

You Keep Coming After Me

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When we hear the gospel of grace and believe it for the first time, the world seems bright and shiny. We are optimistic about life and sure of God's love for us. It is hard to imagine that life would not just naturally progress from bad to good, sinner to saint. Of course there would be little hiccups along the way, but life's road should be mostly smooth all the way to heaven now, right?

Sin and suffering make you doubt God's love.

The smooth road turns into a 10-car pileup on an icy road. The sin we left behind is back, and it brought friends! Like a dog to its vomit, we are right back to anger, lust, resentment, addiction, grumbling, greed, laziness, or pride. And the pain of suffering compounds the doubt as we wonder, *Where is God when I'm hurting?*

Suffering and sin made biblical writers doubt in the same way. The psalmist despaired, "Yet for your sake we are killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered" (Psalm 44:22). We start to wonder if maybe God has moved on to better people or more interesting things, but then we would be mistaking God for just another person. As Eugene Peterson describes, that is a serious mistake: ... to conclude that God has gotten bored looking after us and has shifted his attention to a more exciting Christian, or that God has become disgusted with our meandering obedience and decided to let us fend for ourselves for a while, or that God has gotten too busy fulfilling prophecy in the Middle East to take time now to sort out the complicated mess we have gotten ourselves into.¹

God's love is better than our love.

But God is not like us! He is good, and His steadfast love endures forever (Psalm 136). He has chosen us for His name's sake, and Jesus died to secure God's love and bring us into His family.

"You Keep Coming After Me" is a song for despair. When our hearts feel low—abandoned even—because of painful disappointment, when we wander from God's commands and wonder if He is done with us, we should sing again and again: *"You find me in the depths / You take me to the heights / Just to tell me that Your love will never ever, ever change / You're with me in the wind / You're faithful in the fire / You keep coming after me."*

If we root God's love for us in our obedience or our circumstances, we are sunk, lost in a labyrinth of doubt, confusion, and comparison. But, hallelujah! His love is not like our love! Rather, we must see the Father's love for us rooted in eternity past, erupting from His gracious, electing purposes for everyone

¹ Eugene Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2000).



who would ever believe in Him. Let us put our confidence in our once-for-all-time purchase on the cross, so that sinners like us would belong indisputably to Christ. We must boast of the Spirit in us who is the guarantee of our inheritance.

God never gives up on His children.

We are like Gomer who was unfaithful to Hosea, and yet God instructed Hosea, “Go and get her, and never give up until Gomer is yours.” We are Israel, abused and in exile, to whom the Lord said, “Fear not, for I am with you... I am your God, I will strengthen you, I will help you.” We are Peter after denying the Savior, fearfully coming to Him, not to be condemned, but restored. We are the straying sheep for whom the Good Shepherd lays down His life to never lose.

We are children of God. He will never give up on or lose interest in us. So with this assurance, we sing, *“So keep on moving / Keep on speaking / Keep on turning my eyes / To see what You see / I am listening / I am learning / I am Yours.”*

The apostle Paul responds to the agony of Psalm 44 in Romans:

As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:36-39)

Hallelujah! Though our optimism is not the same as it was when we first believed, it is now tougher, better, and wiser. Our joy is not naively in an easy road, but in the steadfast, pursuing love of God, who keeps coming to finish what He began.

