

## Peter's Prayer and Conclusion

I Peter 5:10-14

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand. The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son. Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.”

Before we begin to work through our text, I want us to go back and read a few passages from earlier in this epistle. As we look at these passages, I specifically want you to consider what is taught about the gospel, salvation, our identity in Christ, and God's work in the midst of trials.

We will begin with I Peter 1:1-9: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of

the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”

Now let's look at I Peter 2:5-10: “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.”

Next, I Peter 3:14-18: “But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”

Finally, I Peter 4:12-14: “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.”

I Peter is a book rich in hope, rich in comfort, rich in instruction, and rich in practical application. All of this flows out of the gospel as the Apostle Peter exhorts and testifies of the true grace of God. From this epistle, and specifically from our text this morning we see that in the midst of trials and afflictions God is at work accomplishing His perfect will in our lives.

### **I. Peter's closing Prayer (v. 10-11)**

We must connect these verses with what Peter has just said in verses 8 and 9. In those verses Peter taught about our great adversary the devil and our responsibility to resist him, but never assume that the devil operates outside the purview of God. The devil is our adversary. The devil seeks to destroy the work of God in our lives. Yet even through his destructive efforts, God is working His

perfect will in our lives. The devil is an unwilling and an unwitting tool in the Master's hand.

In verses 10 and 11 Peter prays for believers. He prays that God would perfect them in and through the afflictions they face. We are going to look at this prayer phrase by phrase, beginning with the phrase: "The God of all grace."

What grace comes from God? All grace. James 1:17 says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

Common grace, the grace every human experiences every day, comes from God. Saving grace comes from God. Sanctifying grace comes from God. All grace comes from God.

As the God of all grace, it is to God we must look for all grace. You will not find the grace you need in yourself. You will not find the grace you need in any other person. You will not find the grace you need in your bank account, in your possessions, or in any experience you could ever possibly have. There is only one source of grace: God. He is the God of all grace and it is to Him we must bring our petitions for grace.

Next, consider the phrase: "Who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus." You, Christian, were called by God. It is no happy accident that you are a part of the family of God. You have been called by God.

You didn't find God. If anything, God found you. But that's a poor expression. It is weak. It doesn't fully express what happened in your salvation.

God didn't just stumble across you one day and decide to save you. He created you. Consider Colossians 1:16 and 17, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

You are not an accident of chance and random process. God created you and purposed that He would save you.

Maybe you are an unbeliever, you are not a Christian, and you have had a hard life. You may think: "God created me to live this life? That's a terrible God."

Please consider very carefully to what I am about to say. Everything in your life has led up to this moment. Everything you have experienced, everything you have gone through, every choice you have made, has helped to form and shape you into who you are today. Now you are here, in this moment, and you hear the gospel.

God came to earth as a man, Jesus Christ. He lived a perfect, holy, sinless life and then laid down His life on the cross to save sinners like you and me. Three days later he rose from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. Repent of your sins, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.

It's not an accident you just heard the Gospel. God has sovereignly brought you to this moment. Don't harden your heart to the grace of God.

God created you, but even creation doesn't fully express God's work in the believer's life. You, Christian, are called by God. Ephesians 1:4 teaches that we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Earlier in this epistle, in I Peter 1:20, Peter taught that Jesus, the precious lamb of God, was foreordained to redeem us before the creation of the world. God's calling upon the life of the believer began in eternity past. We have been called by God.

God "who hath called us unto his eternal glory." Only one thing is truly eternal, and that is God. He has always been and will always be. God's glory is from everlasting to everlasting. It will never diminish, it will never fade, it will never pass away.

Those who are called by God, are called to partake of His eternal glory. All the trials and suffering and temptations Peter has talked about in this epistle, all these things are of this world and they are passing away, but our hope, our expectation, our inheritance is eternal. It will never pass away. We are called to His eternal glory.

This calling is made sure "by Christ Jesus." Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father: John 14:6, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Jesus Christ was the payment to the Father for our redemption from sin: I Peter 1:18-19, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

Jesus Christ now intercedes on our behalf before the Father: Romans 8:34, “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

Next, consider the phrase: “After that ye have suffered a while.” You, Christian, may be called upon by God to suffer. It may be that you suffer through no fault of your own. It may be that you suffer for righteousness sake, following the example of our Lord. But whatever you are facing, whatever suffering you are called to endure for the Lord’s sake, take heart, the suffering will only last for a little while. Compared to the endless ages of glory that stretch off into eternity, what is the suffering we face today? The suffering we face in this world is passing away, but our eternal reward will never pass away.

And our suffering is not in vain. Through the suffering we face, God works His perfect will in our lives.

Look at how Peter ends verse 10: “Make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.” We will break this down word, by word. First, “perfect.”

This word “perfect” means “to render fit, complete.” Some of your Bibles may translate this word as “restore.” It is the same word that is used in Matthew 4:21 and Mark 1:19 to refer to the mending of fishing nets.

The Christian life includes suffering, but for the Christian the end of suffering is not destruction. The end of our suffering will be perfection, a restoration. The trials we face are brought by God or allowed by God to bring us to spiritual maturity.

Next, “Establish.” This word is not used in the sense of beginning a new work, but rather confirming the work that has already begun. Perseverance in trials proves, or confirms, the faith of the believer.

We understand this principle. I’m sure most of you know how to ride a bike. If you can, think back to the very first time you rode a bike. You may have been nervous. You may have been unsure if you could ever learn how to balance and pedal and steer all at the same time. But you tried, maybe someone helped you, and there was a moment where you rode a bike all by yourself for the very first time.

After that moment, then you knew that you could do it. The next time you got on that bike, you were more confident. Your hope, your faith, in your ability to ride that bike had been established. It had been confirmed because you had actually ridden the bike.

In a much more profound sense, the trials we face as Christians serve to establish our faith. Having gone through a trial, our faith is proved. Having faced

suffering and overcome, our faith is confirmed. Through the trials we face, God establishes us.

Now, consider this word “strengthen” Why does the devil tempt Christians? As verse 8 tells us, the devil is our adversary who goes about, seeking whom he may devour. What is he trying to accomplish?

The devil does not believe that God is worthy of worship. The devil desires worship for himself. The devil, through the trials and temptations he is allowed to bring, seeks to weaken and discourage believers. He desires to draw our worship away from God. The conversation between God and the devil in Job 1 is an excellent example of this.

But notice that the true effect of suffering is far different for believers. Far from being our downfall, far from being our destruction, far from being a drain on our strength, this verse gives us assurance that God is at work through our trials to strengthen us.

Next: “settle you.” This word means, “to lay a foundation.” God wants us to be established, grounded, built up on His Son, Jesus Christ and His Word. God is accomplishing this work in the life of every believer.

Next, in verse 11, Peter launches into praise: “To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

When we consider the biblical doctrine of salvation, When we pause to give thought to what God has planned, what God has accomplished, and what He will continue to accomplish there can be no other response but to praise Him.

God called us. God sent His son, Christ Jesus to redeem us. God will perfect, establish, strengthen, and and settle us.

What can we say to the God of all grace? We must follow the example of Peter. We bend the knee and proclaim: “To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

In verses 10-11 we have seen Peter’s closing prayer. Now in verses 12-14 we will look quickly at Peter’s conclusion of this epistle.

## **II. Peter’s Conclusion (v. 12-14)**

At the beginning of verse 12 Peter mentions Silvanus. This is the longer form of the name “Silas” and it is believed that this is the same Silas we know from other portions of Scripture. We see him first mentioned in Acts 15, when the church in Jerusalem sends him to Antioch. He is perhaps best known for being a long-time partner in ministry with the apostle Paul. Peter apparently dictated this epistle to Silas and he was also the messenger who carried this letter to it’s original recipients.

He is only mentioned here in passing, but there is a lesson we can draw from Silas. Silas didn't come up with the words of this epistle on his own. He didn't add to them or take away from them. He simply received the Word of God and faithfully passed it on to others.

What an example for us to follow. May we all be like Silas. May we receive the Word of God and faithfully pass it on to others.

In the second part of verse 12 Peter reiterates why he wrote this epistle. He begins by saying, "I have written briefly."

Peter has not written to them exhaustively. He has not said everything he could possibly say to them. He has written briefly, forcefully, and very purposefully. What was Peter trying to communicate through this epistle?

He tells us, "Exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand." Peter wrote to assure them that the gospel he preached, the gospel they had embraced was the true grace of God. And then, having been assured of the truth of the gospel, Peter exhorted them to stand fast in the faith.

Remember, these are Christians who are facing no end of trials and suffering and persecution for the sake of the gospel. Peter's message to them was, "Stand fast!"

Don't give in. Don't give up. Press on in the Christian walk. Be faithful in the midst of suffering.

Mathew Henry commented, “A firm persuasion that we are in the true way to heaven will be the best motive to stand fast, and persevere therein.”

In verse 13 Peter sends greetings from the church in Babylon. There is some debate about where Peter is when he wrote this. Was he in the ancient city of Babylon or was he in Rome and called it Babylon to protect the identity of the church in that city where persecution had recently broken out. Both of these positions have some support based on what we know from Scripture and church history, but regardless of where Peter is, we can see that the church in that location did not see themselves as above or somehow separate from other church bodies.

From this we can be reminded that the local church body is autonomous, but it is not alone. We would do well to follow the example of this body of believers and show warmth and affection to the whole body of Christ. All who are saved are members of the world-wide body of Christ.

Peter also includes greetings from “Marcus.” This is believed to refer to John Mark, another man we are familiar with from other passages of Scripture. John Mark and Peter had a very strong spiritual bond, like a father and son. It is believed that John Mark wrote the gospel of Mark based off of Peter’s eyewitness account of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

In the beginning of verse 14 Peter says, “Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity.” This instruction is repeated 5 times in the New Testament. We find it four times in the writings of Paul (Romans 16:16, I Corinthians 16:20, II Corinthians

13:12, I Thessalonians 5:26), and then one time here, in our text this morning. Is this a practice that we should still follow?

We know from very early Christian literature, from people such as Justin Martyr and Tertullian, that early Christians kissed at the end of prayers or at the end of the service.

Theologian and historian Hugo Grotius wrote that the early Christians kissed “to show that they were all equal; for the Persians and the orientals kissed the mouth of those only of the same rank, and gave their hands to be kissed by their inferiors.”

John Calvin’s had a comment on this that I found very helpful. It is from his commentary on Romans 16:16, speaking of the “holy kiss.” Calvin said, “It . . . arose from peculiar habits, and is not to be considered as binding on all nations, any more than the washing of feet. The Apostle’s object seems to have been, not to enjoin a rite, but to regulate a practice, already existing, and to preserve it from abuse: it was to be a *holy* kiss.”

In the Baptist tradition, we kiss our spouses. To everyone else we extend the right hand for the handshake of charity.

What are we to conclude from all of this? Though the practice may vary from culture to culture, the calling to demonstrate brotherly love to one another within the body of Christ is a standing order for the church. The church should be

full of displays of charity, displays of brotherly love as we care for one another within the body of Christ.

Peter concludes with this benediction: “Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.” The promise of peace is here confined to those who are in Christ. In Christ there is peace in the midst of turmoil. Outside of Christ there is no lasting peace.

Where are you this morning? Are you in Christ? Have you put your faith in Jesus Christ? If you have not, may today be the day of your salvation. Repent of your sin, call upon the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness, and you will be saved. Don't harden your heart to the grace of God. Don't neglect matters of the soul.