

From Grace to Glory

1 Peter 5:5-14

⁵You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders. And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. ⁶Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷Casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. ⁸Be of sober spirit, be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹But resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished among your brethren who are in the world. ¹⁰And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, strengthen, confirm, and ground you. ¹¹To Him be might forever and ever. Amen. ¹²Through Silvanus, our faithful brother as I regard him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and bearing witness that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it! ¹³She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does my son, Mark. ¹⁴Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.

Peter knew that a “fiery trial” was coming, and he wanted the church to be prepared. Unfortunately, in time of impending trouble, our tendency is to think that “*it can’t happen here!*” With that mindset, we become negligent in our anticipation and preparation. To prepare for their coming *trial*, Peter gave the church three admonitions that would be necessary for them to glorify God in the difficult experience they would experience.

1. **Be Humble** (5:5-7). Peter had already admonished the church to be submissive to government authorities (1 Peter 2:13-17), slave submit to masters (1 Peter 2:18-25), and wives submit to their husbands (1 Peter 3:1-7). Now, he commands all believers to submit to God and to each other

Younger believers should submit to older believers, respecting their age and spiritual maturity. Of course, not every “senior saint” is mature in their faith. Quantity of years does not necessarily produce quality of faith. This also does not mean that older church members should exercise the authority in the church. When this attitude is present in the church, a generation war can arise,

whereby the older folks resist change, and the younger people resist the older people.

Of course, the solution to such conflict depends upon mutual submission: All believers, young and old, should submit to one another, and everyone should submit to the Lord! The winning attitude must be humility: *“clothe yourselves with humility”* (v. 5). Jesus set the example when He gathered with his disciples to observe their “last supper:” Jesus laid aside His outer garment, put on a towel, assumed a servant’s role, and washed their feet. Humility is not belittling ourselves nor demeaning ourselves—it simply NOT considering self at all.

The Apostle Paul addressed such humility in his letter to the Philippian church: *“⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross (Philippians 2:5-8).*

Of course, our ability to submit ourselves to one another is a function of our submission to God. In the regard, Peter quoted Proverbs 3:34: *“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble,”* which is also quoted in James 5:6. It takes grace to submit ourselves to another believer, but it is God who can give that grace if we humble ourselves before Him.

God resists the proud because God hates the sin of pride (cf. Proverbs 6:16-17; 8:13). According to Isaiah 14:12-15, it was pride that caused the fall of Lucifer. It was also pride—the desire to be like God—that tempted Eve to sample the forbidden fruit. Indeed, an attitude that leads us to sin is the *“pride of life”* (cf. 1 John 2:16). Again, the only solution to our pride is the grace of God which God gives to us when we yield ourselves to Him—the evidence of grace is our act of yielding to one another!

Submission is an act of faith whereby we are trusting God to direct our lives and to accomplish His purposes in His time. Should we be concerned that in submitting ourselves to others that they might take advantage of us—not if we trust God and are following His will! We must understand and trust that in directing our lives, the “mighty hand of God” can also direct the lives of others.

The Lord will exalt us *at the proper time!* God always works in His time: first the cross, then the crown; first the suffering, then the glory! Moses was under God’s hand for eighty years, from his rescue at birth, his rearing as a son of the Pharaoh, His banishment to the desert, and His burning bush experience, before

sent him to lead the Jews out of Egypt. Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers, betrayed by Potiphar's wife, and spent years in prison before God freed him to be the prime minister of Egypt. One certain evidence of pride is impatience with God. Therefore, one of the reasons for suffering is that we might learn patience (James 1:1-6), while always remembering that God cares for you!

It is common for us to be anxious and worried, but when we are, we miss God's blessing and are robbed of the joy of salvation. We need His inward presence of peace if we are going to triumph in the fiery trial to glorify the name of Jesus.

According to 1 Peter 5:7, we must once and for all give all our cares (anxieties) past, present, and future—to the Lord. When we try to keep the "little cares" to ourselves, they inevitably become big problems in our lives!

How does God show His love and care for us when we give our cares to Him? In at least four ways the Lord acts in our behalf:

- 1) He promises that if we cast our burden upon Him, He will sustain us (Psalm 55:22).
 - 2) He gives us courage to face our problems and not run away (Isaiah 41:10).
 - 3) He gives us the wisdom to understand the situation and maintain a divine perspective (James 1:5).
 - 4) He gives us the strength to do what we must do (Philippians 4:13).
 - 5) He gives us the faith to trust Him to work all things together for good (Psalm 37:5; Romans 8:28).
2. **Be Watchful** (5:8-9). Of course, one of the primary reasons we have cares is because we have an enemy:
- As a *serpent*, Satan deceives (2 Corinthians 11:3).
 - As a *lion*, Satan devours (5:8).

The word, "*satan*" means "*adversary*," and the word, devil, means "*the accuser, the slanderer*." The recipients of this letter had already experienced the attacks of the slanderer (1 Peter 4:4, 14), and soon they would meet "the lion" in their fiery trial.

Peter gave instructions to help them be victorious in their struggle:

➤ **Respect him—he is dangerous!** He is a serpent who can bite us when we least expect it. He is a destroyer (cf. *Abaddon* and *Apollyon*) and an accuser (Zechariah 3:1-5; Revelation 12:9-11). He has great power and intelligence with a host of demons to assist him in his attacks against God’s people (Ephesians 6:19ff). He is a formidable enemy against whom we would have no defense without the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Therefore, we must “be sober” and have our minds under control when it comes to our conflict with Satan.

Of course, part of our soberness includes not crediting every problem to the devil. While we should have great respect for the power and deceit of the devil, it is important to get our information from God’s Word and not from comic book fantasies or horror films.

➤ **Recognize him—he is a great pretender** (John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15). Because he is deceptive foe, we must “be vigilant”—always on guard. His strategy is to counterfeit whatever God does (cf. Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43). We would be defenseless against His schemes if we did not have God’s Word and God’s indwelling Spirit. The better we know God’s Word, the more adept we are in discerning, detecting, and defeating our enemy. As John writes, we are to “try the spirits” to recognize the true from the false.

➤ **Resist him.** Take your stand on the Word of God (cf. Matthew 4:1-11) and refuse to be moved (cf. Ephesians 6:10-13). Unless we stand, we cannot withstand...!

Our weapons in this conflict are God’s Word and prayer, and our protection is the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18). We must take our stand against Satan by our faith in the victorious name of Jesus Christ. We must pray for one another and encourage each other as we live out our faith in community.

Both Peter and James gave us the same formula for success in spiritual warfare: “*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you*” (James 4:7).

3. **Be Hopeful** (5:10-11). Peter concluded his letter on a positive note by reminding his readers that God knew what He was doing and was in complete control. Peter gave several reasons for our hope:

- **We have God's grace.** Our salvation is by His grace (1 Peter 1:10). His grace is sufficient for every situation we face in life. AS we submit to the Lord, He gives us the grace that we need (Hebrews 4:16; James 4:6; Romans 5:2).
- **We know we are going to glory.** This is the wonderful inheritance that belongs to the born-again children of God (1 Peter 1:4; 4:13-16).
- **Our present suffering is only for a while.** Our trials are only “for a season” (1 Peter 1:6), but the glory is *eternal* (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:17).
- **We know that our trials are building godly character.** God has several tools that He uses to equip His people for life and service, and suffering is one of them. Of course, God's Word, as well as the fellowship and ministry of the church are also His tools for equipping us (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Ephesians 4:11-16).

Our Lord in heaven is perfecting His children so that we will do both His will and His work (Hebrews 13:20-21). Peter uses three words to describe the kind of character God wants us to have:

- **Establish** means “*to fix firmly, to set fast.*” The believer who is established will neither be moved by persecution or led astray by false doctrine (2 Peter 3:17).
- **Strengthen** means that God's presence working in us is all we need to meet the demands of life.
- **Settle** is the translation of a word that means “*to lay a foundation*” (cf. Matthew 7:24-27; Hebrews 1:10). A believer who is equipped by God will “*continue in the faith grounded and settled*” (Colossians 1:23). He will not be “tossed to and fro, carried about with every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:14).

Since Peter began with a greeting of peace, he concluded his instruction with a benediction of peace. His entire epistle points to “God's peace” which is a remarkable way to end a letter that announced the coming of a “fiery trial.”

4. **Peter's conclusion:**

- *I am sending this by faithful Silvanus* (5:12a). Silvanus, the same person Luke calls “Silas” in Acts 15:22 and 18:5, was also connected with Paul's ministry (2 Corinthians 1:19; 1 Thessalonians 1:1. 2 Thessalonians 1:1. He was also the messenger who carried the apostolic letter from Jerusalem (Acts 15:22).

- ***Stand in the grace I have described (5:12b).*** Peter was emphasizing that the entire Christian life is one of grace—God’s daily bestowal of blessings, strength, help, forgiveness, and divine fellowship. God’s grace is all of what we need, none of which we deserve. It is God’s grace that provides all we need to prevail.

- ***Greetings from the church in “Rome” and from Mark (5:13).*** Since at the time of the writing, Babylon was little more than ruins, Babylon is a cryptic reference to Rome—as also in Revelation 16:19, 17:5, and 18. In the Old Testament, Babylon was the center of worldly power and opposition to God’s people, so in the New Testament, Rome was the earthly center of a worldwide system of government and influence that was opposed the gospel.

Peter was not alone in Rome. Mark’s presence with Peter demonstrates a close connection between the Apostle Peter and the author of the second Gospel, whom Peter identified as his “son”—not physical, but spiritual.

- ***Greet one another with the kiss of love (5:14a).*** Obviously, such a kiss was free from romantic overtones, but was a simply a “warm welcome custom” as practiced in the first-century culture to physically express friendship and fellowship in Christ. Today, a ‘*holy hug*’ would be the nearest comparison.

- ***Peace to all who are in Christ (5:14b).*** Peace is what believers need within for troubled minds and hearts, and peace without for their sufferings. Of course, the key to such peace is a personal relationship to Jesus whereby Christ indwells the believer, and the believer dwells *in Christ*. To be *in Christ* is to be united with Him receiving all the benefits of redemption, which is the status of all true believers as soon as they are born-again, and they remain *in Christ* for all eternity.