

**Excerpts from Life-Study of 1 Peter,
Message 34**

**THE MIGHTY HAND OF GOD
AND ITS GOAL (2)**

Bible Verses:

1 Pet. 5:10 But the God of all grace, He who has called you into His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground you.

1 Pet. 5:14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ.

In [1 Peter 5:10,] Peter goes on to say, “But the God of all grace, who called you into His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground you.”

In this verse all grace refers to the riches of the bountiful supply of the divine life in many aspects ministered to us in many steps of the divine operation on and in us in God’s economy.

The initial step is to call us, and the consummate one is to glorify us, as mentioned here, “who called you into His eternal glory.” Between these two steps are His loving care while He is disciplining us, and His perfecting, establishing, strengthening, and grounding work in us. In all these divine acts, the bountiful supply of the divine life is ministered to us as grace in varied experiences. The God of such grace will perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground the persecuted believers after they suffer a little while.

Peter says that God has called us into His eternal glory in Christ. “In Christ” indicates that the God of all grace has gone through all the processes of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to accomplish the complete and full redemption so that He may bring His redeemed people into an organic union with Himself. Thus they may participate in the riches of the Triune God as their enjoyment. All the steps of the divine operation are in Christ, who is the embodiment of the Triune God becoming the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit as the bountiful life supply to us.

It is in this Christ, through His all-inclusive redemption and based on all His achievements, that God can be the God of all grace to call us into His eternal glory and to perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground us in the Triune God (1:1-2) as the solid foundation, thus enabling us to attain unto His glorious goal. What a miracle that fallen sinners can be brought into God's eternal glory! And how excellent is His perfecting, establishing, strengthening, and grounding work in us! This is all accomplished through His "all grace" which is the "true grace" (5:12).

According to what Peter says in 5:10, our sufferings are only for a little while, but God's glory is eternal. After we have suffered a little while, the God of all grace will personally perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground us.

The word "Himself" indicates God's personal activity in the work of grace. The Greek word rendered "perfect" literally means restore. It implies repairing, adjusting, putting in order again, mending, perfectly joining together, thoroughly equipping, well furnishing, and, thus,

perfecting, completing, educating. In Greek the word “establish” literally means to set fast, to confirm. The same word was used by the Lord in His charge to Peter in Luke 22:32. The meaning of “strengthen” is very close to that of establish. Literally, the Greek word rendered “ground” means to lay a basis for. It is a derivation of the word that means foundation. Hence, it is to ground solidly, as in Matthew 7:25, Ephesians 3:17, and Hebrews 1:10.

There is a progress in the four divine acts of grace. Perfecting leads to establishing, establishing to strengthening, and strengthening to grounding in the God of all grace—the Triune God in His dispensation (1:1-2) as the solid foundation.

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First God perfects us. Through the suffering of persecution we are perfected. Then after perfecting us, God establishes us. When we are established, we no longer wander, and we are no longer changeable. After God establishes us, He strengthens us, empowers us, and eventually, He grounds us in Himself as the Triune God.

In 5:11 Peter says, “To Him be the glory and the might unto the ages of the ages. Amen.” To the God of all grace, the One who perfects,

establishes, strengthens, and grounds us, be glory and might.

In 5:14 Peter concludes, “Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ.” At the beginning of this Epistle Peter says, “Grace to you and peace be multiplied.” At the end he says, “Peace to you all who are in Christ.” Peace results from grace; it issues from the enjoyment of the Triune God. Such enjoyment of God as the multiplying and multiplied grace (1:2), the varied grace (4:10), the all grace (5:10), and the true grace (5:12) as the reality of the contents of the Christian life under the government of God issues and results in a condition of peace with both God and man.

Peter’s writing is not at all superficial. It is deep in truth and very experiential. We see this even in what Peter says regarding peace. Peter’s understanding of peace is deep. However, most Christians today think of peace in a very shallow way.

According to 5:14, Peter’s desire is that peace be with all who are in Christ. Peter stresses the fact that the believers are in Christ (3:16; 5:10). It

is of God and through our faith and baptism that we are in Christ (1 Cor. 1:30; John 3:5; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3). This results in an organic union with the Triune God (Matt. 28:19) and makes us one spirit with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17).

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Note: This version is not intended to be printed as material for pursuit during the small group gathering. Instead, it is to be used as additional reference for brothers and sisters who want to prepare in advance for fellowship on the message. We include here notes from the commentaries of the brothers in the life-study radio program. The points from these commentaries can help enrich our understanding and, eventually, our fellowship with the saints on the selected portions of the life-study message. We still recommend that, if possible, the saints still listen to the [audio message](#) in addition to reading the [life-study message](#) for personal pursuit and for preparation for small group gatherings. We also wish to point out that these notes have not been fully polished.

[Commentary]:

Introduction

[CW]: First Peter is a book written with a specific view to God's governmental dealings with His people. It also lays out very clearly that as God's people, we should expect sufferings and persecution from time to time in our Christian life. But Peter does not just leave us with the sober realization that God will measure to us sufferings and trying circumstances in order to discipline us. Actually, the book opens with and concludes with grace. In fact, all throughout the book, Peter encourages the believers with grace, not a superficial religious expression, but marvelous expressions that convey to us four divine acts of grace to be our supply, our strength, and our empowering, to be kept in perfect peace regardless of the outward situation we're faced with. John Pestors, join us, our final program in First Peter. John, it closes on a marvelous note, doesn't it?

[JP]: It's a marvelous ending because it ends in experience. The entire book of Peter is based on experience and not doctrine and it reflects Peter's experiences with the Lord, his failures, his successes. At the end of his ministry, he realizes that everything is of grace and everything comes from the God of all grace. This shows that experience is central to our Christian growth, our Christian development. And Peter summarizes it all with his reference to the God of all grace who has sustained him and brought him through this process in his entire life. So, it's a marvelous summation of Peter's life. It should be the process that we're in and the summation of our life that we could look back and say that in all of our experiences of suffering and all of our experiences of discipline, we have experienced and known and been even in the God of all grace.

[CW]: I think maybe you would point out, I think in a number of previous life-studies, not just in Peter, talking about grace, realizing this is one of those Christian terms, John, that's really undersold, isn't it? I mean, it involves and implies and conveys according to Scripture so much more than has become the common way we treat a word like this.

[JP]: Well, the God of all grace means that grace is God in all of our experiences. We should have an experience of God, which is an experience of grace. It's not just some unmerited favor, some material things that we get. It is God Himself being dispensed and imparted into our being. The process that Peter went through was a process of him knowing and entering into God and knowing God is grace in the midst of all of his circumstances and all of his trials and all of his tribulations. And that should be our experience. We should realize that when we say grace to you, we are really saying God to you. An experiential God that we have living in our human spirit should be our day by day supply and our day by day way in which we live in this world and we encounter all of the anxieties, all of the persecutions, all of the sufferings, even all of the discipline. We engage them by being in the God of all grace. And that brings us through.

[CW]: And as we've seen throughout this whole life-study of 1 Peter, these things you just mentioned, the discipline, the persecutions, the sufferings, the anxieties. Peter experienced all of these things as he writes and presents the salvation from all these things. This is his experience being conveyed to us. It's a most practical and experiential book, isn't it?

[JP]: And that's why it's so encouraging, because we are all like Peter. But Peter demonstrates in his writing and in his choice of adjectives, in his use of words, he demonstrates that he has experienced these. He doesn't just know Him in a doctrinal way. These are not religious lessons to Peter. These are experiences of God in his human spirit as grace.

[CW]: Well, you mentioned adjectives and we'll see in this program today these verses that we're covering, verses 10 through 14 at the end of chapter five, the last verses of the book. Peter's use of adjectives is very significant. Let's read a couple of these verses. I want to pick up verse 9 because it connects to verse 10, where we really begin today. "Being firm in your faith, he writes, knowing that the same sufferings are being accomplished among your brotherhood in the world." Then verse 10, "But the God of all grace, He who has called you into His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen and ground you. To Him be the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen. All right. Marvelous terms, marvelous adjectives. And here's Witness Lee to help us understand this in a full way.

Part 1

[CW]: John, we've marveled on a number of occasions at Peter's use of language. And here we have this phrase, *the God of all grace*. Not God in a general way and not grace in a general way. This short phrase conveys a lot, doesn't it?

[JP]: Especially the word "all." The God of all grace. God was not just a God to Peter who he experienced in limited ways, in limited circumstances, at limited times. He experienced God as the God of all grace. In every circumstance, in every situation, God was there for Peter as grace. And all grace refers to the riches of the bountiful supply of the divine life in many aspects, which is ministered to us in many steps in the divine economy. It's very significant that there are many steps in the divine economy, many steps that are involved in our daily living. There are sanctification, our transformation, our confirmation, our glorification. These are many steps in the divine economy. And for us to progress in these steps, there's many ministrations of life. And this life that comes to us and that brings us on in these steps, that brings us through these trials and these tribulations, that conform us to the image of Christ. This ministration is a ministry of the divine life. It is life that comes to us. It is life that operates in us. It is the divine life of God Himself. And so, when Peter says all grace, he's referring to the living God who was available to us to meet every need, every situation, every circumstance, God is there bringing us on. So, to Peter, He was not just the God of grace. He was the God of all grace. When I communicate with someone in my letters, I often conclude with grace to you because to me, I am saying to that person, may you experience and enjoy Christ. But just lately, I've had the realization I need to say much grace, much grace to you because there is so much more in all of our experiences of Christ that is available to us if we would just reach out, access, open ourselves, open our being to the Lord and call upon Him as the God of all grace. We will experience Him in many situations, in many circumstances, and eventually He will become all to us.

[CW]: You mentioned a letter. Actually, I had the occasion to write a short note to a brother in the Lord whom I knew was going through a particular hard time. And I didn't address the hard time, didn't

even reference it. But I've been in this portion. And so, I happen to mention and quote a little bit of these verses of Peter and how he presented grace to us and the God of all grace. And the true grace and the varied grace and the multiplied grace and the conclusion, as we'll see in the final section, I'm jumping ahead a little bit here, but is peace to all those who are in Christ. And this brother wrote me the kindest note back. He says that was such a tremendous encouragement to me. You do not know how the timing was perfect.

It was one of those situations. And I have the same realization. We need to be full of and convey the much grace to all the people we come in contact with. Because as you pointed out, this grace is just God in Christ Himself.

[JP]: Praise the Lord.

[CW]: Well, John, let's go forward here. And we want to come to verse 10 again. "The God of all grace, He who has called you into His eternal glory after you have suffered a little while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen and ground you. Again, we want to underscore the adjectives. We'll see carry a lot of meaning in Peter's word.

Part 2

[CW]: John, we can't, I think, help but realize that Peter's life, again, just demonstrating this marvelous divine truth, these four divine acts or stages of grace, the perfecting, the establishing, the strengthening and the grounding, really Peter's experience, isn't it?

[JP]: This is Peter's exact experience. But in order to understand that it's Peter's experience, we need to have an understanding of these words, *perfecting*, *establishing*, *strengthening* and *grounding*. Because in many respects, we think it would be just the opposite, that grounding would come first and perfecting would come last. You know, we want to arrive at a stage of being perfected as our Heavenly Father is perfect. And so, we think that perfecting would be the end stage. But actually, Peter has it as the very beginning point. He refers to perfecting as the starting point. And in order to understand that, it's very good to have the recovery version with the footnotes and the cross references, because this word perfecting is the same word that Paul uses when he's speaking to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 13:9, where he speaks about and encourages the Corinthians to be perfected. And this word perfecting doesn't mean that you've arrived at the final stage. What it really means, it means restoring. And it implies repairing and adjusting. And it is putting in order again, mending, thoroughly equipping a person. And this is what Peter needed at the very beginning of his experiences with the Lord. He needed a lot of mending, adjusting, restoring, and being brought to a point where he could be educated and received from the Lord. And this is our experience. The Lord comes in and He begins to work on our humanity, mending us, restoring us, adjusting us with his sufferings, with his trials, with his tribulations, with his discipline. We get restored to a point where we can be educated in a way of life to receive. And then we can be established. We can be strengthened. And ultimately, we can be grounded in the Triune God Himself. The goal is to be grounded, to be rooted, to be based, to have our entire being in the Triune God. And for this, we have this all grace that supplies us and brings us through every circumstance, every situation. If there's a need for mending and adjustment and restoring, grace does it. And in contrast to that, all grace in this marvelous progress, progressive stage in God's economy, there's just a little suffering. And for Peter, the little suffering is worth it. Because in this process, we go from being called to eternal glory. And

the price of that is a little suffering, the adjusting, and the mending, and the restoring, and the educating, and then ultimately establishing, strengthening, and grounding.

[CW]: I think your point here is really a good one, this matter, especially that the concluding stage is the grounding. You know, you look at Peter's life early on, and at one moment, he's boasting he'd never deny the Lord. The next moment, he is denying the Lord. And then he falls into deep despair over his failure. Then he's exalted, you know, on the day of Pentecost, he's up there boldly proclaiming again. I mean, there's certainly the signs that the Lord is working, and many times present with him. But he seems to be sort of all over the landscape. But by the end of his life here, just now as he's facing and about to experience his own martyrdom, he has been grounded. He is unmovable. He's unshakable. And this is the glorious result.

[JP]: Early in his life, you could find Peter in the highest revelation, and then in the lowest, just a few seconds later, he could be in the kind of the lowest dungeon of despair. Because he's just, you know, has to be rebuked by the Lord for giving ground to Satan. But at the end of Peter's life, if you would touch Peter, you wouldn't see these wild fluctuations. If you touched Peter at the end of his life, you would touch a person grounded and rooted and staying in the Triune God.

[CW]: The book, John, as we mentioned early on, concludes with the matter of grace leading to peace. In verse 12, he says, "I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying fully that this is the true grace of God." So, we have the all grace. Verse 10, now we have the true grace of God. Enter into this grace and stand in it. And then verse 14, the concluding word, greet one another with a kiss of love, peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. And John, I'll mention as we prepare to listen here, you talked about the footnotes. We're going to hear Witness Lee in this last portion, even read a footnote on this verse. And I would just recommend that to our listeners. I think a good demonstration from our brother of how valuable these notes can be. All right, here's Witness Lee, our last segment of the Life-study of 1 Peter.

Part 3

[CW]: Well, I liked the way he said that at the end, so I included it, John, for the concluding word of this Life-study.

[JP]: Very good.

[CW]: I could listen to and sort of muse over the words of that footnote, plus the words of Peter in verse 14 over and over again. It's truly marvelous, isn't it?

[JP]: What's marvelous about this particular footnote is it shows the link between grace and peace. Most people think there's such a thing as grace, and then over here on this corner, there's such a thing as peace, and they don't see the connection between grace and peace. The grace that Peter is talking about is the grace that comes from experiencing the Triune God in your Christian life that's under the judgment and government of God. And in that life that we're living, God comes to us and He supplies Himself to us to meet our need in every situation. He's there disciplining us, and on the other hand, He's there supplying us to bring us through these trials and tribulations. And this grace is a grace that, like we mentioned before, brings us through this process where we are adjusted, where we're mended, where we're restored, where we're strengthened, where we're established, and ultimately we're in the Triune God. And so this grace brings us and issues in us being in the Triune God, and the only way for us to be in the Triune God and to enjoy all that the Triune God is, is there to be an intimate

oneness, an intimate relationship of peace between God and man. God is happy with us, and we are happy with God. And God is our source. God is our enjoyment. God is our strength. God is our supply. And so, grace brings us from a negative condition in need of perfection to a peaceful condition of being grounded in God. And so that is the significance of peace. So, this is the marvelous conclusion of a life that's under the government of God, that in our experience of grace, we ultimately have the realization that there will be eternal glory and that there will be peace between God and man. Nothing is more satisfying. Nothing is more experiential. Nothing is more enjoyable than to go through your life realizing that God is happy with you and you are happy with God because we're intimately joined and we're mingled and the divine life is spreading and permeating throughout our entire being, grounding us in the Triune God.

[CW]: Well, I'll say again, I feel very good over this Life-study and appreciate the times you've been with us.

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