

## **The Great Restorer**

### **12052024 -Pastor Bijoy**

**I peter 5:8-11**

**“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup>Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.**

**<sup>10</sup>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. <sup>11</sup>To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.”**

And though it's been a very encouraging passage of Scripture, I suspect that like me—you have also found that it deals with a rather overwhelming theme.

This is, after all, a letter that was written to Christians who were suffering under some degree of persecution and hostility for their faith. Like them, we too are living in a time in which it is growing harder and harder to live for Jesus Christ. Like them, we feel some measure of cultural pressure against our faith. And like them, we find that we're being called upon increasingly to stand faithfully and sacrificially for our Lord in tough times.

And it's not just the pressure of the culture around us that we feel. In addition to the cultural pressures we feel around us, we also need to be on guard against a powerful spiritual enemy who is committed to our destruction. And what's more, if you add to all of that our own personal weakness and failings, it truly does seem to be an overwhelming thing that Peter is calling us to do—to stand faithful to the Lord Jesus all the way to the very end.

our security and our safety is to be found in the fact that the God who knows us entirely has come to us in Jesus, who is the great Shepherd of his sheep. “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” And one of Jesus' sheep was Peter, who wrote this letter and also the second letter. And you know your Bible well enough to know that it was this Peter who, along the pathway of his life, fell on his face, was

dreadfully disappointed. And in many ways, Peter must have thought, “My story as a follower of the great Shepherd and the Master of my life has certainly taken a bad turn, if it hasn’t come to a conclusion.”

But then I’m greatly encouraged by the fact it was Peter that wrote this letter to us. We of course know him as Peter who denied Jesus three times, but we also know him as the Apostle of Jesus Christ. We know him as the one who preached that first great sermon after the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost—where 3,000 people at one time believed on the Lord Jesus. We know him as the one who authored two great New Testament letters, whose testimony was the inspiration behind the Gospel of Mark, and whose ministry occupied so much of the Book of Acts. Peter was a flesh-and-blood man—subject to all the failures and fallibilities that you and I suffer under. And if it had been up to him, he never would have ended his race on this earth faithful to the Lord Jesus. But it wasn’t up to him. It was up to the God who had called him and redeemed him.

I know that, in spite of my weaknesses and frailties, I must make the decision to stand faithful for the Lord Jesus, and must use the resources that He provides for me—joining with my brothers and sisters in Christ in the effort. I know that when I fail and fall and stumble—as I often do—I must confess my failure, get right back up, regain the ground I lost, and keep on walking. I absolutely must do my part. But I also know that it is God who first took the initiative—who first called me to believe on Jesus Christ, and who first gave me the faith to believe, and who has given me the the increasing desire to walk with Him, and who helps me to grow and make progress in that walk every day; who has placed His enabling hand upon me, and has placed His empowering Holy Spirit within me; and who guarantees that I will complete that walk all the way to the very end—and all to the praise of His grace and the glory of His name.

“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.”

The English word “restore”—*katartisei* in Greek—and it is an interesting word. The word actually means mending that which is broken. You will remember at the beginning of the Gospels that Luke records that the nets, after Jesus had told them to put the nets

down on the other side of the boat, the “nets were breaking.” That’s in Luke. And in Matthew, when Jesus comes on James and John, the sons of Zebedee, you will remember they were *katartisei*-ing their nets; they were “mending their nets.” That which was broken they were restoring. I wonder: Have you ever thought about a Sunday like that? That here you come, broken, torn like nets and don’t know whether you can make even a step further. Then you say, “Lord, I’m just back. Restore me. Restore me.” And then God restores you.

You see, the devil’s going to come and say, “You know, all of that busted brokenness—missteps here, there, and everywhere—that is a disqualifier.” Don’t believe the lie. All the winding path that God has brought you along is in order that you might become more like His son Jesus Christ. He is mending you, restoring you for His glory!