

## “Living Hope: The Way of Grace”

1 Peter 2:18-25

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**Main Idea:** Because Christ has suffered for you, you are enabled to endure suffering by entrusting yourself to a just God.

### **We are called to ENDURE suffering (verses 18-21a).**

1. This is a challenging instruction: Servants are to be subject to and respectful of their masters, regardless of whether they are good or just. One might ask: But what if they take advantage of me? Mistreat me? Are mean to me? That is Peter’s point! In the face of injustice, we are to do good and to extend grace to those who are difficult, crooked and unjust.
2. Rightly understood, this is a hard text for our flesh to obey. This challenges some core values that many Americans hold dear: equality, fairness, and reciprocity. But it is too easy to be a good American and a poor Christian. It is easy to love those who are easy to love. God is calling us to love and respect our authorities and others who are difficult and unjust. Grace is willing to overlook and to cover even a multitude of sins.  
*“You simply can’t continually rehearse in your heart all someone’s perceived wrongs against you and grow in your affection toward him or her. You can’t carry with you the detailed evidence of what you have suffered at the other’s hands and have hope for your future together.” - Paul Tripp*
3. This does not mean that we should not confront sin, work to correct social injustice, or get others involved in helping us to grow in godliness. The presenting question is, how we will do it—with vindication and retribution or with grace and mercy?

### **We are called to ENTRUST ourselves to the one who judges justly (verses 19-24).**

1. We find the key to grace in “*being mindful of God*” (v. 19) and knowing that this is pleasing in the sight of God. (v. 20). Consider what Jesus did for us:
  - a. Jesus endured – Jesus not only suffered at the hands of sinners, to obtain the forgiveness for sinners, but he did so without complaint, without returning evil for evil, mean word for mean word, hurt and anger at offense, or even breathing a threat against his persecutors.
  - b. Jesus entrusted – Jesus endured suffering by entrusting himself to the Father, the one who judges justly. God is sovereign over all. He superintends everything so that even what man means for evil, he is able to work for good.
2. We can respond to sin with kindness and forbearance, when we are aware of all that the Lord is and all that he has done. God is greater than our sense of fairness, our

hurt and our disappointments. He is more satisfying, more wonderful, and more delightful. His grace is sufficient for us. Before we can be gracious to others, we need to be mindful of his grace revealed and given through Jesus Christ.

**God's grace ENABLES us to follow Christ's example (verses 24-25).**

1. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ means to follow Jesus to the cross. *"When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."* – Deitrich Bonhoeffer
2. We are called to die to self and to self-will, to our rights, our anger, our sense of betrayal and our glory. For some, it will also mean dying the physical death of martyrdom. But for most, it means dying to our selfish and self-centered desires. And dying to self is a work of grace that produces in us eternal good and increasingly conforms us to the image of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:28-29).

*O Father you are sovereign,  
The Lord of human pain.  
Transmuting earthly sorrows  
To gold of heavenly gain.  
All evil overruling,  
As none but conqueror could,  
Your love pursues its purpose,  
Our soul's eternal good.  
—Hymn by Margaret Clarkson*

**Fellowship Starters:**

1. In the face of unjust treatment, where are you tempted to defend your rights? According to 1 Peter 2:18-20, what response would glorify and honor the Lord?
2. How do you respond when another's weaknesses, deficiencies or sin affects YOU—do you give them what you think they deserve, or extend grace and mercy? What specific ways can you grow in extending grace and mercy to those who are difficult to love?
3. How can being mindful of the amazing grace that the Lord has shown to you enable you to respond graciously to someone who has mistreated or sinned against you?
4. In what present trials or sufferings do you need to entrust yourself into the hands of a just Judge?
5. In his book *The Cost of Discipleship*, Deitrich Bonhoeffer wrote, *"When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."* In your relationships (at home, at work, at church or in the neighborhood) where is the Lord calling you to die to self?

6. Take time as a group to pray, repenting where there is conviction of selfishness and ungodly responses and asking the Lord to enable growth in responding with grace and mercy.