

XLVIII. I Peter in Biblical Perspective

The Elect in the Exile

“The Sojourner’s Benediction”

I Peter 5:10–11

Dr. Harry L. Reeder III

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We are in the study of I Peter 5:10–11. I will begin at verse 6 of the Word of God. I Peter 5:5–7 says [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.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever, and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

This text will actually bring us to the Table of the Lord’s Supper. I love to take people to historical sites and then look at the Word of God. It’s great to get insight while you’re onsite. Recently I went with a group to three different place where Paul stood on trial at the ‘judgment seat’ and that seat is still there. I stood on those “judgment seats” and read the text in Scripture where that took place. I tried to imagine what Paul felt as he was there 2,000 years ago with his life in the balance, Rome looking upon him and the ability to take his life at that moment.

There’s another place in the Bible that as we’ve studied Peter that keeps coming back to me and that’s Luke 22. In the week of passion as Jesus is headed to the cross I’ve often wondered what Peter was thinking when Jesus said to him in Luke 22:31–32, [31] “*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, [32] but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.*” There is so much in those words of Jesus. How did Peter process all of that?

Then days later after His resurrection He meets up with Peter and the other disciples back to the Sea of Galilee. Peter meets up with Him beside a charcoal fire just days earlier having denied Him three times in front a charcoal fire in the courtyard of Caiaphas, the high priest. Now Peter is in front of the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek in front of a charcoal fire. That High Priest is Jesus. Then in John 21:15–17 it says [15] *When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” [16] He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” [17] He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.”*

The product of those moments comes to us in many ways in the book of Acts recounting the ministry of Peter but it comes to us profoundly with I and II Peter as he is writing a letter to the people in the churches of Galatia which is today known as Turkey. We don’t really know if he had even met these people. He wants them to know they are elect exiles and because they are

the elect in Christ he gives them 15 markers of their security in the Redeemer, of who they are in Christ because of Christ. Then he gives them 13 commandments of what they do for Christ. They are on a sojourner's journey where people are taken out of a sin-cursed world all the way to glory and the Promised Land of a new heavens and a new earth.

Then Peter tells them two things as those who are owned by Christ and on mission for Christ. One is that as a Christian you will suffer for Christ to some degree and in some way. You may suffer emotionally, physically or socially or even your livelihood or your life but all who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer for Him. He takes a predominate amount of time in this letter to communicate that, from I Peter 3:13 to I Peter 5:11. The word suffering is used more in that section than in the entire New Testament. He says if they hated Him they will hate you and if they persecuted Him they will persecute you. Jesus says in Matthew 5:11–12 [11] *“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. [12] Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*

The second thing Peter tells them is that we have an adversary that is like a predator. He is always roaring trying to intimidate you but you cast all your anxieties on Him for He cares for you. Perfect love casts out all fear and you're not allowed to retreat or flee from Satan. You are called to resist him and he will flee from you. Be sober-minded, be alert and watchful. This predator is seeking to devour you, your marriage, your witness, your ministry, your joy, etc. He can't take your salvation but he can bring death into your life. Be alert and don't run from him but in Me you go at him and he will flee from you. Spiritual warfare is the way of life for the believer yet we're in a war that has already been won by our Savior at the cross and announced at His resurrection.

In suffering and in this warfare there will be casualties, wounds, incoming fire and you are going to feel it so what is the last thing that Peter wants to tell us? He is going to give us a benediction and it's not Peter's benediction but a divine benediction. It is a promised assurance from God Himself as to what God is going to do to you, through you, in you and for you. This benediction is given in I Peter 5:10–11 which says [10] *And after (or moreover) 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.*

There is a chronology that is here. This God has called and is with you while you are suffering for a while. He will restore you, confirm you, strengthen you and establish you. This benediction clearly has four elements to it. He has already said that suffering is grievous and these are fiery trials but they are also temporary. He has sovereignly brought you to grievous, temporary trials for a purpose and He is gloriously saving you. In the midst of these trials He is going to do something of eternal weight in glory and He affirms it with four words – restore, confirm, strengthen, establish. Now when do you get this benediction?

Our reflex is to think that we'll get this when we get to heaven and when the sufferings are over. My own reflex was that but I don't think that is what He is saying. He is giving you the four fold blessing that you will get on this side of eternity, here on earth, as He sanctifies the sufferings to you, as He sanctifies your deepest distress. This is for now not then. Actually it's pretty obvious when you think about it because when we get to the new heavens we won't need to be restored, confirmed, strengthened or established because we will be all that when we get to heaven. The challenges that are brought by sin will be gone when you get to heaven. You will have already been confirmed at the Judgment Seat when He says 'I am yours and you are Mine.'

As you go through the sufferings this is what God is doing in them to you, through you and for you now.

These four terms are kind of like a montage. They build on each other. They are all united to each other and they are all working together. So the first thing He will do as you go through these trials is He is going to restore you. Restore in the original language is a tough word to translate and in this Bible you find this word in its original form translated with words like fixed, refitted, mend but I really like the older translation of perfected the verb. So in the midst of the trials you are being perfected. This word restored is used when referring to a ship that is being refitted, restored. It's used to speak of soldiers who have been in the battle, they're wounded and they're being restored to get back into the battle. It's used to speak of sails that have borne the brunt of the wind which now have been restored to be strengthened to go back to the seas. It's used to speak of bones that have been broken.

I like the picture of the bone because I can understand it. The reason I like the word perfected better is because it is not speaking of a patch up job for it's more than that. It's not simply that you have been challenged and have suffered for Christ where He will get you back to where you were. No, He is taking you somewhere else. He is taking you to another level. I have broken a couple of bones but the one that stands out most was the collision I had at home plate. I had made the play, the player was out but my arm ended in an L shape so I headed home as soon as the umpire shouted 'you're out' to the other player. My mom and dad took me to the doctor and the doctor said it was a tough break but it could be helped.

I asked the doctor if I could still play baseball because on the way to the hospital I was convinced I was going to have to get it amputated. He said 'Sure but not now for you need about three months for it to heal.' I said 'Will have to wear something over it meaning is this going to be a weak spot and can I break it again there?' I'll never forget what he said. He said 'Son I'm not going to tell you that you're not going to break your arm again but I will tell you that if you break it again it won't break in this exact place for this will now be the strongest part when it heals.' That's what the Lord is telling us here.

When He brings you through the trials/suffering, you grow in grace, in the midst of the trial, suffering, resisting of Satan, the warfare, the wounds will be real and grievous because they're fiery but He's not just going to patch you up for you will be stronger than before right there. Then He goes to the second element.

Then you will be confirmed, which means firmly fixed. You were fixed because you're in Christ but now you're firmly fixed. Not only by faith do you know your assured but now in life you know that His hand will hold you and no one can pluck you out. Now you have a settled strength and when Satan and the world comes back against you, you know you are firmly fixed and now you can put the marker down right here for this belongs to Christ. Now this is battle tested. The contest has been established and now this belongs to the Lord. All of my life is His and this is the best picture I have of this.

In the Tolkien book Lord of the Rings, Fellowship of the Rings it is one of my favorite moments when Gandalf is facing all of the horror of evil as it comes against him in Mordor. It is the epic battle of Gandalf and the Balrog on that narrow bridge, as Gandalf hits his staff to the ground and says 'You shall not pass here!' Now it is confirmed and it's fixed firmly. In Christ you will not pass here. So you are not only restored as a veteran in battle and confirmed but then comes the third element.

Now you are strengthened. I think about a battle when a commander is about to make a decision which becomes a crucial decision in the line of battle, they don't go to new platoons but

they go to veteran units because they have been tried in battle. They have been perfected and confirmed. Now with the strength that they have learned they hold the ground and even take ground.

This word strengthened is only used here in I Peter 5 and isn't used anywhere else in the Bible. Some people think of Peter as an uneducated fisherman but as I have studied Peter it has amazed me at his adeptness in the Greek language. Here he finds a word that is translated rightly as strengthened but this unique word in the Greek is only used here in the Bible. It is speaking of a strength that you know you had but it's not a strength that comes from you but it's a strength that is given to you. It is Holy Spirit stamina. It is the strength of the Spirit of God, the Word of God and the Gospel of God that has been brought to you by the grace of God for the glory of God, given in you and for you. Now that you have been perfected, confirmed and strengthened, this leads to what comes next.

Now you have been established. You knew when you were converted that Christ was in you and you were in Christ. You know you're clothed with the righteousness of Christ. You know that you're filled with the Spirit of God. Now you not only know it by its communication to you in the Word of God but you know it experientially by the presence of God in the midst of trials. One of my mentors said to me that the only way he knew of to get across what this word established means here is to make up a word – you have been *foundationalized*. I love it when a verb becomes a noun. You have been made firm in the foundation. You're identity in Christ has been believed and now it has been experienced because you have been established.

When I was on a Reformation tour the man leading us had to stop at this field in Scotland where there was a wall used to keep the sheep in. The wall had a break where the stone had crumbled down. He made a point that immediately resonated with me. He said 'What would we do with this broken wall? We would typically pick up the pieces of stone and put them back into place but that's not what a Scotsman would do. The Scotsman would know that the reason the stone fell from the wall was because there was something wrong with the foundation. He wouldn't put the stones back in place but he would dig down to where the crack began and fix it from there.' There you get foundationalized – firmed up in the foundation.

This is what testing and trials so even in the midst of spiritual warfare. As you get foundationalized you then get afresh and a new not only propositionally but experientially that I am His and He is mine. I belong to Him and He has me. That becomes your identity for you belong to Christ, you're a soldier of the cross. I have the armor of the Lord, the weapons of the Spirit and Jesus and Jesus has me. I have been in the battle and He has held me, confirmed me, strengthened me, foundationalized me and now I know who I am. This is so crucial.

We love our church, our disciplers and the great heroes of the faith we look up to but our identity is not found there for it is solely and fully in Christ. The best picture I can think of to illustrate this takes place before the Sunday night before July 4th here at Briarwood. That service is called Christianity in America where we take the time to hear a testimony, rehearse God's providential blessings to our nation and how God might use us afresh and anew in our nation. I love the moment where we honor those who have served this nation and we remember the branches of the military – Coast Guard, Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force. We play the hymn of that branch of the service as we honor those who stand as the hymn for the branch they served in is played. As soon as the first notes of the hymn plays up stands those who served in that branch as their shoulders go back and their heads held high. In their minds they think 'once a marine always a marine' or 'once an airman always an airman' because it's their identity on that human level.

That is what Peter is saying happens to the believer. When the trial comes back and warfare continues God has perfected us, confirmed us, strengthened us and we stand for Him and in Him. No matter what the world says our job is not to get on the right side of history, our job is to be faithful to our God through Christ. That is what He has called us to do but all those four things are secondary.

While this promise that has been made is glorious the emphasis is not on the promise, for what is abundantly clear in I Peter 5 is that the emphasis is on the Promise Maker. Let's look again at this text and how he unfolds this. I Peter 5:10–11 says [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.*

He is the One who is taking you through the suffering for a little while. He is the One who has called you to His eternal glory. Peter didn't have to put 'will Himself' in this text. He could have left that out but Peter includes that for he puts the emphasis that God Himself will do this. The point is not simply the promise but the point is the Executor and Author of the promise. It is the One who keeps the promise. This God of all grace will Himself give you this blessing and keep the promise.

How will he do it? He will do it in Christ as the text says. He is the Promise Keeper and all the promises of God are 'yes' and 'amen' in Christ. What more can He say than to you He has said 'I will perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.' I love the hymn *My Anchor Holds* by William C. Martin. The following is the words to this hymn.

*Though the angry surges roll
On my tempest-driven soul,
I am peaceful, for I know,
Wildly though the winds may blow,
I've an anchor safe and sure,
That can evermore endure.*

*Refrain:
And it holds, my anchor holds:
Blow your wildest, then, O gale,
On my bark so small and frail;
By His grace I shall not fail,
For my anchor holds, my anchor holds.*

*Mighty tides about me sweep,
Perils lurk within the deep,
Angry clouds o'er shade the sky,
And the tempest rises high;
Still I stand the tempest's shock,
For my anchor grips the rock.*

*I can feel the anchor fast
As I meet each sudden blast,
And the cable, though unseen,*

*Bears the heavy strain between;
Through the storm I safely ride,
Till the turning of the tide.*

*Troubles almost 'whelm the soul;
Griefs like billows o'er me roll;
Tempters seek to lure astray;
Storms obscure the light of day:
But in Christ I can be bold,
I've an anchor that shall hold.*

*Refrain:
And it holds, my anchor holds:
Blow your wildest, then, O gale,
On my bark so small and frail;
By His grace I shall not fail,
For my anchor holds, my anchor holds.*

He is the unseen cable, He is the Rock. He is the Anchor. Sometimes He sends the storm and sometimes He stills the storm but when He is in the ship, the ship can't sink. It's perfected, confirmed, strengthened and established.

I want to close with something that a mentor of mine brought to my mind and that was the neighborhood game we played called 'King of the Hill.' It is a game where the person at the top of the hill tries to keep and push everyone off the hill until you get pushed off. Then one day by God's grace I heard the Gospel. While I loved to play King of the Hill my life was found because of the King on the hill, a hill that's far away and on it stands an old rugged cross. As *The Old Rugged Cross* hymn says;

On a hill far away, stood an old rugged Cross
The emblem of suffering and shame
And I love that old Cross where the dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was slain

There the King died for me and the King Himself will keep His promise to me. I love the promise that He will perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish me (and you) but what I rejoice in is the One who made the promise. He Himself will keep it, on that cross He secured it so come to the Table for His body, the bread where He bore your sins, His blood shed to atone for them and the promise is 'yes' and 'amen' in Him who will keep you, strengthen you, establish you and gloriously perfect you now for eternity. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for these precious moments in Your Word. Please speak to our hearts as we come to the Table and fill our souls with the presence that we would focus upon Jesus. God, thank You for all of Your promises but thank You for the Promise Maker and Keeper, Jesus Your Son, our Redeemer. Please build Your people up here, right now at this Table. May they see by faith, Jesus, for I pray this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Power Point

I. THE PROMISE MADE

- Restored
- Confirmed
- Strengthened
- Established

II. THE PROMISE MAKER