

Life in Exile
Down Is Up
 1 Peter 5:6-14

The way up is the way down in the kingdom of God.

For Jesus, the cross preceded the crown, and we follow in his steps.

Peter has gone to great lengths to bring together two seemingly incompatible truths—our high standing in Christ as Spirit-anointed priests and our low standing in this world as resident aliens—in short, *elect exiles* (1:1).

Peter calls these seemingly incompatible truths *the true grace of God*. **5:12**

This is the true grace of God—our present sufferings intimately connected to our eternal glory.

5:6 *Humble yourselves, therefore...so that at the proper time God may exalt you.*

5:10 *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.*

For God's people, future glory comes by way of present grief (1 Samuel 2:7-8; Ezekiel 17:24; Matthew 23:12; Luke 1:52; 14:11; 18:14; James 1:9).

"The true grace of God" operates in our present sufferings as God prepares us for our eternal glory.

Example: Joseph

Genesis 45:5-8 *Do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you...God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. "So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God.*

Joseph realized, in all the evil committed against him, it was God who sovereignly orchestrated or allowed it, in order to prepare him for glory.

5:11 *God's dominion is forever and ever.* God is not just a little bit sovereign.

Like Joseph, Peter understands that the true grace of God includes both his tough and tender love. God's grace is at work in our present pain to prepare us for eternal pleasure

Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God
(5:5-7)

Literally, *allow yourselves to be humbled, or be humbled.* As a decisive, point-in-time decision, *we are to allow ourselves to be humbled, under God's mighty hand.*

God's mighty hand is a picture of God's loving discipline. (Ezekiel 20:33–39; Job 30:21; cf. Psalm 32:4).

Note: Peter's citation from Ezekiel 9 in 4:17.

God's mighty hand is a picture of his loving deliverance. (Exodus 3:19; 6:1; 13:3, 9, 14, 16; Deuteronomy 3:24; 4:34; 9:26, 29; 26:8; Daniel 9:15) as well as how he protects and sustains us during hard trials (cf. Acts 4:28, 30; 11:21; 13:11).

El Shaddai = "God Almighty"

El = "Strong One" (translated "God")

Shaddai (so ancient, no one is certain of its exact meaning)

1) From *shadu* meaning hills/mountains = "God of the Mountain" (i.e., don't put your trust in nature or the pagan high places on the hill/mountain tops, but in the living God who created the mountain!)

2) From two Hebrew words, pronounced "she," meaning "who", and "day," meaning "sufficient" = *God Who is Sufficient*"

Hebrew Wordplay: *Shaddai* sounds like two very different Hebrew words. So, as the All-Sufficient Creator, God is...

Shad = breasted one = God's tender love.
(**Genesis 17:1**; **Isaiah 66:10-13**)

Shadad = to overpower, devastate = God's tough love. (**Joel 1:15**; **Ruth 1:20-21**)

Peter's citation of **Ezekiel 9 in 4:17** (*God's judgment begins in his own household*) is from a context of severe discipline.

Galatians 6:7 *Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. We reap what we sow.*

God is always willing to sacrifice the temporal for the eternal.

5:7 - In our humbling, under God's mighty hand, we are to *cast all our cares on him, for he cares for us.*

Whatever God may be up to in this global pandemic and the social upheaval in our land, *this is the true grace of God for us.*

As God's people, we can grieve as those who have hope. God's true grace is at work in our lives.

God's tough love has an end.

Isaiah 57:16 *I will not accuse forever, nor will I always be angry, for then the spirit of man would grow faint before me-- the breath of man that I have created.*

Psalm 103:8-9 *Yahweh is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever.*

Psalm 100:5 *For Yahweh is good; his lovingkindness is everlasting and his faithfulness to all generations.*

God's tough love is limited in scope and duration, while his tender love and mercy are without limit.

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith. (5:8-11; cf. **James 4:5-7, 10**)

The devil has no authority over us. In Christ, we have been delivered from his domain—the kingdom of darkness—and have been placed under domain and rule, the kingdom of God's dear Son (**Colossians 1:13**; **Luke 10:19**).

vv. 9-10 Don't panic.

After we have suffered a *little while* God himself will *restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish* us (Note: some of these terms were used in construction in Peter's day, which fits nicely into the spiritual house that God is building in **2:4**).

El Shaddai, our God Almighty, the God of both tough and tender love, is infinitely sufficient, as the Creator of all, to bring to pass all that he has decreed for us in Christ, whether by discipline or by deliverance. ***This is the true grace of God—our present sufferings are intimately connected to eternal glory. Stand firm in it!***