

“Getting Familiar with the Territory”

The Christological Pattern of the Christian Life

1 Peter 1:1-12

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Jeff: All right. Well let me have you open your Bibles to 1 Peter chapter 1.

Let me say a word about what we’re going to do for the next three weeks. I say three because we’re hoping to have Bruce back. And so I’ve decided to do a limited series, and that’s going to be a three-week excursion through 1 Peter.

Now we’re not going to be looking at 1 Peter as you might expect in a Bible study, going line by line, and so forth. We’re going to be going here and there and everywhere. And I have an organizing theme for that, and it’s called “The Christological Pattern of the Christian Life.”

Now what does that mean? Well that takes its footing on some of what we’ve been working through already. When we’ve been thinking about sanctification, we’re already thinking about the Christological pattern of the Christian life.

But you can think about all kinds of theological and Biblical topics from different angles. And you’re always moving around in those circles that take you into this doctrine and out of that doctrine and into the next, because they’re all woven together and you can’t separate them from one another. And so we’re going to be thinking about one aspect of what it means to grow up in the Lord Jesus Christ. We’re going to think about a very important aspect, a foundational aspect of the Christian life. And I think that it’s one that will help answer some questions that you might have about life in general. So we’re going to be thinking about the Christological pattern of the Christian life.

We’re going to do that, but we’re going to read the text first. And I want us to look at 1 Peter chapter 1, and I want us to look at the first twelve verses. So would somebody read that for us who has a good strong voice that we can all hear?

Participant: *“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia: Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace to you and peace be multiplied.*

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith, for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found in praise, honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully when they prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what or what manner of time

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the Spirit of Christ who lived in them was indicating when they testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that not to themselves but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things which angels desired to look into.”

Jeff: Okay. Thank you very much.

Participant: That’s New King James.

Jeff: Okay. Very nice. Can you see this all right? I wasn’t sure about the visibility of this. So we’re going to look at four points today. Today we’re going to look at some introductory things. We’re going to look at *humiliation* and *exaltation*. We’re going to talk more about what that means in just a minute. And then we’re going to think of some examples of humiliation. You can tell where we’re going to land in this particular study. And then I want to give you some pastoral counsel.

So let’s get started. And the very first thing I want to do is to look at some introductory points.

Now I want to begin by telling you something that I’m not sure that we often think about in the Christian life. When we in the Christian life think about Christian counseling, for instance, do we have an end goal in mind for the counselee?

Once I was in seminary and we had Jay Adams come and speak to us about Biblical counseling. And he asked us this question. He said, “What is it that you want your counselee to look like when you’re finished with him? What is it? You’ve got this marble block. In your helping them with their sanctification process, what do you want them to look like? And this is what he said. He said, “Christ. Duh!” (*Laughter*) That’s what he said to us. (*Laughter*) That was my first encounter with Jay Adams, and what an entertaining session it was!

But I’m not sure that we often think that way. For instance, he pointed out that in secular counseling you have a wide variety of answers to that question. For instance, if you’re a follower of Karl Jung, than you want that counselee to look like they look now. Why? Because what you do as a Jungian counselor is that you just bounce back the things they say. And so they’re just getting a chance to reflect on what they have said to you. If you are a Freudian, you want them to look like their childhood, right? (*Laughter*) You want them to look like a little child again.

But as Christians we want that person to look more like Jesus Christ after they’ve been with us, after we’ve had a chance to help them, then they did before. Why? Because we’re just helping them through the sanctification process as we help to counsel them. That’s what counseling is all about.

Now with that in mind I just want you to think about that and apply that. That’s a very general basic but Biblical concept. What am I going to look like at the end of my life? Well hopefully I’m going to look more like Christ than I do today. But that means that I’m going to look more like Christ hopefully tomorrow than I did today, and more like Him the next day than I did today, because I’m growing in His image, as Romans 8:29 says.

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Transcriber’s Note: Romans 8:29. *For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.*”

Jeff: So what will I look like? Well, I’ll look like Jesus Christ. But here’s the thing. Have you ever seen this picture before? How many of you see a young woman? Raise your hands. That tells a lot about you. *(Laughter)* How many of you see an old woman? Ah, very few of you, right? You can see both pictures.

And the reason I threw that up on the board is because I like it. So let’s go to the next slide. *(Laughter)* No, the reason I bring that up is because it makes a point. No matter which picture you can see and which one you can’t, and for those of you who see the young woman, you’re trying to say, “Where is the old woman in that?” Do you see the old woman yet? Anybody see the old woman, the old woman right there? Oh, I forgot. This doesn’t work on there. There’s the nose of the old woman. There’s her chin. There’s her mouth, and so on.

The point is that the sanctification process is bringing out of us what is already in us by virtue of Christ’s having saved us. That’s the whole point.

So what we are is in Christ. And what we’re becoming is the image of Jesus Christ.

Now how do we arrive there? Well we arrive there by following Jesus Christ. You know this because Hebrews 2:10 tells you this.

Transcriber’s Note: Hebrews 2:10. *“For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”*

Jeff: Hebrews 2:10 describes Jesus as the Author and the Finisher of our faith. Now that word *author* is a word that I’ve mentioned to you before and it’s an important word. It’s the word *archaegos*. And if you look in a Greek lexicon, a Greek dictionary, you’ll find that this word can mean things like *author*. It can mean *originator*. It can mean *pioneer* or *leader*. And the idea then is that we arrive at what we are in Jesus Christ, we arrive there by following the leadership of Jesus.

Now I just want to be quick to say something so that you guys don’t jump on me with both feet. I want you to know that I 100% fully believe that Jesus died for our sins, forgave us of those sins if we are in Him by faith alone, and that, that, that is the primary reason for His death and His resurrection. But remember what we talked about in our previous series. If He died for our sins and we’re justified in Him then we are being renovated into His image and likeness. And so we’ve got to follow Him who is the Author and the Finisher of our faith. He is not only the One who died that we might have forgiveness, but He’s the One who died and was raised that we might follow Him.

And Peter says that. And we’ll talk about this in a minute. Peter says that Jesus *“left an example for you, that you should follow in His footsteps.”* Go ahead.

Participant: Rather than say *if*, why wouldn’t you say *since*?

Second Participant: There you go.

Jeff: What did I say?

First Participant: If. You said, “If.” It’s *since* the Lord Jesus Christ—

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Jeff: Because I’m following Paul’s example in Colossians 3:1 where he says, “If you’ve been raised,” and what he means is *since*. (*Laughter*) And thanks for pointing that out. (*Laughter*) It’s always good to point back to Paul. Anyway, how do we arrive there? We arrive there by following Christ. Why? Because He accomplishes. He is the Pioneer who is the Leader. The way forward is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now let’s think for a minute about humiliation and exaltation. Now as we think about humiliation and exaltation, we need to understand something of the cartography, the mapping out of the text. So let’s just look at the text for a minute.

I want to show you a couple of things that I think are really important when you look at 1 Peter. If you have your Bibles, just take them. If you have an electronic Bible you’re going to have to be quick on the draw. But I want you to look at something that I’m going to talk to you about first. And it’s called an *inclusio*.

Now what is an *inclusio*? An *inclusio* is book ends.

Participant: You’re making up words. (*Laughter*)

Jeff: Yes I am. (*Laughter*) I’m making up words as I go along. Thanks for pointing that out. (*Laughter*) An *inclusio* is book ends.

Now what do I mean by that? Well sometimes the author will use a phrase or a word and even an idea. And he will introduce a text with that word, phrase or idea. And he will bring that text to a close with that word, phrase or idea. And oftentimes what he’s saying is that you need to look at what’s happening in between, because I’m going to give you the idea of what I’m telling you at the beginning and the end, and then I’m going to flush it out in the middle.

Now Peter does that very thing. And oftentimes what you have is that you have that ending with a tag-on. And the tag-on is something I’ll show you next. Now that’s the idea. Let’s look at the *inclusio*.

The *inclusio* is in chapter 1 and in verse 11. And you’ll notice that it says at the end of verse 11 “*the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow*”, depending on the translation you have.

Now if you go to 1 Peter chapter 5, notice what you have. You have again in verse 1 “*the sufferings of Christ and the glory that is to be revealed*.” So again you have the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow—suffering and glory.

Let me put it like this. I want you to think about it as *humiliation and exaltation*. That’s exactly what’s being said. Humiliation and exaltation, suffering and glory.

And in fact, if you go to the tag-on in chapter 5 in verse 6, this is exactly what he says. He says, “*Humble yourselves*.” This is humiliation. This is what he is saying to you and to me. “*Humble yourselves therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time He may exalt you*.” There’s the exaltation.

Now in between those two book ends and that tag-on at the end, between those you will find three places where he says, “If you suffer you are blessed.” In other words, if you are humiliated, you will experience a foretaste of exaltation. Suffering and the glories to follow, humiliation and exaltation.

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I think that is a crucial road map for looking at 1 Peter. If you want to understand 1 Peter, you need to understand that Peter has built his entire letter on what we call *the twofold estate of Jesus Christ*.

Now at this point some of you are like Calvin. Calvin is sitting in class. He’s fidgeting in his seat. And then all of a sudden he shouts, “Boring!” (*Laughter*) And then he’s on his way to the principal’s office and he says, “Yeah, yeah, kill the messenger.” (*Laughter*)

I want you to understand this. One of the reasons why we look at the structure of a Biblical text is because that structure oftentimes points us to the message in a way that is exceedingly helpful, not just looking at an expository way in the text, but looking at how he says it is crucial. And you often find that the Holy Spirit inspires these men not only with the words to speak, but how they say it. It’s just a tremendous thing to notice, especially when you notice it repeatedly in a Biblical text like this.

Well let’s talk about the humiliation of Christ for a minute. Before we do that, I know you guys aren’t shy. Do you have any questions? Yes, Don?

Don: Jeff, what kind of suffering do you think Peter has in mind here?

Jeff: Oh man, Don, you are good! (*Laughter*) You are good. You anticipate what’s coming. So I’m not going to answer that right now. (*Laughter*) I’m going to pretend that the segway is later.

Don: All right.

Jeff: Let’s talk first of all about *humiliation defined*. Let’s talk for a minute about what it is.

What is humiliation? I know that sometimes we have a tendency to think about humiliation the way the world thinks about humiliation. You know what I mean? You get ready for the day. You’re kind of tired as you do, and you put your shirt on inside out. And then you walk around and you meet all kinds of important people that you really wanted to make a good impression on. And then you get home and you look in the mirror thinking pretty highly of yourself because you’ve made quite an impression on those folks. And all of a sudden you see the tag dangling in front of your chin, right? (*Laughter*) Have you ever done that? And all of a sudden, what are you? You are humiliated. You’re mortified; you’re embarrassed.

Listen. That is not what we mean when we talk about the humiliation of Jesus Christ. We have that in mind. That is a subsidiary way of talking about the humiliation of Christ. Why do I say that? Because the death on a Roman cross was a humiliating death. But that’s not first and foremost what we think about when we think about humiliation.

Well if not that, than what? Well when we think about humiliation as it pertains to Christ, we need to think of a status change. In other words, the King of glory left His exalted state and took on Himself the form of a servant. And as a result of that, He is humbled. He is humiliated. He’s treated in a way He doesn’t deserve because He has taken upon Himself the form that doesn’t resemble the glory that He left behind.

That’s what we need to think about when we think about the humiliation of Christ. When we think that way, then the shameful and painful death on a Roman cross fits. It fits into that understanding of humiliation. That’s the way we ought to think about humiliation.

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Do you remember this book, *The Prince and the Pauper*? Remember, Edward is the prince and Tom is the pauper. And they meet and they look alike. And Edwards says, “You know, your life must be adventurous.” And Tom says, “Your life must be great.” And they go, “Hey, let’s switch lives!”

And they do, but you know, they only do it temporarily. But Edward is dressed like a pauper and he can’t get back into the kingdom. The guard won’t let him in; he doesn’t recognize him. So he has to go home. And there he’s beaten up by Tom’s dad because Tom’s dad thinks he’s Tom.

And Edward’s is not getting along any better because all the royal people think that he’s got some kind of amnesia. He doesn’t remember what he’s supposed to be doing and who he is. The reason for that is that Edward has left his high and lofty place, and he is now being treated beneath his status because he has assumed a status beneath his previous one. That’s what we mean.

Now I’m going to let you in on a little secret. The secret is that we oftentimes have a difficult time with life because we don’t understand this concept. We think to ourselves, “Why in the world is he or she treating me the way they’re treating me? Don’t I deserve better than that?” And that’s the way we sometimes feel.

And that’s the way we sometimes feel. And I want you to know that we have justification for that. You say, “What?” Well all you’ve got to do is turn to 1 Peter chapter 2, and what does he say? In 1 Peter chapter 2 he says, “You know what? Do you know who you are? You are a beautiful building, built on Christ. You are a spiritual house. You are pleasing to God through Jesus Christ.” “*You are a royal priesthood, a holy nation.*” That’s what he says. And all of a sudden, you’re going, “Yeah! I am!” (*Muffled laughter*) “Why am I being treated this way?”

And Peter says that you’re being treated this way because Christ was treated this way, and He has given you an example to follow. Look in chapter 2. That’s exactly what we’re told. “*For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example so that you might follow in His footsteps.*” He has just gotten done telling us that if you suffer, you’re blessed.

Participant: What verse is that, Jeff?

Jeff: That is in chapter 2 and in verse 21. So we need to understand; here’s the deal. We need to understand that our status is one of humiliation because we are followers of Jesus Christ. He has a twofold estate, humiliation and exaltation. And what Peter is trying to drive home is that you will follow Jesus Christ in His humiliation, and you are then to “*humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God,*” and let Him exalt you at the proper time.

Yes, you will experience glimpses of blessing along the way as you suffer. You will experience exaltation along the way as you experience the humiliation of your humiliating status. But exaltation is for another time. It’s in God’s time.

So you have to get this. This is a guide along the way. This is the way Peter would have us look at the Christian life.

Now you say to me, “What are some examples, then, of the Christian life?” Thanks for asking, Don. (*Laughter*) What are some examples of the Christian life that we might

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notice? Well I want you to prepare for something, and I’m going to talk to you about it in just a minute. I want you to prepare to hear that it is the normal things in the Christian life, it is the normal things in life that Peter identifies with humiliation.

Now there are some kinds of extraordinary things that Peter’s group experiences. But I want you to notice that he doesn’t focus on those things and say, “Now this is humiliation”, because we oftentimes do the exact opposite.

Okay, let’s talk about it for a minute. Be subject to the government. *“Be subject to those in authority.”* Now you’ve got to realize how difficult this would have been.

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: You have to realize how difficult this would have been, because in chapter 1, verse 1, we’re told that they were dispersed to five areas. Those areas are spread across the northernmost part of the kingdom. You have to cross the Tarsus Mountains to get there.

Now let me tell you something. These were probably exiles from Rome in about 51. The Jews and the Christians were causing such a fuss that the emperor said, “All right, I’ve had enough. I’m exiling the whole group of you.” And so he exiles them to the northernmost part of the kingdom.

Now I want you to know something. When you were exiled, you couldn’t appeal to the Government Office of Exiles and get a stipend to help you move, okay? And when you did move, you weren’t going to go to a happy place. Why?

Think about it. You were being exported to a place where the Roman government wanted to expand their territory. So you got set down in a plot of land that somebody else probably owned. And the government didn’t come along and say, “We’re going to help you take this territory.” No, you had to experience the ridicule, and sometimes the suffering, of being someone who was exiled out and transported and planted into a new area. You had to experience those hardships alone because Rome oftentimes exported the people that it liked the least into these types of areas.

So now here they are. And Peter is saying to them, “Now here’s what you need to do as Christians. You need to be subject to the authorities.” What? Can you imagine being in exile and hearing that letter read? This guy doesn’t get it! You know, that sort of thing? But this is what he says.

Now listen! They would have understood this and known this. But here’s the thing. Isn’t it interesting that Peter only mentions this. He doesn’t say, “Now look, I know these hardships”, etc. He acknowledges that they’re exiles. He tells them what they must do despite that. But he doesn’t focus on that.

What does he focus on? See, this is what we have a tendency to focus on. When we want to talk about the humiliation of Christ, we talk about these things. Oh, the suffering of the martyrs! That sort of thing, right? Peter doesn’t do that. What does he do? He talks about slaves and masters, that relationship.

By the way, if you were a slave in Rome, now you were a slave on the outermost reaches of Rome. And guess what? You probably have a master in that outermost part who doesn’t really abide by the things that one ought to abide by when they’re in the civil code and under the civil authorities. So you might have a more difficult time being a

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slave in that outermost part of the empire. But be subject anyway, whether he’s cruel or not. That’s what he says.

But then this gets a little closer to home, because we don’t have slaves and masters, although some of us may have employers with whom we might feel that relationship expressed. But maybe not.

But here’s the place where I think he spends the most time. He spends the most time with relationships between wives and husbands. He talks about a wife and he says this. Wives, you are in a difficult situation right now. You are Christians who have now been exported to the outermost part of the empire, and you’ve got a difficult, unbelieving husband.

If you look at some of the domestic guides of the day, one of the things that you would find is this. You will find that the domestic guides, the secular philosophers of the day, said this. They said that a wife may not have friends other than her husband’s friends. And her husband’s friends are his gods. And a wife must have her husband’s friends, meaning no other gods besides those of her husband.

Now I want you to think about that. Here’s a Christian woman exiled, exported into the outermost part of the empire. And she knows that the common secular wisdom of the day is that she can’t have friends, not even a God, other than the god that my husband serves. And here Peter is telling her how to proceed. Proceed in the way that you can be gentle and calm and quiet. But never fear his intimidation, and always be ready to give a reason for your faith. Think about that.

And then the next verse. He only gives one verse to this. And I’m not going to spend much time here. But a lot of times guys think to themselves, “Oh, this is just the add-on instruction that a husband has here. But I want you to know something. It’s really interesting.

The flow of it is that you have a difficult time with the government. Slaves have a difficult time with cruel masters. Christian wives have a difficult time with unbelieving husbands. And now all of a sudden he’s going to talk about husbands, and it’s just going to be—No, no, no! Husbands here refers to husbands who have difficult times with unbelieving wives.

You know, that’s not uncommon. We always think about it being the reverse, because I think that sometimes it can be more difficult for a woman with an unbelieving husband. But I want to tell you something. A man with an unbelieving wife can be a difficult thing.

I worked with a man at the factory years and years ago. He was a Christian man, a leader in his church. His wife was an unbeliever. He had to build a room in the basement of his house because his wife would take out all of his books and take out all of his church clothes, and she would burn them in the back yard.

Participant: Wow!

Jeff: That’s a difficult woman. It’s living on the corner of a roof, I’ll tell you! *(Laughter)* And then he sums it all up and he says, “*Who is there to harm you if you do what is right?*”

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And we want to say, “Wait a minute! There are a lot of people there to harm us.” And the whole point is this. That’s exactly right, because you are following in the humiliation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But there is exaltation that’s coming. Right now you’re being treated in a way that is beneath your status as sons of God. But hang in there, because this is the way that Jesus Christ Himself traveled.

Okay, now let’s just think about some pastoral counsel. What would you tell somebody in this particular situation? Well, I’ll tell you what. Peter has some counsel for us, and there are three things I want you to notice.

The first is this. I want you to catch this. This is part of the inclusion. Go back to 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 11. This is one of those really great things. Look what he says. He says that the prophets of old prophesied, and they were inquiring “*what Person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when they predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.*” In other words, they were looking for the time that this Messiah would arrive.

And what does Galatians say? It says, “*in the fullness of time God sent forth His Son.*” The idea was that God has the right time, the perfect time, and He sent His Son at the perfect time. But these prophets of old were inquiring about what that time was.

Now go with me to 1 Peter chapter 5 and look in verse 6. You have to keep that in mind and look what he says. “*Humble yourselves, therefore, under the right hand of God, so that at the proper time He may exalt you.*” Now you get the point. If He had the perfect time to bring His Son, He’s got the perfect time to bring exaltation into your life.

Do you see how pastoral that is, because we often think to ourselves, “Where is God in all this?”

Participant: What does the expression “in the fullness of time” mean? I mean, obviously from God’s perspective—

Jeff: Yes. It means when the time had fully come. Next question? (*Laughter*) You can look at that historically and you can say, “Wow!” Hellenism had created a context where there was a common language for the people to speak. And you can look at it from the perspective that Rome had the *pax Romana*, the Roman peace. And so travel was, for the most part, easy and safe. And you can look at the Roman roadways, the Ignatian Way, the artery running through the kingdom. All of these things you can look at and say, wow! God orchestrated this in such a way that it really was a perfect time for the gospel to come. You can look at it that way.

Or you can look at it from the perspective, the theological/Biblical perspective, that as the covenants climaxed it was now time for the pinnacle of them all to come, for Christ to come and fulfill what had been only in types and shadows in the past.

Now the two of those things coalesce, right? I mean the Lord Biblically and theologically brought His Son at just the time that He prepared the world to receive His Son. So you can look at “in the fullness of time” from a number of different angles, and I’ve given you two of them. Does that help?

Participant: You just had that in your back pocket? (*Laughter*) You said that the covenants were—

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Jeff: Yes. That’s great. Thanks for raising that. Think about the covenant of grace that God cuts with Adam. Think about that. So what does it say? It says that a Redeemer is going to come and crush the head of the serpent.

And what needs to happen? Well creation is now in a bad way. Why? Because of sin having entered into the world. So the very first thing that He does is that He re-establishes the covenant of creation? Where? In the covenant with Noah. He re-cuts that covenant. So he preserves the stage of redemption.

Then what does He do? He brings out the first actors onto the new stage, the family of Abraham. And he cuts the Abrahamic covenant with him.

And then what does He do? Well one of the things that He promises is land and people to fill that land. And He promises that those people living in that land will be a blessing to the nations.

But those people need a guide to live by. So what does He do? There’s they Mosaic covenant, wherein the Law is given so that they will be guided in their ways, and not be like the pagans who lived there beforehand, right?

And then what does He do? He brings about the Davidic covenant, where He promises a king over them, a Messiah/King, and so on. So you see how there’s an escalation of the covenants, climaxing in Christ. Yes?

Participant: Another example of the fullness of time is when God tells Abraham, “You know, your descendants are going to multiply. So I’m going to send them away for four hundred years?” Why four hundred years? *“Because the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”*

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: So all these events come at proper times according to His plan, which is perfect.

Jeff: Yes. And let me just reiterate. This is pastoral, because if God has the perfect time for everything—and if you don’t think He does, look at Ecclesiastes 3; there’s a time for everything and it’s God’s time—if you don’t think that God has a perfect time for everything, you’re going to struggle with your humiliation. But if you understand that God’s timing is perfect and that He has a time for everything, then you will endure your time of humiliation, knowing that God will exalt you at the proper time. And you will experience blessing in the midst of your humiliation at just the right time.

Have you ever been in that situation where you’ve been really under it? And all of a sudden you’ve had this taste of blessing and you said, “Man, did I need that!” God knows when to give those things.

You need to realize who you are. Important: when you forget who you are, when you or the slave starts believing what his master says about him, refer back to chapter 2, says Peter. *“You are a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people pleasing to God through the Lord Jesus Christ, a spiritual house.”* Refer back to who you are. Yes, Don?

Don: Bruce always says this. Are you going to believe what the world says about you or what God says about you?

Jeff: That’s right. That’s exactly right.

Participant: Amen.

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Jeff: And that’s this. And then realize where you are in the plan. This goes back to the timing issue. Where are you in the plan? You need to say to yourself, “I am in the estate of humiliation.” Sometimes the worst thing about us is that we don’t recognize the royalty of one another. And that’s on us. We need to repent of that. And we need to recognize that in one another.

But here’s the point. The point is that I need to recognize where I am in the plan. And when I forget specifically where I am in the plan,—I guess I wouldn’t really know because I’m not God, who is omniscient—then at least I know that I am in the estate of humiliation until God sees fit to exalt me. And so you need to realize where you are in the plan. That’s the pastoral counsel that he gives.

And now our time is up, so we’ll see you next time. But Jordan has a question. Yes? Go ahead, Jordan.

Jordan: So when you define circumstances in creation, or the examples that you gave, it seems like you’re excluding situations like bad health that comes upon you, or the loss of a family member, or something like that.

Jeff: That’s a great question.

Jordan: You might not think of that as suffering, but is that not the same as humiliation in what you’re thinking about?

Jeff: That’s a great question. And this question is an important one. For instance, is suffering with cancer the humiliation of Christ? Is the experience of losing my wife the humiliation of Christ? I would say this. If you are in Christ and you are experiencing that loss or that illness as a Christian, facing it as a believer, handling it in a Christian way, then that is absolutely experiencing humiliation. You’re experiencing it from the distortions of nature. You’re experiencing it from death in the world. You’re experiencing the sufferings that are really beneath us as sons and daughters of the living God.

But when we handle them in a bad way, as Peter says, when you suffer for doing bad, don’t think that you’re going to be rewarded for that. So, for instance, we can handle cancer in a poor way. We can handle the death of a loved one in a poor way. We need to remember who we are and realize where we are in the plan. And as we encounter all of these things as Christians, they are for our spiritual upbuilding because we are traveling in the humiliation of Christ. So that’s a great question. All right. Anything else?

Participant: This is kind of a moot question. But every person Jesus healed eventually died of something.

Jeff: That’s right, even Lazarus. *(Laughter)* You may be thinking, “What? Wait a minute!” You guys have a good day. *(Applause)*