

- I. I. Be Holy In All Your Behavior With A Holiness Like God's Holiness
  - A. I Peter 5:6-14 . . . Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, [7] casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. [8] Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. [9] But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. [10] After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. [11] To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen. [12] Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard him), I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it! [13] She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does my son, Mark. [14] Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.
  - B. Last week we talked about our part in resisting the devil. And at the beginning of last Sunday's teaching, I reminded you that it takes just as much humility and faith in God to resist the devil as it does to cast all your cares on God. Today, we will finish our study of I Peter.
  - C. Pray
- II. The God of ALL Grace
  - A. I Peter 5:10 . . . After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.
    - 1. This statement contains several truths important to our spiritual development, the transformation of our mind, our life-changing growth in holiness, and Christ-like humility.
    - 2. The first truth is this: just as suffering is an unavoidable part of removing and killing off cancer in the pursuit of good health, so suffering is an unavoidable part of removing and killing off our old nature and putting on Christ-likeness in our pursuit of spiritual health. And regardless of what you think about this truth, it is an unavoidable reality for all who wish to live godly in Christ Jesus.

- a. Returning to the cancer analogy, when curing cancer, the suffering is not the suffering of health, it is the suffering of removing the disease in order to get to health.
  - b. In this same way, there is suffering in becoming holy in all our behavior as God is holy. And this suffering is not the suffering of being spiritually healthy, but the suffering of killing off our flesh, our sinful thoughts, our unholy desires, our selfish ways, and our sinful behavior in order to get to an ever increasing and maturing spiritual health.
  - c. And though the suffering associated with putting off our old nature and putting on the likeness of Christ is unavoidable, it is the only sure path to Christian perfection, to an unshakeable confidence in the goodness, faithfulness, and love of God, to a deep inner peace in the midst of every circumstance, and to the joy of intimacy with the Father that nothing in this world can destroy. Or as Peter says, it is the path to the God of all grace perfecting, confirming, strengthening, and establishing us.
  - d. Now I have said this a number of times before, but it is worth repeating here. The devil promises such things as immediate pleasure, riches, possessions, power, and fame, while God promises immediate suffering. However, the devil's path, as pleasing as the beginning is, only and always leads to suffering and death in one form or another. On the other hand, God's path, as hard and painful as it is at first, only and always leads to joy, peace, love, eternal life, and God himself.
3. The second important truth here in verse 10 is that suffering is for a short time, while Christian perfection, or becoming holy in all our behavior as God is holy, is forever. And though the suffering of dying to sin and putting on the likeness of Christ is our part, the perfecting, confirming, strengthening, and establishing us in the Christ-like life is God's part.
- a. So yes, there is suffering, but it is not forever, for on the other side of the suffering God brings us into the marvels of the abundant life. Therefore, to help you pass through the time of suffering, here are two ways to see it or think about it:
    - (1) The same God who saved you from eternal damnation, is saving you and will finally save you from yourself, and from the bondage of sin, and after a time, He will bring you into a life of holiness and joy like unto His holiness and joy. So

just as you trust Him for your eternal salvation, trust Him for present sanctification.

- (2) Another way to see this truth is that the short time of suffering – as difficult or painful as it may be – is insignificant in comparison to the eternally profitable growth in godliness that God is bringing about in you by means of the suffering.
  - b. Now, Christians who believe in this truth give evidence to their faith by valuing and longing for the spiritually profitable outcome of this kind of suffering instead of longing for relief from the suffering or comfort in the midst of suffering.
    - (1) And it isn't as if these Christians do not appreciate relief or comfort when suffering, for they do.
    - (2) Nor is it the case that their longing for spiritual growth makes this kind of suffering less painful, for it doesn't. But what it does is make the suffering worthwhile – just as the suffering of chemotherapy is deemed worthwhile to the those who want to be healed from their cancer.
  - c. Paul puts it this way in II Corinthians 4:16-18 . . . Therefore we do not lose heart, for though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. [17] For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, [18] while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
4. The third important truth gleaned from Peter's words is that when it comes to growing in godliness, our first and foremost focus is to be on our part, while maintaining an unwavering confidence that God has already done and will continue to do His part.
- a. When we speak of God having already done His part,
    - (1) we are speaking of the sacrificial death of Christ and the power of His resurrection – which broke the power of sin over us, and freed us from our enslavement to sin.
    - (2) And we are speaking of the redeeming power of Christ's death – which frees us from the penalty of sin, reconciles us to God, and opens the door to eternal life with God.
    - (3) And we are also speaking of Christ's life, His words, the Holy Spirit, prayer, the Holy Scriptures, and the Church – all gracious provisions from God which have already been given with the intent of transforming us from sinners into saints.

- (4) But it doesn't stop there, for the same God who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, is the same God who will perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you in the Christian life here and now.
  - (5) And all this is just part of the reason Peter speaks of God as the "God of all grace," for there is no grace that we need for salvation or sanctification that does not come from God!
  - b. Now the point of this third truth is this: though we cannot save ourselves or change ourselves, we must begin and continue to do our part if we are to experience the fullest possible reality of God saving us, transforming us, and becoming intimate with us.
  - c. My final statement on God's part and our part is this: We start with God's part, for the work of salvation is almost all His doing. We move to a more obviously shared work of His part/our part, as we begin and continue the process of growing in godliness. But when we get far enough down the narrow road to look back and see some of the changes and growth that has taken place, we recognizing that through it all, God's part is what made it all possible – which is why we give God the glory and not ourselves.
5. The fourth truth I want us to see here in verse 10 is that we must begin and continue doing our part in relation to putting off the old nature, dying to sin, denying ourselves, and putting on godliness, in order to begin seeing the results of God's part in relation to perfecting, confirming, strengthening, and establishing us. This is not contrary to God's common way of working with and in us. For example:
- a. Philippians 2:12b-13 . . . Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; [13] for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Notice, even Paul speaks of our part first, and then assures us that God will do and is in fact doing His part.
  - b. James 4:8a . . . Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.
  - c. James 4:10 . . . Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.
  - d. II Chronicles 7:14 . . . [If] My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

- e. I John 1:9 . . . If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
  - f. Now I want to conclude this part by saying that we ought never to lose sight of God's part. We ought always to depend on God's part. We ought never to neglect gratitude and praise for God's part. Yet we also must not neglect our part – for without our part, God will not do His part of perfecting, confirming, strengthening, and establishing us in the faith.
6. The last thing about verse 10 that I want to bring to your attention are the four words – perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish – that God will bring us into after we have suffered for a time.
- a. When Peter says God himself will perfect us, he means that God is removing all that is defective in us so as to make us perfect and complete in holiness of life. Will you trust His methods?
  - b. When Peter says God will confirm us, he means that God's work in us is anchoring us to the truth, to God's will, to God's word, and to God himself so that our faith is unwavering, our convictions unalterable, and our commitment to endure to the end is sure.
  - c. In saying God strengthens us, Peter means that God brings us to the place where our faith in Him and His empowerment of us is such that by His grace we can endure and be victorious no matter what the world or the devil throw at us.
  - d. And in saying God establishes us, Peter is repeating himself somewhat concerning God making us unmovable. But with this word, Peter is adding the idea of permanency. Or in other words, God will bring us into that condition whereby our eternal life with Him is fixed, unmovable, or we might say, eternally secure.
- B. I Peter 5:11 . . . To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.
- 1. This is a profound statement, for we will only say these words freely and honestly about someone we are convinced will handle such things as ultimate authority, supreme power, and complete control with justice, mercy, humility, patience, compassion, kindness, and love.
  - 2. Peter says this about God, for he is convinced God is worthy of such words. And Peter is not saying them in a temporary way, but in an eternal way, for he wants God to be in this position forever and ever!
  - 3. Do you? Do you trust God this much? To you value God's will and ways this much? Do you want to put your life in God's hands, this much? May we be people of faith who want this as Peter wants it.

### III. This is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!

- A. I Peter 5:12 . . . Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard him), I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!
- B. It is probable that few, if any of us would turn to I Peter to discover or discuss the right understanding of God's grace. Most of us would turn to Romans 3-5, or Ephesians 2:1-10. But Peter says his short letter contains an adequate description of the true grace of God.
- C. So what is the true grace of God?
  1. We know from Peter's introduction that it includes the work of God choosing us and the work of Christ in saving us.
  2. But we also know from Peter's introduction that all this saving work leads to trials and suffering that have as their intended purpose, our transformation and sanctification. And we know from Peter's introduction that our goal is to be that of becoming holy in all our behavior just as God is holy.
  3. Throughout the rest of his letter, Peter shows us when and how we are to work out our pursuit of holiness.
  4. So what is the true grace of God? It is salvation from the penalty of sin, and from the power of sin, and from the practice of sin. In other words, the true grace of God is a comprehensive grace that begins with our salvation, takes us through the sanctification process, and brings us into God's eternal glory to live with Him forever.
  5. Paul puts this comprehensive view of God's grace this way in Titus 2:11-14 . . . For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, [12] instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, [13] looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, [14] who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.
- D. Peter concludes his grace statement with these words: Stand firm in it.
  1. Many Christians know how to stand firm in their confidence that they are born again and headed to heaven after they die. Peter is exhorting us to go beyond that confidence and stand firm in all of God's grace – His grace for salvation and His grace for transformation, including His grace for enduring the suffering required to get to the Christ-like life.
  2. May we stand firm in God's true grace, that is, in all of God's grace.