

1 Pet. 5:6-11 “Under the Mighty Hand”

For the Children: How do you usually act when something happens that scares or upsets or disappoints you? Do you get angry, try to solve the problem by yourself? Do you get stressed out, or try to hide from the situation? The Lord teaches His children a better way of dealing with problems. He teaches us to trust that He is looking after us; and that He has good reasons for allowing problems to come our way. This is how He deals with all His children. For He wants us all to follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus first suffered, then He was raised up to glory. His suffering brought great benefit for us – our salvation. God uses suffering for our benefit today as well. **Questions:** How can suffering benefit us? How does God prevent suffering from destroying us? What does He command us to do when we are suffering?

Introduction:

First Point: Four Reasons for Being Encouraged

- 1) No Accidents: The starting-point for finding encouragement in trials is the realization that none of them are accidental. They are all sent by a loving God whose purpose is our welfare as well as His own glory. That is why we are said to be “under the mighty hand of God.”
- 2) The Sovereign Lord: Once we see all events as “under the Lord,” we can take encouragement from learning about the character of the One who is governing these things. The text reminds us that He is infinitely powerful, with a “mighty hand”; “all dominion is His forever and ever.” He rules over all creatures, all forces of Nature and all supernatural forces. Nothing can thwart His purposes for us.
- 3) The Gracious Lord: The Lord is the “God of all grace” (v. 10). He is the Source of all grace in the world. His grace is super-abundant. The Lord deals with His people in a favourable way, even when we feel that we are being treated harshly by His providence. But He cares for us (v. 7) – literally, “It matters to Him concerning you.” He is never indifferent or cruel. His goal is our exaltation (v. 6) – that we be lifted up in honour. He has the same goal for us as for the Lord Jesus, whose exaltation guarantees our exaltation. The Lord will do everything necessary for this goal to be realized – perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish us in this life (v. 10). “Perfect” in this case means mend, adjust, order and arrange our lives as needed. Even the trials we experience for a little while serve that purpose.
- 4) The Fellowship of Suffering: We are reminded that we experience suffering in common with other believers (v. 9). God’s purpose for His people is so fixed, following Christ’s pathway from humiliation to exaltation, that suffering is experienced by us all. The word “accomplished” implies that God’s purpose – to bring those saved by Christ to completion - is being accomplished by this. Paradoxically, we are therefore encouraged by the fact that all believers suffer

Second Point: Three Commands for Dealing with Trials

- 1) Humble Yourself: Since trials can be occasions for temptation, we are commanded to humble – “make ourselves low” under God’s mighty hand. Note 1 Pet. 5:5/Prov. 3:34. This humility is expressed in seeking His help; accepting His Providence without murmuring; submitting to His revealed will; accepting His right to deal with us as He has, but trusting that His reasons, purposes and timing are good; and by casting all our anxiety/burdens upon Him. Humility is necessary for dealing with the pride and anxiety that often come with trials.
- 2) Keep Sober and Alert: Because of the temptations that often come with trials, we are commanded to remain “sober” – serious- and clear-minded; and “alert” – watchful for danger and for opportunity to serve the Lord. The danger is emphasized by the mention of the devil as an adversary, a prowler and a hungry lion.
- 3) Resist the Devil: The danger must not only be recognized, but also the devil and temptation *resisted*. The church is involved in this resistance. Both the church and her members are to be “firm,” solid in resisting the devil. If we are serious about resisting Satan, we should be participating to the full in church life to gain the help we need from the means of grace and armour of God..

Conclusion:

