

8/4/24 - 2 Tim. 2:3-6 - "Strength to Carry On"

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- [0 : 00] Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.
- An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. It is the hardworking farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. This is God's Word.
- We're having these microphone issues. Maybe we'll take it as a sign. Throw them away. No. Man, that song is timeless.
- If you ever want to hear a church singing, come to Steel Valley Church. Put that song on our hearts. And this place is just full.
- Yeah. I'm going to definitely go back and listen to the live stream on that song. But boy, we're making our way slowly, incrementally through a series in 2 Timothy.
- [1 : 07] And verse by verse we travel together. And this has been a pretty good travel for us. We're arriving just a couple verses into chapter 2.
- And if you are new with us, welcome to Steel Valley Church. And it's great to be gathered in this way. And maybe you're not accustomed to having a Bible anywhere about when you're sitting in church.
- But I think that we have a lot of Bibles available. And we think that that is very, very important to have with you open, whether on an app or paper copy.
- And those are available on any of the racks in front of you. Just turn to your neighbor and look for a Bible and ask him for the Word of God.
- Ask him for that. And we'll continue well. And so as we do, we are reaching a point where Paul is addressing Timothy as Paul is awaiting his execution.
- [2 : 12] And contextually speaking, in the passage today, he is expounding upon something that he previously kind of articulated in chapter 1.
- Meaning that it was something that he referenced previously, which was an invitation to Timothy to suffer.
- And that is in 2 Timothy chapter 1, verse 8. He says, Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God.
- And so this invitation that he hit on and went in a different direction in chapter 1, he revisits of what that suffering looks like.
- The same word, share in suffering in Greek, is repeated here in our text. And today, it gives sense of that invitation again.
- [3 : 15] It's kind of like, suffer together with us. And if with Paul, with Jesus Christ as well. And so, in order to reinforce how this suffering looks like and how to expound upon that within Timothy's life, Paul draws upon three different illustrations in the text today that distinctly represent three different angles saying the same thing.
- Of how Timothy is to suffer well. And within his life, he uses the illustration of a soldier, an illustration of an athlete, and an illustration of the farmer.

And that's what we have in our text today, is that expounding of how to suffer well and looking at those aspects. Now, far too often, I think, in our culture, a doctrinal imposter makes its way into the culture, but also churches as well.

A doctrinal imposter. This imposter paints the Christian life and following Jesus Christ as a means of life enhancement.

Life improvements. A way to make life easier for you. To be blessed. And things like that. However, biblical doctrine, even historical theology, point to a different narrative for the Christian life.

[4 : 44] If you signed up to be a Christian, and you thought that that's going to make your life easier, you've been sold a lie. And so I'm here to unmask that for you.

And if I'm unmasking it, Paul's unmasking it. It's not my opinion. It's not my words. It's Paul's words inspired by the Holy Spirit. And for that, it's God's words.

And so this isn't saying that being a Christian sucks. And things like that. But it will reveal that there is this false appeal to always seeking ease as a Christian.

And that there is an invitation to suffer. And how we ought to suffer well in that. Because Christ has not called us to a life of ease. That's not why he called you.

He's called you to a life of endurance. As Paul says later in his letter that he's run the race. And he wants you to run the race as well.

[5 : 46] And so the recurring question that we will be asking of the soldier. We'll be asking of the athlete. We'll be asking of the farmer.

And so the sermon title today is Strength to Carry On.

And basically we got three illustrations. You guessed it. Three sections. And so I'm going to make it very easy.

And these three sections, by the end of our time, I think you'll see developing into a main point. That we're supposed to be seeing the big picture.

And if we're seeing the big picture, it is critical to be seeing that's the source of our endurance. Seeing the big picture is critical to endurance.

[6 : 50] And so I want to pray before we go into our first verse here together. And ask for the Lord to help us as we enter his word.

Let's pray. Father, we humbly come to you today asking for clarity.

Asking to be challenged. Asking to be corrected. Asking to be guided. Asking to be filled. Father, as your people feasted on manna in the wilderness.

Father, we come to your word today to feast upon the bread of life. Father, help us to eat of it. To take it in. To be nourished by it.

And guide our time. Open our hearts. Help our understanding today. We pray this by the power of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So the first section is looking at the suffering soldier.

[8 : 02] And Paul says as he's returning to this invitation from chapter 1. It says, share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits. Since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. So we ask the soldier.

How do you suffer well? How does a soldier suffer well? Well, we can see some hints in just two verses.

That he remembers who commissioned him. Share in suffering as a good soldier of. Not of yourself. But of Jesus Christ. Christ Jesus.

But also there has something to do with being able to focus well. As a soldier. You know, a soldier's focus is a critical component of his survival.

[9 : 03] It's a critical component of his effectiveness in war. War is chaotic. Sometimes war is unpredictable.

Which demands unwavering attention to details and objectives. From situational awareness to decision making.

To task execution. And communication. All of which are requirements of a focused soldier.

How many of you struggle with focus? In our society today. It's like we're being trained to be distracted.

We're being groomed to be distracted. And you see a soldier's focus is their most powerful weapon. More than the arms that they bear.

[10 : 00] And so it is true for Timothy as a pastor. Specifically. And all Christians. Generally. This focus must specifically choose the right battles to wage.

To be aware of the war going on. And have the discipline. Not to get wrapped up in less essential battles. You know a hospital wouldn't last very long.

If they triaged a man with a splinter. Before the man with his arm that's severed from his body. Right?

And it's the same for a Christian. It won't last if you are choosing the wrong battles. But how to choose the right battles.

Knowing the essentials is key then. Right? Knowing which battles. Like the authority of scripture is a very good battle to wage upon. The trinity.

[11 : 07] The sufficiency of Christ. We can go on and on and on. But definitely not drums in the sanctuary. Or the color of the floor.

If that's a contentious battle you're going to wage. And things like that. Side note. We are in the middle of construction right now. We could have canceled service.

But I don't think that in good conscience we can cancel church service. So we will meet with dust. And with whatever color flooring it is. We're in the middle of construction. And so.

So we are here today. And so we don't get caught up in these civil pursuits. Right? Civilian pursuits.

In other words our calling in this world is to be single-mindedly devoted to our commissioner. Jesus Christ. And whether a pastor or a member.

[12 : 07] That is true. The ability to tune out the noise in practically every area of life. Knowing that our primary aim above all things is to please Jesus Christ and not man.

And we see that in verse 3. As a good soldier of Christ Jesus. How do you want to soldier to suffer well? Well.

To fight our human instincts of being distracted and cut the distractions and focus. For Christians. For Christians.

This conversation might be as easy as cutting screen time in your phone. It might be as easy as just turning off the NFL.

They're overpaid athletes that catch a ball for a living. And get to church. When the church is getting together. Especially on Sunday morning.

[13 : 08] They move the Super Bowl to Sunday. And it shouldn't matter for the church. At all. Drop the conversations about the drums in the sanctuary.

That's not an issue here by the way. I'm kind of caricaturing like. Somebody's visiting here like. Man. They really don't like drums. I love drums. You should see my Spotify playlist.

But. You know what I'm saying? It's like the commission to Joshua. That the Lord gave Joshua. In Joshua 1:7.

He says to Joshua. As he's entering into warfare. Do not turn from the law. To the right hand. Or to the left. That you may have good success.

Wherever you go. If we're inquiring of a soldier. What better soldier than Joshua? In our dopamine addicted society.

[14 : 03] Which has made us accustomed to be uneasy in silence. If we are to be faithful unto the Lord church. In sanctification. We must shift our focus.

And recalibrate our focus constantly. That's suffering as a good soldier. Not only that. But he goes into another illustration.

Suffering. The suffering athlete. In verse 5. An athlete is not crowned. Unless he competes. According to the rules. And now we might inquire of the athlete.

How do you suffer well? Well. If you've ever. Been in sports. And you hate it. It's very easy to fall.

For the shortcuts. To cheat. Now. We may. Think of like performance enhancing drugs.

[15 : 01] Or if I ever enlisted myself into running a marathon. I might be tempted of calling a cab. Somewhere along the way. When nobody's looking. And to get me right around that finish line.

And I'll just go sprinting home. I'm sorry. I'm supposed to be above reproach. And so. It's just. Just a joke. You'll never see me running a marathon. But we might think of that.

We might think of performance enhancing drugs. And things like that. But Paul had a specific context in mind. I think it's within ancient Greek. Athletics. Because. Because. These athletes were.

Supposed to. Take a 10 month. Training. They're supposed to train. They're required. In order to compete. They had to train. For 10 months.

When it came time to compete. They had to swear. And now. When they swear. I mean. They thought. There was so much pagan worship.

[16 : 01] In their culture. And their Olympic games. And everything. Was just kind of like. Ruled by their pagan gods. Like Poseidon. And. So. They're swearing to it. I mean.

They really are fearful. That their life depends on them. Following the rules. And I think that's very likely. The context of what he's telling Timothy. In this passage. And those games included.

Running. Wrestling. Boxing. Or if you want to get your feet involved. Kickboxing. Or if you don't like any of that. And you want to do music. And poetry. This is Greek. Culture.

Of competition. And the crown. Was at stake. If you were caught. Cheating. Taking. A shortcut. The crowning.

Well. It was initially. Crowned with a. It's like a wild. Celery. Thing. It was later replaced. By an evergreen wreath. And this was central.

[16 : 57] To Greek identity. It was central. That. To Greek life. It boasted. Excellency. In Greek culture. And it celebrated. This wreath.

That they received. It celebrated. Their worship. To Poseidon. Now Paul. Is bringing. To Timothy's mind. That.

Award ceremony. A big picture. View. Not telling Timothy. To go. To run. Run. In the Olympics.

And get. Wreath. Get crowned. With a wreath. In honor of Poseidon. But. Bringing to mind. All his letters. And reiterations. To other churches.

As Timothy. Was side by side. With Paul. As he's talking about. This heavenly. Crowning. Referenced in many. Of his epistles. Many of them. That Timothy.

[17 : 51] Was sitting there. By his side. As he's writing. This was a mark. A crowning. A heavenly crowning. That was a mark. Of faithful. Endurance. And this crown.

As Paul says. Is awarded. To those. Who don't take. Shortcuts. And maybe. To take that. A step further. If you win. Or.

Maybe better yet. Endure. If you endure. As a Christian. You must. Train. In this time period.

Between when you. Place your faith. In Jesus Christ. And this progressive. Sanctification. In life. Until you are glorified. In heaven. I don't want you.

To take this for granted. Anything. Regarding the Christian life. For granted. Because if training. Is. Is an aspect of it. And it was required.

[18 : 46] Of Greek. Athletes. And Paul is saying. Compete. According to the rules. To be crowned. How can we ever say. That small groups.

Are sort of optional. In a. In our Christian lives. That if they fit your schedule. You'll join a small group. Or. Bible studies.

Those aspects of training. Of kidding the gym. As. As Paul said to Timothy. In his first letter. First Timothy. 4. 4. 7. He says. Train yourselves. In godliness.

And what was that. Sermon on about. Church. Discipline. He's talking like. Lifting weights. And how can we ever say. That these things.

In the Christian life. Are just mere amenities. Of Steel Valley Church. Oh. Well you can join. A small group. Or a Bible study. At Steel Valley Church. Right. Forget that nonsense.

[19 : 43] Bible studies. Small groups. Are essential. If you're staggering. And wavering. In your faith. And you're not. In a small group. I wonder why. But we know.

How to make. Fix it. In our lives. We know how. We know the path. We must travel. And church. If. If you are not available. For a small group.

I gotta say. You have availability. Right. So start a small group. When you're available. And guess what. There's probably going to be. Other people who are available. At the same time. If you let the church know.

Isn't it funny. How we sort of fantasize. Over athletics. We're like. Man. If I only. Dug my heels in. Back when I was in high school. With that golf team.

If I would have just. Practiced my chipping. A little bit more. Man. That would have been me. Rory. Right out there. Making millions of dollars. Right.

[20 : 38] Fantasizing like Uncle Rico. From. Napoleon Dynamite. Right. But Paul isn't getting at. Just merely admiring.

An athlete. He's literally. Saying. Imitate. These athletes. And how often. We become. Uncle Rico.

In our Christian lives. Dreaming of. Man. I. I used to be on fire. And I remember. When things were. A little bit simple. A little bit more simple.

Than they are now. Things have gotten complicated. And dreaming. We become dreamers. As Christians. Rather than doers. It's a level of engagement.

Upon this road. Of sanctification. Between. Our. Our faith. In Jesus Christ. Until. All things are brought. To consummation. We're right here. In the middle.

- [21 : 35] In our level. Of engagement. Upon that road. Of sanctification. Where a Christian is. Called. To walk in. According. According to. Godliness.
- And if. According to godliness. According to God's words. And so. How might we suffer. As an athlete. We don't take.
- Shortcuts. Dig your heels. Into the work. Of godliness. Dig at your heels. Into. What Jesus Christ. Desires. For your life. Not what the culture.
- Desires. For your life. The last illustration. That we get to. Is. The suffering. Farmer. Says in.
- Verse six. Is the hardworking. Farmer. Who ought to have. The first share. Of the crops. How might a. Farmer. Suffer. As we inquire.
- [22 : 34] Of that. Farmer. With his overalls. And all. I asked my son. If he wanted to be a farmer. Someday. And he's like. He doesn't want to wear overalls. So apparently. Farming. Is equivalent. With overalls.
- In his mind. So. You might suffer. As a farmer. Wearing overalls. But I think. More. What he has. In mind. Is that.
- A farmer. Will suffer. By struggling. To hold. Firm. To his. Purpose. This illustration.
- Stands alone. From the rest. Because. There is generally. Nothing really glorious. About. Farming. Nothing really glorious. There's no. Press conference.
- The news. Aren't running. To your farm. To interview you. When you're bailing hay. Right. Unless that. I guess that. That depends. On the kind of hay.
- [23 : 27] I don't know. Anything about farming. There's nothing glorious. About it. Farming is hard work. And farming is literally. Like working. In slow motion.
- You like that? Okay. Good. At least one person. Is awake. Right. There's early mornings. Long days.
- Right. Constant toil. And issues. All for what? For this little thing? Coming out of the ground? The plowing.
- The sowing. The tending. The weeding. The reaping. The storing. Man. I'll tell you what. That's really going to hit. The 10 o'clock news. The return on investment.
- Is dreadful. For a farmer. Paul is saying. In this slow motion task.
- [24 : 31] Be. Patient. Not only that. But also enjoy. The fruit.
- That is produced. In due time. Hold firm. To purpose. See the big picture.
- Of your plowing. Now Galatians 6.9. Talks about this. Earlier in his letters. To. To the Galatians. He says in Galatians 6.9.
- He says. And let us not grow weary. In doing good. For in due season. We will reap. If we do not give up.
- Now on the flip side. If the farmer. Loses that purpose. He will. Quit plowing. Say.
- [25 : 26] Enough is enough. I'm done. Farming that. And I just lost that. To cicadas. This year. Forget all this. If he quits. Plowing.
- He will quit. Reaping. Paul's command to Timothy. Is to suffer. Well. And if the farmer's involved.
- In that suffering. Telling Timothy. To keep. Plowing. Fruit. Will come. Paul literally diagnosed.
- Christian stagnancy. We get bored. When we're plowing. As Christians. In the sanctification process.

Get bored. I'll tell you what. There's. Stats that are staggering. Even with Bible studies. You say like. Alright. Brent. Wise guy. I'm going to attend this Bible study. Attendance is usually.

[26 : 21] Falling off. Like to 50. 60%. By halfway through. Because people get bored. You can. You can thank the culture. For creating our attention spans.

Like this. Grooming us. We need entertainment. We need all these things. We need the lights. In the sanctuary. We need those.

Loud music. Right? We need this stuff. But how fascinating. To be. Surrounded by.

And fueled. By instant gratification. Feeling that. In our lives. Even myself. Every Monday morning. Tomorrow.

Guess what I'm doing? Getting the next passage ready. Plowing. What's fascinating.

[27 : 16] What's fascinating. That even as I struggle. With this instant gratification. And living in this on demand. Culture. I reckoned. I reckoned. With my weakness.

And my frailty. Of which I suffer. As a Christian. With that farmer. Who has to stay focused. To the overall.

Big picture. And big purpose. We're people who want the manna. But we don't want the wilderness. Right? Love that quote. I don't know who said that.

But you see. We must. See the big picture. If we intend. To. Be faithful. Unto the Lord. In our Christian.

Walks. So how might a farmer. Suffer well. It's holding. Firm. To purpose. Even in times. Of doubt. Even when the plowing.

[28 : 11] Is long. And thankless. Find delight. In the slow work. Of sanctification. Personally. And also. In the life. Of others.

Maybe an illustration. Will help you. The Christian life. Is often. Related. To. Not an air fryer. But a. Slow cooker. That's the Christian life.

Be patient. Not living. For instant results. But investing. In tomorrow. Making. The choices. Today. Investing. In the return.

Tomorrow. Patient. With yourself. And also. Patient. With others. Church. No. Parents. That's. That you're like.

Yeah. I understand. What you're saying. I got. All these young kids. Begging for my attention. Constantly. Students. At YSU. You're probably like. Man. These. These professors. Are ruthless. School's about to start up.

[29 : 10] On the 28th. This gets real. In our lives. In our different. Vocations. Of where God. Has called us. He's calling you. To be. Patience.

And so. As we stand back. A moment. We just unpack. These three illustrations. As we stand back. And we see that. That time period. Called sanctification. When we see.

From that moment. Where we were. Sanctified. Meaning set apart. Positionally. With God. Through Christ's work. And by our faith. We are saved.

Through that setting apart. We are continually. Through life. Being set apart. Being sanctified. An ongoing work. Of the Holy Spirit. In our lives.

And in our daily lives. And seeing the big picture. Is critical. To endurance. Now. I don't want to trap you. In amens today.

[30 : 07] But there's no amen. For this next section. Okay. If you know what I'm talking about. I don't think Timothy. Was being called by Paul.

To. Rally him. By his strength. Of saying. Just as a soldier. Is able to go out. In warfare. To be a soldier.

Timothy. I don't think. That he's saying. To Timothy. To go out. And be that athlete. Late. I don't think. He's saying. To go out.

And plow. Those fields. No. I don't think. It's this pep rally. To go get them. Because that. Would be moralism.

To be going. To do those things. By our own strength. And our own power. No. He's expounding. Upon an invitation. That he gave. To Timothy.

[31 : 03] In the previous. Chapter. What was that invitation? Share in. Suffering. For what? For the gospel. How?

By the power. Of God. And there. You have. Purpose. And you have. Strength. Share in. Suffering. For the gospel. By the power. Of God. And so. The life of. One. Suffering. For the gospel. By the power.

Of God. Will. Then. Resemble. The resilient. Focus. Of a soldier. Resemble. The endurance. Of an athlete. And it will resemble.

The patience. Of a farmer. We're not supposed. To be the soldier. Be the athlete. Be the farmer. No. Our endurance. And the work.

[31 : 56] That Christ has done. In us. Will. Expose. To other people. Something else. Working. In us. Not by our power. We need. Help.

Desperate. Help. In our lives. The essence. Of sanctification. Endurance. Rest. In Jesus Christ. Power. In other words.

If. We endure. As soldiers. It is not. Because of. Our. Aim. Is to. Please. Our holy. Commander. Because it's. Not. About. Us.

It's. About. Him. It's. Not. About. Our strength. It's. Not. About. Our. Virtues. It's. Not. About. Our. Competencies. It's. About. Jesus. Christ. And.

Where. Has. Sanctification. Brought. You. In. Your. Calling. Today. Where. Has. God. Placed. You. At. In. Your. Life. It. Really. Doesn't. Matter. How. Significant.

[32 : 50] Or. Insignificant. You. Feel. In. Your. Life. Or. How. Your. Life. Is. If. You. Are. In. Christ. Your. Path. Is. Constantly. Under. Construction. It's.

Always. Going. To. Need. Work. Your. Path. Is. Always. Under. Construction. And. By. Fixing. Your. Eyes. On. Jesus. Christ. Alone. Is. How. You. Endure. Those.

Who. Receive. Paul's. Invitation. To. Suffer. Will. Find. Endurance. Through. Cutting. Distractions. As. A. Soldier. Not. Taking. Shortcuts. Trying. To. Find. An. Easy. Way. As. An. Athlete. And. Holding. Firm.

To. The. Overall. Purpose. As. A. Farmer. And. I. Think. Paul. Knows. A. Thing. Or. Two. About. Our. Propensity. To. Grow. Discontent. And. Just. The. Normal. Things. In. Life. We. Kind. Of. Like. Hide. From. Things. That. Are. Normal. Because.

It's. Too. Boring. It's. Too. Mundane. It's. It's. True. For. A. Parent. It's. True. For. A. Pastor. I. Mean. Every. Every. Monday. Sunday. Is. Coming. It's. The. Reality. On.

[33 : 46] And. On. On. Until. Another.

Black. Eye. Sometimes. Or. Another. Gash. Another. ER. Visit. Right? You might be married. Or. You might be single. Another. Another.

Date out. With. My. Wife. Right? Another. Time. Another. Everything. Singleness. Another. Lonely. Night. I'm telling you church. No matter. Where you're at.

Paul knows. Exactly. The propensity. Of. Human. Frailty. To grow. Discontent. In. Just. The. Normal. Thing. That. God. Has. Us. In. In. Life. Church. Be. Focused. As.

A. Soldier. Disciplined. As. An. Athlete. And. Labor. Like. A. Hardworking. Farmer. This. Is. What. Sanctification. Is. All. About. And.

[34 : 44] Includes. Seasons. Of. Suffering. In. Our. Weakness. To. Do. This. Well. Resting. Upon. God's. Strength. And. Now. We. Have. To. Noticed. Something. Too. There. Is. An. Order. Of. This. Command.

And. I. Don't. Want. To. Mislead. Somebody. Here. To. Thinking. That. These. Things. Are. Anything. But. A. Consequence. Of. Salvation. Because.

Maybe. You. Are. Here. Today. And. Are. Hearing. This. Good. News. That. You. Have. Fallen. For. The. Lie. That. Apart. From.

Faith. In. Jesus. Christ. You. Can. Please. God. Through. Your. Good. Works. Through. Endurance. Through. Your. Patience. Through. Not. Cheating.

Maybe. That's. You. Well. There's. Good. News. And. Bad. News. For. You. Today. The. Good. News. Is. That. You're. Going. To. Hear. From. Me. Today. Exclusively.

[35 : 40] That. There. Is. Nothing. Any. Of. Us. Can. Do. To. Please. God. Apart. From. Our. Faith. In. Jesus. Christ. And. Being. Obedient. To. His. Word. Not. One. Thing. Romans.

Nine. Says. Or. Romans. Ten. Verse. Nine. Says. That. If. You. Confess. With. Your. Mouth. That. Jesus. Is. Lord. And. Believe. In. Your. Heart. That. God. Raised. Him. From.

The. Dead. You. Will. Be. Saved. That's. It. In. Verse. Ten. For. With. The. Heart. One. Believes. And. Is. Justified.

And. With. The. Mouth. One. Confesses. And. Is. Saved. It's. Not. About. Endurance. It's. Not. About. Anything. It's. About. Surrender. And. To.

Be. Brought. Into. This. Enduring. Command. And. Initiative. Here. Your. Invitation. Today. Is. Actually. Different. From. Timothy's. Your. Invitation. Today. If. You. Have.

[36 : 33] Been. Working. To. Please. God. Apart. From. Faith. In. Jesus. Christ. Is. An. Invitation. To. Be. Saved. From. Eternal. Suffering. In. Hell. Because.

All. Have. Fallen. Short. Of. The. Glory. Of. God. No. One. Is. Righteous. Not. Even. One. And.

As. You're. Saved. From. That. Eternal. Suffering. By. Your. Faith. You. Enter. Into. Suffering. For. The. Gospel. To. Purpose. A. Big. Picture. That. You're. Part. Of.

To. Be. Changed. By. God's. Redeeming. Work. In. Your. Life. And. To. Shine. For. The. Whole. World. To. See. May. This. Also. Be. So. For. The. Rest. Of. Us. That. The. World. Will. Observe. Something. Countercultural.

About. Our. Lives. That. Stems. From. The. Hope. That. We. Have. Apart. From. Anything. That. This. World. Has. To. Offer. To. Us. And. Yes. Even. The. NFL. Amen.

[37 : 28] In. That. The. Invitation. Is. Extended. To. Us. And. This. Invitation. Isn't. Just. About. Suffering. This. Invitation. Is. Actually. And.

Land. The. Plane. This. Morning. I. I. Could. Probably. Stop. Now. But. I'm. Just. Going. To. Keep. Going. There's. A. Parable. Of. The. Stonecutters. And. I. Think. That. It's. Important. For. You. To. Hear.

It. Because. This. Is. What. We're. Talking. About. The. Story. Where. A. Passer. By. As. Three. Different. Stone. Workers. In. This. Cathedral. Of. What. They're. Doing.

In. This. Construction. Process. Of. A. Place. This. Passer. By. Walks. In. Pass. The. Lifts. Himself. Puts. His. Hard.

Hat. On. Walks. Into. This. In. Process. Building. And. He. Asks. The. First. Worker. What. Are. You. Doing. He's. On. His. Knees.

[38 : 27] He's. Cutting. Stone. And. He. Simply. Responds. To. The. Passer. By. Well. I'm. Cutting. Stone. Guy.

Entried. Walks. Continues. To. Walk. Around. Looking. At. This. Structure. Looking. At. The. Walls. Being. Built. He. Finds. Another. Worker. With. His. Measuring. Tape. And. Getting. Measurements.

Done. Yes. That. Worker. What. Are. You. Doing. And. That. Worker. Says. Well. I'm. Building. A. Wall. Intrigued.

Again. Continues. To. Walk. Around. Investigating. What's. Going. On. Here. And. There's. This. Third. Worker. Grabbing. A. Tool. And.

This. Third. Worker. He. Inquires. What. Are. You. Doing. And. Looking. Up. To. This. By. This. Passer. By. He. Replied.

[39 : 21] To. Him. I'm. Building. A. Cathedral. What. A. Difference. Between. Merely. Performing. A. Task. And. Understanding. Its. Larger. Contribution. To. A. More. Meaningful. End. We. Must. Trust. That. Process.

Church. And. Reorient. Our. Perspective. And. Persevere. As. Jesus. Builds. His. Church. Let's. Pray.