

Series: Clarity in Chaos; First Peter

**Because You Bear His Name**

Sermon by Lead Pastor Larry Renoe

First Peter 4:12-19

Waterstone Community Church, Littleton, Colorado

Sunday morning, November 10, 2024

Kate: A reading from first Peter 4:12-19: “Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on to test you, as though something strange were happening to you, but rejoice in as much as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rest on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do 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 do not obey the gospel of God, and if it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner? So then, those who suffer according to God’s will, should commit themselves to their faithful creator and continue to do good,” the word of the Lord.

Larry: Thanks, Kate. Good morning, we have a couple of things to do before we get to listening and hearing from the Lord this morning. First is, this is Veteran’s Day weekend, and so we want all of our veterans, if you served in the military or are currently serving, would you please stand so we can say thank you for serving? Thank you for your service, and then we want to spend some time in prayer, and two things with that. One is a family at Waterstone has just had a tragic loss this last week. Willis Poole was killed in a tragic car accident. He leaves behind his wife, Jenny, and three children, Lily, Molly and Tyler, and we are just grieving with them, and I would like to ask you specifically, like in your phone or wherever you will remember to look, to write the Poole family and this week lift them up in prayer. The memorial service in honor of Willis will be held Saturday here at Waterstone at 10:30 a.m. So, pray for the Poole family, and then lastly, we want to pray for our country. I would like to use a prayer called post-Election Day prayer. It is by an Old Testament scholar named Walter Bruggeman. Let’s pray together.

You, creator God, who has ordered us in families and communities and clans and tribes and states and nations, you creator God, who enact your governance in ways overt and in ways hidden, you exercise your will for peace and for justice and for freedom. We give you thanks for the peaceable order of our nation and for the chance of choosing, all the manipulative money notwithstanding. We pray your favor and presence and protection over our president-elect and his coming administration. We pray now for this new governance, that your will and purpose may prevail, that our leaders may have a sense of justice and goodness, that we as citizens may care about and be the public face of your purpose, so that the conditions for the gospel to spread will be increased in our land. We pray in the name of Jesus, who was executed by the authorities, amen.

For many years, Thrifty Car Rental ran a contest called the Honeymoon Disaster contest, and I would like to share two of my favorite finalists with you: “On their way to Nevada, Paul and Leah Lusk of Sugar City, Idaho flipped their car into floodwaters. When they emerged, Paul, who had hit his head, could not remember the accident, recognize his bride, or recall he had just been married.” That is a tough

one. Here is my favorite: “May and Kyle of Richmond, Virginia, were forced to listen to the comedian on their cruise ship joke about the Titanic movie. Then the couple awoke to the horrible sound of crunching metal and the captain’s order to abandon ship. Their lifeboat made it to shore in Saint Martin, where the cruise line put them up at a nudist colony.”

What happens when your worst days intrude upon your best days, when life does not measure up to expectations, when following Jesus, the most life-giving relationship that we know, becomes a life-threatening misery, especially here in America, in the soil of our culture? I have been dismantling my library as I prepare to retire in February, and I am deciding which books I want to keep, which books I do not, and I came across a book that I read the very first year I started in ministry. It is written by a professor from U.C. Berkeley. His name was Robert Bellah, a prominent sociologist at the end of the twentieth century. He was the first to describe American culture as therapeutic culture. Listen to what he wrote in his book, *The Habits of the Heart*: “In America, life is focused on the need for cure, and this cure is to take the form of enhancing and empowering the self to be able to relate successfully to others in society, achieving a kind of satisfaction without being overwhelmed by their demands. Its genius is that it enables the individual to think of commitments, from marriage and work to political and religious involvement, as enhancements of the sense of individual well-being, rather than as moral imperatives.” In other words, the driving force in American culture is the individual pursuit of happiness. Throw off all other restraints, all other moral imperatives, and pursue happiness at all costs, and then it gets even more interesting in America, when that pursuit of happiness gets mixed in with religion in America. Bellah went on to share some interviews that he did with hundreds of people about the pursuit of happiness and religion, and I have never forgotten this one interview he did with a young nurse named Sheila, at the time, 1985. She says, “I believe in God. I am not a religious fanatic. I can’t remember the last time I went to church. My faith has carried me a long way. It is Sheila-ism, just my own little voice. I just try to love. It is just, try to love yourself and be gentle with yourself, I guess take care of each other. I think He would want us to take care of each other.” There it is, forty years later. If the shoe fits, here we are in a therapeutic culture here in America.

Now, as you heard Kate do our scripture reading, what we have is a bit of dissonance this morning, because here we are living in America, and we have this pursuit of happiness, this individual pursuit of happiness as the highest good in our culture, and we have just heard Peter writing to the churches in ancient Asia Minor, or modern Turkey, and saying the greatest joy in life is to suffer for Jesus Christ. Oh my, the individual pursuit of happiness, or the greatest joy is to suffer for Jesus Christ. Today we are going to walk in this gap, and we are going to try to at least understand that dissonance. We are going to try to understand why Peter believes that suffering for Jesus is an essential part of discipleship, how we are not called just to endure suffering, but actually suffering, particularly as we will understand through trials that come from following Jesus, actually transform us, and so today we are going to close this gap, and I want us to get started with three questions, just to get our minds going. These are questions that I hope you might reflect on the rest of this week as you resonate with this text in First Peter 4.

First, is your personal happiness what is best for you? In other words, should it be your greatest concern, your personal happiness? Second, is your personal happiness God’s greatest concern for your life? and third, and this is a tough one, Jesus, the very best person and the most righteous in living God’s

will, suffered terribly. If we follow Jesus, then what place will suffering have in our lives? So, I'd like to do three things together this morning from Peter's text here. First is I would like us to understand what these trials are. Peter calls them, as we'll see in a moment, fiery ordeals. What is a fiery ordeal? What is this kind of suffering Peter is talking about? Second, I'd like to ask the question, what value does this kind of suffering bring to our lives? Value, so we'll define, and then we'll look at value, and then lastly, how should we respond, not if these troubles come, but when these troubles come? How do we respond?

So, let's begin. Let's look again at the text. We want to look at First Peter chapter 4, verse 12: "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you," we'll stop there. I want to unpack two words. "Fiery ordeal" is one word in the original language, and the word, "test." "Fiery ordeal," Peter, in his Hebrew thinking, he is Jewish. He's remembering his upbringing in Sabbath school, and when they were talking about the book of Proverbs, it was not uncommon to come across verses like this in the book of Proverbs: "The crucible is for silver and the furnace for gold, but people are tested by their praise." By their praise, that is what they praise, what they value. People are tested by their value, but the crucible is what we are interested in. What Peter has in mind by pulling this metaphor of a fiery ordeal, it is one word. It is the Greek word porosis. What does that sound like to you as an English word, porosis? Purity, the idea of purity, the idea of testing by fire, so you go to a place where they work with precious metals. They find a big rock up in the mountains, and they bring it down, and it just looks like a big rock, but then you put it into this crucible or into the fire, and what happens? The precious metal survives the heat. Everything else, rock, dirt, dust, burns away. It is called dross.

I have never forgotten hearing a pastor by the name of Bruce Tillman in Pittsburgh talk years ago about living in Pittsburgh and having some of his parishioners live in a town, a suburb outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, called McKeesport. At the time, McKeesport was world renowned for having the largest steel tube factory, the largest steel mill in the world. Here's what he wrote or what he said in this sermon: "I would see a great serpent of molten metal come slithering down into the machine, and it would be chopped off, and then the machine would grab it by its ends and begin to spin, and by centrifugal force, that bar of molten metal would open from the inside out, forming a perfect tube of steel without seam and without blemish. Many times, I asked the men directing those machines, 'What is the most important ingredient in the process?' The answer was always the same: 'It is the temperature of the metal. If it is too hot, it will fly apart. If it is too cold, it will not open as it ought. Unless you catch the molten moment, you cannot make the perfect tube.'" The molten moment, Peter says that into our lives will come trials, but these trials will be a molten moment, when the perfect precious metal is produced.

So, what do we mean by this idea of a molten moment? What does it actually look like in our lives? Two things, one, persecution. Christians will encounter persecution. People attack Christians because they want to silence their witness, because they are against Jesus Christ. This past week, by the way, this Sunday and next Sunday around the world, it is the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church, so this is timely and what we're going to think about for the next few moments is timely, so we remember the persecuted church. David Platt, a well-known author, a pastor in Virginia, he defines persecution, and then in this article, it was in Christianity Today last week, he talks about what it means for the modern church, especially here in the West, and I was deeply convicted by this article, and I want you to be deeply convicted with me. He defines it this way: "Persecution is harassment or persecution for following Jesus.

In the Sermon on the Mount, the term Jesus uses for persecuted means, ‘pursued with hostility.’” He goes on to describe how this can mean everything from people ridiculing, shaming, excluding, or lying about you, to people arresting you, imprisoning you, driving you out, and destroying your life. Notably, persecution is when these forms of resistance come specifically because someone is following Jesus. In fact, in the Sermon on the Mount, twice we read this will happen, Jesus says, ‘because of me.’” Then David Platt goes on to share this, and this is the part that got me. He said, “Persecution is guaranteed not just for other Christians, but for us also. It is a matter of obedience to God to pray specifically for our brothers and sisters in parts of the world where persecution is fiercest,” Hebrews 13:3. “This cannot be overstated. We have a Biblical and familial responsibility to pray and work for our brothers and sisters, particularly in countries like North Korea, Somalia, Libya, Yttria, Yemen, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sudan, Iran, and Afghanistan. At the same time, God also makes clear in his word that, quote,” and I am about to quote second Timothy 3:12, “Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

Notice the words, “Everyone will.” “Persecution is not a maybe for some Christians. If you have not experienced persecution to some degree,” this is still Platt writing, “You need to ask the question, ‘Am I professing and propagating faith in Jesus?’ In other words, are you clearly and uncompromisingly identifying with Jesus, humbly and boldly proclaiming Jesus, telling people about his life, death, and resurrection, and calling others to repent and believe in Jesus, because their life now and forever in heaven or hell hinges on their response to Him? If we are not professing faith in Jesus like this, then we need to realize,” and this is the part that got me, “we need to realize as we pray for the persecuted church, that our lives are actually sympathizing with their persecutors. That may sound like an offensive overstatement, but consider this, if the purpose of persecution is to silence witness, and you or I are silencing our witness, then we are reflecting the persecutors, not the persecuted.” Persecution is the first kind of molten moment that comes into our lives.

The second kind is adversity, and so I sat down this week and just thought through some ways that I have witnessed adversity over the years, that is Christians being marginalized for not going along with culturally accepted practices. Here are some things I thought of. Here are some ways I have seen molten moments come into lives here at Waterstone. One, when a believer decides to stay in a hard marriage, now let me be clear. I am not talking about abuse, desertion. I am not talking about adultery. I am not talking about violence, but I am talking about times in our marriages, and all of us have these times, when it is hard, and friends around us begin to say, “Why are you working so hard at this? Get out,” but a believer decides to stay in the slow fires of misery and work on their marriage.

Another way of a molten moment is when I have seen people stay sexually pure when everyone around them is saying, “What is wrong with you?” A molten moment is when one befriends the one that everyone else avoids, especially in youth culture, they befriend the one that everyone else avoids, because they know they need the love of Jesus. A molten moment is when a family or an individual chooses to live in a foreign country and forego a comfortable lifestyle, because God has called them to take the good news of Jesus across the oceans. Another molten moment is when we decide to live on less, because we want to channel more into the kingdom of God. Another molten moment is when we end a dating relationship because this person, though they look like Brad Pitt or Emily Blunt and have the amazing personalities, we end it because what they do not have is a relationship with Jesus Christ, and they do not want to be

unequally yoked. A molten moment is when we share our faith at the risk of relationship and knowing we might be avoided and shunned moving forward. A molten moment is when we take an active stance on a social issue by volunteering to serve unwed mothers or immigrants in this culture, and people react. A molten moment is when we choose integrity at work, honest with customers, even though we will take the heat for not making the sale. Peter says, do not be surprised when molten moments come into our lives. Why? Because they come in God's will, to test us, to prove us. A trial is a molten moment that reveals our allegiances, what we really trust. Just like that piece of ore going into the crucible, we do not know how much is pure until there is fire. In the same way, our heart is an amalgam of allegiances.

Now I know we all start out the Christian life this way: "I trust in God absolutely. I worship Him. I love Him. I live for Him." The fact is, there are many other things alongside God in our hearts that we trust in, when we have no idea how much we trust in them until they are threatened, until they are taken away. Take, for instance, our career, but say, as we said, a molten moment. You choose to obey God and tell the truth, and it will cost you and may lead to a layoff. You are in the fire, but it is in that fire right then that you hear God saying, "Okay, now we will find out whether you got in this relationship to serve me, or you have expected me to serve you. Now we will find out whether you view me as your assistant, or you are my assistant. Now it will be proven."

So, we come, as we summarize so far, we will put this on the screen. Peter reframes suffering not as meaningless moments, but as molten moments when God is at work to refine our faith and strengthen our character, and so now I want to look at the value that these this kind of suffering brings. Again, I want to underscore here, when we are talking about suffering this morning, it is a specific vein of suffering, the suffering that is persecution and adversity that comes specifically from following Jesus. I am not talking about suffering that comes from just living in a fallen and broken world, like death and disease and divorce and those sorts of things, so please keep that in mind. This is a specific vein of suffering, adversity that comes from following Jesus. Here is the value that it brings

Number one, adversity shows that we are in the fraternity of Jesus Christ. Look at verse 13 again, "But rejoice in as much as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed." The word "participate," is the Greek word for fraternity or fellowship, and so Jesus is saying when we go through these molten moments, and our faith is proven, you are in the fraternity of Jesus. You are with Him on the way of the master, the suffering road. You have picked up your cross. You have followed Him. Jesus said in Matthew 5, "Blessed are those who are persecuted, for their reward will be great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets of old." Think about that for just a moment. As we go through these molten moments, and our faith is proven, we are on a par with that group in heaven called Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ruth and all the saints of old. We are part of an amazing fraternity as we go through these molten moments. It not only means now we are in good company, but it also means, as you see at the end of the verse, we will be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. It is a future joy as well.

One of the other books I decided to keep from my library is a Greek lexicon, and I looked up that word, "overjoyed," in the Louw and Nida Lexicon, which is like a dictionary. It defines that word, "overjoyed," this way. This is good. You'll like this: "to experience a great state of joy and gladness, often involving verbal expression and appropriate bodily movement." We will be overjoyed then, in good company now, and it is hard, and then we will dance. We will be overjoyed, and why? What is a glimpse

of that? I think some of it is that now you know all this is a tapestry. Then we will be overjoyed, because we will see the tapestry from the front, and it will be beautiful. Now, as we go through life, we look at the tapestry from the back, and there are threads going everywhere, and things make no sense, and I do not understand how all of this fits together. Why the back of a tapestry? But then we will see the front of the tapestry, and there will be joy.

It brought to mind another message I heard years ago from a Minneapolis pastor named Leith Anderson. They were having a celebration at their church. The celebration was at the church, but it was about a celebration that happened in Africa. Here it is. The daughter of missionaries to the Democratic Republic of Congo told Leith Anderson this story; as a little girl she participated in a day-long rally to celebrate the one-hundredth anniversary of the coming of missionaries to that part of Africa, the Congo. At the close of a long day of speeches and music, an old, old man stood before the crowd and insisted on speaking. He soon would die, he said, and if he did not speak, information that he alone possessed would go with him to the grave. He said that when the missionaries arrived a hundred years prior, his people thought them strange and their message dubious. The tribal leaders decided to test the missionaries by slowly poisoning them to death. Over a period of months and years, missionary children died, one by one. Then the old man said, "It was as we watched how they died that we decided we wanted to live as Christians." Those who died painful, strange deaths never knew why they were dying, or what the impact of their lives would be, but through it all, they did not leave. They stayed, trusting Jesus. It is then at the end, overjoyed, we will see the impact of our endurance in the molten moments

The second value that these fiery ordeals bring to our life, the first is we are in the fraternity of Jesus. The second is in verse 14. It enables us to experience the reality of the Holy Spirit. Look again at verse 14: "If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed." Why? "For the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you." Peter again is leaning on his Hebrew upbringing, and he is remembering when Moses went up on Mount Sinai to get the Ten Commandments, and it says for six days the cloud of glory hovered over the mountain, and then he is remembering when the Tabernacle was first completed. Again, the cloud of Shekinah glory came and hovered over the Tabernacle so much that no one could stay inside, and then he is remembering Solomon's grand Temple, when the cloud again came and hovered over it. Then we come to the prophets, and in the prophets we read things like Isaiah chapter 11, where it says out of the stump of Jesse, out of Israel will come a shoot, new life, a new way, and it says the Spirit of God will not rest on a mountain, not rest on a Tabernacle, not rest on a Temple, but rest on a person, and that person is Jesus Christ. It will rest on Him, but look at what Peter is saying, and this is stunning. It is not only going to rest on Jesus, but it is also going to rest on you.

As we go through these molten moments, persecution and adversity for following Jesus, we will have an experience with the Holy Spirit that we will not get in any other way. Jesus Himself said He would send the counselor in, the comforter, and when you are standing before the authorities who are persecuting you, do not worry about what to say. I will speak through you. There will be words that come out of your mouth that you never even thought you would say, but the Spirit will say them through you. Oh my, we have the Holy Spirit resting on us as we go through the molten moment.

Then lastly, the other great value of these moments is that adversity enables us to be encouraged by God's evaluation, and this is a tough one, as we look at verses 16-17. I am going to just jump down to

17: “For it is time for the judgment to begin with God’s household, and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?” Now, initially this sounds harsh, and we are scratching our heads and saying, “Judgment on the household of God, what is that?” Just remember that the word “judgment,” does not always mean condemnation. The context informs its definition. Here, the word “judgment,” in that sentence, does not mean condemnation. It is not talking about the day of the Lord, when all the books are opened, and people are judged. It is talking about what we might say is an evaluation. An evaluation will begin with God’s household.

Now, the second part of the verse is comforting as we go through those moments, in that God knows those outside the faith who are initiating the persecution and the adversity, God will take care of them, that he will do right. That is the second part. The first part is this, that at all times throughout the history of the church, God is always sorting out. I am going to put it this way. He is always sorting out who is a fan, and who is a follower, who is a weak link, and who is a witness, and then the evaluation that we get as we go through those moments will either be encouraging for us and prove us, or it will be challenging for us and be a “Come to Jesus” call. Get back to where you should be. We are always being evaluated, and part of the way God evaluates us, not for salvation. There is no condemnation to those who are Christ Jesus. This is not about our eternal destiny. This is about how we are currently proclaiming and demonstrating, how we are living like Jesus. That is what the evaluation is about.

Remember in seventh grade, this was true for me, youth ministry. We used to have these things called film projectors, and we would sit down in seventh grade, and we would watch these movies about the dangers of alcohol, and they would show these gnarly, grisly car crashes, and then they would show these movies about drugs, and they would show walking skeletons and crying parents, and then they would show these movies about smoking, and they would show these lungs oozing black fluid, and by the end of your seventh grade year, after all the assemblies, you are thinking, “Oh my goodness, I will never do any of those things.” Then you go through eighth grade and ninth grade and tenth grade and eleventh grade and twelfth grade, and we would do almost all of those kinds of things. What is that? That is the difference between a preference and a commitment. A preference and a commitment, and even now, through these molten moments, God is sorting through his church, and He is evaluating each of us and asking, “Am I a preference to your convenience, or am I the living God, whom you cannot live without, and everything in my life is about you?” So, there is the value; we are part of Christ’s fraternity, the Spirit resting on us, walking in the deepest commitment. That is the value of adversity and persecution.

It is just really hard to preach that, I have to tell you, in our culture. It is really, really difficult. Peter gives a radical perspective on life, especially in a therapeutic culture, where the two driving forces are avoiding pain and increasing happiness. The gospel at the same time calls us to live lives of witness and sacrifice, so here it is. This is the answer to one of those early questions of the first three, God’s primary agenda. Here it is, it is not our comfort, but our character. It is not the absence of pain. It is the absence of sin. It is not our personal fulfillment. It is our personal obedience. It is not that we feel good. It is that we do good. That is what God is concerned about in our lives, and so how do we respond? It is a hard word. How do we respond?

First, do not be surprised. If you go back to verses 12 and 13, I won’t read it again. You can read it again. Do not be surprised. How is it that two believers can go through the same trial and have very

different outcomes, one like maybe leaving, one sick, one really struggling, and one holding in there? The answer, one has been surprised. One has been surprised. In Jesus' fraternity, adversity will come. Jesus Himself said, "In this world you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world." You will have trouble. You will not handle suffering, listen, I think this is the most important thing I am going to say this morning. You will not handle suffering if it surprises you. We often think if we are a good person, and if we try hard for Jesus, we get a comfortable life. That is not a promise. The promise is you will have trouble. There will be loss, and there will be adversity. Think it through now. Grief will never destroy you. Surprise will destroy you, and the only way I know to think it through and not be surprised is to remember what we said earlier again in those questions. Jesus, the most righteous person ever, suffered terribly, and that demolishes the idea that good people have good lives and bad people have bad lives. First, do not be surprised.

Secondly, obey. In verse 15, Peter says we should not suffer as a murderer or a meddler, or any other way, but as we go through, what we need to do is to maintain obedience. The most important thing to do when we suffer through a molten moment is to stay obedient. I have seen this over the decades. I have seen it when people go through suffering, when they go through adversity. They are tempted to stop going to church. "It is too hard to go to church. I cry all the time," stop praying, stop reading scripture. They stop being others-centered and just crush in on their lives. It is so easy to push God away in a trial, and I want to implore you, pastorally, that is the absolute wrong approach to take. Why? Because feelings follow behavior. As one of my seminary professors used to say, "The ruts of routine become the grooves of grace." Now understand, some things might need to change about the way you pray or about coming to church or about reading scripture that might need to change, but do not give up on those things. Those are the things that create the environment for God's presence to come into your life when you need Him most.

Do not be surprised, continue obeying, and thirdly, trust God. In verse 19, that word, "entrust," is a technical word from the ancient financial world, and it is talking about how you would deposit money for safekeeping. In the ancient world, there were no banks. The way you entrusted money for safekeeping was to build a good relationship with your neighbor, and when you would go away to travel on a trip, you would leave your money with your neighbor, and they would take good care of it, the solemn duty of a neighbor. Peter says it is not just a good neighbor that you have. You actually have a creator that you are entrusting these trials to. It is the only time the word, "creator," is used in the New Testament. It is significant, and what is a creator? It is the one who has made all things, the one who is in control of all things, the one who is running the world, creator, so Peter says when you go through these hard things, entrust them to the creator. What does that mean? He is the one who knows the duration of this trial. He is the one that knows the intensity of this trial. Trust Him. Trust Him. Commit yourself to the creator.

We also know, as we close, it is not just that we are entrusting to the creator Father, but we are also entrusting everything to the creator Son, and this is where Christianity is unique from all other religions in the world. Christianity is the only religion and worldview that says that God actually suffered, and as you go through the hardest times of your life, even suffering because you are following Jesus, you not only have a creator who is in charge, and it is his will, but also you have the Son, who has walked through everything that you are walking through and is with you, so we hold on. We hold on. Let's pray together.



Lord, thank you for this preaching of Peter. This is a hard text, Lord, but as we understand that we are creatures of time but there is an eternity, this kind of text is the most hopeful text that there is. It says that nothing is wasted, nothing. No matter what we go through in life, especially by choosing to follow you, the hard times that might come, it is not wasted. Those are a value to our growth. It is a witness to the world. You waste nothing, so I pray for anyone in the room sitting here that because they have made choices that have brought a molten moment into their life, I pray Jesus, your Spirit would be on them, and they would take heart that they are in the fraternity and that you are testing them and they are proving themselves a grade-A student. I pray your presence would be known. I pray for any of us who know that we need to step up our witness. We keep quiet. It is so easy to keep quiet. Lord, would you prompt us? I want to pray that you would create a table-made moment this week where we have to talk about Jesus. We have to, that you would make us a verbal out-loud witness again and just say what you have done for us.

Lord, lastly, I want to pray for anyone in the room this morning maybe checking out this Christianity thing and this Jesus person. Lord, would you help all of us to see, and especially those who are seeking you, that following Jesus is what makes life matter? We live in a therapeutic culture. We try everything there is for pleasure and comfort. We have done enough to know it is not those things, so Jesus, call us to yourself today. All we need to say to come to Jesus and live with Him is, "I am yours. Jesus, I am yours." May we say that together today. In Jesus' strong name we pray, amen.

44:15 minutes

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Edited by Tom Kenaston

Message #805