

Faith That Overcomes Part 2

Our Identity in Christ

By Ty Blackburn

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Bible Text: 1 Peter 3:13-17

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Providence Church

2146 Buford Hwy

Buford Hwy, Duluth, GA 30097

Website: www.providenceduluth.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/providencechurch

1 Peter chapter 3. Continuing to exposit a passage we began looking at last week. 1 Peter 3:13 to 17 is our sermon text, same as last Sunday. We said the title of the message, initially the title of message again today, same as last Sunday, "A Faith that Overcomes." A faith that overcomes. We've noted that Peter is writing to Christians in the first century who are experiencing a lot of different challenges in their life of faith. They live in a culture that is hostile to their relationship to Christ. They live in a culture that is hostile to the way of life, that thinks they're crazy and out of step completely with just the normal, reasonable way of living. And in that sense, I mean, the radical nature of the Christian faith in a world that is characterized by darkness always looks very odd and strange, and so in the first century, the Christians who were coming to Christ were being born again, now seeing life correctly, we're trying to live lives of obedience, conforming their lives to the word of God, made them completely out of step with the world and they found themselves the objects of persecution, the objects of ridicule in their families, in their neighborhoods, in their workplaces. And so he writes this letter to galvanize their faith, to strengthen them, to bear up in difficult times, and so this letter relates so well to the circumstances of Christians in our modern world, in America, in Atlanta. The more that you love God, the more that you conform your life to his word, the more out of step you will be with a world that is governed by a completely different set of values.

And persecution is a real reality. It's a key theme in Peter's letter, the reality of persecution, the reality of suffering, and so one of his concerns is to help those to whom he writes, Christians in the first century, to help them to suffer well, to bear up in their faith and so he wants them to have a faith that overcomes the challenges in their lives. And so we look at this passage, we're going to see today that he's not only concerned with the thinking, that's what we focused on last week, getting your thinking right. If you're going to have a faith that overcomes, you need to be sure that your thinking is correct about your life. We're going to see today, he's going to deal with our feelings, that is our hearts. In a sense, last week, you could say the theme, I didn't say this last week, but in thinking about how it relates last Sunday's message to this Sunday's message and to next week, there's a sense in which he says, listen, how do you deal with persecution? Well, first of all, you need to know and understand certain things. That's the first thing. You need to set your mind, as it were, on truth. And then secondly, you need to guard your heart. You need to look at how you're feeling and how you're responding to what's

happening and you need to conform your emotions to the word of God. That's what we're going to look at today. And then next time, he's going to say you need to watch your life. You need to make sure that you have a clean conscience, a good conscience. When you think God's thoughts and when you feel what he wants you to feel and when you do what he wants you to do, you're going to have an impact and you're going to have a faith that overcomes. You're going to make a difference in this dark world.

So let's read the Scripture together. 1 Peter 3 verses 13 to 17.

13 Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. **AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED,** 15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; 16 and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. 17 For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.

Let's pray.

Our Father, we come again to You to confess that we are completely in need of grace. Lord, we thank You that You have made all grace abound to us in Christ, and we come in His name, asking on the basis of what He accomplished at Calvary, taking our sins out of the way, nailing them to the cross, giving us His righteousness through the triumph and resurrection from the dead, and Lord we ask that You would grant us that we would have the mind of Christ as we read the Scriptures, that we would conform our thinking but also, Lord, our affections and our emotions, that You would transform our whole heart that we would be people just like You described King David, a man after God's own heart. May we be people after Your own heart and may we shine brightly. We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.

So a faith that overcomes, there's a sense in which as you watch this passage, these five verses, verses 13 to 17, after he begins with that rhetorical question, who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good, he's saying, you need to remember that the Christian life, you need to understand the Christian life's about doing good. That's what we saw last week, setting your mind. The Christian life is about doing good. What is doing good? It means conforming your life to the will of God. It means living as a husband, a godly husband, if you are a husband, to be a husband like Jesus. It's to be a wife, like the Scripture describes, as someone who's submitted to Christ, I mean, the church submits to Christ. It's to be in whatever area of life you're to conform, your marriage, you're to conform your employment, you're to conform even in your citizenship to be just like God would have you live. As you do that, you become out of step with the culture and they're going to revile your good behavior. They're going to say that you are living evil, that you're doing harm when we just basically say what the Scripture says;

when we live what the Scripture calls us to live we are immediately out of step with the world and we are shining light in the midst of darkness and men love darkness rather than light and so they hate the light. And they will revile us and so he says now you're going to have people that are going to seek to harm you but how can they really harm you? They really can't. That's that rhetorical question. And he wants us to understand that. So he says in verse 14, he's helping us get our thinking right by understanding that, yeah, you must do what is right and when you do, you can expect that people are going to attack you, but when they do know that you are blessed. You must know that, that you are in the position of God's blessing. Don't look at your circumstances and try to interpret whether you're blessed or not. The earthly circumstances will be contradictory to what is reality. God says you are blessed if you are doing good by his power, by his Spirit.

So that's getting your thinking right, that's what we saw last time, but now he says it's not just enough to get your thinking right, you also have to get your affections and emotions under control. You need to move from fear and being troubled to hope, triumphant hope. That's really the movement we see in the passage. He says in verse 14, the second half, 14b, "and do not fear their intimidation and do not be troubled." There's a temptation for you to fear their intimidation and to be troubled, but don't do it, "but instead sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you." We're to move from fear and being troubled to hope.

Now it's important, this word "hope" is such an important word in the New Testament, and the word "hope" in the Bible is very different than the way we use the word hope in our common usage. For us, hope, there's some similarity, but it's inadequate, the natural way we see hope, compared to what the Scripture says. The way we think of hope is it's some desire for future good. You know, it's something that you hope that it's going to be good weather next week when you have certain plans, picnic or you're playing golf or something like that. I hope the weather's going to be good. I hope it's going to get warmer. Well, that's good news. It's going to get warmer. But hope sometimes is just, you know, it's a desire, but the way we use it, there's just the desire and often our hopes are really kind of vague and not very likely to come true. In the Scripture, when the Bible speaks of the hope that we have in Christ, it speaks of, listen, it speaks of hope for future good with expectation of obtaining it. In fact, certain expectation of obtaining it. When we hope for some future good that God has promised, we know we shall receive it. We don't have it now. That's what makes it hope. We don't see it right now, but we know it's coming. Biblically, that's hope. That's what hope is. That's the hope of the gospel. That is, we now know that good is coming and we are certain of it.

And what he's saying is we can move from being overwhelmed by fear, having hearts that are troubled and agitated to a hope that overcomes, such a transformation that people who have been persecuting us or who have been observing us be persecuted will see the hope and say, "Please tell me a reason for the hope that is in you. How can you live like this?" That's what we're called to do. We're called to live lives even under persecution that make people know Jesus Christ is Lord of lords and King of kings. We're called to

have a faith that overcomes and so he's getting at this part of it this week, the movement from fear to hope.

This is all the language of the heart, "don't fear their intimidation." I'm reading the New American Standard actually, a better translation I think is "do not fear their fear." Do not fear what they fear. Actually, in the Greek, you have the verb phobeo, P-H-O-B-E-O. You see phobia in that? Phobeo means to fear. Do not fear their phobos, P-H-O-B-O-S. Do not fear their fear is what it literally says. So the idea is don't fear what they fear. When you're persecuted, don't fear what the people who are persecuting you fear.

It's interesting. It's a passive voice verb here. There's three main verbs in what we're looking at today, "Don't fear their intimidation, do not fear their intimidation, do not be troubled," those are the first two verbs, and the third is, "but sanctify Christ as Lord." Three verbs: do not fear, do not be troubled, sanctify. And we're looking at the first two under this first point. So the first point this morning, there's two points in the outline. If you're going to have a faith that overcomes, if you're going to move from fear to hope, you must, number one, actively resist the temptation to fear what they fear. You've got to actively resist the temptation to fear what they fear.

Do not fear what they fear. It's interesting, the form of this verb, it's actually a passive voice verb. You remember, voice in verbs. Active voice, the subject of the verb is doing the action, right? The boy hit the ball, that's active voice. The boy did the hitting. The boy was hit by the ball, passive voice. He's receiving the action of the verb. You see that? Well, this verb here is a passive voice verb. When it says, do not fear, it literally has the idea, do not be made to fear what they fear. You see that? Something's acting on you and don't allow it to make you passively fearful. You're being acted upon, actively resist the pressure to fear what they fear. It means to be made afraid. Don't allow yourself to be made afraid by what they fear. Don't allow yourself to be made to fear.

So it's a passive voice verb. It's also an aorist tense verb. All three of these verbs are aorist tense in Greek and the aorist tense in Greek emphasizes punctiliar action, that is the action that happens at a point in time rather than ongoing action. And so the idea is, right from the start, as soon as you're feeling the pressure to be afraid, actively fight it now. At the threshold, as it's trying to cross over into your heart, fight it then. Do not fear what they fear. Don't be made to fear what they fear. Resist it firmly immediately. It's actually the same aorist passive on "don't be troubled." Don't allow yourself to be troubled.

Now think about this, if you are living, you're just living for God, you're loving God, you're trying to be a blessing to people around you, you're trying to shine for Jesus, you engage people in conversation about the things of God, you share your convictions openly, but kindly and warmly, and you find people hating you, you find people mocking you, misunderstanding you, mistreating you, rejecting you. It's painful. Nobody wants to be rejected. Nobody wants to be misunderstood and mistreated, maligned and when you have that happening and you sense that someone is coming after you or making fun of you or talking about you behind your back, it's easy to be made afraid. It's easy to be troubled.

This second verb, do not be troubled, it's a word which means to stir up, to agitate. The natural usage of the word "troubling" is used of water, troubled water, turbulent, agitated, you know like waves crashing. Is your mind, is your heart, does it feel like that, turbulent water? Here the soul is agitated. The heart is stirred up. The mind is becoming frantic. If you allow yourself to be troubled, it's the same word Jesus uses in John 14, "Don't let your hearts be troubled." You see, again, it's a passive voice. You're being acted upon. Circumstances are coming at you. And it's like if you have a pot of water, you know, a glass of water, and as I've gotten older, maybe some of you understand what this is like, as you're getting older, you realize your hands aren't as steady as they used to be and so like walking up and down the steps, I find myself spilling things a little more. Not just turning it over, you know, upside down like a child, but it gets a little agitated. The water gets a little agitated and it goes over the side. Well, the idea is don't let your heart get like that. There's a force acting on it, trying to agitate your soul, stand firm against that. This is the idea. The command is don't let yourself be made afraid. Don't let your heart be troubled.

Don't fear what they fear and again, the aorist tense, stop it at the threshold. As soon as it comes, as soon as you find yourself being maligned, misunderstood, mistreated, you find out somebody's talking about you behind your back, at that moment, fight fear. Fight that sense of being troubled and agitated. That's what Peter is saying, "Do not fear their intimidation. and do not be troubled." It's interesting here in God's providence. I didn't realize this when I decided to preach those messages from Isaiah, but he's quoting a passage I preached a few weeks ago during those Isaiah messages at Christmas and New Year's. He's quoting from Isaiah 8:12, and 13. Most of your translations, you'll see a font change in verse 14, "Even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed and do not fear their intimidation and do not be troubled." The font change is there to show you, that's a quote, that's a direct quote from Isaiah 8. He's quoting that verse.

Well, let's turn over to Isaiah 8 because, in fact, let me just mention this. Peter quotes, there's 12 explicit quotations of the Old Testament in the book of 1 Peter, 12. Twice he quotes Psalms, once Leviticus, once Hosea, once Proverbs, seven times he quotes Isaiah. Peter seems to have almost had the Isaiah scroll with him as he's writing this letter. He quotes seven different times from the prophecy of Isaiah. Again, just thinking about the life circumstance of similarity from Peter, those to whom he writes in the first century, these new believers in the trouble they're encountering is just like Isaiah's day, is just like our day. The word of God is so relevant.

Well Isaiah 8, let me remind you of the setting here. What's happening is Isaiah is ministering to the southern kingdom of Israel. Earlier when Boone read from Hosea, he mentioned the northern kingdom, that's Hosea's prophesying to the northern kingdom and he's writing some years before Isaiah. Close contemporary to Isaiah, but he's a few decades before this passage we're looking at. The passage in Isaiah 8 is about 725 BC. He's ministering, Isaiah's ministering to the southern kingdom, not the northern kingdom. He's ministering to the southern kingdom and Jerusalem. And you recall if you were with

us that there's a crisis. There's a very real existential crisis facing the nation of Judah, that is, there's the threat of imminent invasion, armies are camped out on their northern border. Massive armies. An alliance of the Arameans, that is the king of Aram, along with the northern kingdom of Israel. Their brothers have joined with their enemies, the Arameans, the northern kingdom of Israel, have joined forces and have amassed armies on the northern border of Judah, and they're about ready to infiltrate and to advance into Judah. So imagine that. Armies on the border of Canada for us. Imagine the Chinese and whoever else are amassed in Canada, ready to invade. How would we be feeling right now if that were the case? That's the circumstances in which the people of Judah and Jerusalem find themselves. And not only that, there is a conspiracy afoot in the southern kingdom. In Jerusalem, there's reports and rumors that there are people, secret agents, in possibly even the royal court, who are planning to kill the king of the southern kingdom, the Davidic king, Ahaz, so that they can facilitate this overthrow of the southern kingdom.

This is bad news. The army's up there, there's rumors of internal treachery at work, traitors in our midst, and this is what God says to Isaiah in Isaiah, let's start with verse 11, "For thus the LORD spoke to me with mighty power," Isaiah 8:11, "For thus the LORD spoke to me with mighty power and instructed me not to walk in the way of this people, saying, 'You are not to say, 'It is a conspiracy!' In regard to all that this people call a conspiracy, And you are not to fear what they fear or be in dread of it.'" That's exactly what we read from 1 Peter 8. That is, you are not to fear what they fear or be in dread of it. It's actually word for word in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, that is word for word what we find in 1 Peter chapter 3. And then the next phrase is also taken directly from this passage into 1 Peter, "It is the LORD of hosts whom you should regard as holy." Sanctify Christ as Lord is the translation of that same verse with a slight change. It's not Lord of hosts you should regard as holy. In Peter, he says, you shall regard Christ as Lord and sanctify him. That is, regard him as holy. It's the same verb in the Greek translation of the Old Testament here as in the Greek New Testament. Now, of course, this was written originally in Hebrew, but it's clear he's quoting this passage.

Now think about this for a moment. You're not to say it's a conspiracy. He's saying to Isaiah, "Listen, the people, they are fearing what they fear, but you're not to fear what they fear. No, you're not to do that. You're not to be in dread of it." This is translated by the word we talked about, be troubled by it. "You're not to fear what they fear or be troubled by what troubles them. No, you're to fight that. And you're not to say it's a conspiracy." Now, it really was a conspiracy, but he says "you're not supposed to be all preoccupied with what's happening in the earthly realm. Yeah, it's true, there's a conspiracy. Yeah, it's true, armies are amassed on the northern border. Yeah, it's true and you're not to pretend they're not there, know they're there, but you're to do something radically different. You're to look at God instead of what you're seeing with your eyes." This is what's going to change everything, you're to see what is really ultimately the reality, that is that God is there.

Now think about though, so Peter in writing to his people thinks of this passage and he says, "This passage of Scripture, this is what you need to hear today," and so he's telling

us the circumstances that he sees his people experiencing in the first century as Christians in the Roman Empire, threatened with persecution, experiencing rejection, is just like what Isaiah was experiencing in the eighth century BC, 725 BC. You look at the facts, the Arameans, the northern kingdom of Israel, there's a massive army, it's too great for us, yes it is. The pressure is great to be afraid. In fact, it looks reasonable. Anybody with any sense would be afraid. And the fact that there's a conspiracy afoot within the leadership of our own nation, the nation of Judah, isn't that troubling? Who can we trust? Would you not be troubled? Should you not be troubled? I would say yes. I would be troubled. You should be troubled. Only a crazy person shouldn't be troubled. Except that, wait a minute, we're not taking all the factors in. If that was all that was going on, yeah, we should be troubled but what God is saying to Isaiah in this chapter is, look, take all of the factors. And listen, I love this about the Christian faith, the Christian faith is imminently realistic. It faces life as it truly, truly, truly is. There's no pretension. We're not Pollyanna people pretending things are good, whistling in the dark. No, we are looking at reality square in the face and as we do that, you know what, when we count everything up, what we have is hope, not fear. That's the beauty of it.

But he says, the Scripture invites you look carefully at all of the enemies amassed against you. Yeah, they're there. Boy, it looks pretty daunting but you're only looking at half of the story. Look at the rest of the story and that's what he's saying to Isaiah. "Don't fear what they fear because they only look with their physical eyes. Don't be in dread of what they're in dread of because they only look at what they see is visible to them. No, you don't look and fear what they fear or dread what they dread because you see what they don't see. You see the Lord of Hosts." I love this, ""It is the LORD of hosts whom you should regard as holy." It is the LORD of Hosts whom you should sanctify." Lord of Hosts, Yahweh Sabaoth. Lord of the heavenly armies is the idea. There's so many names of God, you know, Yahweh Tsidkenu, the Lord our righteousness, Yahweh Shema, the Lord is there, Yahweh Yireh, the Lord our provider, Yahweh Rapha, the Lord our healer. Yahweh Sabaoth, the Lord of the heavenly armies. God, as he speaks to Isaiah, he says, "Listen, look at Me and look at My massive, mighty armies. Now, in light of that, look at the northern kingdom and the amassed armies on the border, look at the treachery that's happening that we don't even know about, but look at who is with us, the Lord Sabaoth. The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our stronghold. Be still and know that I am God," Psalm 46.

Yeah, I love that. Psalm 46, "God is our refuge and help and ever-present help in trouble, therefore we will not fear though the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though the rivers quake and foam." Think about that, mountains falling into the heart of the sea. Would you be afraid? I mean, if you look at things naturally, you certainly should be. I mean, if the mountains were actually now just falling around, what would we be doing? We would not be carrying on this conversation. You'd be taking cover. Psalm 46 says that the mountains are falling into the heart of the sea, the rivers are quaking and foaming, but there is a river whose streams make glad the city of God. God is in the midst of her. She shall not be moved. The Lord of Hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our stronghold. Yahweh Sabaoth, the Lord of the heavenly armies. Look at everything. This is what he's saying.

So fight this pressure. The pressure is real. The pressure is powerful to be afraid. If you just look at what you see with your natural eyes, you see people hating you, maligning you with the possibility that they could even do violence to you and in some cases kill you, but if you only look at that, you will fear what they fear. You will dread what they dread. You will be troubled. But you must resist it. Don't give in. Fight it. Fight it from the very moment it comes at you, that is, don't let it take any root in your heart because fear is contagious. It grows in the heart. And listen, fear is contagious. It grows in the body. Discord and division grow in the body. Fight against it. Fight against fear. If we find ourselves persecuted, what are we to do? Fight against fear. Resist it. Don't be troubled.

Now we're going to go to the second part, the second point. We're not only to actively resist the temptation or pressure to fear, we're to actively replace the fear of what they fear with a holy fear of Christ. Actively replace the fear of what they fear with a holy fear of Christ. This is where the change happens. Still in Isaiah 8, "It is the LORD of hosts whom you should regard as holy," you shall set him apart, "And He shall be your fear, And He shall be your dread." Peter doesn't quote that last part of verse 13. He quotes the last part of verse 12 and the first part of verse 13 in our passage. And I love verse 14, "Then He shall become a sanctuary." If you will set the Lord apart, make holy, you regard him as holy, the Lord of the heavenly armies, and you fear and dread him, then he becomes a sanctuary, a holy place of refuge. God is our refuge and help. He's our bulwark. He's our shield. That's the idea. But you have to replace the fear of what they fear with the fear of Christ.

Turn back over to 1 Peter chapter 3. The verb in verse 15, sanctify, "but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts." Again, translates the same, originally the Hebrew verb, kadosh, in Isaiah 8, translated here into Greek, hagiazo, sanctify. Now, the verb to make holy, it's translated by different translations. It's sanctify is how it's read in the New American Standard and the King James. If you have the NIV, it says "revere Christ." ESV says "honor Christ the Lord as holy." So honor as holy is how they're translating sanctify. The verb literally means "to make holy." I want you to think about this. Holy is a word we use a lot, but we don't define. One of the really helpful things we can do is define our terms in the Christian life, make sure we know what we're talking about, don't just use words and forget what they mean. To be holy is to be in the realm of the sacred. It means to be removed from the sphere of the common and set apart to the realm of the sacred. The common and profane is just things that we do every day, things that we use, and the idea, the best way to illustrate it to me is to think about a blacksmith making metal implements. He makes forks, he makes, let's say, censers, which we don't use these today, or at least not most of us do, but a censer with something you put incense in to burn incense, to make the smell, and you could carry it around. Okay, so a blacksmith makes out of metal, makes a censer, and one censer he sends to Walmart to sell and the other censer he devotes to the Lord. Okay, it's going to be used in the temple for worship of Yahweh. Two censers, one is set apart unto God and it's never to be taken back and sold at Walmart. It is devoted to God. Okay? That's the idea. To be set apart unto sacred use. To be devoted to God.

So to make something holy is to set apart unto sacred use. Well, it's interesting, he says, sanctify Christ as Lord. Well Christ is already holy so we don't make him holy but he says sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. The idea is we recognize his holiness in the moment and we set ourselves apart and our hearts apart unto him. It says we give our hearts to him in the moment because he is holy and we belong to him. It's interesting that the word order in the Greek of 1 Peter 3:14, "but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts," literally, it reads, "Lord, the Christ, sanctify," and the emphasis word order in Greek is different than English. It's tougher to move word order around in our language than many other languages. I know I've heard it's Spanish, Italian, other French, you can move words around easier than you can in English and still say the same thing and in English, you start moving things around too much and you're saying something nobody understands. So you have to follow a certain word order. Well, in Greek, you didn't have to follow the certain word order and you could use then, you could change order to emphasize something. And so the very first word in this sentence is Lord. "Lord, the Christ sanctify in your hearts." That's the word order. The idea is the first thing we need to see is who really is Lord here in this moment. We're tempted to be afraid. We're under assault from outside pressure, being misunderstood, mistreated, persecuted, how do you not give in to fear? You remember who is Lord. "Lord, the Christ, sanctify."

This is one of the passages, listen, when you have Jehovah's Witnesses visit your house, Mormons too, but Jehovah's Witnesses, they don't believe Jesus is God. Okay, when they come, they'll say a lot of things that sound like they agree with us, but they don't. Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe Jesus is God. Mormons are more confused than even the Jehovah's Witnesses. They believe everybody can become God, but they won't tell you that, they'll talk about Jesus and the Jehovah's Witnesses will talk about Jesus, but they're talking about a different Jesus. They don't believe Jesus is God. They will say that the Bible never claims Jesus is God and they ignore passages like this where Peter, in thinking about Isaiah chapter 8, when God says, "Listen, don't fear what they fear, remember, Yahweh Sabaoth oath is with you," Jesus says to you and me, "Don't fear what they fear, remember, Yahweh Christ, Jesus Christ, Yahweh is with you," makes an equality, Jesus is the Lord of hosts. This is the way the New Testament speaks of Christ. They don't feel like they have to continually explain it to you. It's assumed.

He is Lord. He is God. In fact, kurios, the word for Lord, to say Jesus is Lord is to say Jesus is Yahweh because in the Old Testament, they would not, and Jews still don't vocalize what I just said, Yahweh. They won't say that. They took the third commandment a little too literally, I mean, not too literally, they took it literalistically. Literally, don't take the name of the Lord, your God in vain, that is treated as holy. The way the Jews developed a tradition in the Old Testament of obeying that command was they would never utter the name of God, Yahweh. They would never utter it. So when they would read their Bibles, and they come to a verse like we read in Isaiah 8 that says, "Do not fear what they fear, but sanctify Yahweh Sabaoth," what they would read is, "Adonai Sabaoth." Every time they see Yahweh, they read Adonai. It doesn't say Adonai, they read Adonai. That's how they do it, every single time. In fact, they change the vowel pointing so they make sure they never accidentally say Yahweh. You know what Adonai

means, translates? Translation of Adonai is Lord. The word Lord, Master. So they substituted for the divine, holy name of God, Yahweh, his covenant name with Lord. So whenever they say Lord, you know what they mean? They mean Yahweh. So when the Jewish Christians of the first century, all of the apostles are Jews, when they say, Jesus is Lord, do you know what they mean? Jesus is Yahweh. That's just clear, unmistakable and then a passage like this makes it even more clear.

So he's saying, "Remember who Jesus is." He says, "Listen, you're being pressured from external forces. People are maligning you. They're making fun of you. You're feeling the temptation to be troubled, to be afraid. Remember Christ as Lord in your hearts right now." He's basically saying, "Set Him apart as holy." I think it's more like this, he's saying, I think he's saying something like this. When God said to Moses, remember when Moses sees the burning bush? I love how the text unfolds that. He's tending sheep in the wilderness of Midian, and he sees a burning bush, and he wonders, he looks over at it, "There's a fire. Is it going to spread?" Thankfully, in that area, it wouldn't be as likely to spread as it would be around here. But he walks over toward the bush, and he sees the bush is burning, but it's not consumed. "Like, how does this bush keep on burning and burning and burning and burning and not being consumed?" And hears a voice cry out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" The bush is talking to him and he says, "Here am I." What does God say? The first thing God says, "Take off your shoes for the place you are standing is holy ground." So Moses takes off his shoes. Now he didn't know he was in a holy place when he walked up to that bush but once he did, what did he do? Changed everything. He took off his shoes and he listened to God.

I think what he's saying in this verse, "sanctify Christ as Lord," is something like that. You find yourself in a horizontal, in the visual, in the natural realm, being assaulted, being persecuted, what you need to do is recognize that the Lord Christ is right here and you need to spiritually and mentally in your heart take off your shoes because you're standing on holy ground. And especially it's true when you find yourself being persecuted for the name of Christ, I mean it is holy, holy, holy ground. That's what he's going to say in the next chapter when he says, in chapter 4, verse 14, "If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed because the spirit of glory and of God rests on you." He's saying when you're reviled for the name of Christ, it's as if the spirit, you could picture the tabernacle with the cloud coming down, and he's saying something like that is happening. So when you find yourself being persecuted, stop looking at just what you see in the natural, because that would make you afraid. You ought to be afraid if you're just looking at what's in the natural. But if you see what they don't see, and you count it all up, then you'll see things correctly. You see Yahweh Sabaoth is with you.

There's a wonderful picture like this in the Old Testament. Some of you will be familiar with this, 2 Kings chapter 6. Many of us read this story or heard it in Sunday school when we were children, the story of Elisha and the Arameans. Same country that's assaulting Judah in Isaiah 8 was some 120 years before assaulting the northern kingdom of Israel. In chapter 6, verse 8, "Now the king of Aram was warring against," this is 2 Kings 6 verse 8, "Now the king of Aram was warring against Israel; and he counseled with his servants saying, 'In such and such a place shall be my camp.' The man of God," now the man of

God is Elisha context tells us and you're going to see it in just a moment, "the man of God sent word to the king of Israel saying, 'Hey, beware that you do not pass this place, for the Arameans are coming down there.'" The Arameans are now warring against the northern kingdom of Israel. Later they're going to become friends and fight against Judah in Isaiah 8. Here they're not. Most of the time they were enemies. This is what makes it even worse. These sworn enemies of the people of God, they lined up and fought with the northern kingdom of Israel. But here, the Arameans are coming after the northern kingdom. The man of God knows what the king of Aram is doing. His secret plan, he's made privy to it by the power of the Spirit and he says, "Don't go there."

So verse 10, "The king of Israel sent to the place about which the man of God had told him; thus he warned him, so that he guarded himself there, more than once or twice." It happens more than once or twice. They set an ambush and the kingdom of Israel avoids it. And look what happens, verse 11, "Now the heart of the king of Aram was enraged over this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, 'Will you tell me which of us is for the king of Israel?'" Which one of you is a spy? "One of his servants said," verse 12, "No, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom." "There's a prophet in Israel, that's the problem, and he knows what you say behind closed doors. This prophet, way down in Israel, knows what you say in your bedroom, O King." This is a wise advisor that he has, apparently a God-fearer.

So the king said, verse 13, "'Go and see where he is, that I may send and take him.' And it was told him, saying, 'Behold, he is in Dothan.' He sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city." The little tiny town of Dothan. They surround the city with this great army of horses and chariots.

Verse 15, "Now when the attendant of the man of God," that is his assistant, his helper, "when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out," I think he was getting up to go make the coffee. They didn't have the set thing that you can set the night before to make the coffee. He had to get up, go get the water to make the coffee. "Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city." Can you imagine that? You go to bed, everything's fine. You wake up and we are surrounded. "His servant said to him, 'Alas, my master! What shall we do?'" I think he's thinking that those Arameans found out about you and they are here to end it for us.

And look at Elisha. Now, I want you to think about this. If you're looking at things logically, would you not be afraid? I mean, if there was an army surrounding us right now that had their guns all aimed at us, it would be wise to be afraid and they should be afraid. But look at what Elisha says, verse 16. So he says, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" So he answered," that is Elisha answered, "Do not fear for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." So you see, it's realistic. It's not that you're hoping against hope. No, you're hoping based on reality. Elisha says, "There's no reason to be afraid because our army is much greater than their army."

"Then Elisha," verse 17, "prayed and said, 'O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.' And the LORD opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha." God opened his eyes and he saw the spiritual armies of the Lord. He saw the host. He saw that Yahweh Sabaoth is with us and if he's with us, we have nothing to fear.

He's telling us if you look at Christ and you understand who he is, Peter's saying, he's saying, remember when I told you with Isaiah, remember what we said, Isaiah, the real genius of what God did through Isaiah? Remember, it wasn't what Isaiah heard, remember this? He begins his prophecy, "The vision which Isaiah, the son of Amoz, saw." And I said, we need to see what he saw. Peter's saying the same thing. We need to see what Isaiah saw. Don't fear their fear, but set apart the Lord, Yahweh Sabaoth, as king, and you'll not fear. You see that the reality of who Jesus Christ is, and you put your circumstances in light of that, it changes everything.

Look at a couple of passages I want to show you. Psalm 2. And what I want you to see is the change that happens, because what we need, we're going to move, we're going to find ourselves in situations where we're tempted to be afraid. That's reality. Okay? We're tempted to be anxious. We're tempted to be fearful. We're tempted to be overwhelmed. You're going to find that. That's a part of what life in this world is. Jesus said in this world you shall have tribulation. You know what tribulation does? It troubles the heart. It shakes you. It shakes your heart. But what happens is we move from the initial troubling to hope by seeing God. And I love Psalm 2, this is such a powerful Psalm. I think it's put at the beginning of the Psalter to introduce the whole book of Psalms to us, along with Psalm 1, and it shows the cosmic conflict that's happening in the world that it's evident around us at times in very clear and unmistakable ways.

Verse 1, "Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, 'Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!'" There is this massive gathering of the armies of man and they are coming against God and his anointed. They want to war against God and his anointed and it's the language, the peoples of the earth taking their stand. I mean, they are committed to this and they're going, they're raging against God. There's this turbulence happening and looking at it at first, it is impressive and it is frightening but you've got to see the rest of the story.

Look how God responds. "He who sits in the heavens," verse 4, "He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury." We go from being afraid because we see this happening and God just speaks and he terrifies them. And what does he say? "But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain." "You can rage all you want to. My King has been installed. He reigns."

And look at the transformation that happens. "I will surely tell of the decree," verse 7, "of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and

I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.' Now therefore, O kings," all these armies, "Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth. Worship the LORD with reverence And rejoice with trembling. Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way." Basically, the tables have completely turned. It looked like we needed to be afraid because of these raging armies, but in reality, they need to be trembling because Christ is King. Christ is Lord. And when you see that, it changes everything.

This is what has happened, Jesus has been installed on God's mountain. He is King of kings and Lord of lords and his kingship was made known in the resurrection. Listen to these words from Ephesians chapter 1. I love this in light of what we're talking about. We need to see what God sees, what Isaiah saw, what Peter sees. We need to see what's unseen, which is real and eternal. Paul in Ephesians 1:18 he says, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe." If you know what is the surpassing greatness of his power toward you who believe, what do you have to fear in any circumstance? We need to ask God to give us eyes to see what is truly real.

And look what he says. What is the surpassing greatness? He's going to explain this one, those three wonderful terms. I want you to know about the hope of his calling. I want you to know about the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. Number two, I want you to know, thirdly, about what is the surpassing greatness of his power. And now the next few verses explains the greatness, the surpassing greatness of his power. "These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." God reached into, as it were, the grave, lifted Jesus up from the grave, the clutches, as it were, of death, and exalted him, took him out of death to resurrection, and not only didn't leave him there, took him all the way to the very throne room of God. That's how far the power of God reached down. That's how far the power of God lifted him up. And he says, that power is at work in you if you belong to Jesus Christ. I pray that you would see that power. When you understand that, all of the raging, all of the tumult, the fearful show that the world makes is nothing.

One last observation this morning. When he says, "but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts," and we're going to talk about how we respond to unbelievers next time, he says, "always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you." The word "account," some translations say "reason," literally it's "word," it's logos though. They're going to ask you, when they see your hope, when you see what God sees, and when you see reality, you see that Christ is King and he's with you, and you, as it were, take off your shoes in the moment as you're being persecuted,

you know Jesus is here, and the most important thing is that Jesus is here, it changes everything, and you turn from fear to hope, overcoming hope, they're going to ask you to give a reason for the hope. And I love this, logos, the logic. How do you get where you are right now? Because they see all that is visible naturally, and they're like, how in the world can you... they think you're just crazy. But they see something about you that, no, you're not crazy, you are completely sane, you are filled with a sense of joy and hope, even in this moment, the most crazy thing, how do you explain it? What's the reason, what's the logic of it? Can you explain the logic of it?

And what I love is, listen, when you overcome like this, the most logical thing in the world is to see what God has shown you in his word. It is logical. It is truth. It's not happenstance. It's not pie in the sky hope. It is reality. Jesus Christ is Lord of lords and King of kings. You belong to him. If God is for you, who is against you? Count up all that they have against you. Look at it squarely. Count it all up and then look against the balance sheet on the other side. Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords. And now, what do you have? Hope. You're with him. We're with him. What can they do? That's what God is calling us, an overcoming faith. It's not just mental, it actually affects our emotions. Your emotions follow your thoughts. You set your mind, like we talked about last week, you guard your heart, you believe what he says, you don't allow fear to come in, you don't allow your heart to be troubled, but instead you look at what's really true about Jesus Christ and you are going to see hope swallow up fear and people see the reality that Jesus Christ truly is King of kings and Lord of lords. What can separate us from the love of Christ? Nothing. Nothing can separate you from the love of Christ, which is ours through what Jesus has done.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, we praise and honor You and we acknowledge that, Lord, we are prone to be fearful, how easily we let our hearts be troubled, we're easily intimidated. And Lord, You continually say, "Don't be afraid, don't fear." Help us. God, help us in the moment to see what is really real; more real than what we see with our eyes physically is that which we don't see, which is spiritual, because the things that are unseen are eternal. The things that are seen are temporal, they're fading away. Help us see the unseen. Help us see the glory of Christ. Make us strong in the Lord and the strength of His might, One who loved us enough to die for us, to pay the price for our sins, to give us His righteousness, risen from the dead, exalted to the right hand of God. Make us bold, Lord. Make us overcomers. And may we encourage one another through all, whatever You bring in our lives, we know that You brought it and that You will give us the grace to be faithful. We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.