5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Suffering, Hope, and the Faithfulness of God

Day 1: Do Not Be Surprised

Reading: 1 Peter 4:12-14

Devotional: The Christian life was never promised to be free of hardship. Peter's command is clear: do not be surprised when fiery trials come. Surprise reveals misplaced expectation. When we expect comfort as the default of faithfulness, we have been shaped more by culture than by Scripture. Trials are not evidence that God has abandoned you. They are the very terrain where faith is tested and proven real. Today, examine what you expect from following Jesus. Adjust your expectations not downward, but outward -- toward a God whose purposes in your suffering are deeper than your present pain.

Personal Reflection: What trial have you been most surprised by? What does that surprise reveal about what you expected from God?

Practical Application: Write down one current difficulty you are facing. Beside it, write one way God may be using it to deepen your faith rather than diminish it.

Day 2: Sharing in the Suffering of Christ

Reading: Philippians 3:10-11

In this passage, Paul expresses his longing to know Christ deeply -- including through sharing in his sufferings -- as a path toward resurrection and transformation.

Devotional: There is a knowledge of Christ that can only be gained through suffering. Theology learned in comfort has its place, but theology forged in pain carries a different weight. When you suffer for your faith, you are not simply enduring hardship -- you are entering into a fellowship with Jesus that transforms how you understand his love. As the sermon described, suffering can serve as a mirror that reflects the evidence of your union with Christ. It costs you something to follow him, and that cost is itself a form of intimacy. Today, consider what your willingness to suffer for Christ reveals about the depth of your relationship with him.

Personal Reflection: Have you ever experienced a season of suffering that drew you closer to Christ rather than further away? What did that teach you about him?

Practical Application: Spend ten minutes in prayer today, not asking God to remove a difficulty, but asking him to reveal himself more fully within it.

Day 3: The Presence of God in the Furnace

Reading: Isaiah 43:2

This verse assures that when God's people pass through overwhelming trials -- whether flood or fire -- God promises to be present with them and to protect them through it.

Devotional: God does not always remove the furnace. He enters it. The promise of Scripture is not that those who follow Christ will avoid suffering, but that they will never face it alone. Sometimes God strips away comfort, security, and ease not to punish, but to draw us back to the one thing that cannot be stripped away: himself. The sermon described how suffering can cause us to release our grip on lesser things and fall before the Lord in desperation. That desperation is not weakness. It is the beginning of a deeper and more honest faith. The presence of God is often experienced most profoundly not in seasons of abundance, but in seasons of need.

Personal Reflection: What things do you tend to grip tightly that God may be asking you to release? What would it look like to hold those things more loosely?

Practical Application: Identify one area of life where you have been seeking comfort or security outside of God. Surrender it to him in prayer today and ask him to fill that space with his presence.

Day 4: Entrusting Your Soul to a Faithful Creator

Reading: 1 Peter 4:19 and Romans 8:28

First Peter 4:19 calls those who suffer according to God's will to entrust their souls to their faithful Creator while continuing to do good. Romans 8:28 affirms that God works all things together for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose.

Devotional: Entrusting your soul to God is not passive resignation. It is an act of profound, active faith. It means choosing to believe that the God who created you, who sent his Son to suffer and die for you, and who raised that Son from the dead, is working in your pain with a purpose you cannot yet fully see. The sermon was honest about this: God does not always work things together the way we would define "good." But he is working. The call to entrust your soul

is a call to release your grip on outcomes and rest in the character of the one who holds all things. He is faithful. That is the anchor.

Personal Reflection: Is there a situation in your life right now where you are struggling to trust God's faithfulness? What is making it difficult?

Practical Application: Write out a short prayer of surrender today. Name the specific thing you are struggling to trust God with, and declare in writing that you are choosing to entrust it to him. Return to that prayer throughout the week.

Day 5: The Glory That Will Be Revealed

Reading: Romans 8:18

In this verse, Paul declares that the sufferings of the present moment are not worth comparing to the glory that will one day be revealed in those who belong to Christ.

Devotional: The Christian endures suffering not by pretending it does not hurt, but by holding it against the backdrop of what is coming. The sermon described it this way: the Lord takes the tension, the heartache, the struggle, and the pain, and rewrites it to his glory. The scars remain, but they become the very evidence of the story. The martyr Stephen looked up into heaven and rejoiced not because the stones did not hurt, but because his relationship with God was so rich that what was coming outweighed what he was enduring. That is the mindset Peter calls us toward. Suffering is real. But so is the glory. And the glory is greater.

Personal Reflection: How does the reality of future glory change the way you are currently viewing your suffering? Does it feel distant or near to you? Why?

Practical Application: Listen to the song "Scars" by I Am They this week. Let the words serve as a prayerful reminder that Christ's suffering was not the end of his story, and your suffering is not the end of yours.

This reading plan is designed to be used alongside personal prayer and, where possible, in community with other believers. Suffering is not meant to be processed alone. Share what God is teaching you with someone you trust.