July 22, 2018 (Tim Eakin) “Suffering amidst Trials”

“Our heavenly Father, we are so thankful that you are sovereign over all things. You are in control and you sustain us not only when things are going well but also when we face suffering. You sustain us through suffering and also you use it for our growth and your glory. We are so blessed to live in this country where we can worship and serve you without fear of physical harm or imprisonment, but we know that is not the case for so many of our brothers and sisters around the globe. Help us to always remember them in their suffering, we pray that you will comfort and sustain them.

You tell us not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon us to test us, as though something strange were happening. Help us to understand that suffering goes hand in hand with serving you. Please protect us from the lie that is so prevalent today, that following Christ is all about health and wealth and prosperity. We know that your Son suffered greatly when he was here on earth and it is our greatest privilege to share in his sufferings.

Teach us to rejoice as we share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. We ask that you would give us glimpses of how you are glorified through suffering and help us to treasure your glory more than our own comfort and wellbeing.

Make us believe that if we are insulted for the name of Christ, we are truly blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon us.

We pray that none of us suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Protect us from sin and keep us from stumbling. We know that apart from you we are utterly helpless in our fight against sin. We ask that you work in us to reveal the sin in our hearts and our lives so that when we do suffer it can be for our connection to your great name and not due to our own sin.

Father, when we suffer as Christians, let us not be ashamed, but let us always glorify You in the name of Christ. Help us in our homes and workplaces and among our friends to boldly proclaim the name of Christ and to never shy away from identifying with you. We acknowledge that like Peter we are often tempted to be ashamed of you or even to deny you. Give us strength and courage to always stand up for you and the truth of your gospel.

Your word says that it is time for judgment to begin and we know the sobering truth of what awaits the ungodly sinners who do not obey the gospel when your judgment comes. Yet we often become desensitized to this truth and we have hard and calloused hearts towards the lost. We ask that you will soften our hearts and help us to love all those around us who are lost and running towards your just judgment. Make us to love them enough to unashamedly share your gospel with them. We plead with you on behalf of all of our loved ones who do not know you or have turned their hearts away from you. We know that only you can change their hearts, please show mercy to them and incline their hearts towards you.

Therefore let us and all of our brothers and sisters around this world who suffer according to Your will, entrust our souls to you our faithful Creator while doing good.

May the great name of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ be glorified in our time here today; it is in the name of Jesus that we ask these things. Amen.