on Himself. Paul would say He who knew no sin became sin on our behalf so that in Him, we might become the righteous of Christ. On the cross, Jesus took our sins and God viewed Jesus as a sinner, like you and me. Those things that you've done, your rebellion—God looked on Jesus as a rebel and Jesus died as a rebel dying your death and my death. He bore our sins in His body, and Peter says, on the tree. Everyone knows the tree is another word for cross, but I think Peter uses tree to bring us back to the Old Testament Deuteronomy passage that says anyone who hangs on a tree is cursed. So not only is He hanging as a Roman criminal but He's hanging as a cursed man by God. He's cursed by God for our sake. Jesus dies in our place for our sins, which is the very heart of the gospel.

Why did He die for us? Why did He suffer for us? So that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. In other words, Peter's trying to weave in this idea of suffering...he's saying you're suffering, I know you are, keep enduring, trust God. Well, why? Why should I suffer? Why should I keep trusting God? Because suffering often has purpose, and notice the purpose of Christ's suffering—Christ suffered to save you. His suffering was not wasted; it was on purpose. He suffered so that He might save you. So, I

think the connection is your suffering can also be used for purpose because as you suffer unjustly, it's going to bring attention to you and those around you. Why are you not fighting back? Why are you not speaking up? Why are you not demanding that you get your way? All these questions and you get to show people your Suffering Savior. Because I'm trusting God, God's the judge, God will figure out retribution, what needs to happen, do you know what I'm doing? I'm going to love and show grace to the people around me. I'm going to show mercy because I have a God who showed mercy to me, and He did it by suffering for me on a cross so I'm going to suffer a little bit here to show people my Suffering Savior. See, Jesus suffered to save you. It's by His wounds you have been healed. His suffering had purpose. He took our stripes. He took our chastisement. That punishment we deserved, Jesus took so that we could be free and so that we could have none.

Now Peter is going to talk about our sin, our straying. So, here's the suffering of Christ, now let's end it with our own sin, our own straying. Verse 25 says, "For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." This is another allusion to Isaiah 53:6. It said you were like sheep. Again, he's writing to servants in houses who are being mistreated and things aren't going well because they're following Jesus. What do you do? Keep enduring. Entrust God. God is doing something—even in your mistreatment, God is moving; God is doing because He did it in Christ. The sufferings of Christ led to your rescue, your salvation. Don't you remember your own rescue? You were like straying sheep. In other words, you were a rebel. You were running from God. You did not love God. You loved sin and you ran away from Him. It's this idea of we are all sinners who ran away from God. If you think about, what do we contribute to our salvation? Have you ever thought about that? What do I bring to the table when it comes to salvation? We know that God contributes a lot like, His Son and the cross, but what do we contribute to salvation? Well, the only thing we bring to the table is our sin. That's our contribution. In other words, our contribution is the very need for salvation. It was our sin that sent Jesus to a cross to suffer in our place for our sins, and Peter is bringing that up...*Hey, you were the sheep. You're the ones that ran away. You're the reason that Jesus had to suffer.* But

notice that those who ran away, they have now returned. The sheep that ran has now returned. How did they return? Through the cross of Christ because of the suffering of Christ, because of how He hung on a tree for you and for me, and we can die and now live to righteousness. The sheep have come home. So, he's given them this picture...*Hey servants, I know you're in a house, I know you seem like you're insignificant, and nobody cares, but here's what I want you to remember, God, the Father, who is the righteous judge, is also your Shepherd and you're His a little sheep.* That's good news for that culture because if you look at the Old Testament you see that sheep couldn't really take care of themselves, but if they had a good shepherd the good shepherd could watch over their needs. I mean, just read Psalm 23 when you get home and think about God as your Shepherd who takes care of every need you have. Life doesn't go well sometimes, but if you have a Shepherd who's watching, He cares for you and He knows just what you need. So trust your Good Shepherd.

God is not just your Shepherd He's also the Overseer of your souls. The word, overseer, is like the word, pastor, or bishop. It's this idea of Jesus in a real way is your pastor. He is the Overseer of your soul. He's looking out for you. He's got your life mapped out and planned out, and He cares for you and He's getting you to where you need to be. So, here you have a people who are suffering somewhat and they're commanded to be mindful of God, remember God is looking, look to the example of Jesus, and oh by the way, Jesus is your Good Shepherd who's also your perfect pastor. In other words, you have all you need in the midst of your suffering; you are not alone. For us, we don't have an exact correlation of the group that Peter is talking to but we are in relationships with people who have authority over us. And sometimes, as we follow Jesus and we do what Jesus wants, it brings hardship to our lives and hardship to our jobs from the people in authority over us. We are maligned, we are mistreated, we are ridiculed, we are called names. Sometimes, we're demoted. All sorts of things can happen because the person over of us doesn't love how we love Jesus.

So, what do you do when that's you? What do you do when you're in a situation where following Jesus is making your life worse rather than

better? Peter would say endure. Endure unjust suffering. And as you do so, entrust God who is the righteous judge, and trust Him. He's in control of your life. You don't have to get back. You don't have to get even. You don't have to threaten. You don't have to get your way. Instead, you can trust God in your situation, that God is doing something in you and through you. I think part of the big reason that He wants us to suffer well is because in our suffering we can show others our Suffering Savior, because it's not normal. It's normal to bite back. It's normal to fight back. It's normal to speak out. It's normal to yell. It's normal to get angry. When we repay good for evil, people notice. Your employer notices. People notice, and if you do it enough, they're going to ask questions, "I continually call you names, how do you continually speak good about me?" "Well, it's because of my Savior—and let me tell you about my Savior. He suffered for me so that I might die to sin and live to Him. He suffered for you also, and if you will repent and believe in Him, you too can have life everlasting."

See, I had options in that classroom. I could've just changed classes. That would have been probably the easiest. You know, I like the Bible, the professor doesn't; he doesn't like me because I like the Bible. It's not going well for me. So I could've easily just taken the easy road out and said I want to switch classes. I could have found a professor who loved the Bible and loved God and everything would be great. But if I had done that, I wouldn't have gotten to have a Bible study with two atheist in that class. Do you know what they got to see week in and week out? Someone who was getting ridiculed and name called and maligned and made fun of, but who just continued to, by God's grace, give a little bit of truth and a lot of love and a lot of generosity, who befriended a professor who didn't really care for me that much. They got to watch and see, and the end of that semester, by God's grace and by God's mercy, they were won over, not with better arguments, they were won over by why are you still being kind to this man. It was because Christ was kind to me, and I was able to that little situation to show somebody the glory of Christ, my Suffering Savior. I don't know what you're in, I know what you're going through right now, but maybe you're in a spot similar to that. I'm not talking about an abusive relationship, you need to get out of those; you need to report those. We're not talking about that. We're not talking about just in your daily life and

daily things. You are getting some malignance, some ridiculing, and it's a little bit hard, there's a little bit of suffering, and I think what Peter would say is just stay. Endure. Keep going. We're not stuck like they were. Most of us can get out. We can move jobs. I know you have a mortgage and I know you have to pay the bills, so maybe some of us are a little bit stuck. What do you do? Just endure, remembering God, know that He's watching, the example of Christ, the power of Christ, endure so that while suffering, as you walk or limp in the footsteps of Christ, you show people your Suffering Savior. That people would see Him, and that people would get to know Him, and that you will be a person who is drawn more to Christ and who gets to point others to the glory of Christ—not because every day is happy, but because some days are actually bad and it's often the bad days that we get to show Jesus the most.