

Noah's Rest

1 Peter 3:8 – 4:6
Halifax, 3 December 2006

Introduction

In our worship service today, we anticipate the baptism of Noah Benjamin Shearouse.

- Ordinarily, when we have a baptism, I break from my regular series to preach on the subject of baptism or something related to baptism.
- Today, I am going to do just that,
 - but thematically, I am not going to break from our regular series.

We are studying Matthew 24 at this time,

- And last week I showed you how Jesus, in response to His disciples who always thought they would soon escape the troubles of this world,
 - were taught that instead, they would experience not only the common sorrows of wars and famines and earthquakes,
 - but also persecutions that would be targeted specifically at them *because* they were His disciples.
 - It was a very different picture than they imagined—
 - They had supposed all along that very soon they would be reigning beside Jesus on thrones with all sorts of honour and wealth.
 - But Jesus made it clear that in this world, they would have much tribulation until the end.
- Well then my brothers and sisters,
 - What hope do we have bringing a little child into a sin-filled, sin-cursed world like this?
 - Had we might as well join the general ranks of our society who despair in brining children into the world?
- Brothers and sisters who belong to Jesus Christ, I say “no!”
 - We have no need to despair...
 - not because we think our children will somehow avoid all the sorrows of this world and even persecutions for their service to the LORD,
 - We know that they will be afflicted with all these things in a society that is becoming more and more ungodly...

- Our hope not that they will escape these things, but our hope is rather that of Lamech, the father of Noah.
 - Lamech lived in a society that was even more ungodly than our own...
 - And yet, as he looked upon that little baby boy that God had given him,
 - he had a prophetically inspired hope that ought in principle to be the hope of every godly parent who trusts in our LORD.
 - In Genesis 5:29, we are told what Lamech named his little boy to express that hope:
 - Gen 5:29: And he called his name Noah, saying, “This *one* will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD has cursed.”
 - Now this is very significant...
 - Lamech is not deceived—he is no Pollyanna who supposes that everything will be sweet and lovely for his son...
 - He is very conscious of the curse of God on the world—he speaks of the ground which the LORD has cursed.
 - In this way, he refers to the curse that God had put on all man kind when we fell from the righteousness in which we were created.
 - God cursed that ground from which Adam had been made and over which he had been given dominion so that it would now take dominion over him and swallow him up—
 - he would struggle with nature and at last he will return to dust.
 - Yes, it would still bring forth food to him, but not without many sorrows and difficulties...
 - And in the end, it would swallow him up.
- But Lamech is shown that his little son will somehow be instrumental comforting us concerning this curse...
 - And so to testify of that hope, he names his little boy Noah which means “rest” or “peace.”
 - I have often pointed out to you that the Hebrew word for “peace” that we so often run into in the Old Testament translates the word **Shalom**,
 - and I have told you that this word not only includes the idea of rest from trouble and conflict, but also the presence of a positive blessing.
 - It conveys more than our English word **peace**.
 - But the Hebrew word **Noah** is more like our English word.

- It does not exclude the idea of prosperity,
 - but the focus of this word is peace or rest from or in turmoil and conflict.
- And so it was that as Lamech looked on a world full of violence and immorality and that was surely spiralling downward to judgement,
 - He saw his little son as one that would have peace and that would bring rest and comfort in this sin-filled, sin-cursed world.
 - Lamech saw this by prophecy...
 - And we need to see though Lamech's prophecy the promise we have for every one of our covenant children...
 - That they will have peace and be the authors of peace in the midst of a sin-filled, sin-cursed world by the grace of God!
 - That's the promise we need to claim and seek for them.
 - Not that they would escape the sorrows of this world, but that they would live in peace even though God's curse is all around them.
 - Did Jesus not promise this to His disciples when He told them that they would have tribulation in this world?
 - Did He not also say,
 - **Joh 14:27** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.
 - This is one of the glorious aspects of the hope that we have for our little covenant children when we baptise them.

You need to learn to look at your covenant children in this way.

- We live in a society that has largely turned its back on God, and there is a lot of chaos and turmoil as a result,
 - But in the midst of all the chaos, they are children of peace—they are Noahs.
 - They ride through the dread storms of this world in peace and come out from God's judgement purified and refined as gold!
 - As a people of faith, we are not to look at them and despair, but we are to look at them with this hope before us.
 - Again, not the hope that Jesus' disciples kept thinking of—of peace and prosperity in this world...
 - But the peace that believers are promised in the very midst of the storms of life.

There is, perhaps, no book in the Bible that is better able to help us understand this peace, than the epistles of Peter.

- Peter is writing to Jews who had trusted in Jesus.
 - They were getting it from all sides...
 - Their Jewish brethren were persecuting them, claiming that they were heretics who had forsaken the faith—cutting them off from the synagogue and the community...
 - At the same time, the LORD was stirring up the Romans against the Jews to bring His promised judgement upon them,
 - and these believing Jews were just as much the objects of the Roman persecution as the rest.
 - They lived in a period of immense opposition.
- Their circumstances were not a lot unlike our own...
 - We live in a society that has long been Christian—but more and more nominally so...
 - As we endeavour to follow Christ in this society, we continually face the contradiction of our own Christian brothers and sisters as they rebel against Christ.
 - And at the same time, we see God raising up hostile peoples to chasten us for our covenant breaking as nation... the Muslims in particular... and they do not make any distinction between us and those who are nominal.
 - Like the Jews to whom Peter wrote, we are set to “get it” from both sides...
- What does Peter have to say to the followers of Christ who live in such circumstances?
 - Is it a message of gloom and despair?
 - Is it a message that denies the reality of the difficulties in which they live and assures them that it won't be as bad as they think?
 - No! It is rather a message that calls them to be faithful in a world that opposes them, and that teaches them about the peace they have in tribulation!
- Just look at how he begins his letter in 1 Peter 1:3-5!
 - 1 Peter 1:3-8: Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

- See how he stresses the hope they have of heaven—their incorruptible inheritance that is reserved for them!
- And see how He says that God’s power keeps them until that hope is realised at the last day...
 - God’s grace is so powerful, that even in the midst of all the trouble and chaos and temptation and persecution,
 - we are able to keep on loving Him—He enables us to do it by the power that raised Jesus from the dead at work in us!
 - Now you might have thought God’s grace was great if He had immediately snatched you away from all the troubles of this world...
 - That is probably the way we would have chosen for him to work...
 - But is it not an even greater grace that is able to keep us loving Him in the face of all sorts of temptations and trials in this sin-filled, sin-cursed world?
 - Blessed be His name! How great is His matchless grace and power!
- Peter goes on in verse 6-9 to explain how the Lord actually uses the troubles we experience to show clearly that God is a work in us, and to deepen our love.
 - 1 Peter 1:6-9: In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls.
 - Trials show the grace of God at work in you because they put you to the test.
 - They show that God has so worked in you that nothing can drive you away from Him.
 - They reveal the genuineness of your faith as they revealed the genuineness of Job’s faith.
 - The world may not admit that you are right, but if you are willing to die for what you believe, they at least have to admit that you are sincere!
- Peter’s theme all the way through his letter is that though we go into the fire, the fire does not harm us...
 - and though we go through the waters, they do not swallow us away...
 - Instead they display and deepen our undying love for our Saviour.

- And as this is Peter's theme, it is no surprise to find that he twice speaks of Noah...once in each of his epistles...
- Noah is an example of a man who went through the raging waters of God's judgement with God's grace and emerged at the end purified rather than destroyed.
 - For Peter, Noah stands as an example of the peace that believers have in the midst of a hostile, sin-filled, sin-cursed world.
 - Now I want to draw your attention to 1 Peter 3 where Peter speaks of Noah, and not only of Noah, but also of him as a type of baptism.
 - The passage is found in 1 Peter 3:8 – 4:6.

I. First, see in this passage that you are called to patience when suffering unjustly.

- Peter lays out three characteristics of a godly response to unjust treatment in verses 8-17.
 - A. First, he explains how you ought to respond to the one who does wrong to you...
 - 1 Peter 3:8-9: Finally, all *of you be* of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, *be* tenderhearted, *be* courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.
 - 1. He says not to return evil for evil...
 - In other words, when someone does wrong to you, you are not to wrong back to them!
 - a. But you know what you are like when someone wrongs you!
 - It's a natural for you to return evil for evil!
 - As soon as someone insults you, you want to insult them back...
 - If not to their face, at least behind their back...
 - You want to spread it around and tell everybody how they treated you!
 - You want to even up the score with them!
 - b. Children, don't you find yourself doing this a lot!
 - Your little sister accuses you of not doing your chores or something,
 - and you immediately want to pick a quarrel about she neglected to do her chores too!

- I want you to know that your parents struggle with the same kind of thing...
 - As soon as they are accused or insulted,
 - the first thing they want to do is get back at the person who insulted them!
2. But Peter tells you to do something altogether different!
- He tells you to return a blessing to their insult or their wrong!
 - Don't let them drag you down to behave the way they are behaving!
 - Instead, find something you can complement them about or find some good deed you can do for them...
 - perhaps do one of their chores for them and when they ask about it, tell them that you just wanted to show them how much you loved them!

TRANS> That is the way you are to respond to the one who wrongs you.

B. Secondly, Peter tells you that you are to trust God when you make such a response...

1. One of the things that keeps you from returning evil for good is the thought that if you don't defend yourself, who is going to do it?
 - a. At the end of verse 9, Peter says that when you bless those who curse you, **God Himself** will bless you.
 - You will inherit a blessing.
 - It may not come immediately, but it will come in time.
 - b. In verse 10-12, Peter quotes from Psalm 34 to prove it.
 - 1 Peter 3:10-12: For "He who would love life and see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil."
 - The idea seems to be that God is always looking to bless those who bless others, and to oppose those who do evil to others...
 - He keeps records...
 - He doesn't forget it when you do good in response to your neighbour's evil...
 - When He sees it, He sets himself to bless you.
 - So if you want to see good days—days that God has blessed—then seek peace with your neighbour and pursue it.

- You are to have confidence that you will be blessed by God.
2. Peter goes on in verses 13-14 to drive home the point that you don't need to be afraid of your cruel neighbour since God is looking out for you...
- a. In verse 13, he asks the question,
- "Who is going to harm you if you become followers of what is good?"
 - that is, if you return good for another's evil.
 - Most people won't attack you when you do good to them...
 - Most people will come to love you and appreciate you if you consistently live that way.
 - What kind of person is it that keeps on abusing you when you keep show kindness in return?
- b. But Peter is realistic...
- 1) He knows that there are those in the world that will pour on more malice and more abuse the more good you do.
- The believing Jews to whom he wrote were experiencing that very kind of unreasonable and unjust treatment...
 - in some cases from their own husbands, or from their masters, or from civil authorities.
- 2) But in verse 14, Peter says,
- "But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. And do not be afraid of their threats nor be troubled."
 - You have to commit it all to God and trust Him to make it right!
 - In verse 2:23, Peter says that this is exactly what Jesus did when He was crucified...
 - I Peter 2:23: "when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously."
 - You have to leave the whole matter with God, being assured that He will work out justice in the end.
 - If you don't have this trusting attitude toward God, your response is not godly,
 - even if you return good for your neighbour's evil.
 - It's something you are to do while trusting God...

TRANS> So you see first that you to do good in response to evil and secondly that you are to entrust that whole matter to God...

C. Thirdly, Peter shows you the godly response you ought to have to those who see you returning good for evil...

1. When you live like this, it's going to get people's attention!
 - I mean, who in this world returns kind words for insults and gracious deeds for injuries?
 - As I pointed out before,
 - When you respond like that, it shows very clearly that God is at work in you—
 - that you aren't just living for this world, but that you truly believe that God will reward you in the world to come.
 - When you are at work and you have a cruel boss—and you keep on responding with kindness and keep on serving with integrity,
 - it's going to get people's attention!
 - They are going to ask you what makes you so different.
2. And Peter is saying that when they do, you are to sanctify Christ as Lord in your heart and be ready to answer them!
 - a. The temptation will be to just tell them that you think it's important and helpful to be kind—to make some lame comment like that!
 - Sometimes the people who are the most patient in bearing their sufferings are the ones who have the hardest time giving a response when ask about their hope...
 - b. Peter is saying to sanctify Christ as LORD when you answer...
 - In other words, explain clearly that the reason you respond the way you do is because you are serving the LORD and have confidence in His promises.
 - c. You are to respond to them like this even in a society that is hostile toward Christ.
 - Let the persecutions come in such cases; if they do, it is God's will...
 - And it is better to suffer for doing good—in this case, boldly speaking the truth about Jesus; than for doing evil—in this case, hiding the truth.

TRANS> So Peter (and our Lord who moved Him to speak this words) gives us a tall order here!

- We are to return good for evil, to trust God to bless us at last when we do, and to be ready to give a full defence of our hope when asked about it!
 - All that even in a society that hates Christ and persecutes His followers!
 - You are to continue in obedience to the will of God no matter how bad the opposition gets!
 - You are to continue in peace, resting in what God has promised.

II. But as this is difficult for us, Peter goes on to furnish us with two examples...

- These are examples of persons who persevered in doing the LORD's will in the face of all sorts of hostility,
 - who maintained peace through all sorts of chaos and tumult!

A. The first example is that of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. If ever there was a person who suffered unjustly in this world, it was He.
 - a. Never mind (for a moment) that He was Himself the very Son of God who left the glories of heaven to come to this earth and that He was the Messiah who was worthy of all honour and respect.
 - Just look at Him as a man and see what great injustice was done to Him.
 - He went about doing nothing but good, and He was rewarded with accusations, abuse of all kinds, and crucifixion!
 - Never was a man treated with such injustice in all the history of the world.
 - b. But consider further that He also suffered the very curse of God in order that He might bring sinners to God!
 - He came into this sin-filled, sin-cursed world deliberately to join Himself to His elect people, sin-filled and sin-cursed though they were...
 - They were at enmity with God by their sin and were subject to everlasting punishment without intermission in Hell forever.
 - By joining Himself to them as their Mediator and Head,
 - Jesus deliberately made Himself responsible and liable for all their sin...
 - He deliberately brought Himself into the mess that they had gotten themselves into in order that He might bring them out of it.
 - He deliberately went into the chaos and trouble of a fallen world.
 - And with all that sin laid upon His account, He went to the cross to suffer the pains of God's curse for them!
 - As Peter says in verse 18:

- “He suffered, the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God.”
- c. He suffered for sins that He did not commit to reconcile ruined sinners to God.
- He became the very object of God’s cursing, the unclean thing that was despised and rejected and cut off...
 - all to pay our penalty that we might come to God and have life and communion with Him who were justly cut off.
 - If a little bit of suffering on our part might be used of God to awaken sinners to respond to Him,
 - what complaint do we have?
 - We are not suffering even close to what He suffered,
 - it is only the resistance of a sinful world that we experience as God patiently deals with them with a view that at least some of them will repent.

TRANS> Jesus’ suffering was very unjust and very severe.

- But God, His Father, had called Him to do it and so He pressed on without wavering.
2. He persevered in the will of God through all the unjust treatment, and the end result was that He came through it all with life and salvation!
- a. At the end of v. 18, Peter explains that He was “put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”
- Now there is some debate as to whether this speaks of the Holy Spirit or of His own Spirit.
 - But scripture tells us elsewhere both that He was raised by the Holy Spirit and that He raised Himself by His own Spirit.
 - So it really doesn’t matter that much which is referred to here.
 - The point is that Jesus suffered unjustly—for sins that He Himself did not commit...
 - and that He did so **patiently** because it was the will of God...
 - and that the curse could not remain on Him.
 - He was put to death in the flesh, but His Spirit could not be destroyed and by His Spirit, He was raised to new life.
 - The outward man perished, but the inward man lived on!
 - He was made alive by the power of the Spirit...

- He rose again after He had followed through with the will of God that called Him to suffer for sins He did not commit, the just for the unjust.
 - And the life that He emerged from the grave with was not merely life for Himself...
 - but life for Himself as the Mediator who had taken upon Himself all the sins of His people...
 - He arose with the penalty of all His people's sins fully paid!
 - The whole church rose from condemnation when Jesus rose!
- b. And then He went and preached to the Spirits in prison (as verse 19 says)
- 1) Now there is a great debate about who these spirits are!
 - one thing that is clear is that they were spirits that were disobedient in the days of Noah...
 - either the spirits of men or angels who are called spirits...
 - 2) There is room for debate, but it seems best to suppose that these spirits are the angels that Jude talks about in verse 6 of his book who:
 - "who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode,"
 - and whom the LORD has "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day."
 - The testimony of ancient history is that the race of giants that are spoken about in Genesis 6 were the result of the daughters of men having relations with the Sons of God—a title often used of angels.
 - The Bible seems to concur with this testimony.
 - Peter's point would then be that after Jesus arose from the dead,
 - He went and proclaimed His victory to these spirits who did not keep their proper place as ministering spirits...
 - He declared to them that their doom was sealed because of His victorious death and resurrection.
 - This is what Peter refers to in verse 22 when he says that angels and authorities and powers are all subjected now to Christ, after His resurrection.

TRANS> What ever the case,

- the point is that Jesus arose victoriously as one who did the will of God which involved suffering unjustly.
 - He was fully vindicated and rewarded at the end.

- He showed His indomitable love for God and brought all of His elect people to God.
 - He rode through this sin-filled, sin-cursed world resting in the will of God and so came into God's promised rest.
 - Therefore, we ought to ride through this sin-filled, sin-cursed world resting in the will of God so that we will come forth to obtain God's promised rest.
 - In other words, don't let opposition keep you from the will of God.

B. The example of Noah is very much to the same purpose.

1. He lived in a world that was in deep rebellion against God...
 - and in that sin-filled, sin-cursed world, Noah also did the will of God.
 - He did not allow the opposition to stop him.
 - a. He built an ark according to God's command to prepare for the coming judgment...
 - And God waited for 120 years to bring His judgement,
 - bearing with the great wickedness of the world until Noah had finished.
 - b. And all the while Noah was building,
 - he had to endure the contradiction of sinners.
 - You can imagine how stupid it must have looked to the people to see this guy building a boat when it had never rained on the earth.
 - He told them of the hope that he had and they mocked him and ridiculed him...
 - You can be sure because if they had believed him, they would have entered the ark with him.
 - But Noah endured all that hostility and continued in the will of God.
 - He had peace in a world that opposed him because he believed God.
2. And the end result was that He was vindicated!
 - a. It was only a tiny minority—eight persons—that were saved.
 - All the rest refused.
 - But it was from that tiny remnant that the world was populated.
 - It was through that one family that the world was preserved in order that the promised redeemer might come!

- b. As Peter says, they were saved through water...
 - The water itself cleansed the world of its great wickedness so that it might continue on until Christ should come to crush the serpent's head.
 - The same water that carried Noah in the Ark destroyed the rest of the world.

TRANS> And so now Peter brings all this together to encourage us:

- The LORD was carried through this sin-filled, sin-cursed world by His Spirit,
- and Noah was carried through this sin-filled, sin-cursed world through the water in the Ark...
- both the LORD and Noah continued in the will of God in the midst of all sorts of opposition...

III. But how can we be carried through this sin-filled sin-cursed world with peace?

A. Peter says that baptism now saves us!

1. This was his message on the first day he preached the gospel at Pentecost...
 - a. A crowd gathered because they heard the praises of God declared in their native languages,
 - And Peter preached and told them that this miracle was the result of Jesus of Nazareth pouring out His Spirit...
 - And he tells these Jews that the one they crucified, God has raised from the dead and made to be LORD and Christ.
 - Many of them were cut to heart and cried out, saying, what shall we do?
 - And Peter says,
 - Acts 2:38-39: "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."
 - And the scripture adds in the next verse:
 - Acts 2:40: And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."
 - Peter, you see, is telling them how to make their way through this sin-filled, sin-cursed world and be saved as Noah was saved...
 - His words are, "Repent and let every one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

- b. And so it is not surprising to find Peter telling the persecuted disciples to whom he is writing that baptism is the antitype to Noah which now saves us...
 - 1) Noah did the will of God for the preservation of both he and his household—he built the ark in a hostile sin filled world and entered it and was saved...
 - 2) Peter is saying, that this is a type of what you must do if you wish to be saved from the sin-filled, sin-cursed world that you live in...
 - A type is something that represents something, and an antitype is the thing that is represented—it is the thing that takes the place of the type.
 - And Peter is saying that that anti-type is baptism.
2. But just what is baptism and why does Peter attribute so much to it?
- a. Well first of all see that Peter is not looking at the bare ritual...
 - It is not the washing of our bodies—the mere act of being sprinkled with clean water—that saves us...

TRANS> He tells us what it is!

- b. It is the answer of a good conscience toward God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - 1) We are baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...
 - To be baptised into someone's name means that you are identified with them, joined together, mersed together with them so as never to be separated.
 - In other words, baptism, when rightly received, brings you into union with Jesus Christ for salvation through faith.
 - 2) Do you remember what I told you before about Jesus?
 - a) He did not suffer for his own sins, but for our sins that He might bring us to God.
 - He joined Himself to us in order that He might cleanse us from our sins...
 - He went to the cross to pay the penalty of our sins, and after His work was completed,
 - God raised Him from the dead to show that His work was accepted for all His people!
 - And that is why He appointed baptism for all those who trust in Him,

- because as soon as you believe, you become the object of His cleansing virtue...
- Your sins are washed away and you are completely forgiven.

b) Baptism then is a picture of the cleansing that Jesus gives us when we join ourselves to Him through faith.

- It is the answer of a good conscience toward God through the resurrection of Christ...
- Brothers and sisters, what could make your conscience free from guilt but to know that God has accepted Jesus sacrifice for your sins?
 - That Jesus went to the cross to pay for our sins and was raised up by God because His payment was fully accepted for us?
 - The resurrection tells us that the penalty of sin has been paid in full!
 - We a baptised into His name to show that His death is ours and that his victory over is ours!
 - We are cleansed because we are joined to Him!

B. Brothers and sisters, this is what you must do in this sin-filled, sin-cursed world if you would be saved...you and your children...but this is exactly the thing that our world opposes!

1. The message is that you must join yourself to Jesus Christ openly and fully for His cleansing.

- You must do this even though the world you live in opposes it.
 - a. They may not oppose the sign of baptism (the way the Jew's were opposing it when Peter wrote to these Jewish believers),
 - In our day, it is not the sign of baptism, but opposition to the claim that Jesus alone is Saviour...
 - If you get baptised to say and say that there are many other ways of salvation and that there is no Hell to be saved from anyway,
 - And if you say that He need not be obeyed in all things, but that we are free to pick and Jesus...
 - then you will get along fine in this present world...
 - But if you do that, you are not really continuing in baptism—in what baptism is according to God...
 - You are breaking the covenant instead of keeping it.

- But if you are bold and clear with the true message...
 - You will get a lot of opposition, not only from those outside the church, but even more from those within.
 - b. Peter is telling these believers to arm themselves for suffering in the flesh as Jesus did...
 - People don't like his cause—
 - not His cause as it is reinterpreted by them, but the real gospel as it is set forth in the scripture.
 - You can expect to meet with opposition if you defend this gospel.
2. Peter is saying, “don't let that stop you!”
- a. He points out in the first two verses of chapter 4 that when you are willing to suffer to do the will of God,
 - it makes it very clear that you have been changed—given new life!
 - It is a sign that you are through with sin.
 - You are going to hang on to God's salvation no matter what because you truly believe, just as Noah truly believed and kept on building the ark.
 - Not that you are perfect, but that you are now committed to Christ and unwilling to jettison Him for some temporary comfort in this world.
 - You realise that you have spent enough time going your own way and that the time has come now to do God's will.
 - b. The world thinks you are strange, being so committed to the will of God to that you are prepared to suffer for it...
 - and they will speak evil of you, as it says in v. 4...
 - But as verse 5 shows, it will not go well with them at the end—
 - They will be judged...
 - They will have to answer for all the evil they have spoken against Christ's servants and for all the wrong they have done to them.
 - They will be judged same way the generation of Noah was judged...
3. In verse 6 Peter reminds the dear believers to whom he writes that this gospel that He has been preaching to them was preached to their brothers who are now dead—perhaps having been killed for their faith...
- a. It was preached to them (as to you) in order that they might be judged according to men in the flesh—

- it was to bring them into contradiction to this sin-filled, sin-cursed world...
- it was that God might put enmity between them and this world...
- that He might bring them out and make them strangers to this rebellious world...
 - so that the world judged them according to the flesh, and perhaps tortured them and killed them...

TRANS> But this judgement was only “according to men in the flesh...”

- b. It was likewise preached that they might live (v. 6 goes on to say) according to God in the Spirit...
 - That they might emerge from this world to live unto God, to do the will of God in their generation!
 - With the result that they will be carried through this sin-filled, sin-cursed world in peace—
 - carried through the contradiction of sinners and carried through the final judgement of God in peace.

Conclusion

And so you see what hope we have as we baptise little Noah today...

- It is the hope that we who join ourselves to Jesus Christ will be cleansed...
 - And that through union with Him, our sins are washed away...
 - And that we and our families can be carried through this hostile world and finally through God’s judgement at the end unscathed.
 - That we can go through water and fire and be brought out to rich fulfillment through our Lord Jesus Christ who gave Himself on the cross for us.

Our gracious Lord does not bid us to leave our children outside the ark until they are old enough to enter on our own...

- He tells us to bring our little ones to Him for His blessing...
 - We bring them to Jesus Christ with us because God had told us that the promise is to us and to our children.
 - We look to Him for their cleansing as we do for our own...
 - And as they grow into maturity,
 - we teach them that He is the source of their cleansing and pray that they will never be so foolish as to jump out of the ark into the raging sea of the world.
 - The grace of God is not that which lifts us out of all suffering now,

- but it comes to us so powerfully that it enables us to live to the glory of God in the midst of this sin-filled, sin-cursed world...
- It builds in us a love for God so deep and a confidence in His promises so sure that we are able to keep on openly holding to Jesus Christ in the face of all manner of opposition and suffering.
 - We are able to continue in the covenant of baptism...
 - The end will be that through Christ,
 - we will come into that inheritance that which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that will never fade away.
 - Let us come to our Christ in this hope, and continue in Him forever in this sin-filled, sin-cursed world.