

For every true Christian

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, we're going to turn now to our Bible reading, and you'll find that in 1 Peter, Peter's first letter, chapter 4. If you have one of our church visitors' Bibles, it's page 1016.
- And we've been in chapter 4 these last few weeks. We come to this last section of chapter 4, beginning at verse 12, and we're going to read together verse 12 to the end of the chapter.
- And you'll see it begins with this word, beloved, which indicates it's the beginning of a new section in the letter. If you look back over just to chapter 2, verse 11, you'll see that there, that central section of the letter began with the very same word, beloved, I urge you.
- And from chapter 2, verse 11, through to chapter 4, verse 11, we have that whole central section that we've been studying together about what it means to live as strangers, as exiles in the world, what real Christianity looks like in a hostile world.
- And now Peter is coming to the last section where he's drawing together a lot of the themes that we've already seen in the letter and focusing very particularly on a strand that has been going through all the way through this letter, that the road to glory is the road that involves much suffering.
- [1 : 2 8] So let's read together at chapter 4, verse 12. Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you as though something strange were happening to you.
- But rejoice in as far as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.
- If you're insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed because the spirit of glory, even of God, rests upon you.
- That word there, and, is a word which is often translated and or also even. I think here what Peter is saying is he's explaining who the spirit of glory is.
- The spirit of glory, that is, the spirit of God, rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or as a thief or as an evildoer or even as a meddler.
- [2 : 3 3] Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed or shamed, but let him glorify God in that name.
- For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God. And if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?
- And if the righteous is scarcely saved, or better, if the righteous is saved through difficulty, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner? Therefore, let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful creator while doing good.
- Amen. May God bless to us his word. I'll turn, if you would, to 1 Peter chapter 4, page 1016 in the Church Visitors Bibles.
- And this last section from verses 12 to 19, which are all about the road to glory. The road to glory for every true Christian.

[3 : 52] Now, in Luke's gospel, a great turning point comes at chapter 9, verse 51, where we read this. When the days drew near for Jesus to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.

And the rest of the gospel describes that road, the road to heaven's glory for Jesus, through the suffering of the cross. And as they were going along the road, Luke tells us, and he repeatedly uses that phrase, Jesus explained to his disciples what it means to be a follower with him on that road.

It means, he says, to take up your cross and following Jesus on that same hard road. Foxes have holes, he said, and birds have their nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.

The road to glory is a road shaped by suffering for Jesus and for all who will follow him to his eternal glory. Now, back then, of course, Peter bitterly resented that kind of message.

But now, here he is, late on in his own life, passing on that very same message of Jesus to his readers, having learned in his own life only too well the truth of these words.

[5 : 19] And at chapter 4, verse 12, we see it makes a turning point also in Peter's letter, where he too, as it were, sets his face towards Jerusalem to focus his eyes and our eyes on the only road to glory that there is for followers of Jesus.

Remember the first section of the letter up to chapter 2, verse 10. Peter was telling us that believers are an elect people whose privilege is to be special to God. We're called to share in that glory that is to come.

And he lays out for us the authentic salvation that is our true hope and the authentic church that's our true home, both now and forever. And then we saw in the heart of the letter from chapter 2, verse 11, to chapter 4, verse 11, that he reminds us that believers in this world are nevertheless an exiled people whose path is to be strangers on earth, but nevertheless showing forth God's glory now in authentic Christian lives amid this hostile world.

We'll proclaim the excellencies of our Savior as we submit willingly and as we serve winsomely and as we even suffer worthily in the world and in our workplace and in our family life and in our fellowship life, despite deep hostility often from this world.

As we've seen, we're to be unshrinking in a world of slander and we're to be unsullied by the world of sin that we're called to live in the midst of. But here at chapter 4, verse 12, in his final section, again, beginning, as we said, with that word beloved, just as section 2 began, here Peter draws together everything that he has taught so far and he focuses on the very heart of the truth about this road to glory with Jesus.

[7 : 16] And the heart of it is that we are called to be an Easter people, a people whose pattern is to share in the sufferings of Christ and to be shaped through suffering for glory with Jesus.

And this, he tells us, is the unavoidable path and pattern for every Christian believer. For every Christian believer here, focusing till the end of chapter 4, then in chapter 5, verses 1 to 4, it's the same path for every true Christian leader.

And then finally, from chapter 5, verse 5 to the end, it's the same path for every true Christian church, every fellowship together. And if you look, you'll notice that this phrase, the sufferings of Christ, lies at the very heart of each of these three sections.

Chapter 4, verse 13, and chapter 5, verse 1, and chapter 5, verse 9. You'll notice it's in the plural. It's the sufferings of Christ. He's not talking about Christ's own suffering on the cross for us, but he's rather talking about our sufferings, the sufferings that form the cross that every true disciple of Jesus must take up daily, as Jesus said, if they're going to follow him to his eternal glory.

So Peter's saying this, let me help you understand what Jesus helped me understand in the end about his true glory and about the road to that true glory. What it means for you to take up your cross and follow the Master.

[8 : 54] That's what he's explaining here in verses 12 to 19 of chapter 4. The road to glory for every true Christian in the world today. Indeed, every Christian who's ever lived. So look first at verses 12 to 13, where he wants us to be clear about our true expectation.

Our true expectation for this road to glory. Don't be surprised, says Peter, about suffering for Christ, because we share in the pattern of Christ.

We suffer knowing that we will rejoice in Christ's full glory that is to come. So verse 12, Beloved, don't be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you.

Peter's already taught right back in chapter 1, verse 6, about various trials that were already grieving his readers. And he said there that these things are to test the genuineness of your faith.

Now we've said it probably wasn't yet at this stage at least, full-on state persecution and martyrdom. There's no reference to that in the letter. But it was the general pervasive pressure that comes to Christians from a culture that is hostile to genuine Christianity and genuine Christian faith.

[10 : 15] So if you look at verse 14, it speaks about being insulted for Christ's name. We saw back in chapter 4, verse 4, that he spoke about being maligned as Christians just for being different and for not condoning the world's view of things and their behavior.

Back in chapter 3, verse 16, he spoke about slander, about mischievous reviling of even the good behavior of Christians, so casting doubt upon their integrity. Chapter 3, verses 1 to 6, he spoke about the pressure that comes particularly within the home from a non-Christian spouse.

All kinds of pressures, all kinds of things that we also know and experience only too well here in the 21st century, at school, or in the rugby club, or in the office, or on the university campus, in the halls of residence, where very often there is a hostile environment to our Christian faith.

And often it does surprise us, doesn't it? Especially the new Christian. Sometimes people are very surprised. They go and tell their friends, their family, they've become a Christian, and suddenly they find themselves facing a hostility that they never expected to have.

Well, no, says Peter, don't be surprised at this. Even when it blows right up into a fire that leaves you very badly burned.

[11 : 37] It's what we should expect. This is not something strange. Why? Because, verse 13, you're sharing the sufferings of Christ.

And all true Christian believers will share in the pattern of Christ. If anyone would come after me, said Jesus, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

Follow him on the same road. The road to acceptance with God in glory, and therefore, very often, the road to rejection by the culture, the mores, the ethos of this world.

Because Jesus said also, the man who hears you, hears me. And the one who rejects you, rejects me. And we know that the world rejects Jesus. And you, he says, bear the hallmark of the genuine article.

I don't possess a lot of silver, alas, but I do have a rather lovely silver napkin ring, which was, I've had it all my life.

[12 : 47] It was given to me as a gift at my baptism by William Still, who baptized me. And it has my initials on it. But at every corner, in the four corners of this ring, there is a little hallmark.

And even though, when it looks very tarnished and filthy, as it does at the moment, and most of the time, because I'm not very good at cleaning it, those hallmarks declare it to be not worthless, but genuine, solid, sterling silver.

And that's what Peter's saying, just so the pattern of Christ is stamped like a hallmark upon every true Christian believer.

And it is suffering for Jesus' sake that proves that you are the genuine article that you are his. That's the hallmark. Jesus said in Matthew 5, verse 11, in the Sermon on the Mount, that when we are reviled and slandered and persecuted for his sake, it demonstrates that we belong to his true heritage.

He says, because just so they persecuted the prophets who came before you. And conversely, he says, woe to you when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did about the false prophets.

[14 : 05] Do you see? So, Peter says that when we face the fiery trial of such unpleasantness, and it isn't pleasant, is it? It's not easy. It's naturally very hard to face these things.

But when we do, he says, we are to rejoice. Not because in and of itself it's a good or nice thing to be insulted for the name of Christ.

Of course it isn't. But because of what it signifies. That it's the hallmark of those who truly are on this road to glory with Jesus. Of course, that is the opposite, isn't it, of what we naturally expect?

It's the opposite of what we naturally want. And a whole great swathe of modern day Christianity wants to tell us that we shouldn't expect suffering. And that if we do find it, well, there's something wrong with us.

We need to pray for it to be taken away. We need counseling to sort it out. But no. In Acts chapter 5, when Peter and the other apostles were beaten and put in prison, do you remember?

[15 : 10] They were told not under any circumstances to preach Jesus' name. They were told they were rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

We're not to be surprised, but we're to rejoice. Says Peter. When friends at school make snide comments about you because you go to Scripture Union at school or at camp or church on Sunday or Tron Youth on a Friday or whatever.

And when you say to your friends, yes, actually I do believe what the Bible teaches about Jesus. Or when your work colleagues behind your back talk about you and sneer because you won't join in on what they do or won't join in the office gossip.

Or when your fellow student at university just calls you a Bible basher or a bigot or intolerant. Or they just pity you perhaps because they consider your faith in Christ as an obvious sign of intellectual weakness.

Rejoice, says Peter. Rejoice now because you can see that the pattern of Christ is being stamped upon your life as a hallmark. It tells you you are on the road to glory with him.

[16 : 25] Glory that is everlasting. And you shall, says verse 13, rejoice and be glad. You shall rejoice exuberantly as one translation puts it when at last his full glory is revealed.

And your faith and your life will result in praise and honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ as he said in chapter 1 verse 9. Rejoice and be glad, says Jesus, for great is your reward in heaven.

Everyone who acknowledges me before men, often suffering for it, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies me before men, not willing to face the fiery trial for Jesus, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

See, to acknowledge Jesus means to stand with Jesus and to stand for Jesus. And it should be no surprise to us that that will very often mean suffering, sometimes very fierce trials, very fiery trials, and real pressure, real temptation to deny him in order to quench those fires that are burning you.

Didn't Peter himself know that only too well? Well, he denied the Lord Jesus those three times so terribly, didn't he? This moment of most awful need and weakness.

[17 : 58] But Jesus restored him, gave him a second chance, and thereafter Peter learned the joy of not denying, but the joy of sharing in Christ's suffering and rejoicing of being counted worthy to do so.

Well, maybe that's a word to someone this morning. Maybe the Lord's looking at you as he looked at Peter with those eyes on that dreadful night just as the cock crew and Peter's heart melted.

Is he calling you to repent of your denial of Jesus, of your reluctance to be stamped with that hallmark, sharing the pattern?

For the sufferings of Christ? Beloved, don't be surprised about suffering for Christ, but rejoice so that you may also rejoice exuberantly when his glory is revealed.

That's our true expectation of the road to glory. Then in verses 14 to 16, you see Peter digs deeper into our true experience on the road to glory.

[19 : 11] Don't be shamed by suffering for Christ, he says, because we're sharing in the presence of Christ. We suffer knowing that we are reflecting God's true glory in Christ to the world even now when these things are happening to us.

If you're insulted for the name of Christ, he says, you are blessed because the spirit of glory, the spirit of God rests upon you. So don't be shamed, but glorify God in that name.

See, he's saying that it's a glorious blessing, not a shameful punishment to suffer for Christ's name. Now, first of all, of course, notice verse 15.

We need to note Peter's realism. Not all suffering that Christians endure is suffering for Jesus. We may be very tempted to think that that is and to use it as an excuse, but that's quite wrong.

If I'm caught speeding on the motorway on the way to church or on the way home from church, I can't claim that I'm suffering for Jesus, can I? Just because I'm on the way to church.

[20 : 20] I'm just suffering because I'm speeding and breaking the law like everybody else. I haven't been, by the way, at least not yet. And when I am, I won't be telling you. But you see, Peter's not naive.

He won't let us away with that. Look at verse 15. Christians can do wrong and suffer rightly and justly if they murder or steal or do other evil. And if they do that, then, well, we can't complain if we're locked up in prison or fined.

Or even, do you see, even if they suffer for being a meddler. It's a difficult word to translate that, but it does seem to mean being an annoyingly meddlesome sort of busybody, the sort of interfering person that will easily arouse hostility in others and cause them to react badly.

Don't suffer by doing that, says Peter, by causing needless hostility to the Christian faith. Some Christians are very good at that. They can be very censorious or very disapproving, very sanctimonious in their treatment of others.

Well, understandably, people can't stand that and they'll react against you, against that kind of Christianity. Well, of course, that's not suffering for Christ. It's not worthy suffering.

[21 : 34] It's unworthy suffering for your own stupidity or your own obnoxious behavior, your arrogance. Don't do that, says Peter. It's not what he's talking about. In fact, his letter is full, isn't it, of injunctions to show honor and respect to everybody, to do good, not to give people reason to scorn Christ because of our bad manners, of our bad behavior.

No. Don't suffer for that sort of thing. But, having got that out of the way, if you are insulted truly for Christ's sake because we bear his name honorably and faithfully so that we are made to bear the shame of the world, then he says here, don't feel that shame.

Don't be ashamed. It doesn't so much mean be embarrassed or ashamed in the way that we often use it. It means to bear shame. It means to be in disgrace, to bear reproach. You see, then the world's shame and reproach is not only evidence of the pattern of Christ upon us, but it's evidence, Peter says, of the very presence of Christ with us.

Verse 14, his spirit rests upon you in that situation. Now, Hebrews 11, verse 26, speaks about this reproach of Christ, which Moses considered to be of greater worth than all the treasures of Egypt.

Why? Well, I think because, as Hebrews 13 goes on to speak about, when we find ourselves despised and rejected as Jesus was, bearing the reproach that he endured outside the camp, the writer there says, we go to him outside the camp.

[23 : 19] You see, not just that we bear his pattern, but we know his presence. We go to him. We're in the place where he himself is making known the glory of his presence.

We are with him and he is with us. His spirit is upon us. The spirit of, literally, the glory. The spirit of the glory is the spirit of God. And Jesus is the glory of God.

Peter's probably echoing the prophet Isaiah here. Isaiah 11. You remember when God says of the promised king in David's line that the spirit of God will rest on him. The spirit of wisdom and knowledge and might and so on.

But of course, as Isaiah says later on, that great king will be God's chosen servant. The promised one who would suffer and be wounded for our transgressions in order to bring salvation to God's people.

A Messiah who would be glorified, lifted up, through suffering. And so, the one upon whom the spirit rested in fullness to display all God's unseen eternal glory in the universe was none other than the crucified Messiah, Jesus Christ.

[24 : 39] He is the image of God who displays to the world the true glory of God. James says in chapter 2, verse 1, our Lord Jesus Christ literally is the glory, the glory of God.

You see, this is the message, isn't it, of our Christian faith, astonishing as it is to the world that God's true glory, the glory of the great sovereign creator and ruler of the universe, it's revealed to the world not in the grandery of the mountains, not in the beauty of the landscape, not in the wonder of all his creation, not even in the power and might of the plagues against Egypt, not even in the thunderings of the mountain of Sinai, but his glory is revealed ultimately and fully in the sufferings of his son.

The glory of the invisible eternal God is made visible supremely at the cross. And so John says, we beheld his glory, full of grace and truth.

We have seen it. And he didn't mean on the mount of transfiguration. John doesn't even talk about that. He meant on the mount of crucifixion, Calvary. Jesus said in John 12, for this purpose I've come into the world.

For this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name. as he spoke of the death that he was about to die. So that whoever sees him will see, says Jesus, the glory of the Father.

[26 : 22] You see, we have such a different idea of what constitutes glory as human beings. But true glory, God's glory, is a glory that is full of grace and of truth, of abundant faithfulness and covenant love.

It's his image, the Lord Jesus, our Savior, who displays that true glory and who displays it in his sufferings for sin. Paul speaks in 2 Corinthians 4 of Jesus Christ as the image of God and as of the glory of God.

And he talks about how God has shed his light into our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, the crucified Messiah.

So do you see what Peter is saying to us here? He's saying that if we suffer for his name's sake because we glory in his name, then the light of the true eternal glory of God is resting upon us because the spirit of glory, the spirit of our crucified Savior rests upon us.

The Lord Jesus is with us. He's present with us, making us reflect his true glory, the true glory of God to the world in our worst moments of struggle and suffering for his name's sake.

[27 : 55] You see, when we are insulted, when we bear reproach, when we bear the disgrace of the world, we think, oh, God's glory has departed from us.

His power is least in evidence. Isn't that how it seemed at the cross? Peter says, no, it's precisely then that you display in your life more than at any other time the presence and the power and the glory of God on earth because the Spirit of his Son is resting upon you.

Isn't that what God said to Paul? My power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weakness so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

My weakness, the power of Christ resting upon me and just so, Peter. We glory in the scorn and the shame and the reproach of his name because the glory of Christ then is resting upon us.

God's name all the way through the Bible implies his presence, doesn't it? The temple is where he made his name to dwell. That is, he presents himself right there in all his glory in the midst of his people.

[29 : 21] Peter says, that will be our experience as we cherish his name, glorying even in the shame that that name brings to us in this world. He'll be there where two or three are gathered even in my name, says Jesus.

There am I in the midst. And when you're suffering and bearing reproach for my name, then the spirit of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ rests upon you then more than at any other time.

So don't be shamed by his name. When we suffer for his name, he's there, his spirit is upon you and you are reflecting his true glory.

The glory of God that is made known to this world in the cross, you're reflecting it to the world as truly as it is. God's glory will be seen in the cross for all eternity.

Read the revelation of John. What is the glory of all heaven when the lion of the tribe of Judah is revealed? He is the lamb who was slain from the very foundation of the world.

[30 : 38] You see, it's that eternal perspective that lies behind verses 17 and 18 where Peter gives us the true and the explanation of this road to glory.

Don't be sorrowful about suffering for Christ, he says, because we are being sifted by the proving of Christ. We suffer knowing that God even now is revealing his true church in the world and for all eternity.

See, the explanation of living through all this struggle is that we're living through the birth pangs of the day of judgment even now. In the cross of Christ, the day of the Lord has begun, the great day of God's salvation and his judgment.

The day that chapter 1, verse 11, reminds us that the prophets foresaw as a pattern of sufferings and then subsequent glory. It's the end of the age that Jesus often spoke of.

It's the birth pangs of the new creation, during which, remember, Jesus said, the gospel will be proclaimed to all the ends of the earth before the end finally comes.

[31 : 47] And it is the proclamation of this gospel that brings the judgment of that last day into the present, even now, dividing men and women now for all eternity.

Jesus was plain about that, wasn't he? those who confess me before men now, I will confess before the Father on that day, but whoever denies me now will be denied on that day.

Paul says exactly the same thing in Romans chapter 1. He says that the gospel, in the gospel, God's righteousness is being revealed, a righteousness received by faith, but his wrath is also being revealed in the rejection and unbelief of that gospel.

And Peter's saying exactly the same here in verse 17. Do you see? that judgment has begun. And as the whole Bible makes clear, God's judgment is utterly impartial.

Indeed, it begins always at the house of God, the professing church of Christ. And this judgment he talks of here is not just a condemnation, it's the fire of judgment that sifts and tests and separates the true from the false.

[32 : 59] Verse 12, this fiery trial is sent to test you. It's the same language he uses in chapter 1, verse 6 and 7 about being tested by fire. It's the prophet Malachi who uses that language, isn't it, in Malachi chapter 3 about the messenger of the covenant, the Messiah, who would come to God's temple like a refiner's fire to purify God's people for righteousness and to purge the ungodly and the sinner in punishment.

John the Baptist picked up that very language, didn't he? Talked about Jesus coming with a baptism of fire with his winnowing fork in his hand to do what? To separate the wheat and the chaff.

The wheat he will gather into his barn but the chaff will be burnt with a fire that is unquenchable. And Peter says that sifting is taking place now.

And the righteous, verse 18, are being saved, he says, not scarcely but with difficulty or through difficulty. He's not saying it's hard for God to save us, he's saying it's hard for us to be saved by God.

That was Jesus' consistent teaching. The gate is narrow, the way is hard that leads to life. They'll deliver you up to tribulation, you'll be hated by all men for my name's sake and many will fall away, said Jesus.

[34 : 21] And the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end through that hard road will be saved. See, the road to glory is a hard road, a difficult road.

Many do fall and stumble. I'm sure we've all seen it. And if many fall away and their love grows cold because of verbal opposition, what will we see under real persecution if it comes to us in this country, what will we see?

And yet the righteous are saved on this hard road to glory, says Peter. But if that's so, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?

That is, as verse 17 says, those who do not obey, who refuse the gospel of God. Well, he doesn't need to answer. He's made it clear already, hasn't he? The awful reality of judgment for those who reject the call of life.

It's Jesus, isn't it? Jesus, more than any other who talks about the dreadful fire. He talks about eternal, everlasting punishment.

[35 : 37] But you see, this present fire of proving is sifting all people, says Peter, either purifying them for eternity along the hard road to life, the road to true and everlasting glory, and that suffering both defines true believers and refines them for the true church of Jesus Christ, either purifying for eternity or purging for eternity.

Those who disobey the gospel, who dishonor Christ's name, who deny his pattern in order to avoid suffering now, make that road easy and wide. But alas, Peter is telling us that for those, it won't be a road to glory.

It's not sufferings of Christ followed by eternal glory in Christ. What will become of them, he says? It's their road to ruin. Solace now, perhaps, but eternal suffering without Christ, without hope, forever.

So don't be sorrowful about suffering for Jesus now, he says. The world, even now, is being sifted and you are being shaped, you are being proved true, you are being purified so that your faith will come forth as gold.

And so lastly, verse 19, we have the true encouragement on this road to glory. Don't slip amid suffering for Jesus, says Peter, because we are suffering according to the purpose of Christ.

[37 : 16] We suffer knowing that God will faithfully restore his whole creation in Christ for all eternity and that he's called us to share in that through shaping us along this road to glory.

When we suffer for Christ, Peter says here, we suffer according to God's will. In other words, it's under God's sovereign permission. He is in control. And it's under God's sovereign providence.

It's suffering with a purpose. He's the faithful creator, he says. And what that means is that God will never allow his purpose in creating this whole wide world fail.

And he will never allow his purpose in creating your life to fail. God will never fail. And so you can trust him. The hardest time, isn't it, to trust God when things seem very hard, when it seems that we're not being blessed by his presence.

Especially when life is hard, perhaps because we are trying to follow Jesus and that's making our life harder and harder, much harder than it would be otherwise. It's so hard to trust God when life is hard.

[38 : 30] It seems then, doesn't it, that God's absent, that he's lacking in power, he's lacking in faithfulness. Think of the cries of the psalmist.

Lord, where are you? How long? Where have you gone? Why have you deserted me? Think of the cry on the cross. My God, why have you forsaken me?

All consciousness of a father's love and presence gone. A sense of total abandonment. But it's not true that God has deserted us then.

Indeed, the greatest truth of all time in history is that where God's glory seemed most completely veiled to Jesus on the cross, God's glory was being most completely unveiled in Jesus to the whole world.

and yet, even in that desolating darkness where he suffered, as Peter said in chapter 2, verse 24, he continued entrusting himself to the one who judges justly.

[39 : 44] And so can we, says Peter here. And so must we, even in the darkest place, we can entrust ourselves even more certainly to him than Jesus could because Jesus was faithful to death, even to death itself for our sakes.

And because our Savior was faithful, he will ever be faithful to keep us, never to leave us or forsake us, not ever, in any darkness.

He was forsaken so that none of us who trust him need ever be. However dark it may seem, however many shadows may come across our life on this road to glory.

So friends, when we suffer insults for his sake, for his dear name, we can be sure that then, more than any other time, think of it, that his presence will be most near and his glory will be most visible upon our lives to the world.

Remember Stephen, he testified to Christ even as he was facing that raging mob that were about to kill him and we're told he was full of the Holy Spirit and he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, even Jesus, standing at the right hand of God.

[41 : 08] And what did those people see who were about to murder him? Stephen's face shone like the face of an angel. He was reflecting the spirit of glory to the whole world.

If you're insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed because the spirit of the glory, even the spirit of God, the God made known in the cross of Jesus Christ, he rests upon you because this is the road to glory, the only road to glory for every true Christian.

And so Peter says, entrust yourself to a faithful creator God while doing good, not ill, knowing that your struggles are all in his hands and all for his glory and for your eternal glory also.

Entrust and do good. Trust and obey. Though there is no other way to be happy in Jesus on this road to glory than to trust and obey.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, help us, we pray, to know true glory and therefore to know the road to true glory.

[42 : 36] Help us, we pray, to take up our cross today and every day willingly and with rejoicing and follow our Lord Jesus Christ.

And when the cup you give is filled to brimming with bitter suffering hard to understand, may we take it gladly, trusting, though with trembling, out of so good and so beloved a hand.

Amen.