

1Peter 10-11-05b

We pick up our study now in 1 Peter chapter 1. We're looking at the nature of this inheritance and what it takes to qualify for it. The inheritance is not there for all believers, and it's kind of a shocking concept to some, but all believers are not inheritors. It is by faith and patience that we inherit.

We might be tempted to say, well, it's kind of like at the school assembly in high school. I remember there was people that went across and got little awards and got recognitions and people got trophies, but that's just for competitive people. I'll just be glad to be in the faceless, nameless, wrong.

I'll just be glad if they let me in the pearly gates, so to speak, and I don't need to worry so much about inheritance. If you have any credence that you assign to the Word of God, you will know that this is a fatally bad attitude to have. This is not the kind of reward you want to miss.

This is not the sort of inheritance you want to disqualify yourself from. These are not only things that we will greatly enjoy and appreciate at a personal level, but they reflect the glory of God. We are created for the glory of God.

The plan and purpose of God is to manifest Himself in and through and to His creation. We want to be a part of that. The first and greatest commandment is, love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your strength.

And if you love God, you want to please Him. You want to be what He has saved us to be, and that means be an inheritor. This isn't about you.

It isn't about us. It's about God. It is God's desire that we be overcomers.

It is God's desire that we prevail. It is God's desire that we enter into the victory that His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, achieved at the cross. And you are a failure and a disappointment and an outcast.

Again, it's a little shocking. You can be a believer, and you can have eternal salvation, and you can be cast out. That's what an outcast is, someone who is cast out.

Cast him out and apportion him his inheritance, his lot, with the hypocrites. This isn't just not achieving a positive. If we disqualify, if we fail to achieve, if we fail to gain inheritance, it's not just, well, I didn't get an extra perk or an extra minaret on my mansion in heaven or something.

This is a failure. This is a serious lack of interest, lack of love for the Lord God, lack of appreciation for the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. You have failed.

You are deficient. You are defective. You are an unprofitable servant.

You will be cut into and apportioned your nothingness with the hypocrites in the darkness which is outside. So at the same time that inheritance is a wonderful, exciting potential for us, failing to achieve it is no light thing. It's a serious thing.

We are commanded to walk in the light. We are commanded to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. We are commanded to mature.

We are commanded to grow in grace and knowledge of the Savior. This is our mission. So many people, there's such a big thing in entertainment and the fluff that passes for philosophical thought in the modern day about destiny.

It started back in the 70s. Luke, it is your destiny. And ever since then, oh, destiny, fate.

And you know, the prophecy says that thus and so is going to happen to the hero of the story and it is your destiny. And have you ever thought about these fictional things? Some of them are science fiction. Others of them are werewolf fiction and vampire fiction and all other kinds of fiction.

But there's always a destiny and there's a fate and there's a prophecy and there's some big master plan, but they never get around to telling you who thought up these destinies, who set this destiny, who decided this fate. There's this great vacuum outside the story where it's just literally deus ex machina. It's just, well, we need a fate and a destiny so we can get this story to move along.

And so we'll just make one up out of whole cloth that came from nowhere. Oh, what was the thing in Dune? And there's some guy that's supposed to be the messiah in Dune and these people, these prophetesses and blue-eyed people are supposed to be thinking up stuff that that Irish actor, Kier, or whatever his name was, was going to be the next big thing. Well, who gave these seers and prophets and drug takers, who gave them the information? Where did it come from? Well, that's all just taken for granted.

It's unexplained. And people understand the concept of destiny, but they don't understand that there actually is a destiny and there is a destinator, a predestinator, if you will. But it is these potentials, it is these opportunities that have been destined and predestined by God.

God predestined that people who are saved in this age would be conformed to the image of his son, potentially. We have to, if you're interested, it seems like everybody, why is this in all of this entertainment and story fair? Why is it? Because people are interested in destiny, that there is an instinctive human recognition, that there is purpose, that there is a reason why you are here. We all sense this.

Anybody in their right mind senses that there is something going on here. It is bigger than us. We didn't just wake up out of the muck to look around and say, oh, look the universe and then fall

back down into it.

Everyone has that innate sense. God has put eternity in our hearts. God has put a sense of destiny and purpose and design in our hearts.

And we all recognize it. Well, this is it. If you want to know what your destiny is, if you want to know what your purpose is, if you want to know what your *raison d'être* is, if you want to know why you're here, this is it.

To enter into the glory of God by inheriting. Ultimately, it boils down to what are you going to do in eternity? When the Lord Jesus comes back and we come up from the dust of the earth or we rise as those who are alive and remain and we meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord, then what? Then what? Do we just strike a pose and put an expression of bliss on our faces and say, isn't this great? There is going to be activity. There is going to be ongoing movement.

God is vastly, infinitely creative. And this is just finger work. This physical universe is just the work of God's fingers.

It's a quick study. There's more and more that He's going to do in all of the eternal future. We want to enter into it.

We want to be ready. We want to be prepared. We get prepared here in this life, on this earth, by laying hold of eternal things that God reveals in His word.

That qualifies us. Through faith, we enter into this inheritance. Through faith.

We walk by faith. We are saved by faith. As you have received Christ, so walk in Him.

By faith. By faith, Abraham. By faith, Noah.

By faith, Moses. By faith, all of the Hebrews of Hebrews chapter 11, all those heroes of the faith. By faith.

By faith, we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. By faith, by faith, by faith. It's all about faith.

Well, what is faith? We're going to spend a Saturday tomorrow doing things. How can we do it by faith? Well, we have to have something to put our faith in. And it is the truth of the word of God that God exists, that He has a plan, that it's important that we should live in a way that is pleasing in His sight, expunge and cleanse ourselves from sin and from distraction and the weight that holds us back, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

Jesus authored it. Jesus fulfilled it. Jesus completed it.

He is the Alpha and the Omega of our faith. All of that is in view in Peter's letter when he says, We have been born again. We've been brought forth like infants.

What is the excitement about a baby coming into the world? Why do people just get so giddy over the whole thing? Among other things, for the woman it's relief after several months of great discomfort and having to support the thing and wondering who it's going to be, what it's going to be, what will it be like? Can I communicate with it? Can I bathe it and change it and dress it and train it up in the way that it should go? You can't do all that when it's inside. You want it to be born. But the reason everyone is so excited, one of many reasons, is that when a new person comes into the family, their whole life is ahead of them.

It's a huge potential. All of the opportunities, this is what we're going to do and this is what we'll talk about and this is what they're going to experience and everything is fresh and it's a blank slate. It's a wide open vista.

It's an unplowed field. It's unbroken snow. This person is going to come into the world and their whole life is literally ahead of them and they can become and enter into and enjoy and experience and be a part of and it's all these great potentials.

That's why the scripture says, we have been born again. It's not just the technical theological doctrine of regeneration. It's we've been made alive in a new realm.

Our spiritual life is just like that baby. It's all before us. It's potential.

It's there. It's waiting to be seized and experienced and laid hold of and enjoyed and exploited and fulfilled. It's a new birth.

It's a new chance. It's not limited by anything in this life. It's there for the asking and the seeking and the knocking on the door and walking through.

It's new. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. He's a new being.

Old things are passed away. All things are become new. It doesn't matter how smart you are.

It doesn't matter how many goofs you've made in the past. It doesn't matter what anybody knows about you. There's people that almost hate to go back and see their family at Thanksgiving because those are the people that know all of the bad stuff about me.

It doesn't matter. You're a new creation in Christ. And the great thing is that God's mercies are renewed every morning.

You think, well, I had that unbroken snow. I had that unplowed field, but I went in there and I tracked it up. I went in there and wrote my name in it.

I made snow angels when I shouldn't have. I've splattered mud on it. I was trying to get my car out of a hole.

I had a beautiful light snowfall over the yard one time. It looked so beautiful. I had to move the car.

I got in the car and everything was slick. There was a mud hole there. When I got out of the car and looked, that beautiful snow was just all besmirched and befouled.

Naturally, it sat and didn't melt for three days. It was all this brown, ugly, where formerly there'd been this beautiful thing. And I thought, boy, I sure wish I could... And the car didn't move anyway.

All I did was mess up the snow. And we think, oh, I've messed this up. I can't go back.

There's no second chance to make a first impression, etc. Not so in God's plan. The wonderful thing about the grace of God and the work of Jesus Christ is... Remember 1 John 1? If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with Him and He with us.

And the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, keeps on cleansing us from all sin. If we acknowledge our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The word all is in 1 John 1. The word all is in 1 John 1. The besmirching is taken away.

The fallops are removed. This is the thing that kept me from getting anywhere in art. Because if you have a thing about... Well, I don't know what it is.

Blank canvas is very intimidating. Because what if I make a wrong mark? With oil paints, you can't just scrape it off. It's not like the computer where you can hit the back button and off it comes.

With oils, oils are forever. You can mask it, you can hide it, you can paint over it, but you can't get it off of there. Same with watercolors, even more intimidating because they're transparent.

You can't even cover it up unless you go opaque. If you're doing that transparent watercolor seascape thing, you get one chance. You get your wash across there, that's it.

If you don't get it right, you've got to take that piece of paper off, that expensive watercolor paper, and put on another one. And if you're poor and trying to do art and you realize each sheet in this tablet costs so many... Anyway, it becomes and you think, I don't want to make a mistake, so I'm just not going to do anything. As soon as I make a mark, I'm going to be unhappy with it and I want to take it back, and I can't, so I'm just not going to.

But the great thing in the Christian life, in our spiritual life, is the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. It wipes the slate clean. It doesn't matter.

Will there be consequences if we sin against one another? Will there be hurt that is inflicted where there will be ongoing things? Of course. But the guilt of it, the weight of it, the impediment of it, the power of it is taken away. And God can even work the injuries from it together for good.

Shall we sin because God has such a great remedy? You know, Paul asks, should we sin then so that grace may abound? Meganoita, God forbid. Just because God's got a great bottle of bleach doesn't mean we should run around staining everything. But that goes back to our fundamental heart attitude.

Do you love God? Do you appreciate the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you care at all about what a tremendously monumental, stunning thing salvation is? If we do, then we are going to want to inherit. We are going to want to max out in the plan and purpose of God. Be an inheritor.

Be an overcomer. Be one of those who receives those blessings. Not because, look at me, I've got a bunch of inheritance.

Not, oh boy, am I going to have fun in eternity? Because it is a fulfillment of God's desire. It is a fulfillment of God's plan. It glorifies Jesus Christ.

If I can say it in a crude and inaccurate way, it makes it worth God's while to have saved us. It makes it worth Jesus' while to have come and died on the cross for us. It redeems the work of God on our behalf when we enter into it and fulfill its purpose.

There's nothing worse than knocking yourself out for someone to give them help. Maybe they're in a bad situation. Let's say you go out.

Somebody's in the middle of the night. They call you up. It's 2.30 a.m. and they're out and they've got a flat by the side of the road and some horrible snowstorm.

And you say, well, okay, I'll come out and change your tire. So you get up, you dress, you go out there, you find them, you get your flashlight, you go out there, your knuckles are freezing and the biting wind is blowing down your neck. You get in there and you get this whole thing changed and you put the tire on.

And in the meantime, the person hailed a cab and left without saying anything. And, well, what did you call me for? We're just going to get a cab and leave anyway. I've done all of this because I care about you and I'm happy to do it on your behalf.

And you just left. Cab showed up, hopped in, drove away, didn't tell me what to do with the car. I'm on the 3 a.m., freezing cold.

Well, I wonder if this is not sort of the way God feels sometimes when he has sent his son, the Lord Jesus Christ to die for us. We claim salvation and we're real happy when it comes and then we get in a cab and drive off. God says, look, I have done this work on your behalf.

Please avail yourself of it. Make it worth my while. Make me happy that I saved you by entering into it.

That's what this inheritance is. That's why it's important. That's why Peter, as he's talking to these dispersed pilgrims, these Jewish Christians, who all their lives have thought about inheritance in terms of God's promises to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob through Moses and David, I seem further away from inheritance than ever.

At least when we were in the land, when the Romans were there, we were at least on the ground. I could look and see a well that my forefathers had dug or a city that my forefathers had built. I could see the history.

I could see where the patriarchs and my ancestors have walked. And yes, we were oppressed, but at least I was there. Now I'm scattered to the winds.

I'm up here in some God forsaken place. And Peter says, look, don't fall apart over this. God chose you to experience this dispersion for a time.

Your deliverance, your inheritance is fixed in heaven. It is guarded by God. It is ready.

It is prepared and it will be revealed at its time. It's going to happen in the last time, but this is not the last time. Something that needs to happen first.

And that's what we find here in the next verse. You are kept. You are guarded by the power of God through faith with a view toward deliverance, prepared deliverance.

It's a done deal deliverance to be revealed in the last time. In this, you greatly rejoice. I can imagine some of the people saying, I do? Say that again.

I was kind of feeling down in the dumps because I'm living up here in Pontus and I'd really like to be down in Hebron or Judea or Galilee or someplace in the land. In this I greatly rejoice. Well, if I believe what Peter is saying, I do rejoice.

God is guarding my inheritance. He's guarding me. And as long as I maintain my faith, I will surely inherit.

I will surely enter into these things. It doesn't depend on history. It doesn't depend on the Romans.

It doesn't depend on the success of an army. All it depends on is God's perfect time and God will bring his plan to pass. So yeah, I guess I do.

I am happy about that. Peter says, you greatly rejoice in this. Though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials.

That deliverance is going to be revealed in the last time. There is going to be an ultimate vindication, an ultimate award of all of these treasures. Though now for a little while.

This word little while is oligos. It's like oligarchy. You know, rule by the few.

A little bit. Remember when Paul was talking in Acts and he's preaching and the guy comes back and says, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And when we went through Acts, we saw that it's literally with so little do you expect me to be a Christian.

It's this word oligos. In so little, I'm going to become a Christian. You've given me this five-minute speech and you expect me to convert.

Kind of an idea. Oligos. For a little.

And it doesn't really have the word while. It's just though now for a little. Now for a little.

If need be, you have been grieved. If need be. Well, what be the need for me to be grieved by various trials? Literally in Greek, this is, you rejoice greatly for a short time now, if necessary.

Dei is the word. Desmos is the word for bonds. It is that which confines or constricts.

And a necessity is a confinement. It is something that is bound to happen. Almost English, the word bind and bound works almost the same way as dei in Greek.

So you rejoice greatly now for a little, if need be, if necessary. If it is necessary, you are distressed. Now, how does God figure out for whom it is necessary to be distressed? This, by the way, is lupeo.

If you're familiar with the biological designations for wolves, what is it? Lupus. Lupus. And there's a disease, I think, that has that name, and it's based on the cry.

It's like a wolf cry. But lupeo is the source of that word. And it means to be sad, to sorrow.

You know, the lone wolf baying at the moon in the middle of the night. He sounds lonesome, so we'll call him Old Lonesome. That's his scientific name.

Canis lupus is a lonesome dog, sorrowful dog. Sad dog is lupus. So you rejoice greatly knowing about this upcoming deliverance that is already prepared, will be revealed in the last time, it's guarded in heaven, now for a short time.

And there isn't an although. I think you have a... It says though now for a little while, but they base this on the grammar because it's, you know, concessive or whatever. But there's no word that says although or though.

It says you rejoice greatly, now for a short time, if necessary, you are distressed. So you rejoice

in your future deliverance, even though now you're distressed. Have you ever had both things going on at the same time? You can be really happy about something that's coming up, but right now you're distressed.

Anybody that's been in school, in final exams, knows this feeling. When you think about it all being over next week, oh boy am I happy. But when you think about that test tomorrow, boy am I lupo.

Especially if you're not prepared. Some people, brilliant people that just, you know, they eat these midterms and finals for breakfast and it's like, yeah, give me a chance to show what I know. I'm going to see if I can, you know, get a hundred percent.

But their challenge is just, is it going to be a 96, a 98 or a 100? My challenge is, you know, am I going to pass out from nervousness before I ever even get the thing open? But you can have a mix and it depends on what you're looking at. Peter says, this inheritance, you rejoice in that while at the same time now it's necessary that you are grieved by these various trials. And this is poikilois perasmois.

And it even sounds tribulational. Poikilois perasmois. Perasmos.

This is being troubled, being tested. And poikilois just means different kinds. And there are different kinds of trials.

So God does this on purpose. He has prepared our deliverance and he's saving it for the end. Think about this.

And this is another sort of faulty analogy, but I'll use it anyway. You are familiar with stories, with novels and narratives. And there's three, there's basically four parts to your standard story.

Especially your extended story, your novel or your movie. First part is introduction and background. Let's meet the characters.

It was a dark and stormy night. And here's Sam driving down the road looking for the guy with the flat. Okay.

That you introduce the character. What time and place and so on are we? Is it werewolves in London? Is it Little Miss Muffet and her tuffet? What is it? So you set up the characters and the background and the structure of it. The second thing is you take these things that you've introduced.

Here's time and place and people and you complicate things. There's got to be some tension and some crisis and some conflict. This is the problem with Barney, by the way.

If you've ever tried to watch Barney, the purple dinosaur, I don't even know if he's still on.

Hopefully, something bad has happened and it's all gone. Something good has happened and it's all gone.

But I actually tried to watch Barney all the way through one time. And he was jumping up and down on the moon and singing a little song and dancing. And they had a little story where... And the problem with the Barney story that I recognized right away is there was no conflict.

It was like, I'm going to bake these cookies. Who can I get to bake these cookies? Oh, can you help me bake these cookies? Thank you. Oh, can you help me? Oh, thank you.

And they all get together and bake. Oh, let's all sing and dance a little song and then goodbye because we made these cookies together. And isn't it wonderful that there's no conflict? A good story has conflict and tension.

And you build things up to a climax where I just don't know what's going to happen to our hero who a good author, a good story crafter will have made you care about. This is another problem with modern affairs. You watch a thing for a while and you think, I don't really care what happens to any of you.

I'm going to bed. There's nobody to root for. These crime caper movies where you're supposed to root for the gang that's trying to rip off some bank.

Who do you root for? Come on, cops. I mean, you know they're going to fail. You know they're going to all be sipping margaritas down in some Bahamian island someplace when it's all over.

You want me to root for the criminals? You want me to say, oh, police, don't catch him. Let him go. Let him get his ill-gotten gains.

And all the poor people that had their money in the bank are just out of luck. There's nobody to root for. So you introduce everything.

You complicate it. You set up trouble and tension and conflict leading to a climax. Then, in the third part of the story, the climax is resolved.

The problem is addressed. And then there is the, as Dr. C. says, the denouement, the denouement, the aftermath, the postscript, and they all lived happily ever after. He rode off into the sunset with Dolly Mae riding by his side as their son left the harbor and their ship sunk slowly in the west and at the end.

So that's your parts. Well, think of God's plan for human history for believers in those terms. First of all, we're introduced to the environment, the characters, and the issues.

We're here on this earth. There's good and evil. And we're starting off joined up with the bad guys.

We're born into the wrong crowd. We're born into those who are separated from God. And as the issues get more complicated, we find out that, well, there's lots of alternative choices.

You can decide whether or not to believe what God says. You have the opportunity to transfer from darkness to light, or you can throw in with the bad guys. It gets complicated and complicated.

You say, I want to be with the good guys. And God says, Okay, you're with us. However, I can't change your clothes yet.

You're still wearing the outfit and hanging around with all the bad guys. And it's complex. And we have to wrestle against what we were formerly a part of.

We don't wrestle against flesh and blood. It's against principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this age. We're wrestling the darkness that we have, on paper, been delivered from.

But our final deliverance, where we're ultimately removed and completely separated from darkness, is yet future. But this is the complication. The climax is going to come, and the great piece de resistance is going to be right there when the Lord Jesus returns and fully delivers us.

That's the kairos eschatos. That's the last time. We are in the complication, tension, and conflict build-up phase.

And it's necessary. This is what Peter is telling these pilgrims. He says, Look, the resolution is coming.

The climax will happen. You'll be delivered. You'll get your inheritance.

Everything's going to be great. But we haven't gotten that far. What kind of story would it be if he just said, Well, here's Bob and Andy, and here's their hot rod car.

Oh, by the way, they all lived happily ever after. The end. What kind of a story is that? I want to be engaged.

And hopefully, in a good story, you see the characters learn and grow and take something away from the experience. That's what we're supposed to do. We face this conflict.

We learn and grow and take something away from the experience. This is the gripe, by the way, just as an aside. When you watch your Terminator movies, your Schwarzenegger martial arts guy movies with Steven Seagal or the guys with the foreign names.

I can't remember. What's the thing about those? Those guys don't learn anything. They're big, bad, silent, gruff heroes at the beginning.

They're big, bad, gruff, slightly bruised and damaged, artfully scarred heroes at the end. But they're no different at the end than they were at the beginning. They don't come away thinking, you know, next time, I should probably just pack a gun and I can save myself 15 minutes of whirling around climbing scaffolds and dealing with this guy.

Just pop him and I'd be all right. You could learn something. You could grow.

But they don't. And that's the literary objection to a lot of this adventure movie fare is it doesn't really do anything more than just give you an excuse for a lot of explosions and ragged clothing and so on. This life is a narrative.

We're introduced to what's going on and that it is complicated. And it's supposed to be complicated. You're supposed to encounter difficulties.

You're supposed to have opposition. It's a part of the plot. It's a part of what makes the story great.

It's a part of how we as characters learn and we'll have something to take away from the experience. When the climax happens, the conflict is resolved and that great denouement, the great resolution aftermath is the eternal future where we have our inheritance. And we got it legitimately.

We didn't steal it from a bank. But Paul is telling these pilgrims, you are in the conflict and stress phase. Don't be surprised.

Don't be taken aback. It would be silly to have the last time now. You wouldn't have learned anything to take away from the experience if God just said, Oh, you believe in my son Jesus Christ? Well, come up here.

Here's a golden street. Here's a pearly gate. Here's some clouds.

Here's a harp. Here's a crown. Play me a tune.

Hey, I'm glad you joined the good guys. You don't learn anything through that. We so appreciate our salvation because we know what we ought to be.

We know what we will someday be. We're not it yet. And as we try to extricate ourselves and we avail ourselves of God's grace and we work and struggle against darkness and against sin and against everything that is mundane and earthly and shallow and partakes of the devil's work, we appreciate.

It's one thing to have sight. It's another thing to have been blind and now see. Who appreciates their sight more? Who is going to value it and treasure it and enjoy it more? Someone who's had it from birth or someone who was blind from birth and suddenly, miraculously, is given perfect

sight.

Who is going to treasure it? There's nobody that treasures American citizenship and American residence and the great things about this country than those who have lived overseas for any length of time and have seen how it is in other countries. And there's nobody less likely to appreciate this country than those that have always been here and just take it all for granted. God doesn't want us to take His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, for granted.

He doesn't want us to take salvation and all of the wonderful things He has in the eternal future for granted. How can we best develop a frame of reference? How can God inoculate us against the kind of rejection and negative decisions that Satan and one-third of his angels made? Because they had been in nothing but a perfect environment, as far as we know. We have already seen the dark side.

You take a prisoner of war five or six years in Hanoi, coming back to the United States of America, coming down the steps from the airplane and kneeling down and kissing the ground here. Wouldn't it be great if every American had that appreciation for this country? Well, that's the kind of appreciation we will have because we have been slaves to sin. We have been hampered and beaten down and bruised and hurt.

And we've lived in the darkness. We know what it's like to be separate from God. Enemies of God, without hope, without Him in the world.

We have experienced it and we're never going to want to come back to the sewer that is life apart from God. The death, the pain, the suffering. Well, the time that remains to us in this life is a time to learn and grow through faith to lay hold of that inheritance.

And the more we exploit this time and recognize that our tests and our hardships are part of God's gracious, loving gift to us. The reason we are suffering and going through this thing is because He loves us. If He didn't love us, He'd just take us to glory and wait to see if we would ever fail.

So when Peter says, in this you greatly rejoice. You know that your salvation is secure. You know that your inheritance is secure because you are one of those who through faith is protected by the power of God.

But for a little while, if need be, and we have different needs. We have different things we need to learn. Some of us need to learn patience.

Some of us need to learn that we're secure. Some of us need to learn that we have been cleansed and forgiven and the past has no hold over us. Some of us need to learn to be independent.

Some of us need to learn to be dependent. Some of us need to learn humility. Some of us need

to learn courage and strength.

Some of us need to learn perseverance. Some of us need to learn consistency. Some of us need to learn to stop worrying.

Some of us need to learn to guard our lips. We have different things that we need to learn and so God sends us various tests, various trials. They are tailor-made.

They are designed, custom designed, to strengthen us. People spend all kinds of money going to personal trainers. The personal trainer does an evaluation.

He says, well, I see you've got this little flab on the side and I see your biceps are missing and I see you've got no stamina. You can't run more than 40 feet without huffing and puffing and passing out. So here's my tailor-made program to help you in your weakest areas.

You've got a wonderful, strong set of abdominal muscles there. Your six-pack is just practically blinding me so we don't need to work on sit-ups. What we need to do is arm strength.

We need to do endurance training. Somebody else can run all day. They're stringy and can breathe and their heart only beats 60 times a minute that they're running like the blazes and their heart's just flubbing along and they don't need endurance training.

They need strength training. They need to bulk up. They need something different.

So the program is tailor-made to strengthen individuals in the areas where they need strengthening, to maintain them in areas where they need maintenance and to achieve their goals. Well, God tailor-makes our lives, our trials. If you're a student, you have academic challenges.

For some people, math is easy and English is hard. For other people, English is easy and math is hard. And God designed this.

You think, well, why does He care? What's the eternal future got to do with math and English? What does your mind go through as you face these classes? You're at work. Some things are easy. Some things are hard.

Other people, it seems like they get a break and stuff goes easy. Relationships, whatever the area may be, you look around and you say, it doesn't seem to me like we're all getting the same deal of the cards here. I've got it tough and this person has it easy.

I was born with certain liabilities and that person wasn't. And that person is sitting over there saying, you know what? I was born with certain liabilities and he wasn't. You would be amazed at the people you look at and say, boy, I'd sure love to trade places with them in terms of how the cards were dealt.

And many of those people are looking at you saying, you know what? It would be great if I had that set of problems instead of the problems I have. It's just a matter of how visible are the problems. Some people's problems are largely invisible.

Other people's problems are largely visible. But I will tell you this from the word of God. God is fair.

God is just. And all of us push against the same level of resistance. Nobody gets an easy time and nobody gets a too hard to cope with time.

Everybody gets the same level of resistance. And I say that knowing what I'm saying. The same.

You are not special. Your problems are not unique and unseen by others in terms of their level of difficulty or their ability to be overcome by faith and by the resources that God has provided. Your problems are not harder than someone else's.

They are different than someone else's. They are more or less visible than someone else's. But don't get arrogant about your problems and think nobody knows the trouble I've seen.

It's arrogance to think that your problems are greater than others. They're not. And don't think that you're special and you've been set aside for unique and unseen by other eyes testing.

Your test is no harder and no easier than anybody else's. It's just different. That is the justice of God.

God doesn't pick on some people and give other people a golden spoon and a big pass. Get out of hell free. Get into heaven free.

It is all the same. Everybody has to walk by faith. Everybody has to claim the promises of God.

Everybody has built-in temptation in the flesh. It can be in wildly different areas. It is easy to look across at someone else and say, he doesn't know anything about how much I'm being tested.

Probably not. And guess what? You don't know anything about how he is being tested either. And don't assume that you know that this person's got an easy break.

That person may be overcoming stuff every single day that you know not of. And probably is, because we all have the same challenge. You look at human bodies just as an example.

There are people that are born with brawny, I-can-bench-325-without-even-trying bodies. Others of us are built light, built stringy, built a different way. And for me, maybe benching 175 is a real feat.

But if I'm on one bench pushing 175, and this beefy guy is pushing 325, it is just as hard for him to bench his 325 as it is for me to bench my 175. And it would be pretty silly for him to look over

at me and say, well, his problem is no biggie. Look, he's only doing 175.

Look, for me, that 175 is just as hard as your 325. So shut up. And by the same token, this is why the Bible says, in one verse it says, bear one another's burdens, and two verses later it says, each one must bear his own load.

We can encourage and support and help one another through prayer and through friendship and through encouragement and through fellowship and through speaking the truth in love, but we all have to bear our own load. And guess what? God assigns the load. How accurate do you think God's load assignment is? Does he give some people, he loves some people more and he just gives them a very light load, and I like you so much, I'm going to give you the 300-pound load.

God made us. He loves us. He loves us equally, and we are all given the same.

So get the idea out of your head that it's easy for some and hard for others. All of us tend to think, well, my stuff is unique and special and nobody knows the truth. Forget that.

It's arrogance, and it is a quick way for Satan to invade our spiritual life and lead us into making excuses. Because my problem is so difficult, I can't be expected to achieve in the plan and purpose of God. That is Satan's own lie.

What has he done? He has just neutralized you. He has just taken away your opportunity for inheritance to the extent that you buy into the lie that it's too tough, it's special, it's, you know, I'm just not like other people. That's Satan's lie.

In Christ, you are a new creation. In Christ, you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. You are strengthened.

You are upheld by the right hand of God's righteousness. And God says, my strength is sufficient for you. And if God's strength is sufficient, the only reason you're not achieving is that you've fooled yourself or you've allowed Satan to fool you into thinking that it's some kind of special deal.

Peter says, Greatly rejoiced, though now for a little while, if need be, you are grieved by various trials. These people in the Diaspora could say, well, the guys down in Israel don't have the trouble I've got. Right.

They've got a different variety of trial. They had a different need. God had a different need that he's using them to fill.

He has another need that he's using the Diaspora people to fulfill. It's all in the perfect plan and provision of God. The one thing we cannot afford to do is forget that God is in control.

God is in charge. His plan is perfect. His provision is perfect.

His timing is perfect. His load plan is perfect. The tests that he brings to us are perfect, perfectly

designed, perfectly weighted, perfectly calibrated to enable us to grow in grace, to enable us to qualify for inheritance through faith, that preserved inheritance and a deliverance that has already been prepared and is going to be revealed at the end.

Well, this brings us to verse 7 and that's where we'll pick up next time. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for your almost incomprehensible grace and faithfulness and love expressed toward us through the Lord Jesus.

We pray that we can avail ourselves of these things that you have provided to us, that God the Holy Spirit will enable us to maintain a perspective to walk by faith and not by sight and to lay hold of that for which we were laid hold of. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.