

1 Peter 3:13-17

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[0 : 00] And grab your copy of God's Word. 1 Peter chapter 3 is where we're going to be this morning. As Wes has already mentioned, this is one of those days where it doesn't go the way you had planned the night before.

Nathan is sick. He called me this morning, so I give that to you as a... If it's terrible, blame Nathan. If it's good, just talk to me, alright?

Let me know. 1 Peter chapter 3 is our text this morning. We've got some things that are happening at Christ Family Church that we're really excited about.

And one of those is our community groups. We've got three community groups right now. We want to see them grow, expand, and multiply. And in our community groups, we've been talking a lot about loving our neighbors and reaching our communities with the gospel.

And we've been praying for opportunities to join God in what He's already doing. To be part of what He is working out.

[1 : 07] Because God invites us to join in what He is already doing. We don't have to do anything new. Well, all of us here, I can say with boldness, we all live in the South.

We all live in the Bible Belt, although the Bible Belt might not exist much longer. And one of the barriers that we as Christians in the South deal with is that people already have a preconceived notion of what a Christian looks like.

They already know. They think they have the idea of what a Christian is supposed to look like and how they're going to or supposed to act. Well, this barrier prohibits us from having deep conversations with people without first removing that barrier.

Without first proving to them who we really are. Proving to them that we're real. Proving to them that our life has been changed through the gospel. The problem here in the South is there's a ton of people just like that.

Who have the preconceived notion of what a Christian looks like. So this circumstance that we face, the people around us, people who know or think they know what a Christian is, people who claim to be Christians and maybe aren't at all, makes it vitally important that we live a specific way, a certain way through the gospel in our communities.

[2 : 42] If we're going to reach those communities, we have to be real. We have to live a specific way, a biblical way, not a denomination way or not a religious way.

So this morning I want to talk about for us evidences of a Christian life. Evidences that are dead giveaways to people around us that we are Christians, that we are believers, that we are followers of Christ, that we live the gospel out.

There's a saying in sports, the saying is the team looks good coming off the bus. Meaning they've got their great uniforms on, they've got the physique, whether it's football or basketball or whatever. They've got their confidence, they're strutting around with their headphones and they're dressed to the tee or whatever. And you look at them and say, oh man, they look good coming off the bus.

But you guys know the reality is, is how do they play? How do they act it out, out on the field or out on the court? That's what speaks, not how they look coming off the bus.

[3 : 52] The same is for us as Christians. We may look good getting off the bus. We may look good leaving the church building. We may look good sitting in a room with a bunch of Christians singing songs.

But how are we when we're out in life? How are we out on the field? And that's what I want to talk about this morning. So, 1 Peter chapter 3, we're looking at five verses.

We're going to start reading in verse 13 and kind of dig through them. Starting in verse 13. Now, who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?

But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled. But in your hearts, honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

Yet, do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience so that when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

[5 : 01] For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. Let's pray together. Father, you know the circumstances of this day.

None of this has surprised you. None of this has taken you, thrown you off guard. God, we trust in you this morning, that you are at work here this morning.

And I ask, God, that you would speak through me, that you would use me, that what is spoken would not be my opinions, that it would be your word to us this morning. As nerve-wracking as this may be, God, you have put me in this position, so I pray, God, that you would use me to proclaim, to build your kingdom this morning.

I pray for the hearers of your word, that we would hear with our hearts, and not with just our ears. And when that happens, we know that action is to follow.

When that happens, we know that we leave this place different, living different, striving to be different, because we have heard a word from you. So, God, I plead and I beg, speak to us this morning.

[6 : 19] Use your word, spirit move, in Jesus' name. Amen. So, just a little background here.

Peter is writing this letter to churches in Asia Minor, and there's persecution happening in these churches. These are churches in Asia Minor who are tasting great persecution.

They are living it. And they're dealing with the question, is it worth it? Is it worth it to struggle, to deal with this type of persecution, to suffer?

And Peter writes this letter, and it's to affirm to them, yes, it is. That's why in chapter 1, verse 3, it says we have a living hope for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He, right off the bat, tells them it is worth it through Jesus Christ and because of Jesus Christ.

So, he affirms to them that this persecution is okay. It's worth it. So, now, we come to chapter 3. And in these five verses, Peter gives us some evidences of a Christian life.

[7 : 24] And these evidences for you this morning come in questions. The first one is, are you passionate for good? Are you passionate for good? The second one is, Christ Lord of your life.

The third one, do you have a readiness to defend your faith? Fourth, do you live with a good conscience? And fifth, do you suffer for doing good?

And of course, we'll run through those again. First one, first question for you, first evidence. Are you passionate for good? And we see this in verse 13.

Now, who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? Another word for good is righteous. You have a fervent pursuit of good, of righteousness.

In the face of danger and suffering, the churches in Asia Minor were encouraged to pursue righteousness above everything else, no matter what.

[8 : 26] This word zealous means an intensity or an enthusiasm, a passion. In Jesus' time, zealots were a group that pledged to free the Jews no matter what from all foreign rule.

And they would assassinate, they would steal, they would lie, they would kill themselves for the greater good. That's the kind of passion that Peter is talking about here.

That's the word he's using. So much passion that they'd even give up their own lives for it. Now, there's an assumption here in verse 13.

If we are zealous for what is good, then we're the opposite towards what is bad. See the assumption? If we're zealous for what is good, if we're passionate about what is good, what is righteous, then we're the opposite towards what is bad, which we know is sin.

So the question for you and for me is are you zealous for sin or for what is good? Is there a line that you won't cross in your life?

[9 : 34] Do you have boundaries set up? Are you zealous enough? Are you passionate enough to care? Or do you just go through and whatever happens, happens?

Do you take extreme measures to avoid sin? Guys, do you watch TV shows that lead to thoughts in your minds? Do you visit websites that you wouldn't visit in front of other people?

These are the questions and the circumstances that a passionate person of good would not do. Are you zealous for what is good?

Do you pursue people above God? Do you pursue the praise of people instead of the praise of God? Again, something that somebody who is zealous for good would not do.

Another way to look at it in Matthew 5, verse 6 in the Beatitudes, the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied.

[10:41] Hunger and thirst. Two strong verbs. And we all can relate to these two verbs. We all know the feeling of being hungry. We all know the feeling of working outside in the middle of summer and being exhausted and thirsty and all you want is some water.

And the only thing that's going to quench that thirst is that water. That's the idea here is hungering and thirsting for righteousness. Are we zealous?

Are we passionate for good? If you're a Christian, the assumption will be true in your life. You will oppose the bad. You will oppose sin.

And you will be passionate and zealous and you'll hunger and thirst for righteousness. Is there a passion in your life for good things? For godly things?

Do you want to do good things? So there's our first piece of evidence found in verse 13. Passionate for good.

[11:47] The next one is, is Christ set apart in your heart as Lord? And this is found in verse 15. Verse 15 reads, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy.

Christ as Lord is New Testament language. In the Old Testament, Lord was always used as Yahweh or Jehovah. So to say that Christ is Lord is saying that Christ is God.

That Christ is God. He is the same as the God of the Old Testament. His deity is being proclaimed when it says Christ as Lord. So is Christ set apart as Lord in your heart?

Is He holy? Holy. Now, of course, Christ is holy, but is He set apart? Is He part of your life? Has He changed your life? So, so many times in churches we describe salvation as a decision.

It is a decision to be made. Choose this day to be saved. Do you want to go to heaven when you die? There's that aspect of biblical salvation. I will not shoot that down.

[13:00] But it's not the whole story. See, the depravity of all of us is missed. The depravity of our sin and our lack of doing good is missed. The holiness of God is missed.

The atonement for our depravity of sin or sin is missed. The judgment of God is missed that we are guilty of that sin. The gospel is missed that we can't do anything good apart from Him.

When you and I become Christians, we receive this gift from God. And when we receive this gift, we surrender our lives to Him. Not because it seems better or feels better or it beats hell, but because God has chosen you and He knows His children.

And we surrender our lives and we make Him Lord of our lives. See, we were sinners with no hope. Sinners without a direction. Sinners, in fact, our direction was the opposite of God Himself.

And we became saints with hope in eternity. Jesus Christ is not a decision. He's a Savior. He's not an invitation. He's a calling.

[14:17] He's not a part of your life. He is life. So to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior is to worship Him as Lord. He should be the sole object of our love, our reverence, our loyalty, and our obedience.

So in so doing, then, our entire lives will flow from Him being Lord of our lives. So all our actions will be different, will be godly, will be passionate about good.

if Christ is Lord of our lives, then we will do three things. First, we'll do is we'll recognize His perfection. Turn to Hebrews chapter 7 real quick.

Hebrews chapter 7 verse 26.

It reads, For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.

[15:41] Verse 27. He has no need like those high priests to offer sacrifices daily, first for His own sins and then for those of the people. So He did this once for all when He offered up Himself.

Holy, unstained, set apart. Jesus is the only one who is perfect and worthy to be praised. It's not us, not what we do, but Jesus alone.

So if Christ is Lord of our lives, we'll recognize His perfection. But not only will we recognize His perfection, we will submit ourselves to His will. We'll submit ourselves to His will and not our own.

Romans 12 verse 2 says, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is the good and acceptable

and perfect.

He knows all and He has what is best for us. So when Christ is Lord, we will submit ourselves to His will. And thirdly, we will make His glory known through our lives.

[16:51] So if we do these things, we hear repeat often that we were created to do two things. Logos question number two, to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever.

Well, if that's our end, how we get to our end is by Jesus Christ being our Lord. In Revelation chapter 1, verse 12 through 18, it reads, then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me. And on turning, I saw seven golden lampstands and in the midst of the lampstands, one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow.

His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars.

From his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead, but he laid his right hand on me, saying, fear not.

[18:14] I am the first and the last and the living one. I died, and behold, I am living forevermore, and I have the keys of death and Hades. This is who we worship.

This is Jesus. He is in heaven. He is the first and the last. He is the living one and alive forevermore. We bring him glory when he is Lord of our lives.

We will honor his name, and his name will be above anything else. In other words, back to Matthew, Sermon on the Mount, chapter 6, the Lord's prayer says, Hallowed be your name.

Holy, holy, holy is your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done. That will be the outpouring of Jesus as Lord of our lives. Holy, holy, holy, your kingdom come.

Your will be done. Earlier in 1 Peter, and in all of Scripture, when it says, when it talks about the heart, the origin of the human behavior, the seat in which all decisions and actions come from, it is what makes us who we are.

[19:33] So to make Jesus the Lord of our hearts automatically makes an inner thing into an external thing. So an internal thing becomes an external thing.

So what we do on the inside then turns into actions as we live. It will be evident. Our entire lives will change for the good.

Our desires will be His desires. Not because He changed, but because He changed us. Our actions will line up with His will. And as Romans 12 said, we will be transformed by Jesus Christ and His Lordship.

So Christ being Lord is another piece of evidence to prove a godly life. The third evidence is in a question.

Do you have a readiness to defend your faith? Back to 1 Peter 3 verse 15, the second part of 15. Read the first part.

[20:37] But in your hearts, honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. Always be prepared.

Yet do it with gentleness and respect. The language here paints a picture of a courtroom. Make a defense. Defend your case.

Make an argument. This, of course, does not mean that we're going to be in a courtroom or setting like that to defend our faith. But it does mean that since the gospel is a public lifestyle, it is a changed lifestyle, lived out for people to see, people are going to ask.

And we're going to have to make public defenses, public arguments. A commentator said, it does mean that every believer should grasp the essentials of the faith and should have the ability to explain to others why they think the Christian faith is true.

So do you have a readiness to defend your faith? Do you have this yearning just to know why you believe what you believe?

[21:57] See, apathy is not accepted. In verse 15, it says, always being prepared. Now, I'll be honest, this morning took me by surprise.

I don't know that I was prepared this morning for the phone call. Needless to say, I had to be prepared. I had to prepare myself. But see, apathy is not allowed.

The idea that we can just coast on through and not care, just, you know, I'm Christian, whatever, whatever that means. I'm going to go to heaven.

It's cool. It's not a fruit of the gospel in your life. We should always be concerned about the opportunity to share.

It is a proactive attitude. I'm afraid that churches, the American church, is filled with apathetic people who can defend their church.

[23 : 00] they can defend their worship experience, but they cannot defend the hope that they have or they say they have in Christ. Now, think about that. They can defend why they go to a specific church, but they can't defend Jesus of the church they say they go to.

Here's the reason I think, I believe, is because they have been emotionally infected. their need to get their feelings stirred up has been met and not their spiritual need.

So, when you attack a feeling or attack emotion, the gloves come off and they're able to defend that, but they're not able to defend the Jesus.

And Peter is not saying, now, defend those churches you're with. Defend those churches in Asia Minor. He's saying be ready to give an answer for what?

For the hope. Always being prepared to make a defense. Anyone asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. A living hope, as 1 Peter 1 3 says, we have a living hope for the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

[24 : 26] Jesus resurrecting gives us hope. And because of his action, we no longer fear death. Or we should no longer fear death. Now, I can guarantee that if I surveyed everybody in this room and I said, what is your greatest fear?

Some of you are going to say to die. Death. And that's reality. Some will say spiders. Some will say snakes. Some will say, I don't know.

some of you will say death or dying. Now, the reason is probably something related to not being able to do or accomplish something yet that you want to accomplish.

And I can relate to that a little bit. But Jesus himself and eternity with Jesus is far better than anything this world has to offer.

Anything. Think of the greatest thing that you could accomplish. And he is far better than that. When we die, it's going to be like Apple with their new iPad 3.

[25 : 37] Hang with me. Don't drop off the cliff. Hold on. The iPad 2 is a remarkable piece of technology.

People in here have it right now. They're studying. They're cross-referencing. And I'm okay with that. Remarkable piece of technology. But when the iPad 3 comes in, what does Apple do?

They tell you, you don't want the iPad 2. It's a piece of junk. You want the iPad 3. Look at it. It's even better. better. And they do this so that you'll buy their product.

Now, the reality is that when we get to heaven, it's not going to be like the Apple iPad 2, which is good, and the iPad 3, which is better.

It's going to be Jesus' best and everything else is garbage. And we're not even going to want what's behind us. We're not even going to want what's here. We're going to want Jesus. We're going to want to worship Jesus alone.

[26 : 36] So, we can then say, nothing is better than Jesus, here or in eternity. And we can no longer fear death.

So then, if we can no longer fear death, the question in verse 13 is rhetorical. Now, who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?

You're zealous for what is good? You're zealous for righteousness? That desire has been put in you through Jesus. Jesus is our living hope through His resurrection.

We have eternal security. He is far better than anything this world has to offer. The answer is simple. No one. We no longer fear death.

Then no one can intimidate us. No one can change our mind. strongholds that we struggle with. Strongholds that just grab us and hold on to us really can no longer be strong.

[27 : 46] So, let's turn it a little bit. Are you being asked to make a defense? Are you being asked to defend the hope that you have in Jesus Christ?

Christ? Does your lifestyle lead to questions of why you act the way that you do? A godly life is a life that lives in opposition or opposite to the world.

That is as clear a statement and as simple statement as I can make. It is opposite of the world. See, the world celebrates individuality. The gospel promotes unity.

unity. The world preaches self-preservation. The gospel promotes one. The world promotes the idea that beauty and attractiveness is all we need.

The gospel proclaims the blood of Christ is all we need. The world promotes do. Do, do, got to do this, got to do that. The gospel proclaims done.

[28 : 53] Jesus has already done it. The world leads to death forever. forever. The gospel leads to life everlasting. If we live a gospel-centered life, people will ask for us to make a defense because we will be different.

Are you being asked? Are you being asked? The last part of verse 15 says, yet do it with gentleness forgiveness and respect?

Now, when you encounter a hostile challenge to something important to you, no matter what it is, what is your response like? Does it tend to be more emotional and harsh and more right at them? If it is, we're all in the same group. We're all together. It's because answering critics in your own power, with your own emotion, that's going to be the reaction.

We're going to go after them. We're going to defend with raw emotion. But see, the gospel enables us to answer with gentleness, with respect.

[30 : 09] Now, I know what some of you are thinking. This doesn't mean that we fold like lawn chairs. We just, you know, take the critics and that's cool, man. Whatever. Just tell me.

Tell me I suck. It's cool. Tell me Jesus is horrible. That's cool. No. But we can, the gospel still allows us to correct with gentleness, with love, with care and concern for their hearts and their souls.

We can still be bold and right and not sin. The gospel enables us to answer with gentleness and respect.

See, this is why Peter tells us to do this, to do it with gentleness and respect. He knows that we're human. He knows that the readers of this are going to be human and we're going to have the same sinful nature, the same emotional fortitude and whatever.

We're going to be made the same. And he knows through the leading of the Holy Spirit, of course. Nevertheless, our response can be and must be gentleness and respect.

[31 : 26] Gentleness to the unbeliever, concern for their souls, love for them, respect towards God, respect and fear is another word here, towards God.

which as we know, fear of God, everything trickles down from that, from our reverence to God, everything kind of trickles down from that.

So, we fear God, we're going to be humble. We fear God, we're going to put others before ourselves. We fear God, we will respond to our offenders with love and gentleness.

Here's what Martin Luther wrote about speaking to people about the hope that we have. He says, do you know what the devil thinks when he sees men use violence to propagate the gospel?

He sits with folded arms behind the fire of hell and says with malignant looks and frightful grin, ah, how wise these madmen are to play my game. Let them go on.

[32 : 33] I shall reap the benefit and I delight in it. But, when he sees the word running and contending alone on the battlefield, then he shudders and shakes for fear.

We must defend, not with our opinions, not with our thoughts, we defend with the word. We defend with the word, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Do you know the word? Do you know the word of God? So, not only do we have a readiness to defend our faith, but another piece of evidence is, do you have a good conscience?

Verse 16. Having a good conscience. Having a good conscience. So, be ready to defend your faith for the hope that you have, with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience.

the rest of that verse, so that when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

[33 : 45] The key word here, key words here are in Christ. Does your reaction, does your defense, does the way you live your life fit within the statement in Christ?

Are you living in Christ? Does your life lean towards sin or towards righteousness? Now, Jamie and I had the great opportunity to take our kids to see the Lorax last night.

So, if they all were at the wedding and you didn't see us at the reception, that's where we were. We were at the movie theater. There's a line in the movie that's very applicable to this.

The Lorax asks the once-ler, he says, which way does a tree fall? And the once-ler says, I don't know. And the Lorax responds by saying, it falls whichever way it's leaning.

Be careful which way you lean. So, for you and for me, which way does your life lean? Sin or righteousness?

[34 : 56] If a life is in Christ, that means your life through the gospel leans towards righteousness. His term in good conscience does not mean that you've got a good credit score.

It doesn't mean that you have good relationships with your co-workers or you can sleep well at night or you don't believe in the Easter Bunny or Santa Claus. None of that.

It has to deal with our relationship with God. Because of Christ and His work on the cross, we can live in God's presence clothed in Christ, clothed in His righteousness.

To have a good conscience means that we stand firm in our knowledge of Christ's work for us on the cross and our standing with God. What Paul repeatedly says to the church in Corinth talking about their conscience, where they think they are.

Our sins all have been forgiven. We are children of God, every single one of them. We stand as if none have ever been committed, as if we are perfect.

[36 : 15] And in fact, we are because of Christ and His perfection and His righteousness. There's a saying, and we've got presidential campaign going on this year, and there's a saying that says we all have skeletons in our closet.

We all have things that are in there that we're just ashamed of, things we've done, things we've thought, things we've whatever. Well, politicians, you'll notice, ramping up now, and they've already been doing it, they're starting to pull skeletons out of the opposing politicians' closets.

Well, this guy had affairs, and this guy doesn't do this, or this guy, whatever, and on and on and on. They try to sway us as voters to vote for who they want us to vote for.

Well, here's the reality. Sure, we all have skeletons in our closet. We all have something we've done that we're ashamed of. But because of Christ, because of what He's done, those skeletons don't exist.

Because He has forgiven us of those sins. He has cleansed us as if we've never committed them.

[37 : 36] So if we live in good conscience with God, those skeletons don't exist. that's good news. There's nothing to fear.

Am I saying go and run for politics? No. I'm not saying that. But I am saying even better, you're standing before a holy, righteous God is right because of Christ.

If you are a child of God, if you know Jesus, if you have surrendered your life to Him. So see what matters is our relationship with God.

Not how we live. Not what we think. What matters is our relationship with Him and then everything else gets affected by that. So if we know Jesus and the gospel has infected us, our lives will be affected.

So we can live as fearless and forgiven children of God. and when we do our reaction to our slanderers can be gentle, respectful, and godly and good conscience.

[38 : 54] Verse 16, there's two words right in the middle. It says, so that having a good conscience so that when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

They'll be put to shame because nothing they say will be true. Nothing will matter. You have lived the life in honor and praise of God.

In good conscience with Him, therefore, nothing matters. And what somebody says, rumor, slander, will not matter because your standing with God is right.

Now, the last evidence, the last piece is, do you suffer for doing good? Do you suffer for doing good?

And this is found in verse 14 and verse 17. Remember, Peter's writing to the churches in Asia Minor who are already suffering, and in fact, worse is headed their way.

[40 : 06] Peter knows that more is coming. So in verse 14 he says, but even if you should suffer for righteousness sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled.

Verse 17, for it is better to suffer for doing good if that should be God's will than for doing evil. Now, as Christians, there's going to be times of suffering.

There's going to be situations that we're going to suffer through. Some may be persecution. There are two statements that I've read recently.

One says, suffering stalks the believer until this present evil age comes to an end. Another one is suffering is an indication of God's blessing.

We see that in James 1. You guys know, James 1. 2-4, it says, Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. [41 : 13] And let steadfastness hold its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds.

We are going to suffer. The people in Asia minor are suffering at this time that Peter is writing this. There are brothers and sisters in our time who are dying, being murdered for their faith. Now, of course, for most of us in here, that's not really a reality. We're kind of sheltered here. We've got freedom. We've got safety. We've got houses.

We've got a lot of things that shelter us here. But it doesn't mean that sooner or later our faith is going to go head on against someone or something in this world that is against what we preach, against what we live.

See, the reason that we're going to suffer is because Jesus is the antithesis to the world. He's the opposite of the world. He preaches life. World is death.

[42 : 21] He is light. World is dark. And if he's the light and he shines the light in the dark, you get to see all the defects, all the warts, all the cracks, all the whatever.

Because Jesus' light has been shown. The defects in religion, the defects in philosophy, the defects in social priorities, the defects in moralism, the defects in personal responsibility.

Jesus is the light. And if we claim to be his, then we will suffer for his name. There will be a time. The fact that we are Christians and in Romans chapter 8, if God is for us, then who is there to fear? In Revelation chapter 2 verse 10, Jesus gives us some encouragement. He says, do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation.

Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. That's to the church in Smyrna that he writes to. We should not go through suffering with our heads hung low, with the poor me attitude, or the poor me signs all over us.

[43 : 59] We should go through suffering with courage, with courage and fight. Courage in order to be faithful.

We must face all circumstances with courage. As Joshua says in Joshua chapter 1, only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you.

Verse 9, he repeats, Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened and do not be dismayed. For the Lord, your God is with you wherever you go.

We suffer with courage because it's an indication of God's blessing on our lives. We're okay with it because we know the end. We're okay with it because we know the Savior.

So does your life give evidence of a godly life? Or do you just look good coming off the bus? Do you look like something that you're not?

[45 : 11] As our community groups gather, as we pray through opportunities to share, to reach our community for Jesus? Do we just look good coming off the bus?

Do we just have good intentions? Do we just carry our Bible in our left hand and not our right hand? Do we preach and say certain words?

Do we look good coming off the bus or do we actually live it out? Has our life been changed? by the gospel. I pray that all of us have a passion for what is good.

That we are ready to defend the questions of our faith. That Christ is set apart in our hearts as Lord. That we live with a good conscience and that all of us suffer with courage and fear of God alone.

Let's pray together. Amen. Amen. Amen.