

SUFFERING AND GLORY – 1 Peter 5:10-14

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There's a lot said in the book of 1 Peter about suffering, a word that in its various form appears 13 different times. But now we come to the end of this encouraging and instructive book, and what is the conclusion? 1 Peter 5:10. In the original Greek, the phrase, "*the God of all grace,*" is first, and it should be first, because God should always be first, foremost, and foundational in our lives.

It says that God is the God of all grace. And grace is a general word, and Vines defines it as "*the power and equipment for ministry.*" It means God's divine enablement and power, what every Christian needs for his life, from when he is saved throughout all eternity.

- In all his introductions to his epistles, Paul wrote "*grace and peace*", for he knew that Christians need God's grace every day of their lives. In Eph 3:7, Paul said, "*I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of his power.*" In 2 Cor. 9:8, he says, "*God is able to make all grace abound to you so in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*"

God never wants to hold back anything good from you. He wants to freely give you all the grace you need so you can live for Him in just the way He wants. And the key to receiving this grace is being humble - 1 Pet. 5:5. Heb. 4:16 - "*Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*"

Now it says that God called you. Rom. 8:28-30. God predestined you, He foreknew you, He chose you, which means God Himself picked you, and selected you to be one of His children. Way back in eternity past, God decided who would be saved. Now it says that God called you, and what this means is that during your life on earth, before you were saved, God was working in your heart. Through His word and Spirit, and through the lives of others, and through different situations in life, God was leading you to Himself, and then at the right time, He caused you to be born again, to be justified.

And God called you according to His purpose. This means God has good and perfect plans, carefully thought-out plans for your life, and He'll bring them to pass, in this life on earth, during the millennial kingdom and the eternal kingdom. 1 Peter 1:15, 2:9, 2:21, 3:9

- Then we read that you are called to God's eternal glory. This word glory is another general word, referring to all the goodness, love, power, holiness, righteousness, mercy, and wisdom that God and Christ have. And because they have all this, because this is what they are like, then we are to glorify Them, we are to eternally worship and love Them.

One way to sum up your Christian life is that God wants you to share in His glory.

When you were first saved, you tasted God's glory - His mercy, love, power, etc.

- 2 Cor. 3:16. As you go through life, you will see and experience more and more of the Lord's amazing glory, for you will be transformed, and become more like Christ.

- 2 Cor. 4:6. And as Christ lives in you through the working of the Spirit, you will know and experience more of God's glory. Eph. 3:14-19

2 Cor 4:17. This glory you now have and experience is only the beginning. Your Christian life has just begun - there's so much more God has in store for you. And it's eternal glory, for it goes on forever, and it's a great weight of glory, an incredible amount of glory, what you cannot imagine, and cannot compare to anything else in this world.

- John 17:22-24. Again, there's this glory, glory we now have because Christ has given it to us, and glory we will see and experience in the future when we're in heaven.

1 Peter 5:10 – *“After you have suffered a little while.”* Now what Peter has been saying is that we suffer while we are here on this earth.

- 1 Peter 2:21. And so we're called to suffer - this is part of God's plan for our life.

- 2 Tim 3:12. As we live a godly life, then we'll suffer. People often hate us when we tell them about their sin, and that they need to repent, and that they'll be punished forever if they don't. They may get mad at you, slander you, ostracize you, or try to hurt you.

Jesus told us - *“A slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.”* As 1 Peter 4:12 says, you should not be surprised if you suffer.

Now we're not being persecuted a lot in this country at this time, but it's obvious to me, and I know, to many of you, that it's right at our doorstep – it'll be happening more and more.

But here's the main point of 1 Pet. 5:10 - you suffer a little now during your time on earth, but it's worth it, for you're going to receive and experience all this glory in the future.

And this truth of present suffering and future glory is stated not just in 1 Pet. 5:10, but many other times in the New Testament. Rom. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 4:17; 1 Pet. 5:1, 4

- This perspective of a little suffering now and a lot of glory in the future must be imprinted on your heart, and only then can you live rightly for the Lord during your time on this earth.

What we're talking about is hope, which means you know it's worth it to sacrifice and suffer for the Lord in the present, for you know what God has promised you in the future.

Rom. 8:18-25; Heb. 11:8-10, 24-25

- And so now you have the big picture, this perspective of your entire life, that you will suffer on this earth, and not all the time, but you will go through trials and hardship and persecution, and then there will be all this glory in the future. 1 Peter 1:5-7

But now you live during this evil age, in a world controlled by the devil, and you struggle against the flesh and the devil, and there are many dangers, toils, and snares, and so life is not easy - it's hard, it's difficult, and sometimes seems impossible.

- We have this promise, *“that after you've suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who's called you to His eternal glory, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.”*

- And there are four different, but yet, similar words that explain how God will make sure you make it to glory, that you get from earth to heaven. And so let's go through them:

1. Perfect - this word means to bring to wholeness, to bring through to the end, to complete. It conveys the idea of destiny, and the path of progress to reach that destiny. Phil. 1:6 - And clearly, God has a plan for your life, and will make sure you fulfill His plan for your life, and will make sure you keep going to the end. Psalm 138:8, 1 Cor. 1:8-9

2. Confirm – this word literally means to fix, to set fast, or to set in place. It conveys the idea of nailing something down. For example, when you nail shingles to the roof, then those shingles are set in place, they are not going to get loose, they are secure. - God confirms our lives, keeps us grounded, keeps us spiritually set in place, spiritually secure. This same word is used in Acts 14:22 - Paul was “*strengthening the souls of the disciples,*” and in 1 Thess. 3:13 when it says, that “*God may establish your hearts.*”

3. Strengthen – this word means to make firm, to make sturdy. 1 Thess. 3:2 says, “*We sent Timothy to strengthen and encourage you.*” And 2 Thess. 2:17 says, “*May God comfort and strengthen your hearts.*” The idea is that God wants to make those who are weak spiritually stronger, and those who are strong even stronger. Isaiah 40:28-31

4. Establish – this is translated to settle, or to lay a foundation. This means that our lives as Christians are not shaky, but are grounded, steadfast, and immovable. 1 Cor. 15:57-58

Now these four words are similar, and they all have to do with how God wants us to be growing, solid, strong, and stable. Col. 2:6-7 – God wants us to be like plants that are rooted and established in the ground. Our roses need three years to be established. - Eph. 4:15-16. Our spiritual growth and stability relate to being connected, to being joined together with other Christians. To be spiritually strong, we need fellowship, we need to learn from others, to be loved by others, and to be encouraged by others.

This all relates to how God will guarantee that you make it to heaven, that the hope you now have will come true. And yes, you are to do your part, but in the final analysis, God Himself will make sure that you, His child, will be with Him in heaven. Jude 24 - For this reason, we *must say*, “*To Him be the dominion.*” The word dominion means power, strength. And it’s by God’s spiritual and physical power that you’re saved, that you grow, that you are glorified, and that you will make it to heaven. Eph. 1:19-20, Phil. 3:21

Now we have Peter’s closing remarks:

1. Peter gives credit to Silvanus, who is also called Silas. And Paul was teamed together with him during some of his missionary journeys. And he says Silvanus is faithful, which means he’s a reliable, dependable, and trustworthy Christian. And he would have been faithful first to God and to His word, and then to Paul himself.

2. Peter shares his overall purpose, to exhort and testify to God’s grace. Indeed, Peter was preaching God’s word, but here he’s emphasizing the effect of His word, that it resulted in God’s grace and power working in the lives of people.

3. Peter encourages his readers to stand firm in God's grace. In 2 Tim. 2:1, Paul says, "*Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*" Our spiritual strength and stability comes as we depend on God and His grace. Otherwise, we'll be weak and useless Christians. In Gal. 5:1, Paul tells the Galatians, "*You have been severed from Christ... you have fallen from grace,*" meaning that they were depending on the law and their own flesh instead of depending on Christ alone for salvation and spiritual growth.

4. Peter sends greetings from the church he is in, which is in Rome - and these in this church, like the readers of this letter, are also chosen. This word Babylon is a reference to this church in Rome. Now I believe it was a code word for the church, for at that time, persecution was intensifying in Rome, and Peter did not want this letter to fall into wrong hands and endanger the Christians who were there.

5. Peter then instructs them to greet one another with a kiss of love. This word love is from the Greek agape, and is referring then to a physical kiss that conveys spiritual meaning, an agape, godly love for the person being kissed. Now back in those days, a holy kiss like this, from men to men, and women to women, was a customary outward sign of affection among the early church believers.

6. Finally, there is the benediction. Oftentimes the benediction is grace and peace, but here it just says peace. And this would be fitting, for Peter had spoken much about suffering in this epistle, and he wanted to remind them of the fact that God wanted to give them peace, a spiritual calm and serenity of heart that could only come from the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 3:18