



1 Peter 5:10-14
After You Have Suffered

Summary: There is suffering in this life, but there is also a gracious God who calls you to glory.

Two things in life are true. There is suffering. And, God is good.

At any given moment you might be experiencing or feeling more of one side than the other, but both are always true. That's the whole point of this letter we have spent several months studying together and here, at the end, Peter summarizes it like this:

1 Peter 5:10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*. 11 To Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Now that sounds a lot like some of the things he had to say when he opened the letter.

Flip back and look with me at

1 Peter 1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls.

Peter opens and closes his letter with the recognition that there is suffering in life, *you are grieved*, things do hurt, you will cry, you'll be angry, you'll be frustrated, you'll feel numb. But God. But God is at work in, through, and over it all. God knows, and He is good and He's giving you significant gifts in the middle of your pain.

He is, look with me back at chapter five, verse ten: **the God of all grace**. That's the Greek word *charis*. So if you meet a Karissa or a Karisa, her name means grace. And God is **the God of all grace**.

OK, but what does that mean? We tend to think of grace as poise, 'Oh she's elegant, and carries herself so gracefully.' Or we think of saying 'grace' before a meal.

But what is [grace](#)? Grace is like a favor done for you with no expectation of return. It's a strange and alien concept here in Northern Virginia where so much is based on performance and accomplishment, deadlines and capacity. We build our lives on what we've done and what we're doing, or pursuing goals and completing projects and being recognized for our performance in return.

But grace is getting something you didn't earn, or maybe even ask for. And knowing that you don't have to do or give anything back. It's a gift. And, it's always positive. Grace brings you joy, pleasure, satisfaction, favor, or acceptance, it's a benefit to you. And, it's absolutely free – the only motive behind it is the generosity and kindness of the giver.

The opposite of grace is works, earning something and that's what we're far more familiar with. Even kids understand works. There are times when kids make a deal with their parents, if you do this chore or this project, and you do it well, this many times or for that long, then we will buy you that thing you want. That's contract negotiation, it's preparation for the real world – you put work in, you get a product or paycheck in return. It's performance-based.

But that's not grace. Grace is when you've been wanting something and your parents suddenly surprise you with it. Maybe you've even behaved poorly lately. Maybe you've had a bad attitude, maybe you've been cutting some corners on your chores or your schoolwork, but mom and dad still decide to give you that thing that brings you so much joy. Not because you earned it, not because you deserve it, but just because they love you and want to do you good. They show you grace.

I hope you are able to look back and remember stunning moments of grace received in your life. Blessings you never saw coming. I hope you have memories of times when people showed up and blew you away with their kindness, their generosity, their acceptance or their forgiveness. I hope you know what it means to be on the receiving end of grace.

But, I also hope you know and understand and have experienced what Peter describes: that God is the [God of all grace](#). That whatever you have received or experienced from other people is a pale, thin, pixelated, reflection of the grace that God offers us.

Grace is the doorway into the Christian life. Read the letters of the New Testament, almost all of them begin with: [Grace to you and peace from God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ](#). That's found in Romans 1, and 1 Corinthians 1 and 2 Corinthians 1, and Galatians 1 and Ephesians 1, Philippians 1, Colossians 1, 1 and 2 Thessalonians 1, Philemon, which only has 1, and Revelation, the last book of the Bible, puts a little spin on it in and says in:

[Rev 1:4... Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,](#)

It's really, really, hard to read the Bible and miss the idea that Christians are the recipients of God's grace, His kindness to us, His unmerited favor, unearned gifts, and undeserved love. He is, [the God of all grace](#). And it starts with the gift of salvation. The Bible says:

Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is the gift of God,*

Go back and consider the example I used earlier of the child and the parents agreeing this much work, done this way, for this long, will get you that thing you want. That's work. That's a contract. That's performance based. And there is a place for that. It's called the workplace, and those kids are being trained for that – which is good, it is good to learn, my work, my effort can produce a reward.

But remember, that's not grace. That is not how you are saved. That's not how you get on good terms with God. No one negotiates a salary package with God, no one challenges the final grade God gives. Because none of us can perform consistently with the quality and standards God expects.

But we try. We try all the time. We think we have to make a deal with God. OK, God, I'll do this and then you do that. I'll go to church and then You do this. I'll stop cussing and then You do that. I'll pray every night and then You heal them. I'll do my part and then You do yours. It's a contract, *and that's not how God works*. He is [the God of all grace](#). What if, instead of trying to make a deal with God, you simply asked Him what He wants to do, without negotiating your part? Could you trust Him to do the right thing without trying to bribe or compel Him?

The Bible tells us over and over again, that, in general, God has some pretty good plans for us. Some pretty good ideas of where things should be headed. Peter wants these people to know that [the God of all grace](#), has [called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus](#).

That is massively important for us to know, because Jesus Christ is the clearest picture of God's grace that we could ever have.

We human beings needed salvation, we needed grace, and God took it upon Himself to provide. The Father and the Son with the Spirit enacted a plan that would satisfy justice, shower us with mercy, and showcase divine grace.

So, without a contract, without us earning it or deserving it, while we were in the middle of our sins, Christ died for us – He took our guilt for the wrongs we have done and will do, and suffered for them, but then He rose again and turned around in mercy to offer us forgiveness, a fresh start and new beginning for anyone who wished to receive this grace as God's gift - like the parents who decide they will buy the nice gift even for a misbehaving child.

They're not ignoring the child's behavior; they see it and hate it. They're not encouraging the behavior; they still want it to stop. They're not rewarding the behavior, they even

wonder if they should really give the gift right now in light recent events and attitudes, but they decide to do it anyway, because it's a gift of a grace, a gift of love. It cost them something, they had to spend money to get this gift, but they give it anyway, because they love the child and it's an act of grace.

Friends, all throughout the Bible we see that God is a generous, loving, patient, and gracious Father. He's not ignorant, He's not unaware - don't mistake His patience for His permission, but He's trying to show us His grace, He's trying to show up His love, He's [calling us to His eternal glory by Jesus Christ](#) and the work He has done for us.

Earlier in the letter Peter spoke of the same [calling](#). Do you remember, back in chapter two when he contrasted believers with non-believers? He said those who are not Christians reject what God is doing, they don't receive His grace,

1 Peter 2:9 But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

There is this contrast, this division, this separation. Some have heard the call and responded, some have not.

Which means, we need to ask: *Have you heard God's call?* Have you responded?

Can you say, yes, I have? I have heard God speak, and I have responded.

Some hear the call and refuse to embrace it. They're like the spoiled child who receives the parent's gift of grace and says 'It's about time. Why did you make me wait so long? All my friends have one already.'

God is [calling you out of darkness into His marvelous light](#). The [God of all grace](#) has called you to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus. My question is, did you answer the call, or do you keep sending it to voicemail? Are you ghosting God?

But let's talk about something – you might be doing it *because* you're suffering. You might be ignoring God or having some struggles with Him because you want to know: *why am I going through this pain?* That's a real thing, isn't it?

It's easy to be all excited about God and your spiritual life when things are going well. But what about when life is hard, what about when you're suffering? Well, Peter said that kind of thing happens. That's the whole reason he wrote this letter, right? To remind us: suffering is real, but so is God, and He's walking us through it, bringing something better out of it.

He says,

1 Peter 5:10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

My friends, suffering can hollow you out. It can make you bitter and cynical, or it can give you a strength you never possessed and could not gain anywhere else. Few of us enjoy suffering while we're in it, but if you speak with anyone who has matured in life, they will tell you that suffering really can make you better. It can perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

Think of the parallel here with athletics and conditioning. Did anyone ever really love two-a-day football practices in the heat of summer? Does any dancer really love it when her toes hurt from practicing on pointe? Does any swimmer love early morning practice when the water is cold? No, but they do these things *to get better*. They see physical suffering as a gateway to new skills and higher levels of performance.

Could that be true spiritually? Could it be that God is able to use the things that have you worried right now, or things that you don't like, the situation you wish would change, the people you wish would leave, could He be using all of that to teach you some new skills and lead you into higher levels of performance?

Yes. Yes, he could. God knows what you are going through, He knows what you are facing, and He sees what you can become through it all. It's not fun for the coach or the teacher to watch their players or dancers or swimmers suffer and struggle and strain, but they also see what lies ahead, and if these guys or these gals could just stick with it and press on, press through, and listen to their coach, they'll get there and they'll be amazed at what they can do.

Church, God wants to perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

The word perfect can also be translated 'restore' or 'complete.' It can be used to describe the process of setting a fracture, putting a broken bone back in place. It's used for mending fishing nets that have become tangled and torn with use, or to repair a ship. It means to repair and return to service.

Suffering hurts us, breaks us down, but Peter says, God knows - He is watching over us, and even if we're broken in the process, He is going to bring us through *whole, restored, returned to useful service*. So don't worry about what you might lose or break, God knows and He will take care of you.

He will also establish you, make you stand firm, make you solid. If you will turn to Him, respond to His calling and look for His grace, God can use your suffering the way a blacksmith uses fire to make metal stronger. God often uses suffering and difficulty to turn our uncertainties into certainties, to turn our doubts into convictions, and to anchor us on a firm and fixed foundation. There are things that change you once you've gone through

them. You realize, ‘well, if we made it through that... there’s no reason to be afraid of this.’ Because God has **established** you *through the suffering*.

He’s also going to **strengthen** you. Let me ask: what do you think are some of your strengths? Is it your personality? Do you just find it easy to connect with people and get your way? Do you have a lot of grit and determination, the ability to grind it out and see things through? Is it your physical body – the size of your muscles or the shape of your curves? Is it your mind – your ability to think, study, analyze and solve? Or, your ability to create, to innovate, to design? What do you think are your personal sources of strength?

And, what do you have to do to develop or maintain them? And how is that going? Are you still working to improve your strengths, or are you kind of coasting? Are you making plans for how you’re going to get after it again, soon? Or are you grappling with the fact that your best days may be behind you?

William Barclay wrote in his commentary, “a life with no effort and no discipline almost inevitably becomes a flabby life.” But he was speaking about our spiritual strength.

So, may I ask: is your relationship with God a source of strength in your life? Is it the greatest source of strength in your life? And what kind of condition are you in? Have you been strengthened by suffering and trials that have made you spiritually trim and fit, or do you need to lose a few pounds and regain a little flexibility?

If so, think about this: no good coach or instructor really means to beat and crush you with hard routines, schedules, or practices. They will push you, but they don’t want to see their people hurt, so they try to take you right up to that line where the stress placed on your body induces growth and over time the limits of what you can handle are pushed out farther and farther. So too, God wants to train you to endure whatever may come your way, and the glorious thing there is, there’s no connection with physical ability or size.

Remember that whole story about David and Goliath? One had physical size and strength, the other had confidence in and a relationship with God. And the little guy came out on top. Well, so too with you, you don’t have to be impressive physically to be a beast spiritually.

And here’s something else to consider: when it comes to spiritual strength, there are no glory days of your youth. You don’t blow out your spiritual knee, or tear your spiritual bicep. You can keep growing and growing and growing spiritually with age, *if you keep allowing God to strengthen you through suffering*. In fact, He might even be using your *physical suffering* to build your spiritual strength, *if you will lean into Him*.

Finally, notice this: He wants to **settle you**, or make you steadfast, immovable.

Trials and suffering expose the truths on which real life is founded. Sorrow and pain sweep away all the topsoil and expose the bedrock of our faith, they show us what we’re really building our lives on. They force us to ask the question, why am here? Why am I doing this?

Physical training often does the same thing – elite level teams, units and programs, often have a testing phase to see: how bad do you want this? How much do you really want to be here? Who are you doing this for? People show up with the wrong motivations get screened out by the suffering. But the people who are truly dedicated, committed, the people who feel called to this, made for this, the people who want it badly, will press on.

I've been there spiritually, and you probably have too, where the only thing that keeps you hanging on is the absolute conviction that there's no place else to go. 'I don't why this is happening, I don't know why God seems silent, I don't know how this all going to work out or when, but I'm going to continue to trust that all the things I knew about God before this happened are still true.' Those are the moments when God is settling you, anchoring you, and *it couldn't happen without the suffering and storms.*

This is what [the God of all grace](#) is doing as He calls [us to His eternal glory in Christ Jesus](#) so,

[1 Peter 5:11](#) To Him *be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

There is suffering in this life, *and* there is a God who is good, who is using that suffering to accomplish His eternal purposes, to grow us, strengthen us, to teach us new skills and stretch the boundaries of our performance.

And, we aren't the only ones who benefit from our growth – other people are going through things too, and God often uses us to help our teammates. Notice:

[12](#) By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.

[13](#) She who is in Babylon, elect together with *you*, greets you; and *so does* Mark my son. [14](#) Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Suffering tends to shrink our field of view. We go internal. We get tunnel vision. We shut other people and other things out as we navigate our pain and frustrations. Peter reminds us, there are people around us who can help and who we can provide help to. Silvanus brought you this letter, the church in Rome greets you, and pay a little attention to one another. Don't let suffering separate you from the very sources of strength that God is surrounding you with.

Including Jesus. Remember, you are in Him, and that gives you peace because you know, no matter what you face, you also have

[1 Peter 1:3](#)... a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4](#) to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, [5](#) who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

This is the plan. This is what God is up to. There is suffering, but He offers to walk with you through it, to use it to make you better instead of bitter.

The [God of all grace is calling you to His eternal glory in Christ Jesus](#). Are you taking the call?

If yes, I hope you have been [perfected, established, strengthened, and settled](#) by our time this morning – I hope you have heard God speaking to you and giving you the grace you need to keep pressing on.

If you've been hearing the call, but have not responded yet, what are you waiting for? Today we celebrate the birth of our nation, and you could celebrate your new birth in Christ as well. All you need to do is stop resisting Him – answer the call. Tell Him you're sorry for living life for yourself, you want to be forgiven for resisting and ignoring Him, you want to be forgiven for hurting yourself and others with the choices you've made, and you want to follow His leading, with His help, for the rest of your life, *even if it leads through suffering*.

Just have an honest discussion with God, right there in your chair. And then when you're ready, come forward and receive the elements for communion – these reminders of all that Jesus suffered for us. Hold onto them and we'll all take together in a few minutes.

Let's pray.



Sermon Application and Discussion Questions

1 Peter 5:10-14 After You Have Suffered

Summary: There is suffering in this life, but there is also a gracious God who calls you to glory.

- Which statement do you feel more in tune with right now: there is suffering in this life, or God is good?
 - When or how have you felt the tension between those two things?
 - What forms of suffering have you experienced: physical, relational, economic, political, psychological, others?
 - Which form of suffering would you most like to relieve in the world?
- Give an example of each source of suffering that you have experienced or witnessed:
 - Self-induced – my own sinful choices led to it
 - Others – the choices and actions of people produced suffering
 - Spiritual – God or Satan was behind the suffering
 - Environmental – suffering was the result of life on our fallen planet
- Describe a time when you experienced or received grace from God or people.
 - Was there a time when you ever negotiated, as the child or the parent, to work for something? Was there a time when you ever gave, or received something as an act of grace?
- When and how did God call you to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus?
- Have you ever endured intense physical training, or academic study, that felt like suffering, in order to reach higher levels of performance? What was that like? Did you reach your goals?
 - What kind of parallels can you make with growing spiritually?
 - Where do the parallels break down? For example, in athletic training we must rely only on our own strength, but God gives us strength for spiritual efforts.
- How has God used the strength of others to help or encourage you? How has He used something He brought you through to help others?
- Explore these cross references to learn more: Rom 5:3-4 (God builds hope and character through trials); 1 Thes 3:13, James 5:8 (God will establish your heart); 2 Thes 2:17 (God will make you strong in word and deed); Col 1:23, Eph 3:17, Eph 4:14, Matt 7:24 (God is building a firm foundation for us)