

We'll be looking this morning at verses 12 through 14. 1 Peter chapter 5, verses 12 through 14. Last week we looked at Christian warfare. We saw that when discussing this topic of Christian warfare, we looked at our enemy, our weaponry, and our God. And it's undeniable that as Christians we fight battles. spiritual battles.

And how do you keep going in the battle? How do you keep going when you can't seem to endure any longer? How do you keep going when you're weary and you're suffering? Well, as Peter brings this letter to a close, he is addressing that topic. He wants his readers to keep going. He wants them to press on to glory because they indeed are suffering.

With this in mind, let us pray and ask God to bless the reading and now the preaching of his word. Oh God, we come to your word, the very word of God, the one who spoke the world into existence, who said, let there be light and there was light. The God who spoke into our hearts and took from the dead rubble of our sin and made us new creations. by the power of your spirit working through your word. And we come now to your written word. And we pray that that same spirit who went out and brought forth out of nothing this, your world, would go forth through the reading and preaching of your word and take from our hearts and make us recipients of your truth, loving what you teach us. With the same power that you created, would you create a new and a fresh in us through this reading and preaching of your word.

We pray this in Jesus's name, amen. 1 Peter 5, beginning in verse 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. She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings. And so does Mark, my son. Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ. This ends the reading of God's holy word. May he bless now the proclamation of it to our lives.

Well, as we come to this final section of 1 Peter, let us remember those to whom Peter was originally writing this letter. When Peter first wrote this letter by divine inspiration, he was writing this letter to churches who were suffering and were even facing some level of persecution. Just a few years after he wrote this letter to them, many of them would actually be martyred for following Christ. These were serious Christians who were facing serious spiritual and physical suffering. And Peter wants them to suffer well to the glory of God. He wants them to keep going.

But how can they keep going? Or to make the question more personal to us this morning, how can you keep going? Don't you feel the daily battle of living for Christ? Don't you sometimes just want to stop fighting? How can you keep going? And this is what Peter is pressing into them in these closing words of this epistle. Keep going. That's what he is really saying to them here. Keep going. And he says you keep going in these three ways. Keep going first by standing in grace, second by unity in election, and third by peace in Christ. So standing in grace, unity in election, and peace in Christ. So first, keep going by standing in grace. Verse 12, he says, 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.

Now there are a few interesting notes that Peter gives us here about this epistle. He mentions Silvanus. Silvanus was a faithful co-worker and laborer in the gospel with Peter and Paul. And he's likely mentioned here because he was probably the carrier of this letter to the churches to whom Peter was writing, or he may have been in a minuensis. But in any case, we know that he was an important co-laborer of Peter, and we know from other letters, Paul as well.

But what we really want to note here in verse 12 is he says, I have written briefly to you exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God." Peter says throughout this letter, even with all the commands, which are 30 or so, he says, what I have been trying to do is set forth for you the true grace of God.

He wants his readers to understand who the Lord Jesus Christ is and what he has done to save them from their sins. He wants them to revel in the marvelous electing grace, saving grace of God. That God the Father would choose men like them. That God the Son would die for men like them. That God the Holy Spirit would sanctify men like them. He has been stressing all sorts of glorious commands and doctrines throughout this letter, but it's all intended to declare the true grace of God.

The true grace of God is the only way of salvation. The true grace of God is the only way of sanctification. The true grace of God is the only way of glorification. There is no way you can be saved There is no way you can be sanctified. There is no way you will be glorified apart from the true grace of God. No grace, no salvation, no sanctification, no glorification.

And why is Peter saying this to them at this point? Because they are suffering. And he is saying to them, do you know what you need in your suffering? What you need is the true grace of God. It is only God's grace that can keep you as you're going through fiery trials.

But why does Peter call this grace true? Why does he specifically use that word true grace of God? Well, I cannot say for sure, but I suspect that this is why Peter says true and not just grace of God, the true grace of God. I suspect it's because He wants them to believe that it is real for them and that it is sufficient for them. They are suffering and he wants them to believe that this grace is true, that it is sufficient, that it is real for them.

God's grace is not fake. God's grace is not idealistic. It is true for his people. And don't you sometimes feel like God's grace is fake? Be honest. Don't you sometimes feel like it is grace? It sounds good, but it doesn't feel real to you. It doesn't feel like it could be sufficient for you in your present sufferings, in your real trials.

But Peter is stressing here that the grace of God is true, and he's been expounding it throughout this letter so that the people who are suffering would believe it in the midst of their turmoil. It is true for you too who are in Christ. But then he adds these words, stand firm in it. And why do you think he adds these words, stand firm in it?

Well, because we are all prone to leave it, aren't we? We are all prone to leave the true grace of God. We are prone to try to live the Christian life by our works, not by the true grace of God. We are prone to leave this safe, secure foundation and find some other way that we can operate. Operate in some way apart from simply delighting in and relying on the true grace of God.

When I was reading these words and he says, stand firm in it, what I picture him saying is, do not move. This is the only place where you will be safe. Don't go anywhere else. Stand firm right where you are. Imagine someone comes to you with a gun and they point the gun at you and they say, don't move. I bet you I know what you're going to do.

You're not going to move. Why? Because you know, if I go anywhere else, if I move, I'm in danger. And I really think that's what Peter is trying to drive home to them at this point. He's saying, don't go anywhere else. You're suffering.

You're going to be prone to leave. You're going to be prone to want to run away. You're going to be prone to want to doubt that God is sufficient for you. You're going to want to be prone to doubt that he will care for you. You're going to want to have all these things rushing through your mind.

And he's saying, don't go anywhere. God's grace is true. Don't move. Stand firm in it. So this morning, the application is obvious, isn't it? The only way you are going to be able to live the Christian life is by standing firm in the true grace of God. It is his grace that will keep you. It is living in light of what Christ has done for you that will enable you to grow in grace. Keep going by standing in God's grace. But secondly, keep going by unity and election.

You see this in verses 13 and 14, the start of verse 14. She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings. And so does Mark, my son, greet one another with the kiss of love. Peter begins verse 13 with this reference to she who is at Babylon. All commentators agree that Babylon here is just a reference to Rome. Peter is essentially saying the church, she who is at Babylon, which is Rome, sends you greetings. Now, why would Peter call Rome Babylon? Why does he do that? That's a little strange, right? Why would he call Rome Babylon here? Well, he's probably doing this for a number of reasons, but the biggest reason is likely that he's trying to draw a connection to the Old Testament.

Remember in the Old Testament what Babylon represented to God's people. In the Old Testament, Babylon was where the people of God were exiled in 586 when they were conquered by the Babylonians. They were conquered by the Babylonians and they were taken into exile in Babylon.

And so it was a place of exile. When they were in Babylon, they longed to be in the promised land. They were not home. They were in exile. They were pilgrims. And Peter is saying, I too am an exile. I too am a sojourner. I too am a pilgrim. I am in Babylon, so to speak. I am not in my homeland. My homeland is heaven. That is where my citizenship lies. And so while I write you this letter, I am in a Babylon, so to speak, because I am not yet in my heavenly homeland.

And this fact of our being pilgrims has been stressed throughout the letter, hasn't it? The very first verse, he said he was writing to elect exiles. In chapter two, verse 11, he calls them sojourners and exiles. He's been stressing this pilgrim language, this exile and sojourner language throughout the book. But what makes us exiles? Why are you, if you're a Christian here this morning, why are you an exile? You are an exile because you are elect. What makes you a pilgrim is that God has chosen you to be his own.

If God didn't choose me, I would not be in exile in this world. I would be at home in this world. I would love the filth and sin of this world. The only reason you do not delight in and love and cherish and want all the wickedness that the world could offer you. The only reason you don't want that, the only reason that's not the true craving at the very core of your being, the only reason that doesn't just get you excited to live in sin and darkness, the only reason is because you're elect. It's because you don't belong here.

It's because you have a heavenly homeland. You've been chosen. God choosing you is what makes you a pilgrim. Election leads to exile in this world and citizenship in the world to come. And I say all this because if you look at the text, that's what he is stressing. Look again there. He says, she who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen. He is stressing election.

He is stressing that they are mutually chosen by God. They're both recipients of the grace of election. And what sort of effect, according to the text, should our election have on our living with one another? Well, he says essentially that it should produce mutual love for one another. Right after speaking of election, he goes on to say this, the final command of the book. Greet. That's a command. Greet one another. with the kiss of love, flowing out of the fact that they have been mutually elected, mutually chosen by God.

You have been chosen, I have been chosen. This fact ought to manifest or produce loving relationships among one another. So what are you supposed to do when someone whom God has elected and you know that they are believers, best you can tell they're really sons and daughters of Christ, what are you supposed to do when they irritate you? Well, according to this text, you're supposed to love them. You're supposed to greet them. And you love them because they, just as much as you, have been chosen by God.

God, the Son, shed his blood for you just as much as he shed his blood for that other person that bothers you. The blood of God was spilled for that person that gets under your skin, if they're of the elect. How do you think that should affect the way you treat them?

It should have profound implications, shouldn't it, on the way we treat one another. Now, I'm not suggesting that means you always have to like them. I don't think it means they need to be your best friend. But you might think of it like this, and maybe this would be good for the younger people in the room, but for all of us. Think children of this kind of way of thinking about it.

Okay, you're a younger person and you go to play a game of kickball. And there are a group of young people playing this game of kickball and Among these people, there are a few that you don't personally like very much. You know, she kind of bothers you a little bit. He kind of has mistreated you on the playground a little bit, and you kind of don't like him.

But then you both get chosen, elected, chosen to be on the same kickball team. What happens? All of a sudden, you cheer for that person when they go up to kick. You are wanting the best for that person when they pitch Why? Because they're on your team.

And that's a simple but I think helpful way of trying to understand what this ought to mean for us. We are on the same team. We're united to one another in Christ. So we should cheer one another on. We should encourage one another in the ways of the Lord. Why? Because they're my teammate in Christ. We are both united to Jesus Christ.

So we greet one another with a kiss of love. Now, this doesn't mean we all need to start greeting one another with kisses, but the idea is simply this. We should greet one another with affection. And in our context, it might look like a hug, a holy hug, we could say.

But the point is this. You know this from experience. It is hard to hold a grudge against someone when you give them a hug. It's true. It just is because you have that affection. So a lot of times when people get in fights, especially when they're young people, not that I would know this from parenting, but after the children ask one another for forgiveness, you often ask them to give one another a hug and all of a sudden, it's different because they had that affection, that unity. And so that's the attitude that we ought to have. So this morning, again, the application is quite simple, isn't it? If you need to keep going, you need unity and election. You need the body of Christ. You need the church.

Here they are, they're suffering. And he's saying, you know what? You're suffering, but the church in Rome cares about you. They're sending greetings to you. They know you're suffering and they love you. And that's true for you too. That's true for our missionaries that we know of that are suffering. We try to care for them. We try to encourage them by saying, we hear your cries. We are with you. And so we should do that with one another in this body and more broadly in the church around us.

But then thirdly, keep going by peace in Christ, by peace in Christ. Verse 14, the end. Peace to all of you who are in You know, Peter ends this letter very similarly to how he began it. He began the letter by stressing the doctrine of election and peace with God, peace in Christ. And now he concludes with this same sort of thing, election and peace.

And why does he do that? Well, he does that because he's a good pastor. He knows what they're going through and he knows that these are two specific doctrines, peace and election, that will be of benefit to them in their suffering. They're on the brink of being persecuted for the faith, they're already suffering for the faith, and he's saying to them, remember the electing love of God and remember even through your persecution and suffering that you have peace in Christ.

You have peace in Christ. You are suffering, you are being mistreated, but even so, You have peace in Christ. And you know, there's only one place where you can find peace with God. And that is in Christ. There is no peace anywhere else. There's no peace with God in your wealth. There's no peace with God in your will or exertion. There's no peace with God in health. There's no peace with God in pleasures of the flesh.

There's only peace with God in Christ. You can only have true, objective, eternal peace with God in the Lord Jesus Christ. What can turn away the wrath of God from you? Only Christ taking the wrath of God on himself. in your place. And why, I ask, is there only peace with God in Christ? Because only Christ can extinguish the wrath of God. And so he's saying the wrath of God has been removed from you. You have peace with God, objective, eternal peace with the living God, even in your suffering. Think for a moment about how Christ fulfills the Aaronic Benediction. These words from Numbers chapter six, may the Lord bless you and keep you. How can the Lord bless you and keep you? Only because he forsook and did not bless the Lord Jesus Christ for you in your place.

May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. How can God make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you? Only because he turned his face away from his son and he turned his favor away from his son for you in your place. That's the only way that he can have a shining face and a gracious favor towards you.

May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. How can the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace? Only because He gave his son wrath so that in him he could give you peace. There's no way he can give you peace if he does not give his son wrath in your place for your sins. That's the only way for peace with God.

And here's the good news. Once you are in Christ, you can never be out of Christ. Once you are in Christ, you are secure. But this being in Christ, this security, never eliminates conflict. You face conflict with sin because you are in Christ. That's what they were experiencing. They were facing conflict, turmoil, suffering, because they were in Christ.

But even then, he is saying, you have objective peace with God, even in your suffering. So in a world like ours, where there is very little peace, there are wars and rumors of wars, This truth will help you keep going. Your circumstances may provide you with little peace. You may be going through trials and tribulations, but keep going because you have peace with God.

The Christian cries, peace, peace, and there is peace for him. There is peace for him because of what Christ has done for him. How is it that the Christian and have peace that surpasses all understanding. It comes from being reconciled to God. It is not a circumstantial peace, it is a supernatural peace. Christ did not only remove God's wrath for you on the cross, God produced peace between you and him on the cross.

So Peter concludes then by urging these Christians to keep going, keep going, Keep going for these three reasons. Keep going by standing in grace, by unity in election, and by peace in Christ. Let us pray. Almighty God, we thank you for these closing words of 1 Peter 5.

The saints there needed to keep going, and they needed truth from you that would strengthen them in this calling to keep going. Father, they were suffering. Perhaps they wanted to give up. Temptations were increasing as the suffering in their lives increased.

And Peter tells them that they must not go anywhere other than standing in the grace of God. There's no other foundation. Everywhere else will be deceptive. Everywhere else will leave you with no Christ and no gospel and no life. He tells them that you're united to brothers and sisters in Christ.

You've been united to them by election. Encourage one another, greet one another, stir one another up. And then he says to them, you have peace with God in Christ. Whatever your suffering is, you have peace with God in Christ. Keep going. Oh, Lord God, we pray that for ourselves so we would keep going. Keep going because of who you are and what you have done for us in your son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.