

# Can I Get Just One Break?

## Know Pain Know Gain series #3

### Chris Famisaran

Good morning, everybody. How are you all doing today. So great to see you all and welcome to all of our visitors. Personally and want to say thank you for joining us today. Glad to have you all here. Let's go ahead and begin with a word of prayer.

Father in heaven, thank you, Lord for the opportunity to once again continue on our journey of Know Pain, Know Gain. As we go forth in this study, Lord, open our hearts and our minds to what you have us to learn today that we may be better educated, equipped and empowered to serve you. In Jesus name, amen.

I previously mentioned ancient Bristlecone pines, several 100 miles to the north of us, in a small town, of Bishop to the east is the ancient bristlecone pine forest. And these are trees that grow at a very high elevation, sometimes upwards of almost two miles above sea level. And these are trees that have just endured. Their evergreens that may sometimes live for 1000s of years, the older specimens may only have a thin layer of bark on their trunks. And especially considering the habitat of these trees where it's super rocky, the soil is poor. Precipitation is meh, it's super incredible that they're still able to survive. Of course, there's also not just the the environmental challenges that they face. But also, you know, within these trees, there are cells that are produced as a result of the difficult conditions as they're all arranged. And as they're all formed in this one plant. The wood is so structured and continues to live for extremely long periods of time. And yet, as one researcher says Bristlecone pines in richer conditions may grow faster, but they die earlier and soon decay. And so the challenging surroundings, around these trees help them to survive longer. In fact, these trees grow, the higher you go, what is there less of? Oxygen, right? And so they face adversity head on. And, you know, in our lives, we all face adversity. And for the Christians of recipients who are receiving this letter that Peter is sending them, they are facing much much adversity. Persecution, in fact. And so this group of believers from the surrounding areas that they're writing to have to band together to endure. Now, though, they are facing many challenges and like we also do, we also can be thankful for God who will be with us and lead and guide us.

Now, let us go to First Peter, chapter four, verses 12 through 19. One of the lessons that we can take from this is we can rejoice in difficult times. We can rejoice in difficult times. All right, we all there. All right. Dear friends. Do you not be what? Surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on to test you as though something strange were happening to you. Should we be surprised when challenges come forth? No It's part of life, right? Unfortunately, but especially for these believers here in in Pontus and Cappadocia and the surrounding areas. They're believers. They're away from their homes. As as it says in the previous lesson that we've taken this last week they were considered foreigners and what? Exiles. And they're facing all kinds of persecution and peer pressure to conform to what you is their area that they're living in. But Peter says, Hey, don't be don't be afraid. And I'll say, it's interesting to when he says, "Dear friends" I often wonder like, is he trying to start writing over again? Did he maybe take a

break that he and Silas take a break? Maybe go to lunch and then come back? Did he break this in chunks. But it says Rejoice, but rejoice in as much as you participate in the sufferings of Christ. So that you may be what? Overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted, because the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the spirit of glory and of God rests on you, if you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief, or any kind of criminal, even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do you not be ashamed. But praise God, that you bear that name. For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household. And if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who don't obey the gospel of God? And if it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly, the sinner? So then, those who suffer according to God's will, should commit themselves to their faithful Creator, and continue to do good.

And as we read that sometimes, though, that can be very challenging, because the truth of the matter is, do we really want to suffer? We don't. What does suffering entail? Pain. Do we like pain? No, I was reminded of that I hurt myself earlier this week, and I kind of had to humble for a couple of days this week. And it's like, man, Getting old is lame. And I'm not like old, but you know, I've now considered middle age. I'm not young anymore. And, you know, there's challenges to that there's the physical pain that you know, and you're gonna experience physical pain, especially if you'd like to, you know, do cool things, there's potential for risk. But as we get older, our bodies are not as fresh as they used to be. Sometimes it takes a little longer to even just get out of bed. Sometimes it maybe we've kind of grown and we sit down on the couch. And sometimes there's pain, it's not just the pain of the physical pain. But when you're feeling we're experiencing hardship, there's a mental toll to that there's an emotional toll. When you experience hardship, in this case, where they're dealing with other people who don't agree with them, they're trying to, you know, conform to what is regular in the current context of the culture that they're living in.

The people that Peter is writing, writing to, they are different. But has God called us to be different? Yes. Now God calls us to be different, but not to be. There's a difference, though, there's a difference between being different. And being, Thank you, weird. All right, God, I wanted to be nice about it. But Gustavo said it. No, but it's true. Like, have you met unique individuals who try to represent the gospel, but it sometimes seems like they're more invested in being unique and different or weird than actually sharing the gospel? Yes, we're called to stand out. But is it helpful if we're intentionally being weird? Think about how we're going to reflect Christ. God says to be in the world, but not of the world. Right? We're called to, to rejoice and to share Jesus with others. But we also want to represent Jesus well. And so these individuals here are experiencing true hardship. And when Peter says, you know, you're probably going to be insulted, you're probably going to be slandered as we learned last week. You're experiencing evil, but don't repay in kind, follow the golden rule, which is to do what? To treat others as you would want to be treated. That means I can't remark with snide comments. Not the best representation of Jesus, amen. So even to do the right thing, sometimes in this day and age seems odd, because people are more concerned with wanting to follow certain perspective now being different, is that bad? No, not that actually the real truth, the true reality is, we're all unique in our own ways. Does God want us all to be the same thing? No, in a way God is an artist. There is beauty in the diversity, especially here in this church, right.

And so the main thrust of this part here in chapter four, verses 12, through 19, is the fact when difficult times happen, accept them, learn from them, but also know that yes, they're going to come, but continue to be a faithful example. And as we learn when we talked about submission, by being a faithful example, just maybe you may win over your friends, your family, your spouse, those that work around you. Win them potentially, to Christ. But not always, sometimes there may be some challenges along the way.

Now, as you continue, though, in order for the church... Relationships, strong relationships are necessary for the church to survive. As they're experiencing all of this hardship, this persecution. What does the church needs to do? They need to band together, they need to be united. Let's go ahead and continue. chapter five, verse one, he says to the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, and as a witness of Christ's suffering, who also share in the glory to be revealed. Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them, not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve, not lording it over those who are entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And then the chief Shepherd among you appears you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. And in the same way, you were younger, submit yourselves to your elders, all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another because God opposes the proud, but shows favor to the humble.

It's Proverbs by the way, humble yourselves therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he might lift you up in due time, Cast all of your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind, your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour resistance, standing firm in the faith, because you know, that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing some kind of suffering. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast, to Him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

Now, in this passage here, Paul is highlighting a few groups, who's the highlighting here? The elders, first off, do the elders, they're the the ones who are overseeing these groups. He's calling them to continue to faithfully lead all of the people that they're, that they have been, then tasked to be responsible for. To set a good example to mentor and not to, to lead for your own game, but to serve faithfully for the cause of Christ to be good leaders. But there's a second group that Peter mentions, and that is those who are what? Who are young. And it says, hey, those of you who are younger, be mindful of those who are older, listen to them. Respect them. I came across this quote. Some of you maybe especially as parents know. I know I'm supposed to be preparing my teenagers for life, but it's really hard when they already know everything. When we're young, we think we know everything. And yet as you get older, what do you realize? You don't know everything? I have more questions than I then I'd have answers compared to 20, 30 years ago, right.

But life should be about asking questions. Since that's how we learn, and that's how we grow. That's how we make things better, asking questions. So humbly submit to those who are older. And likewise. So just because you are the elder, you are the leader, if you're the authority, humble yourself as well. And simply submit yourselves to those who were younger, as a church back then, and still today, we have to work together in this relationship of sharing those who are older and have more experience and

are mature, share the lessons, but those who are younger and those who are younger, we need to listen because there's so many things that we can learn, and you could potentially avoid as you get older. Amen. Those of you who are older. Amen, so work together.

The last thing that I want to share today is that of us, especially in verse eight, be alert and of sober mind your enemy, the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. I wanted to highlight this is just, you know, we live in an age where truth apparently seems to not be true, it can be changed, can be relative, to fit whatever you want. But what we know is God is God. Amen. May we live by the principles of faith, but God has passed down to us, to be kind, be loving, to be humble, but also to be mindful to be alert, protect yourself. And with that, Peter sends his greetings with the help of Silas. Silas, who also I believe, also helped go round with Paul helped him to write this letter. And he closes with peace to all of you who are in Christ.

So what are the biggest takeaways? As you think back as you reflect where in your life, does trouble find you? Hardship, pain, persecution, it's going to find you. And who do you look up to? In the church in the second half? Do you have somebody a spiritual brothers, spiritual aunt, spiritual grandparent that you can go to and ask questions?

And more importantly, today as you leave, whether it's today, or next week, or in the next couple of weeks, but especially today, I want you to find somebody in the church that you don't know or don't know, as well. You have no excuse, because we have visitors and we have new members in this church. Praise the Lord. I want you to find them. And I want you to ask, Hey, what's your name? And I want you both to share something that one thing, just one thing, share one thing that you are passionate about. And if you don't want to share what you're passionate about, share your favorite ice cream flavor, share what's your favorite city, share whatever you want to share one thing and by this, that we can get to know each other better, to know that we might be able to help support one another in difficult times. Amen. Amen.

Let's pray. Father in heaven, Lord, I pray that when challenging times come we respond with the idea of good. Yes, there may be challenging, but there are things that we can also look at that. For instance, I can have more time to get better I can to study, whatever it may be, Lord, may we look to every situation with good, help us to take the lessons from them, and to learn and grow but also Lord, help us to be mindful and to see how to move forward. And most importantly, Lord, be with our community. Help us to build up one another, to love one another, to care for one another, to be sympathetic and understanding and to support above all the Lord. May we be your faithful examples, your ambassadors, as Paul says, For you, here and everywhere we go. In Jesus name, amen.

Grace and peace, everybody. Have a great week.