

“Under His Hand” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Easter 7 – May 17, 2026

- I. **1 Peter 5:6** – ⁶Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time He may exalt you.
- II. **What does it look like to have humble dependence on God?**
 - a. We might talk about love and trust in Him above all things, but to fully give everything to God in a humble way is more than talk.
 - i. Sadly, many of us either take credit for the good in our lives, or blame God for the bad... and often the challenges we face are not an occasion to humble ourselves under God’s mighty hand...
 - ii. I cannot speak to suffering in the ways some of you are experiencing it, or the suffering you have already gone through, and therefore it’s easy to stand in this pulpit and talk about trusting God through it all.
 1. The truth is that we all go through different kinds of suffering and trials, and we all have a walk with God that’s unique as well.
 2. As I said last week, the suffering that Peter is writing about in his letter is suffering for Jesus and being persecuted for having faith... but whenever any kind of suffering happens and we turn to Jesus, that is also a blessing for us.
 - b. Each of us faces what Martin Luther called the “unholy trinity” of the world, the devil, and our own sinful flesh.
 - i. As we go back to the beginning, consider the fact that the devil began his work of tempting people in the Garden of Eden.
 1. The first temptation came when he introduced doubt to Eve – “did God really say”?
 - ii. As Adam and Eve each chose to fall for the temptation, the result was a brokenness and evil that would infect and spread like a sickness throughout all of creation.
 1. The world was infected... From the powers of the world... the governments, the rulers, the influencers, and the societies that reject God and His ways.... To the way that world is full of chaos... disease, war, famine, and storms... nowhere on earth is safe from sin’s reach.
 - iii. So, we have Satan prowling around like a lion... a world that is broken and opposed to God... but what about our sinful flesh?
 1. The Bible constantly reminds us that we were dead in our trespasses and sin (Eph. 2:1), that we have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23), and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. (1 Jn. 1:8)
 2. The sin that started with Adam and Eve is in us through and through... and this is why we are constantly tempted to turn away from God rather than toward Him.

- c. When we talk about having humble dependence on God, it's comparable to life without sin – no one can be perfect in turning to Him – but the Lord Himself has given us faith and the power of the Spirit to trust and rely on Him more all the time.
 - i. Our sinful flesh is always tempted to push God away, especially when we experience the suffering and trials of the world.
 - ii. And this is the struggle – that the devil tempts us to turn away from God... the world tempts us to reject God and His will... and our own sinful flesh tempts us turn away from God in anger or to seek a solution on our own.
 - 1. You see, when we suffer, many people get angry at God for allowing this trouble (rather than being angry at sin, or the devil)... or instead of submitting to God in humility, we go out on our own to figure out a solution without God.

- III. **Our reading in 1 Peter reminds us** that we will face many challenges and trials in life, but we are in the best place when we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.
 - a. We are in the best place when we endure our suffering and fiery trials with our Lord in the forefront of our minds and hearts... because that was what He humbly did for us.
 - i. Yes, we were in Christ's mind when He faced the brutal trials and suffering on our behalf.
 - ii. The constant reminder He makes to us... including all His followers... is that we will suffer in this lifetime...
 - 1. He told His disciples they would suffer greatly for His name... and He tells us that we also can expect the same...
 - 2. Peter simply tells us what Jesus already said in the Gospels, "do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you."
 - 3. Yes, we will be tested by the fiery trials of Christian persecution ... but we will also face the fiery trials that come in a world of sin and brokenness.
 - 4. Sometimes the test is to see God in the midst of the trial.
 - 5. More often than not, the test is to humbly place ourselves under the hand of the Most High...
 - 6. In fact, as we trust the Lord through the trial, it is the ultimate peace as we walk with Him.
 - b. As I said before, the temptation is to turn away from God and to do wrong things, while the Bible tells us to, "...entrust [our] souls to a faithful Creator while doing good."
 - i. How many of us have faced a trial and rather than humble ourselves to God under His mighty hand, we struggled against Him?

- ii. I've seen people become so angry at God in their troubles that they rejected Him completely... walking away from their faith.
- iii. Others, so distraught with their situation, decided to run from God by using drugs and alcohol... which only made things much worse... along with their relationship with God.
- iv. Sometimes a person facing trials will make rash decisions to fix them, taking it upon themselves to work it out... only to face even more difficult consequences.
 - 1. Remember in Genesis 16 when Sarah did not wait on the Lord, so she gave Hagar to Abraham and they had Ishmael... and not only did that cause more suffering, but even today we are still challenged by the offspring of Ishmael as the ancestor of Islam.
- v. Many times, when difficult medical situations arise, people choose death to solve the problem rather than trusting in God.
 - 1. Some take their own lives... others cut short the innocent lives of others... and oftentimes, if they would just turn to the Lord, the answers and support would lead to different decisions.
- vi. I've also seen others who faced hardships turn bitter and resentful at God and those around them.
 - 1. They seek revenge and wallow in self-pity and unforgiveness, which in time, begin to consume their faith... and even their health.
- c. Yet, what does our reading tell us?
 - i. Humble yourselves under God's mighty hand, so when the time is right, He may exalt you.

- IV. **As we trust in the Lord**, and as humble dependence on Him becomes our aim... He will exalt us.
- a. It's interesting that this same word, "exalt" is used in John 3:14, as it says that the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness... and so must the Son of Man be lifted up...
 - b. Often, to be exalted is to be lifted up in suffering and trials...
 - i. Without Jesus seeking the will of His Father and going through with all things necessary for our salvation, we would be left without forgiveness or hope in a future with Him.
 - ii. But Jesus willingly went to the cross to be lifted up... but beyond that death came the ultimate victory over sin and brokenness – the resurrection.
 - iii. You see Christ's resurrection is the promise that the prowling lion satan cannot truly harm us... that the world and all its powers cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord... and not even our own sinful flesh is unforgivable... No... Christ wins... and because of that... you win.

- c. So today, no matter what your struggles may be, do not fight against the mighty hand of God... rest beneath it.
- d. That same hand is the one that holds you, forgives you, and finally lifts you up in Christ.... Amen.