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God's Plan and Promise for Suffering Saints  
1 Peter 5:6-14

Good morning. Thank you for being here this morning. Please take your Bible and open to 1 Peter 5:6. The title for our lesson this morning is God's Plan and Promise for Suffering Saints.

This morning we are going to finish our study of 1 Peter. There won't be class next week. Then on April 16 we are going to begin a 6 week study on the power of the resurrection from 1 Corinthians 15. 1 Corinthians 15 is a 58 verse chapter that defends the truth of Christ's resurrection, describes our future resurrection with Him and consider how the power of the resurrection should change the way we live every day. That study begins on April 16.

As we finish our study of 1 Peter, I hope you're encouraged. 1 Peter was written to give God's people hope. Remember we are born again according to the mercy of God to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and God commands us to fix our hope completely on the grace to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. I was driving to a meeting one morning and I remember a man saying that the Christian's hope is found in solely trusting in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Paul began his first letter to Timothy this way, "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope." Our hope is found in a person and a place - The person is Christ and the place is heaven.

The hope we have in Christ is meant to sustain us through the storms of life. That's what 1 Peter is designed to help all of us with. 1 Peter is a letter about hope and holiness. We have learned in this letter that salvation leads to

sanctification and sanctification leads to submission and submission leads to suffering and suffering leads to glory. We really do follow Jesus through suffering to glory.

Glory seems to be the theme of the last chapter as Peter writes about being an eyewitness of both the sufferings of Christ and the glory that is going to be revealed. He writes about God exalting us at the proper time and finishes his last series of exhortations with a reminder that the God of all grace has called you to His eternal glory in Christ.

When we suffer for doing the will of God moving forward I hope we will find a comfortable chair and get a cup of coffee or whatever caffeine drink helps you stay focused and marinate our souls in 1 Peter. The going will get tough for following Christ but it is worth it because of where we're headed. In John 17:24, the night before the cross, Jesus prayed for us this way, "Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world." When we see our risen Savior face to face it will all be worth the sacrifice.

One thing that helps me keep my focus on the Lord when times are tough is reading biographies. Someone I have been reading a little about lately is Elizabeth Elliot. Many of you know that name. Elizabeth and her husband Jim went to Ecuador with some other families in the 1950's to take the gospel to a group of Indians who had never heard the name of Christ. On January 8, 1956, Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, Ed McCully, Peter Flemming, and Roger Youderian were speared to death on a sandbar called "Palm Beach" in the Curaray River of Ecuador by a group of Indians they were seeking to reach for Christ.

Elizabeth Elliot was left in the jungles of Ecuador to take care of their 10 month old baby and to grieve the loss of her young husband. Many people in her position would have left and gone back home. **Elizabeth decided to stay and**

**serve.** Instead of growing bitter, she took a different approach. She stayed there trusting the Lord and focusing on doing the next thing God had called her to do. She writes about this in one of the best articles on suffering I've ever read called Do the next thing. She writes:

"When I went back to my jungle station after the death of my first husband, Jim Elliot, I was faced with many confusions and uncertainties. I had a good many new roles, besides that of being a single parent and a widow. I was alone on a jungle station that Jim and I had manned together. I had to learn to do all kinds of things, which I was not trained or prepared in any way to do. **It was a great help to me simply to do the next thing.**

You can imagine how tempted I was to just plunk myself down and say, "There is no way I can do this." I wanted to sink into despair and helplessness. Then I remembered that old Saxon legend, "Do the next thing." I remembered a verse that God had given to me before I went to Ecuador in Isaiah 50:7: "The Lord God will help me; therefore, shall I not be confounded. Therefore, have I set my face like a flint and I know that I shall not be ashamed."

What is the next thing for you to do? Small duties, perhaps? Jobs that nobody will notice as long as you do them? A dirty job that you would get out of if you could have your own preferences? Are you asked to take some great responsibility, which you really don't feel qualified to do? You don't have to do the whole thing right this minute, do you? I can tell you one thing that you do have to do right this minute. It's the one thing that is required of all of us every minute of every day. Trust in the living God.

Now what is the next thing? Well, perhaps it's to get yourself organized. Maybe you need to clean off your desk, if you have a desk job that needs to be done. Maybe you need to clean out your kitchen drawers, if you're going to do your kitchen work more efficiently. Maybe you need to organize the children's clothes...**Somehow or other, the peace of God descends upon us when we**

**take things calmly, peacefully and humbly as the next thing that God has assigned us to do."**

I think we all admire her approach to suffering for doing the will of God. **When faced with a major trial she didn't soak in self pity, but she busied herself in the service of Christ!** What a great example for all of us. In the last section of 1 Peter, Peter shows us what to do when we suffer for doing God's will. God knew we would suffer in His service so He tells us what to do.

In the last section of 1 Peter, we read God's plan for suffering saints. Peter ends with a series of exhortations that really help us. I don't know what you're going through this morning, but the end of 1 Peter provides all of us with something to focus on moving forward. Before Peter finishes his letter he shows us God's plan for our anxieties, our adversary and our anticipation.

1 Peter 5:6-11

- 6** Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,
- 7** casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.
- 8** Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.
- 9** Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.
- 10** And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.
- 11** To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Most New Testament letters are written the same way. A good way to think of these letters is calling and conduct. New Testament letters are written to Christians in order to remind us how God saved us and how we should live as God's people. **Our calling in Christ transforms our conduct for Christ.** If our conduct never changes, we should probably go back and make sure we're called to salvation.

Where does Peter start in his last section? What character quality does Peter tell suffering saints to adopt as their new way of life in verses 6-7? Humility. Our entire life is to be covered with the virtue of humility. When we approach God in a spirit of humility, especially when we are suffering, He gives us all the grace we need. Do you want God to give you grace in trials? Then start with pursuing humility. God does not give out grace indiscriminately - He gives it to those who humble themselves.

Humble yourselves an imperative command. If the church is commanded to do something, could it mean that Christians aren't always humble? Yes. Humble yourselves is a duty that calls for immediate attention. Immediate action. What's the next thing to do in our Christian life? Humble yourselves. Dan Doriani, "Peter does not say, "The Lord will humble you," but "Humble yourselves." The command "Humble yourselves" signifies that we don't wait for God, an adversary, or the hardships of life to humble us. We must act on ourselves."

What does this mean? If we are told to humble ourselves, it means humility is not natural. Self reliance and a sense of our merit rules strong in our sinful hearts. Again, humility is not natural. Pride is natural. *Humility to a sinner is as natural as walking is to a fish.* We are all by nature proud people. Mark 7:21-23 describes what exists naturally in every human heart and it's an ugly list and pride is on the list. To be humble we have to be saved and we have to be obedient. Humility requires grace motivated effort.

RC Sproul, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God" - In that simple phrase we have a microcosm of the entire Christian life. Obedience means submitting to the arm of the Lord, acknowledging Him as Lord and acknowledging His eternal and everlasting authority to require of us whatsoever is pleasing to Him. When we do so, He will exalt us in due time. The exaltation will come at the hour that God has appointed. We are told repeatedly in Scripture that God indeed has appointed a time when He will judge the world by His Son, a time when He will vindicate His people, a time when He will share the glory of His Son with those who have embraced His Son."

In this setting being humble means accepting suffering as par for the course in the Christian life. **Suffering is to be expected and not rejected.** If you try and run from suffering in Christ's service, you will have nowhere to go. Remember in every stage of the Christian life pride is our greatest enemy and humility our best friend. Humility is our best friend. **In the simplest way I can think about it a humble person confesses to the Lord - I can't, you can.** Psalm 91:1-2 are some great verses to memorize in this area, "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." We're not being humble if we're not trusting God.

I must need extra help in this area because God has graciously surrounded me with friends who routinely send me texts of encouragement to trust the Lord. One of them this past week went like this:

"The LORD has better plans and better ideas than we do, along with better timing, for better outcomes, with better motives, and He provides better answers to life's perplexing questions, as well as turns for good even through life-altering losses and later-altering disasters than we do. Beloved — Will you trust Him? Will you trust Him even when His word says "no", and "off limits" to what you're tempted to pursue? Will you trust Him even when His providence seems to say, "not now", or "yes, but not until you first do \_\_\_\_\_"? He is good. He promises good. He only does that which is good. And even under a frowning providence, He hides a smiling face."

If we are going to obey these verses in 1 Peter 5:6-7 we have to believe that God knows what is best for our lives. Faith is a life dominating conviction that all God has for us through obedience is better by far than anything Satan can offer us through selfishness and sin. Peter reminds suffering saints not to take matters into their own hands, but instead to humble themselves under God's mighty hand.

God is always the deliver of His people. God sees His people in times of trouble and He delivers them in His own perfect timing. God saw His people in trouble in Egypt and He delivered them. God saw us dead in our sin and He delivered us. Colossians 1:13-14, "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Sometimes, maybe its especially men, have a hard time admitting we need someone else's help. When our family first moved to Kansas the church had something called a family camp. We were new to the church and though the Gillen's are not the camping type we decided to go. The camping spot was a few hours away. We typed the address into what was called a Garmin and followed the directions. In Kansas you can get into what feels like the middle of nowhere fairly quickly.

The closer we got to the campgrounds the more it felt like we were in the middle of nowhere. The Garmin began to tell us that we were .5 miles away from the campsite. Then it told us to turn into someone's driveway and to drive behind their house. It spoke and your pastor followed. Then we drove out into the middle of a field in the middle of nowhere and the Garmin said, "You have arrived at your destination." It wasn't wrong. We had arrived at a destination, but it was clearly not the right one. Eventually we got the right directions and found our way to the camp site.

What's my point? Sometimes we don't like to admit we need help or that we are lost. If we are going from here to heaven humility is not an option. We are to humble ourselves before the One who can get us safely home to heaven. We get there by His grace. We get there by His power. **God gives grace, not to people who help themselves, but to people who humble themselves.**

Proverbs 12:25 says, "Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down but a good word makes him glad." Friend, we all have anxieties. We all have things that weigh us down. But we don't have to carry our burdens around as if there is no one there to help us. The good word we need to make us glad this morning is that God will deliver us and God is devoted to us so take whatever weighs you down and cast it all on Him. If we know what to do with our anxieties and we are not doing it, what's that called? Sin. We are in sin if we carry around our anxieties instead of casting them all on the Lord.

So, are you pursuing humility knowing that God promises to give you the grace you need to endure whatever comes your way? Dan Doriani, "Even if we are uncertain *when* God will act, in this lifetime or later, when this age ends, he promises to restore the humble." That would be a good next thing for all of us - To make sure we humble ourselves and stay humble from here to heaven.

God has a plan for our anxieties in verses 6-7 - It's called humility.

In verses 8-9 God has a plan for our adversary when we suffer - it's called Stand firm in the faith. Look with me at verses 8-9 as we see God's plan for our adversary during seasons of suffering. Notice what God commands us to do with our adversary:

1 Peter 5:8-9

- 8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.
- 9 Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

When I was in middle school I was a little fella. I didn't really start growing until my junior year in high school. **I had no facial hair until Junior college and now I can grow a beard in about 5 hours.** You can probably watch my facial hair grow if you stare close enough.



When I was in middle school the word on the streets at Hubbard Middle School was that a younger kid at the school who was bigger than me had a problem with me and he was out to get me. I was in the 8th grade. He was in the 6th grade. I knew who the kid was but he was going to be hard to spot in the busy hallways as I made the trek from math to social studies.

You can imagine that showing up at school knowing someone bigger and stronger than you was out to get you wasn't fun. But this younger kid didn't know something about me that was important. I had a friend named Steven Mathis. Steven was bigger than me and he wasn't scared of anyone. The guy who was out to get me was bigger and stronger than me but he wasn't bigger and stronger than my friend Steven Mathis.

One day Steven and I were walking down a hallway and up ahead I saw the kid who was telling people he was going to use me as an object lesson for how tough he was. I pointed him out to Steven and without me having to ask Steven took off running after this kid. I remember he ran up to this kid from behind and got the kid in a headlock and he informed him that he was never ever going to touch me. Stephen defended me. He protected me against an adversary. From that day forward I knew I'd be okay roaming the halls of Hubbard Middle School.

When you have an enemy that is stronger than you who is out to get you, it can make life a bit uncomfortable. Right? Is Satan stronger than us? Yes. Is Satan stronger than Jesus? No. You and I are no match for Satan but Satan is no match for Christ! Christ is stronger than Satan. Christ is God. Christ created Satan and at the cross, Christ destroyed Satan. That's one reason Jesus came into this world. 1 John 3:8, "Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil."

Back in 1 Peter 3:22 we were reminded that after Jesus suffered for sins He rose again and went and proclaimed victory to the demonic realm. Now Jesus sits in

the position of authority at God's right hand. Authority over what? What realm of authority does Jesus have power over right now? 1 Peter 3:22, "(through the resurrection of Jesus Christ), who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him."

**Jesus is sovereign over the demonic realm right now.**

Who does Jesus exercise his authority on behalf of? Ephesians 1:22-23, "And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all." Jesus uses His authority to protect and build the body of Christ. A good verse to memorize in the area of spiritual warfare is 1 John 5:18, "We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him."

There are things Satan can and cannot do to a believer. Satan can accuse us. Satan can entice us to sin. One of his major schemes is to cause us to doubt our right standing with God. There are two main errors I think a lot of Christians make when it comes to Satan - We underestimate his power or we overestimate his power. We act like Satan doesn't exist or we see Satan behind every bush.

In 1 Peter 5:8-9, Peter takes what appears to be something very complicated and he makes it simple. Satan does exist and his goal is to devour every believer. Friend, if you are in Christ Satan hates you. God cares for you and Satan wants to sign you like wheat. Satan is the believer's personal adversary who stands against us and seeks our ruin.

That's why Peter tells us that after we have humbled ourselves under God's mighty hand we have to be awake and alert because we have an opponent who wants to devour us. I don't know this for a fact. Maybe Peter will set me straight in heaven. Peter wrote this letter in the early 60's AD. During this time, instead of going to the football stadium to watch their favorite team play, people went to

the coliseum to watch people die. People were routinely killed by lions in the coliseum. Lions who devoured their flesh.

I think that graphic picture is important to get our attention. Satan wants to devour you, Christian. He would love nothing more than for your suffering to lead you to deny the faith. He would love nothing more than for you to interpret your suffering as God being against you and not for you. He's a liar and the father of lies. What is God's plan for our adversary? Resist Him.

The way we resist the devil is by remembering what is true about the devil. We know Jesus defeated Satan at the cross on our behalf and we know that one day Jesus will cast Satan into the lake of fire. We trust our Savior to defeat the devil. We leave spiritual warfare up to the Savior. "Standing firm in the faith" describes the condition for victory. "Firm", in a physical sense, describes something as firm, hard, solid, and compact, like a rock.

D. Edmond Hiebert, "Victory lies in adhering to the work of Christ on the cross, where He defeated the devil. In Christ, Satan is now a defeated foe. "Victory over Satan lies in faith, because faith unites us to Christ, the victor. By faith, the devil is driven to flight as is the lion by fire."

To stand firm in the faith you have to know the faith. To know the faith you have to study the faith. Earlier I quoted a series of verses that teach is the truth about why Jesus came and the sovereignty Jesus has right now over the demonic realm and how Jesus exercised that authority on behalf of the church. How do I know these things? The Bible tells me so. If I didn't have the truth, I wouldn't know there was a devil or what to do with His schemes, but because I know the truth I know what to do. The gospel is one message with many applications.

*Your spiritual life gets stronger the more your understanding of salvation grows.*

What did Peter know about Satan's schemes and the work of Christ? The night before the cross we read about Satan's plan for Peter and Jesus' protection of

Peter. Luke 22:31-32, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." Satan wanted to destroy Peter, but Jesus would not let it happen. This is great news!

Satan cannot destroy the faith of those God has chosen to save by giving us to His Son. John reminds us in 1 John 2:1-2, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." Our goal as believers is not to sin. But never sinning is not possible. When we sin, Jesus is our advocate.

What a friend we have in Jesus. He lives to make intercession for all of the accusations Satan sends our way. I hope this helps us love Jesus more.

J. C. Ryle calls Jesus' intercession the one great secret of a believer's perseverance in the faith: "The continued existence of grace in a believer's heart is a great standing miracle. His enemies are so mighty, and his strength is so small, the world is so full of snares, and his heart is so weak, that it seems at first sight impossible for him to reach heaven. The passage before us explains his safety. He has a mighty Friend at the right hand of God."

What else do we need to know about our adversary? At the end of verse 9 Peter reminds us that we know something. What do we know in the middle of verse 9? "knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world." Satan is the adversary of every single Christian everywhere. We all have the same adversary and we all have the same Savior to defend us in the battle.

Have you ever listened to someone talk who has been in a war? Someone who has served in our military in another part of the world. How do they talk about the men they fight with? Family. Brotherhood. **There's a unique bond between**

**people who are in the same war together fighting the same enemy for the same cause.** We have a brotherhood with every believer who is engaged in the same battle. We are in the ultimate spiritual battle with the same enemy with believers scattered throughout the whole world.

What does this mean? You may feel alone in your suffering but you are not alone. Your brothers and sisters in China know a little about suffering. You may feel like the only one Satan accuses night and day but you're not. You may feel like the only one fighting temptation but you're not.

Hiebert reminds us, "Support in the struggle also comes from the realization that the sufferings of the Asian Christians were not unique. The same kinds of sufferings are afflicting "your brothers." The word "brothers" stresses the solidarity of the Christian body. All who are in union with Christ may expect suffering, and the whole body is joined together in suffering. The "world" is that orderly system under Satan that is opposed to God and his Messiah Verse 9, then, relates to the common lot of believers in Christ."

One application for us, especially as believers in America who don't yet suffer like the rest of the world is that we should spend time praying for our brothers and sisters in Christ in other parts of the world who are suffering more than we do. Get a magazine called the voice of the martyrs and read it and pray for other people. There is a website called Operation World that helps you better understand what God is doing in other parts of the world and gives you specific ways to pray for other believers. Getting your mind off yourself and praying for other people is a great way to endure suffering.

In verse 10 Peter shows us God's plan for our anticipation.

1 Peter 5:10-11, "And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

When I was a kid my parents sent me to a Christian camp called Kanakkuk in Missouri. I was probably about 9-10. I was there for 6 weeks but it felt like 6 years. I've never been so homesick. I lived for the day my parents would show up and take me home. The day came for my parents to arrive and they actually blocked off a spot for the parents. I could see my dad but I couldn't actually get to him. Satan was working. Then, finally, they removed what was blocking us and I remember running and jumping into my father's arms.

Friend, we will all suffer in the service of Jesus Christ. We will not all suffer the same way, but we will all suffer some way. **Isn't it good to know that all suffering is temporary?** No matter how much we suffer in this life, one day we will see Jesus and we will be made like Him and we will never suffer again. How do we know this to be true? What kind of God is our God? He's the God of all grace. Friend, when God sets His sovereign grace on you He Himself will get you all the way from here to heaven.

Peter knew this personally. Peter had an acute awareness of his sinfulness.  
Remember Luke 5

- 5:1** On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret,
- 2** and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets.
- 3** Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat.
- 4** And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."
- 5** And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets."
- 6** And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking.
- 7** They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.
- 8** But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

Peter started his pursuit of Christ acknowledging how sinful he was. Peter rebuked the Lord. Peter denied the Lord. Even after the resurrection and after Peter had been an apostle for a while, Paul had to rebuke Peter in Galatians 2 because Peter was not living in step with the implications of the gospel. Peter was really good at messing up in the service of Christ, but God loved Peter and that's all that matters. When the God of all grace sets His love on you, you'll be okay.

Peter anticipated a glorious future for the people he wrote to in 1 Peter. Why would a sinner have such confidence? Because Peter knew God is the God of all grace. **He is not the God of merit, but the God of mercy!** The God of all grace who called them to His eternal glory in Christ would Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish them. Why? Salvation is of the Lord and to Him be the dominion forever and ever amen.

Dan Doriani, "Peter closes his epistle with the assurance that the outcome of our life rests more on God's power and grace than on our labors."

Toward the end of his life John Newton wrote:

I am not what I ought to be. Ah! how imperfect and deficient.

I am not what I might be, considering my privileges and opportunities.

I am not what I wish to be. God, who knows my heart — knows I wish to be like Him.

I am not what I hope to be. Before long, I will drop this clay tabernacle, to be like Him and see Him as He is!

Yet, I am not what I once was — a child of sin, and slave of the devil!

Though not all these — not what I ought to be, not what I might be, not what I wish or hope to be, and not what I once was — I think I can truly say with the apostle, "By the grace of God — I am what I am!"

Does God have a plan for our anxieties that come along with suffering in his service? Yes. 1 Peter 5:6-7 shows us the plan for our anxieties.

Does God have a plan for our adversary when we suffer in the service of Christ?

Yes. 1 Peter 5:8-9 shows us the plan for our adversary.

Does God have a plan for our anticipation when we suffer in His service? Yes. 1

Peter 5:10-11 shows us the plan, what we should anticipate.

What a great last section in a letter on suffering. In the midst of our suffering God commands His children to be humble and hopeful.

Peter ends his letter with some final remarks in verses 12-14:

1 Peter 5:12-14

- 12** By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.
- 13** She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son.
- 14** Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

Remember last week I said that Peter provides specific instructions to specific people in the church who needed help in specific ways. Every born again believer matters in the body of Christ. We are all saved to serve. Peter was the unique apostle, but he needed Silvanus's help to record this letter and get it out to these local churches. She who is at Babylon is a reference to the local church Peter is serving when he writes the letter. Babylon being a reference to Rome. Peter includes Mark. This is the Mark who wrote the gospel of Mark.

Peter ends with a unique form of greeting one another. Greet one another with the kiss of love. Hopefully, they had tooth brushes back then. This was BC - Before Crest. This was a kiss on the cheek man to man and woman to woman. It's a sign of the unique affection Christians have for each other. Being born again changes our hearts to love one another.



The command to “greet one another with a kiss of love” reminds us of Peter’s emphasis on love in God’s household. Love is our prime disposition and main action, our sign of solidarity. First Peter 1:22 said, “Love one another deeply, from the heart.” We also notice the phrasing of 2:17, “Show proper respect to everyone: love the brotherhood of believers.” So we *respect* everyone, but we *love* the brotherhood.

What does God want this letter to achieve in the hearts of all who read it? What's his ultimate aim? Look at the end of verse 14, "Peace to all of you who are in Christ." That's what pastor Peter wants for Christians suffering in the service of Christ. Peace. It's a benediction. I like benedictions. I like a closing thought. Paul likes to close his letters with grace, and Peter prefers peace.

Where did Peter get that from? He got it from Jesus. Jesus wanted the same thing for the men who left everything to follow Him. On the last night in the life of Christ, in the upper room, Jesus told the disciples in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

After Jesus rose again on Sunday when He first appeared to the disciples we read in Luke 24:36, "As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!” Peace to all of those who are in Christ. Friends, Jesus Christ is our peace. His sacrifice is the means of our peace with God and He promises us peace in the midst of suffering in His service. We have all we need in Christ to suffer and to keep rejoicing all the way from here to heaven. Let's pray.

The last several months we have been going through 1 Peter. 1 Peter was written to help Christians who were being persecuted suffer well. Not all were suffering well when Peter wrote this. Some were discouraged, others were confused. Some of them came out of pagan backgrounds where there was no persecution associated with the worship of false gods. And now people are hating them and maligning them for their faith in Christ and the way they don't live like they used to live. They were learning that living for Christ is the best way to live, but it's hard. Jesus said so in Matthew 7:14, "For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."

Here is what I want - I want all of us to be among the few in the world today who follow Christ all the way from here to heaven no matter what comes our way. How does that work? Most New Testament letters, as you know, begin with doctrine and then move to devotion. They begin with salvation and what God has already done for us in Christ, what Christ is doing for us right now and what will happen when we die or Christ returns. Having laid the theological foundation, the apostles then move toward specific application. Exhortations based on our new identify as children of God.

We are going to finish 1 Peter looking at God's strategic plan for suffering saints. Along the way from here to heaven, Peter ends his letter helping us with 4 practical areas of the Christian life:

1. Our anxieties
2. Our adversary
3. Our anticipation
4. Our affirmation

#### 1 Peter 5:6-14

- 6** Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,
- 7** casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.
- 8** Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.
- 9** Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.
- 10** And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.
- 11** To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.
- 12** By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.
- 13** She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son.
- 14** Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

How do you wrap up a letter to people that you love who you know are going through a hard time? Let's say you find out someone in the church is suffering. Their life is hard, particularly because they are seeking to do God's will. How would you finish a letter to them or a text to them or an email to them?