

THE GOD OF ALL GRACE

1 Peter 5:10-11

INTRODUCTION

- At the end of his life, Serbian physicist, engineer and inventor, Nikola Tesla wrote a final (perhaps apocryphal) message to his mother: “All these years that I had spent in the service of mankind brought me nothing but insults and humiliation.”
- Many, if not most people in the world live completely self-centred, self-loving, self-serving lives
- But there are some who see the harm in selfish living, and opt to use their lives to help others, sacrificing themselves for the welfare of others
- While this is certainly better than living for one’s self, it falls far short of the ideal
- For the humanist/atheist who rejects God, his altruism is nothing more than a façade, a mask for his self-love
- “Scratch an altruist and watch a hypocrite bleed,” wrote atheist biologist Michael Ghiselin
- And in the end, the altruist’s life ends in disappointment and dissatisfaction
- But there is another way to live; a life driven not by self-love, or even for the benefit of others; it is a life that experiences true satisfaction and contentment which continues beyond this world into the eternal
- It is a life lived for the glory of God
- God made us in his image and likeness, endowed us with minds that can reason and choose, and hearts that can love and worship, and designed us for the purpose of glorifying him

- God's law to man is summarised in the command to love him with all our being (Deuteronomy 6:5)
- All that we do is to be for God's glory (1 Corinthians 10:31)
- The great obstacle stopping men from fulfilling the purpose for which they were created is their proud, sinful, rebellious heart which refuses to submit to God
- Only the grace of God working in us is able to change and transform us from loving and serving self, to loving and serving God
- Having been reconciled to God through the blood of Christ, we are enabled by his grace to serve him in this world, in every circumstance, even under trials of affliction, suffering and persecution
- Such was the case of the Christians to whom the apostle Peter wrote his epistle – strangers scattered for their faith in Christ
- This is Peter's guide to persecuted believers, as to how we are to live and glorify God in a hostile world
- In this final chapter, Peter has been instructing the church as to the proper attitude and behaviour they ought to have as they undergo the fiery trial of persecution
 - ✓ The elders are first instructed to faithfully lead the flock (1-4)
 - ✓ Those in the church generally are called to have a humble spirit and to trust in God (5-7)
 - ✓ The church is then cautioned to be on guard against the devil and to resist him in the faith (8-9)
 - ✓ And finally, God's people are rest in God's grace to sustain and perfect them through their trials and finally bring them to glory (10-11)
- In these two verses, Peter exhorts to a sixfold look:
 - ✓ Heavenward to the God of all grace
 - ✓ Backward to his calling and election
 - ✓ Forward to his eternal glory
 - ✓ Outward to our present suffering in perspective

- ✓ Inward to his perfecting and confirming work in us
 - ✓ Heavenward to God in worship
- These verses conclude the body of the epistle, and Peter essentially ends where he began, encouraging the saints with their eternal inheritance in glory, showing them that though they are suffering presently, it is but for a short time, and that God's grace would sustain them until the end

We learn three lessons from Peter's prayer of encouragement:

I. DIRECT YOUR EYES UNTO GOD (10)

A. But the God...

1. This conjunction ("but") makes a strong contrast with the theme of the previous verses that dealt with the spiritual warfare with the devil
 - ✓ The devil hates us, but God loves us
 - ✓ The devil is our adversary, but God is our defender
 - ✓ The devil seeks to harm us, but God helps us
 - ✓ The devil accuses us, but God accepts us
 - ✓ The devil is strong, but God is stronger
 - ✓ The devil can do much, but only by God's permission
 - ✓ The devil will soon be cast into the abyss, but God will reign forever
2. Yes, we have a very powerful enemy who is continually seeking to devour us, *but God* is greater and by his strength we can overcome
3. We must learn to insert a "but God" into every circumstance of life, which will transform how we view them and how we handle them (Genesis 50:20; Psalm 73:26; Acts 13:29-30; 1 Corinthians 10:13)

B. The God of all grace

1. Peter is imitating Paul, who frequently would describe God with a title according to the subject he was writing about:

- a. The God of patience and consolation (Romans 15:5)
 - b. The God of hope (Romans 15:13)
 - c. The God of peace (Romans 15:33; 16:20; Philippians 4:9; Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:20)
 - d. The God of love (2 Corinthians 13:11)
 - e. The God of all comfort; (2 Corinthians 1:3)
2. “All grace” (*pases charitos*) indicates “every” grace – God is the original and only source of grace
 - a. God’s grace is “manifold” (1 Peter 4:10) – it is multifaceted, able to meet our every need in every situation at any time (Hebrews 4:16)
 - b. It is inherent to God’s very nature to be gracious – he has always been gracious and always will be (Psalm 86:15)
 3. The first component of God’s grace is that it is his *favour*, *goodwill*, and *benevolence* towards his creatures
 4. The second part of this grace is that it is thoroughly *undeserved* (Romans 11:6)
 5. There is only one power in the universe capable of the immense task of transforming such wicked, sinful, ungodly children of hell such as we are, into holy saints fit for a holy heaven and for the immediate presence and fellowship of a holy God – the grace of God
 6. The two prerequisites for receiving this grace are humility (James 4:6) and weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9)
 7. The rest of v.10 describes what God’s grace does for us

II. DEPEND YOUR EVERYTHING UPON GOD (10)

A. He has called us

1. This is the work of God's Spirit in the heart of a sinner, using the word of God to convict and convert
2. Were it not for the active calling of God, we would never seek God and remain eternally lost (Romans 3:11; Luke 15:4)
3. Throughout the epistle, Peter refers to the believer's calling
 - a. Called to holiness (1:15)
 - b. Called out of darkness into his marvellous light (2:9)
 - c. Called to follow Christ's steps (2:21)
 - d. Called to inherit a blessing (3:9)

C. We are called unto his eternal glory

1. When God originally created man, he "crowned him with glory and honour" (Psalm 8:5)
2. Through the fall, Adam lost that glory God had bestowed on him, which became marred by sin
3. But Christ came to restore what was lost in the fall, including that divine glory that man receives through unbroken fellowship with God
4. Salvation is not just eternal *life* it is eternal *glory*, where the believer is received into God's eternal kingdom to receive an inheritance and share in his glory (Romans 8:16-17)
 - a. The glory of putting off of this vile body, and receiving a glorious body like unto Christ's (Philippians 3:20-21)
 - b. The glory of the complete eradication of sin from us

- c. The glory of the enjoyment of perfect communion with God in his presence
 5. The fullness of this glory awaits the day of Christ's coming, yet even in this life we may enjoy a foretaste of the glory to come (Romans 8:30; Ephesians 1:13-14; 1 Peter 1:8)
 6. It is only by "Christ Jesus" that we may receive salvation and this eternal glory
- B. We must suffer a while
1. The word for "while" (*oligos*) is elsewhere translated as "few", "little", "short" and "small"
 2. It refers to both the *duration* of the suffering as well as the *degree*
 3. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17)
 4. While the world thinks little of this word, "after", living only for the present, the Christian should keep it ever before him, knowing that this present evil world will soon pass away and make way for Christ's eternal kingdom
- C. God's work in us
1. He perfects us
 - a. The word "perfect" (*katartisei*) means to make fit or join together; to restore
 - b. It is used of mending the nets (Matthew 4:21) of restoring an erring brother (Galatians 6:1) of framing the body and the worlds (Hebrews 10:5; Hebrews 11:3) of the union of members in the church (1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 13:11)

- c. Sin has disrupted, disordered and displaced our lives, and God uses trials and suffering to restore us into what we ought to be, after the image of Christ
 - d. Even as the resetting of a broken bone or joint can be traumatic and painful, yet it results in a restored and whole body, so too afflictions may be grievous, yet God is working all things together for good in his people (Romans 8:28)
2. He establishes us
- a. This word (*sterizo*) is “to set fast, to set in a certain position, to settle, confirm”
 - b. God’s design for us is that we are immovable in our faith, in spite of temptations, persecutions, afflictions or false teachers (Acts 20:24)
3. He strengthens us
- a. “Strengthen” (*sthenosei*) indicates steadfastness, confirmation
 - b. We are to rely upon God’s almighty strength, and it is through trials that we learn our own weakness and utter dependence on him (Ephesians 3:16; Philippians 4:13)
4. He settles us
- a. This word (*hemelioosei*) means to secure as in a foundation, to be grounded
 - b. Trials strip away all that is superfluous and unnecessary in our lives and we are left our foundation in Christ to stand upon. (Matthew 7:24-27)
 - c. The world and the devil are constantly working to *unsettle* and *shake* us from our confidence

- d. The settled believer says, “He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved” (Psalm 62:2)

III. DOXOLOGISE ETERNALLY YOUR GOD (11)

A. Praise in response to God’s grace

1. It is most appropriate that the apostle breaks forth into a doxology after this prayer invoking God’s gracious power upon the saints
2. “Glory” (*doxa*) – All that he does in us is not for our glory, but for his glory
3. “Dominion” (*kratos*) – It is his might that will accomplish his will in conforming us to his image, and in finally subduing all things unto himself
4. “For ever and ever” – literally “to the ages of the ages”
5. Amen – so let it be

CONCLUSION

1. What are you living for? What is the driving force in your life?
2. Is it your own selfish pleasures or is it the glory of God?
3. God is the “God of all grace”, yet those who spurn his grace must suffer his judgment?
4. Have you humbled yourself before him as a guilty, helpless sinner and received his grace?
5. Pray: “O LORD, be gracious unto us” (Isaiah 33:2)
6. Are you submitted to his will, receiving afflictions joyfully from his hand, knowing this is his means of perfecting you?