

“Stand Firm In It!”

1 Peter 5:10-14

December 30, 2023

INTRO: *How seriously & humbly did you celebrate Christmas?*

We are the stable that Christ turns into His temple!

(and how seriously & humbly are you looking ahead to the new year?)

PRAYER

CONTEXT: 1st Peter’s... *finale without a finish line.*

The Global Message of 1 Peter

Peter wrote this letter to encourage believers scattered around the known world to ***persevere through suffering***. For in suffering they are following in the footsteps of their Savior, by whose death and resurrection they are saved.

- ESV.org

Hardship and holiness: these are the ***twin themes*** of Peter’s first epistle, written to a church composed of Gentile converts from licentious hedonism on the one hand and Jewish converts with Old Testament traditions on the other hand. Together they experienced ***an alien and exile status in a hostile world***. - Crossway.org / Jared C. Wilson

Another commentator called 1st Peter the Job of the N.T...

The theme of 1 Peter is: *Experiencing God's grace in the midst of suffering.* In a real sense, **1 Peter is an interpretation and application of Isa 53.** - **Bible.org**

For my part...

I pray that 1st Peter will forever inform, inspect, & inspire your life. I pray this powerful little Book called 1st Peter, with its 5 chapters, 35 commands, and 105 verses will forevermore shape your worship, walk, work, warfare, & witness.

BIG IDEA:

God's faith family stands missionally firm thru suffering... BE-ing empowered in holy, humble, harmony... ALL by His grace, per His Gospel & for His Glory!

PREVIEW:

1. *The FULL Gospel*
2. *Humble FAITH*
3. *FAMILY Peace*

TEXT:

***10**And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. **11**To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

***12**By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. **13**She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. **14**Greet one another with the kiss of love.*

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

I. The FULL GOSPEL

➤ **God's Gritty Gospel** *(suffering to glory)*

***v.10** And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, & establish you.*

A. We NEED repetition and reminding! (Genesis 4:7-9)

B. Here is a summary of 1st Peter in a snap-shot...

C. Here is The Gospel of Jesus THE Christ in a verse...

a. Suffer for a little while

- b. God & His grace have called/caused you
- c. His Gospel will bring you to His glory eternal, via:
 - i. **Restoring**
 - ii. **Confirming**
 - iii. **Strengthening**
 - iv. **Establishing**

➤ **God's Eternal Power**

v.11 ***To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.***

- A. Peter is not just declaring... he's demonstrating his 1st person faith in the One, true, Almighty God of creation!
- B. Notice the coming-under humility in his witness...
- C. **"Dominion"** is "might," "power," "all-sovereignty"
- D. Like Hebrews, 1st Peter Exalts Christ & Exhorts Church
- E. **"Forever AND ever"** = holy hyperbole to humble us!
- F. *When your God looks big, your sins look big. When your God looks small, your sins look small. - Anonymous*
- G. **1 Peter 5:11 (and ALL of God's Word) should keep us from making mountains out of mole hills... AND keep us from making mole hills out of mountains!** JDP

II. HUMBLE FAITH

(REAL; BOLD; THIS; FIRM)

➤ REAL Humility & Faith

v.12 *By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him,*

A. Silas the HOLY MAN

- a. A *“leading man”* in Jerusalem church under James
- b. Referred to as both *a prophet* and *an apostle*...
- c. *Dispatched to Antioch* along side Paul & Barnabas

B. Silas the HELPFUL MISSIONARY

- a. Began to *serve & support Paul’s Antioch ministry*
- b. Paul *replaces Barnabas & Mark* w/ Silas on #2 trip
- c. Silas *stays in Berea* & ministers to/with Bereans...
- d. Silas stays by Paul’s side in *the Philippi suffering*
- e. Silas *sings praises in pain...* from inside the jail cell
- f. Silas is *an eternity impacting witness & missionary*
- g. Silas stays on mission thru *Thessalonica troubles*
- h. Silas *rejoins Paul in Corinth*... see his commitment

- i. Paul *wrote 1 & 2 Thessalonians “with” Silas*
- j. 2nd *Corinthians* says *Silas evangelized* that church
- k. Notice how *Silas now serves Peter as he did Paul...*
- l. *Silas knew this mission field* & the family of God...
- m. Silas *helped with & carried Peter’s 1st letter...*

C. Silas the HUMBLE MODEL

- a. See the importance of subordinate kingdom work

Silas always played 2nd fiddle...
and faithfully found joy in it.

Is that not a pattern for us?

- b. It’s amazing what God does through humble people who are not looking for credit or glory...

*Not a syllable that Silas ever said
is recorded in Scripture.*

- c. Silas’ humble identity, simply: *“a faithful brother”*

- i. **Consider** the grace, power, gift, & witness

- ii. **Contrast** w/ *“unfaithful weed/goat/wolf”*

- 1. **Faithful** vs. **unfaithful SPOUSE**

- 2. **Faithful** vs. **unfaithful SOLDIER**

- 3. **Faithful** vs. **unfaithful SHEPHERD**

➤ **BOLD Humility & Faith**

*I have written briefly to you,
exhorting and declaring that this*

- A. Caring Christlike love invests in other's lives. JDP
- B. Sharing ("**briefly**") = sermon, life group, etc.
- C. Exhorting = warnings wrapped in encouragement
- D. Declaring = **NOT suggesting**; like it or not!
 - a. **Greek = "declare/testify AS A WITNESS"**
 - b. See **Titus 2:15**
 - c. *Some things need to be declared vs. discussed.*
- E. Truth-in-love ("**this**") = **ALL** of **1st Peter**

VIDEO: *1st Peter Summary*

The Gospel Coalition

(Themes)

*Those who persevere in faith while suffering persecution
should be full of hope...*

1. **Those who suffer as Christians will be exalted.**
1 Peter 1:6–9; 2:18–25; 3:13–22; 4:12–19
2. **The church of Jesus Christ is the new temple, the new Israel, the new people of God.** 1 Peter 1:1–2; 2:4–10

3. **Believers should set their hope on their end-time inheritance.** [1 Peter 1:3–9, 13–16](#)
4. **Christ died as a substitute for sinners, and his death is the basis for their new life.** [1 Peter 1:17–21; 2:24; 3:13–22](#)
5. **Christ’s suffering is an example to his disciples.** [1 Peter 2:21–23](#)
6. **At his resurrection, Christ triumphed over his enemies.** [1 Peter 3:18–22](#)
7. **Christians should live righteously in their homes and in society.** [1 Peter 2:11–3:7](#)
8. **New life in Christ is the basis for a life of love and holiness.** [1 Peter 1:3; 1:13–2:3](#)

➤ **THIS Humility & Faith**

is the true grace of God.

A. **AUTHENTICITY:** [God’s full context “truth in love”](#) (1st Peter & “all Scripture” – cf. Ephesians 4:15 & 2 Timothy 3:16-17) is the defining & describing of God’s TRUE grace!

B. **AUTHORSHIP:**

ALL “true grace” is truly GOD’s grace! -JDP

C. **AUTHORITY**: NOTE the IMPLICATION of this phrase... **BEWARE the wicked ways of your adversary the Devil, who is prowling around with his demons, disguised as angels of light, looking for souls to devour...**

1. Per 1st Peter 5:8, Matthew 7:15, and Acts 20:29, **BEWARE! Watch out! Because biblical grace, like biblical love... has cultural copies and damnable counterfeits!** -JDP
2. **Prowlers uses FAKE grace & PHONY gospels!**
- JDP
3. ***Eternal, spiritual-devouring happens when real people put their relational faith in FALSE teachers, FAKE grace and its PHONY gospels.***
- JDP

➤ **FIRM** Humility & Faith

Stand firm in it.

A. **Stand** vs. fall

- Ephesians 6:10ff ***“and stand firm”***
- A “strong, faithful obedience” metaphor
- Upright = righteous / fallen = sinful

B. **Firm** vs. flimsy

- Joshua 1:6-9 ***“be strong & courageous”***
- Hebrews 10-12 ***“consider them/Him”***

- *1 Timothy 6:12 “fight the good fight”*
- *Revelation 21:8 “no cowards in heaven”*

C. *In* vs. out

- *Rich ruler... 99% vs. 100% obedience*
- *Prodigal family party... whose in vs. out*
- *Pharisee vs. tax-collector... looks vs. love*
- *Matthew 7:21-23: mechanical vs. miracle*

D. *It* vs. counterfeit

- *John 8:32-36...*
- *Biblical warnings abound...*
 - Walk through the Garden of Eden*
 - Take Genesis 4:7,8,9 to heart*
 - False prophets throughout the O.T.*
 - Direct warnings from Jesus, Paul, Peter, James, Jude, etc.*
 - Read the Book of Hebrews & 1 John*

Live dangerously.

BE The danger! BE The Church!

BE The T-9... move ANYTHING, biblical bulldozer!

BE that biblically firm and faithful family of charging rhinos!

Standing firm means...

- Bringing glory to God in ALL things...
- Confessing, Repenting, & seeking restoration...
- In the macro & the micro missions of life...
- BE-ing biblical vs. cultural in commitments...
- Never meeting sin in the middle...No compromise!
- In redemption vs. religion...
- With sheep vs. goats... With wheat vs. weeds...
- With owners vs. hirelings...
- With trusted shepherds vs. tricky wolves...
- On the narrow road vs. the broad road...
- With the heavenly humble vs. the poisonous proud...
- With our Lord & Savior vs. the liar Satan...

VIDEO: *Paul Tripp – “Your Last Hill”*

III. FAMILY PEACE

(God's Loving Elect & Preserving/Persevering Peace)

- **God's *Loving Elect***

v.13 *She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. v.14 Greet one another with the kiss of love.*

See sample of 10 inspirational inclusions *(sandwich like parallels)*

- *Family of God to Family of God*
- *Grace, mercy & mission to Grace, mercy, & mission*
- *Blessed & Beloveds to Blessed & Beloveds*
- *Chosen-Elect to Chosen-Elect*
- *Persevering Worship to Persevering Worship*
- *Remembering the mission to Remembering mission*
- *A little while context to A little while context*
- *Long-term perspective to Long-term Perspective*
- *Suffering to Glory... & again... Suffering to Glory*
- *Peace “no matter what” to Peace “no matter what”*

➤ **God's Preserving & Persevering Peace**

PEACE to all of you who are IN CHRIST.

Galatians 5:22

*...the fruit of the Spirit is: love, joy, **peace**...*

Psalm 119:165

*Great peace have those who love your law;
nothing can make them stumble.*

Philippians 1:28

Don't be intimidated in any way by your enemies. This will be a sign to them that they are going to be destroyed, but that you are going to be saved, even by God himself.

Philippians 4:7

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

REVIEW:

1. **God's Gritty Gospel.** *(Today's suffering = tomorrow's glory!)*
2. **God's Eternal Power.** *(He is sovereign forever & ever Amen!)*
3. **God's Humble Faith Family** *(We BE... like Peter, Silas, Jesus!)*
4. **God's Truth-In-Love** *(We exhort & declare His TRUE grace!)*
5. **God's Firm Command-To-Stand** *(Never ever quit on Christ!)*
6. **God's Loving Elect** *(True love is an encouraging apologetic!)*
7. **God's Persevering Peace** *(God's peace stills sin's noise/fears!)*

CLOSE:

So how does one close 1st Peter?

Peter could summarize his message, therefore, as
a call to stand in grace. – Schreiner

Grudem put it this way:

Peter says he has been exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God, thus summarizing his letter as a combination of moral commands (exhorting) and factual doctrinal teaching (declaring that this is the true grace of God). The word this is best understood to refer to the entire way of life described in the letter as a whole. The entire Christian life is one of grace—God's daily bestowal of blessings, strength, help, forgiveness, and fellowship with himself, all of which we need, none of which we ever deserve. All is of grace, every day. From continual trust in that grace and from continual obedience empowered by it, Christians must not move; rather, they must stand fast in it—until the day of their death.

So, again, how does one close 1st Peter? How are we to close any book of the Bible? I exhort us to treat each book the same way we do the whole book...

We should never really close The Bible.

We should never close or walk away from 1st Peter.

Instead, I pray, we will hear and heed 1st Peter's inspirational inclusios, loving exhortations, and its defining promises of God... over and over and over again, each and every day of our lives.

I pray, per 1st Peter & all of God's Word that we:

1. Will BE God's blessed, beloved, truth in love FAMILY
2. Will BE elect exiles harmonized in holy humility.
3. Will BE Great Commandment & Commission Church.
4. Will BE persevering thru persecution & suffering.
5. Will BE an army of ambassadors/discipled warriors.
6. Will BE winning witnesses of His Word, will, & ways
7. Will BE glorifying God by sharing His grace & gospel.

May we BE The CHURCH in this dark & dying world...

NO MATTER WHAT!

PRAYER

WORSHIP: *Faithfully; Don't Fight Alone; Come Jesus Come*

New American Commentary: Schreiner

5:12

The closing begins with a reference to Silvanus.

The NIV introduces two changes in the text. First, it translates “Silvanus” as “Silas.” Silas is mentioned often in Acts as Paul’s partner in ministry (Acts 15:22, 27, 32, 40; 16:19, 25, 29; 17:4, 10, 14–15; 18:5). He most likely was the same person as the Silvanus mentioned in 2 Cor 1:19; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1 and here.

Hence, the NIV translation is defensible here. The problem with the theory of pseudepigraphy arises here, for those who adopt such a theory argue that Peter was not the real author, and so they also raise the question of whether Silvanus is a real person or simply a fictive device. Hence, Achtemeier concludes with the awkward solution that a real person is intended, but Silvanus was too old to carry out the task of taking the letters to Asia Minor. **If the realism of the text is accepted, it is more economical to argue that Silvanus really and truly carried the letter to the various churches.**²

Second, the NIV translation suggests that Silvanus helped author the letter. “With the help of Silas ... I have written to you briefly.” A number of scholars have supported such a view, understanding Silvanus to be the amanuensis or secretary of 1 Peter.³ As we noted in the introduction, ascribing the letter to Silvanus possibly could solve the problem of the excellent Greek found in the letter. Nevertheless, contrary to the NIV, the wording used here cannot and should not be used to defend the theory that Silvanus functioned as the amanuensis in 1 Peter. The NRSV is therefore more cautious and accurate in translating the phrase, “Through Silvanus ... I have written this short letter.” **The phrase to “write through someone” (*graphein dia tinos*) during the time the New Testament was written does not identify the amanuensis but the carrier of the letter.** Hence, Peter did not specify the amanuensis but informed the readers that Silvanus was the one designated to carry the letter to them.

For example, the letter containing the decision of the apostolic meeting in Jerusalem was sent “through” Silas and Barsabbas (*grapsantes dia cheiros autōn*, Acts 15:23). In some manuscripts Romans contains a subscription that says the letter was written “through Phoebe” (*dia Phoibēs*). This certainly does not mean that she served as the secretary since Rom 16:22 clearly demonstrates that Tertius filled that role. What we have here is a formula designating the bearer of the letter (cf. Ignatius, *Rom.* 10:1; *Phld.* 11:2; *Smyrn.* 12:1; *Pol.* 8:1; Polycarp, *Phil.* 14:1). Such an observation does not rule out conclusively Silvanus as a secretary since it is possible that Silvanus functioned as Peter’s secretary and Peter failed to mention that fact. It does show, however, that the formula used here does not constitute evidence that he served as Peter’s amanuensis.

Peter also remarked that he “regard[s]” Silvanus as a “faithful brother.” We have here the typical commendation of the person who bears the letter (**Rom 16:1–2; Eph 6:21–22; Col 4:7–8**).

Those who carried letters would also convey news from the letter writer and presumably could function as the first interpreter of the letter if the recipients had questions about its meaning.

The words “I regard” (*logizomai*) represent Peter’s apostolic judgment on the matter of Silvanus’s credibility, indicating that Silvanus delivered the letter with Peter’s imprimatur (cf. Rom 3:28; 8:18; 2 Cor 11:5).

Peter followed convention in describing his letter as brief (e.g., Heb 13:22).

He then identified *the purpose of the letter, saying that he had written to encourage and bear witness to the true grace of God.*

The word “this” (*tautēn*) in the phrase “this is the true grace of God” refers to the letter as a **whole** and should not be traced back to a specific antecedent.

The grace of God has been manifested in Jesus the Christ, who suffered on the cross and then was exalted to glory. Similarly, Peter called on his readers to suffer faithfully as Christians as a prelude to entering into glory.

In the interval before the consummation of all things, believers are exhorted to “stand fast” in such grace.⁷

*Failure to stand constitutes apostasy,
and those who apostatize will face
destruction on the last day.*

Peter could summarize his message,
therefore, as

a call to stand in grace.

The delicate balance between the indicative and imperative is preserved here. Grace has grasped every believer in Jesus Christ, and believers have been begotten by God’s grace (1:3). Still, they must stand in the grace that has secured them. Grace does not cancel out the imperative but establishes it.

5:13

The letter now closes with greetings and a benediction, which is characteristic of letter closings.

The greeting in v. 13 comes from the one who is chosen in Babylon (*hē syneklektē*) and from Mark. Hence, the notion of election functions as an inclusio framing the letter (cf. 1:1). It is unlikely that the fellow elect should be identified as an individual woman.¹⁰

It is quite unlikely that readers in Asia Minor would know the identity of this unnamed woman. Some have even seen a reference to Peter's wife. But this is quite improbable. Early manuscripts add the word "church," and even though the addition is secondary, we see an early and accurate interpretation of the identity of the chosen woman.¹²

The fellow elect one represents the church in Babylon, which sends her greeting to those who are elect pilgrims from Asia Minor.

Such an interpretation is confirmed by 2 John, where the church is described as "the chosen lady and her children" (v. 1), and John closes by saying, "The children of your chosen sister send their greetings" (v. 13).

A reference to the church is also suggested by the teaching that the church is Christ's bride (cf. Eph 5:22–33; Rev 19:7–9).

The interpretation proposed above is strengthened when we recognize that Peter wrote symbolically about the church in Babylon. There would be no need for Peter to specify his wife was in Babylon. The historical Babylon of the Old Testament was a city in ruins, and so Peter could not have been referring to that city.¹⁴ Moreover, no evidence exists that Peter ministered in such a locale. Some scholars have noted a place called Babylon on the Nile Delta (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 2.315), but it is doubtful that this military outpost is in view.

Peter drew on Old Testament tradition, where Babylon represents those opposed to God (cf. Isaiah 13–14; 46–47; Jeremiah 50–51). In this instance, as in Revelation (17–18), Babylon designates Rome itself, the enemy of God.

The mention of Babylon constitutes another reminder that believers are exiles in their present situation, and the allusion to exile under the dominion of Babylon constitutes a bookend between the beginning and end of the letter.¹⁶

The greeting from Mark comes from John Mark, who accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey. He subsequently left Paul and Barnabas, and Barnabas recruited him for further missionary work after Paul rejected

him (cf. Acts 12:25; 13:4, 13; 15:35–39). Paul later spoke highly of Mark (Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11; Phlm 24).

Peter, of course, would have known Mark from the earliest experience of the early church, where meetings were held in the home of Mark's mother (Acts 12:12).

The early tradition that Mark wrote under Peter's influence is also historically credible (see Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.15.1–2; 3.39.15; 6.25.5). Calling Mark his "son" is not literal but designates the fatherly love Peter had for the younger Mark.

We have already seen that the closing is full of symbolic language, and the phrase should be read as symbolical here as well.

5:14

The injunction to "***greet one another with a kiss of love***" is similar to the Pauline letters, where the holy kiss is enjoined (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26).

Peter's language differs since he spoke of "a kiss of love" instead of a "holy kiss."

The love between members should be comparable to the love that exists in a healthy family,

though the greetings with a kiss were, of course, to be pure and unstained by any kind of sexual lust. The kiss of love probably was practiced during worship, since it would naturally occur when believers met together as a community.

The letter concludes with a peace wish.

Paul, in contrast, closed his letters with grace benedictions (e.g., Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 16:23; 2 Cor 13:14; Gal 6:18, etc.).

The reference to peace recalls 1:2 and in that sense functions as yet another inclusio.

The phrase “in Christ” simply means “Christian” here, with the result that Peter prayed that peace would be the portion for all those who are believers.

Closing the letter with a peace wish is significant.

Believers in the Petrine churches were buffeted by trials and persecutions. The stress of life was significant. What believers need in such a situation is God’s peace and strength, a peace that will enable them to stand (5:12) amidst the pressures of the present evil age. Such peace will fortify believers so they can endure opposition and persevere to the end, so that they will receive an eschatological reward.¹

¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 247–252.

NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY: Grudem

CLOSING GREETINGS (5:12–14)

Peter ends the letter with a brief concluding section. In verse 12 he begins by noting the role of Silvanus, but then immediately reverts to another word of exhortation. Verses 13 and 14 contain personal greetings and a benediction of peace.

a. I am sending this by faithful Silvanus (5:12a)

12a. *Silvanus* is also closely connected with Paul's ministry (he is mentioned in 2 Cor. 1:19; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1), and is **the same person whom Luke calls 'Silas' in Acts (mentioned twelve times between Acts 15:22 and 18:5). In fact, Acts 15:22 names Silas as a messenger carrying the apostolic letter from Jerusalem.** (A. T. Robertson, *Grammar*, pp. 172–173, gives a long list of Gk. names which had both long and short forms in the same pattern as Silas/Silvanus.)

By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you has been thought by some commentators to indicate that Silvanus was a messenger who carried Peter's letter, by others to indicate that he was the 'amanuensis' (secretary) who recorded the letter as Peter spoke (cf. Rom. 16:22; the use of an amanuensis explains Paul's habit of adding a personal postscript 'with my own hand': 1 Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11; Col. 4:18; 2 Thess. 3:17; Phlm. 19). The evidence presented in the Introduction clearly favours the 'messenger' view, not the 'amanuensis' view (see pp. 25f.). (The NIV translation, 'With the help of Silvanus [see mg.] ... I have written to you briefly', is apparently based on the view that Silvanus is the amanuensis.)

In addition to the sense of the phrase 'by Silvanus' (see p. 23), further evidence that this sentence merely designates Silvanus as the messenger is found in the fact that Peter calls him *a faithful brother as I regard him*. **This commendation of the bearer of a letter is common and appropriate** (apparently found, for example, in 1 Cor. 16:10–11; Eph. 6:21–22; Col. 4:7–9; Titus 3:12–13), but nowhere is there a clear example of such a commendation given for an amanuensis who helped to write a letter, nor would there seem to be a good reason for Peter to do so. (Although Tertius mentions himself in Rom. 16:22, no NT author himself specifically mentions or commends an amanuensis.)

Of course, one could argue that even though this verse designates Silvanus as the bearer of the letter, he could also have been the amanuensis who wrote at Peter's direction and (perhaps) polished the style of composition. But if this verse is entirely explained as a designation showing Silvanus to be the bearer of the letter (see discussion in Introduction), then there is nothing here

which also designates him as the amanuensis, nor is there historical data elsewhere which would indicate this role for Silvanus. It is best, therefore, to conclude that there is no clear evidence in the letter indicating that Silvanus had a role in its composition.

b. Stand in the grace I have described (5:12b)

12b. *I have written briefly to you* is similar to the expression of brevity found in Hebrews 13:22.

Looking back over both Hebrews and 1 Peter, one cannot help being struck by how much the authors have actually said in a very short space:

many present-day readers may see in that fact additional evidence of divine as well as human authorship of this letter (certainly that has been true of the present author's own experience while working closely on the letter over many months).

Peter says he has been exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God, thus summarizing his letter as a combination of moral commands (exhorting) and factual doctrinal teaching (declaring that this is the true grace of God). The word this is best understood to refer to the entire way of life described in the letter as a whole. The entire Christian life is one of grace—God's daily bestowal of blessings, strength, help, forgiveness, and fellowship with himself, all of which we need,

none of which we ever deserve. All is of grace, every day. From continual trust in that grace and from continual obedience empowered by it, Christians must not move; rather, they must stand fast in it—until the day of their death.

c. Greetings from the church in Rome and from Mark (5:13)

13. *Babylon* can hardly be the ancient city of Babylon in Mesopotamia which is prominent in the Old Testament, for by the first century it was a small and obscure place (see Introduction, p. 34), for which there is no evidence of a visit by Peter (or Mark: see the end of this verse), or even of a Christian church. But there is good evidence outside the New Testament that Peter was in Rome about the time this letter was written (see Introduction, pp. 34f.), and **it is best to understand *Babylon* as a reference to Rome (just as in Rev. 16:19; 17:5; 18:2).**

It is not that Peter was trying to disguise his location, but rather that he is carrying through the imagery of the church as the new people of God, the true Israel (see note at 2:10), which he has maintained since the word ‘Dispersion’ in 1:1.

Just as in the Old Testament Babylon was the centre of worldly power and opposition to God’s people, so in the time of the New Testament Rome is the earthly centre of a

worldwide system of government and life which opposes the gospel.

Yet there Peter is in the midst of it.

And Peter is not alone. *She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, must mean the church at Rome*—for no one individual would be so well known to all the churches of Peter's readers as to be identifiable from such an anonymous reference.

The whole church at Rome sends you greetings. And so does my son Mark indicates the presence of Mark with Peter and shows a close association with the author of the second Gospel.

Son means not physical son but spiritual 'son', close associate and assistant in the service of Christ (cf. 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2).

d. Greet one another (5:14a)

14a. *Greet one another with the kiss of love* is similar to a closing exhortation in several of Paul's letters (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26).

Such a kiss was free from romantic overtones, since Paul always calls it a 'holy kiss'.

Although we may dismiss this as simply a custom belonging to first-century culture, we would do well to recognize the benefits in interpersonal relationships which come from

such close physical expressions of friendship and fellowship in Christ. It is much harder to get mad at someone you have just hugged or kissed, and it is much easier to feel accepted in a fellowship which has given such a warm welcome!

'Give each other a handshake all round' (Phillips) is far too distant and formal—probably a 'holy hug' would come much closer to fulfilling Peter's intention. And it should be a genuine expression of love in Christ.

e. Peace to all who are in Christ (5:14b)

14b. *Peace to all of you that are in Christ* is what these believers needed—peace within for troubled minds and hearts, and peace without when God grants them rest from their sufferings (cf. 'peace' in 1:2b).

To be *in Christ* is to be united with him for all the benefits of redemption: it is the status of all true believers as soon as they have become Christians, and they remain *in Christ* for all eternity.²

St. Andrews Commentary: R.C. Sproul

God of All Grace

But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you (v. 10).

² Wayne A. Grudem, [*1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*](#), vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 206–209.

Every good thing we experience comes to us from the benevolent hand of God. We live by grace alone. We move from faith to faith, life to life, and grace to grace, and God is the author of all of these graces. He is not just the God of grace or just a gracious God, but He is the God of *all* grace. God's eternal glory, which is in Him alone from all eternity, He will not share with any man. Nevertheless, by His grace He has called us to participate in it. The only one who can perfect us is God. The only one who is able to establish us is God. The only one who can give us abiding strength is God. The only one who can settle us is God.

Augustine said, "Almighty God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you." Augustine was saying that the human spirit remains perpetually unsettled. As long as we are estranged from God, who made us for Himself, we cannot possibly be settled in our spirits.

To be settled is an act of divine grace, so Peter's plea is that God would settle us. Then Peter gives a benediction: ***To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen*** (v. 11)—*solī Deo gloria*.

Peter had been there for the Sermon on the Mount. He had heard Jesus explain how to pray: ***"Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen"*** (Matt. 6:13).

v.12

After the benediction comes Peter's farewell: ***By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand*** (v. 12). Who is Silvanus? Most commentators agree that the name Silvanus is another way of spelling the name Silas, the man who traveled with Paul on his missionary journeys and rose to great importance in the early church. Presumably Peter entrusted this epistle to Silas to deliver to the recipients.

She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son (v. 13). Some have speculated that "she who is in Babylon"

was Peter's wife. Earlier, Jesus had healed Peter's mother-in-law, so we know that at some point Peter was married. However, the "she" here almost certainly refers to the church, which is given a feminine title throughout the Bible. Babylon is the code name, as it were, among biblical writers of the first century, for the city of Rome. If Peter is writing this epistle from the city of Rome, he is telling its recipients that not only does he greet them but that the whole church in Rome greets them as well.

In referencing Mark, I doubt very much that Peter is using the term "son" in a biological manner but rather as Paul referred to Timothy. As Timothy was Paul's son in the Lord, so Peter describes Mark as his spiritual son. Peter is almost certainly indicating John Mark, the one who went with Paul on a missionary journey but was sent back home. He did not make it as a missionary; the Apostle Paul had to fire him so that Mark could find his vocation. **Afterward Mark went home and wrote the Gospel of Mark, which we believe to be, in a very real sense, Peter's gospel, because Peter stood behind Mark as he penned it.**

Now Peter makes mention again of Mark and sends Mark's greetings along.

Greet one another with a kiss of love (v. 14). Elsewhere that is called a "holy kiss."

It was the way ancient Near Eastern people greeted each other at that time and still do today.

We are not obligated to continue that custom in our nation, but we may greet one another with a holy kiss, if we desire.

Peter concludes the epistle the same way that Jesus concluded His teaching to His disciples: giving them the legacy of Christ.

Jesus had no earthly estate. His only garment was His robe, which was taken by His captors who gambled for it.

***All He had left
to give His disciples was peace:***
***“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give
to you; not as the world gives do I give
to you. Let not your heart be troubled,
neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).***

Although Jews commonly wished peace on one another, it took on a particular sensitivity in the Christian community, so Peter concludes this epistle with this common ending. ***Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen*** (v. 14).

*Peace to all who are in the Prince of Peace;
peace to all who have the inheritance
of His peace.
Amen.*³

³ R. C. Sproul, [1-2 Peter](#), St. Andrew's Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 190–192.

Albert Barnes New Testament Commentary:

10. *But the God of all grace.* The God who imparts all needful grace. It was proper in their anticipated trials to direct them to God, and to breathe forth in their behalf an earnest and affectionate prayer that they might be supported. **A prayer of this kind by an apostle would also be to them a sort of pledge or assurance that the needed grace would be granted them.**

Who hath called us unto his eternal glory. And who **means, therefore, that we shall be saved.** As he has called us to his glory, we need not apprehend that he will leave or forsake us. On the meaning of the word *called*, see Notes, Eph. 4:1.

After that ye have suffered a while. After you have suffered as long as he shall appoint.

The Greek is, 'having suffered *a little*,' and may refer either to *time* or *degree*. In both respects the declaration concerning afflictions is true. They are *short*, compared with eternity; they are *light*, compared with the exceeding and eternal weight of glory. See Notes, 2 Cor. 4:16–18.

Make you perfect. By means of your trials. The tendency of affliction is to make us perfect.

Stablish. The Greek word means *to set fast; to fix firmly; to render immovable*, Luke 16:26; 9:51; 22:32; Rom. 1:11; 16:25; 1 Thess. 3:2, 13, *et al.*

Strengthen. Give you strength to bear all this.

Settle you. Literally, *found you*, or establish you on a firm foundation—θεμελιώσει. **The allusion is to a house which is so firmly fixed on a foundation that it will not be moved by winds or floods.** Comp. Notes, Matt. 7:24. seq.

11. *To him be glory, &c.* See Notes, chap. 4:11.

12.

By Silvanus. Or Silas. See Notes, 2 Cor. 1:19; 1 Thess. 1:1. He was the intimate friend and companion of Paul, and had laboured much with him in the regions where the churches were situated to which this epistle was addressed. In what manner he became acquainted with Peter, or why he was now with him in Babylon, is unknown.

A faithful brother unto you, as I suppose. The expression ‘as I suppose’—ὡς λογίζομαι—does not imply that there was any doubt on the mind of the apostle, but indicates rather a firm persuasion that what he said was true.

Thus, **Rom. 8:18**, ‘**For I reckon** (λογίζομαι) **that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared,**’ &c. That is, I am fully persuaded of it; **I have no doubt of it.**

Peter evidently had *no doubt* on this point, but he probably could not speak from any personal knowledge. He had not been with them when Silas was, and perhaps not at all; for they may have been ‘strangers’ to him personally—for the word ‘strangers,’ in chap. 1:1, *may* imply that he had no personal acquaintance with them. Silas, however, had been much with them, (comp. Acts 15:17–31,) and Peter had no doubt that he had shown himself to be ‘a faithful brother’ to them. An epistle conveyed by his hands could not but be welcome. It should be observed, however, that the expression ‘I suppose’ has been differently interpreted by some. Wetstein understands it as meaning, ‘Not that he supposed Silvanus to be a faithful brother, for who, says he, could doubt that? but that he had written as he understood matters, having carefully considered the subject, and as he regarded things to be true;’ and **refers for illustration to Rom. 8:18; Phil. 4:8; Heb. 11:9.**

Grotius understands it as meaning, ‘If I remember right;’ and supposes that the idea is, that he shows his affection for them by saying that this was not the first time that he had written to them, but that he had written before briefly, and sent the letter, as well as he could remember, by Silvanus. But there is no evidence that he had written to them before, and the common interpretation is undoubtedly to be preferred.

Exhorting.

No small part of the epistle is taken up with exhortations.

And testifying. Bearing witness.

The main design of the office of the apostles was to bear witness to the truth, (1 Cor. 9:1)

and Peter in this epistle discharged that part of the functions of his office towards the scattered Christians of Asia Minor.

That this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand. That the religion in which you stand, or which you now hold, is that which is identified with the grace or favour of God. Christianity, not Judaism, or Paganism, was the true religion. **To show this, and bear continual witness to it, was the leading design of the apostolic office.**

13.

The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you.

It will be seen at once that much of this is supplied by our translators; the words ‘church that is’ not being in the original. The Greek is, ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτή; and might refer to a church, or to a female. Wall, Mill, and some others, suppose that the reference is to a Christian woman, perhaps the wife of Peter himself. Comp. 2 John 1. But the Arabic, Syriac, and Vulgate, as a well as the English versions, supply the word *church*. This interpretation seems to be confirmed by the word rendered *elected together with*—συνεκλεκτή. This word would be properly used in reference to one *individual* if writing to another *individual*, but would *hardly* be appropriate as applied to an individual addressing *a church*. It could not readily be supposed, moreover, that any one female in Babylon could have such a prominence, or be so well known, that nothing more would be necessary to designate her than merely to say, ‘the elect female.’ On the word Babylon here, and the place denoted by it, see the Intro., § 2.

And so doth Marcus my son. Probably John Mark. See Notes, Acts 12:12; 15:37. **Why he was now with Peter is unknown.** If this was the Mark referred to, then the word *son* is a title of affection, and is used by Peter with reference to his own superior age. It is possible, however, that some other Mark may be referred to, in whose conversion Peter had been instrumental.

14. *Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity.* A kiss of *love*; a common method of affectionate salutation in the times of the apostles. See Notes, **Rom. 16:16.**

Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus.

That are true Christians. Notes, **Eph. 6:23; Phil. 4:7.**⁴

⁴ Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament: James to Jude*, ed. Robert Frew (London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885), 208–209.

MacLaren's Expositions

1 Peter

SYLVANUS

[1 Peter 5:12](#) {R.V.}.

I adopt the Revised Version because, in one or two small points, it brings out more clearly the Apostle's meaning. This Sylvanus is, beyond all reasonable doubt, the same man who is known to us in the Acts of the Apostles by the name of Silas. A double name was very common amongst Jews, whose avocations brought them into close connection with Gentiles. You will find other instances of it amongst the Apostles: in Paul himself, whose Hebrew name was Saul; Simon and Peter; and probably in Bartholomew and Nathanael. And there is no reasonable doubt that a careful examination of the various places in which Silas and Sylvanus are mentioned shows that they were borne by one person.

Now **let me put together the little that we know about this man**, because it will help us to some lessons.

- 1. He was one of the chief men in the church at Jerusalem when the dispute arose about the necessity for circumcision for the Gentile Christians.**
- 2. He was dispatched to Antioch with the message of peace and good feeling which the church at Jerusalem wisely sent forth to heal the strife.**
- 3. He remained in Antioch, although his co-deputy went back to Jerusalem;**
- 4. and the attraction of Paul--the great mass of that star-drew this lesser light into becoming a satellite, moving round the greater orb.**
- 5. So, when the unfortunate quarrel broke out between Paul and Barnabas, and the latter went sulkily away by himself with his dear John Mark, without his brethren's blessing, Paul chose Silas and set out upon his first missionary tour.**

6. He was Paul's companion in the prison and stripes at Philippi,
7. **and in the troubles at Thessalonica;**
8. and, though they were parted for a little while, he rejoined the Apostle in the city of Corinth. From thence Paul wrote the two letters to the Thessalonians, both of which are sent in the name of himself and Silas or Sylvanus.
9. **There is one more reference to Sylvanus in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, which mentions him as having been associated with Paul in the evangelisation of the church there.**
10. Then he drops out of the book altogether, and we never hear anything more about him, except this one passing reference, which shows us to him in an altogether new relation.

He is no longer attached to Paul, but to Peter. **Paul was probably either in prison, or, possibly, martyred.**

At all events, Sylvanus now stood to Peter in a relationship similar to that in which he formerly stood to Paul. He was evidently acquainted with and known to the churches to whom this letter was addressed, and, therefore, is chosen to carry Peter's message to them.

Now I would suggest, in passing, how Sylvanus' relations to the two Apostles throws light upon the perfectly cordial alliance between them, and how it shatters into fragments the theory which was thought to be such a wonderful discovery some years

ago, as to the 'great schism' in the early church between one section, led by Peter, and the more liberal party, headed by Paul. Instead of that, we find the two men working together, and the only division between them was not as to the sort of gospel they preached, but as to the people to whom they preached. This little incident helps us to realise how natural it was for a man steeped in Paul's teaching to attach himself, if circumstances suggested it, to the person who has been said to have been antagonistic in the whole drift of his conceptions of Christianity to that Apostle.

But I do not wish to speak about that now. I take this figure of a man who so contentedly and continually took such a subordinate place--played second fiddle quite willingly all his days, and who toiled on without any notice or record, and ask whether it does not teach one or two things.

I. First, then, I think we may see here a hint as to the worth and importance of subordinate work.

Not a syllable that Silas ever said is recorded in Scripture. He had been a chief man among the brethren when he was in Jerusalem, but, like some other chief men in little spheres, he came to be anything but a chief man when he got alongside of Paul, and found his proper work. He did not say: 'I have always pulled the stroke oar, and I am not going to be second. I do not intend to be absorbed in this man's brilliant lustre. I would rather have a smaller sphere where my light may not suffer by comparison than be overshadowed by him.' By no means!

He could not do Paul's work, but he could endure stripes along with him in the prison at Philippi, and he took them. He could not write as Peter could; it was not his work to do that. But he could carry one of Peter's letters. And so, 'by Sylvanus, a faithful brother, I have written to you.'

Perhaps Sylvanus was amanuensis as well as letter-carrier, for I daresay Peter was no great hand with a pen; he was better accustomed to haul nets.

At all events, subordinate work was what God had set him to do, and so he found joy in it.

Well, then, **is not that a pattern for us?**

People in the world or in the Church who can do prominent work are counted by units; and those who can do valuable subordinate work are counted by thousands--by millions. 'Those members which seem to be more feeble are the more necessary,' says Paul. It is a great truth, which it would do us all good to lay more to heart.

It is hard to tell what is superior and what is subordinate work. I suppose that in a steam engine the smallest rivet is quite as essential as the huge piston, and that if the rivet drops out the piston-rod is very likely to stop rising and falling. So it is a very vulgar way of talking to speak about A.'s work being large and B.'s work being small, or to assume that we have eyes to settle which work is principal and which subordinate.

The Athenians, who deemed themselves wisest in the world, thought there were few people of less importance than the fanatical Jew who was preaching a strange story about what they knew so little of that they took Jesus and Resurrection to be the names of a pair of gods, one male and one female. But in the eyes that see truly--the eyes of God--the relative importance of Apostle and Stoic was otherwise appraised.

We cannot tell, as the book of Ecclesiastes has it, 'which shall prosper--this or that.' And if we begin to settle which is important work, we shall be sure to make mistakes, both in our judgment about other people, and in our sense of the obligations laid upon ourselves.

Let us remember that when a thing is to be done by the co-operation of a great many parts, each part is as important as the other, and each is indispensable.

Although more glory may come to the soldiers who go to the front and do the fighting, the troops miles in the rear, that are quietly in camp looking after the stores and keeping open the lines of communication, are quite as essential to the success of the campaign. Their names will not get into the gazette; there will probably not be any honours at the conclusion of the war showered upon them; but, if they had not been doing their subordinate work, the men at the front would never have been able to do theirs. Therefore, the old wise law in Israel was: 'As his part is that goeth down into the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff; they shall part alike.'

And so it is good for people that have only one talent, and cannot do much, and must be contented to help somebody else that can do more, to...

remember this pretty little picture of Sylvanus, 'the faithful brother,' contented all his life to be a satellite of somebody; first of all helping Paul, and then helping Paul's brother Peter.

Let us not be too lazy, or too proud with the pride that apes humility, to do the little that we can do because it is little.

II. Another lesson which is own sister to that first one, but which may be taken for a moment separately, is, the importance and obligation of persistently doing our task, though nobody notices it.

As I remarked, there is not one word of anything that Sylvanus said, or of anything that he did apart from Paul or Peter, recorded. And for all the long stretch of years--we do not know how many, but a very large number--that lie between this text of mine, where we find him in conjunction with Peter, and that day at Corinth, where we left him with Paul, the Acts of the Apostles does not think it worth while to mention his name. Was he sitting with his hands in his pockets all the while, do you think, doing no Christian work? Did he say, as some good people are apt to say now, 'Well, I went to teach in Sunday School for a while, and I took an interest in this, that, or the other thing for a bit, but nobody took any notice of me; and I supposed I was not wanted, and so I came away!'

Not he. That is what a great many of us do. Though we sometimes are not honest enough to say it to ourselves, yet we do let the absence of 'recognition' {save the mark} influence us in the earnestness of our Christian work to far too great an extent. And I dare say there are good friends among us who, if they would be quite honest with themselves, would take the hint, and, if I may use such a word, the rebuke, to themselves.

Dear brethren, all the work that any of us do has to become unnoticed after a little while. It will not last. Nobody will know about you or me thirty years after we are dead. What does it matter whether they know anything about us, or say anything about us, or pat us on the back for anything that we do, or recognise our service whilst we live? Surely, if we are Christian men and women, we have a better reason for working than that. 'I will never forget any of their works.' That ought to be enough for us, ought it not? Whoever forgets, He remembers; and if He remembers, He will not remain in our debt for anything that we have done.

So let us keep on, noticed or unnoticed; it matters very little which it is. There is a fillip, no doubt--and we should not be men and women if we did not feel it--in the recognition of what we have tried to do. And sometimes it comes to us; but the absence of it is no reason for slackening our work. And this man, so patiently and persistently 'pegging away' at his obscure task during all these years which have been swallowed up in oblivion, may preach a sermon to us all.

Only let us remember that he also shows us that unnoticed work is noticed, and that unrecorded services are recorded. Here are you and I, nineteen centuries after he is dead, talking about him, and his name will live and last as long as the world, because, though written in no other history, it has been recorded here.

Jesus Christ's record, the Book of Life, contains the names of 'fellow-labourers' whose names have dropped out of every other record; and that should be enough for us.

Sylvanus did no work that Christ did not see, and no work that Christ did not remember, and no work of which he did not, eighteen hundred years since, enter into the enjoyment of the fruit, and which he enjoys up there, whilst we are thinking about him down here.

III. The last thing that I would suggest is--here is an example to us of a character which we can all earn, and which will be the best that any man can get.

A great genius, a wise philosopher, an eloquent preacher, a statesman, a warrior, poet, painter? No! 'A faithful brother.'

I suppose the eulogium is meant in both senses of the word. The one of these is the root of the other; for a man that is full of faith is a man who may be trusted, is reliable, and will be sure to fulfil all the obligations of his position, and to do all the duties that are laid upon him.

You and I, whether we are wise or not, whether we are learned or not, whether we have large faculties or not, whether we have great opportunities or very small ones, can all equally earn that name if we like. If the perfect judgment, the clear eye, of Jesus Christ

beholds in us qualities which will permit Him to call us by that name, what can we want better? ***'A faithful brother.'***

Trust in Christ; let that be the animating principle of all that we do, the controlling power that restrains and limits and stimulates and impels.

And then men will know where to have us, and will be sure, and rightly sure, that we shall not shirk our obligations, nor scamp our work, nor neglect our duties. And...

being thus full of faith, and counted faithful by Him, we need care little what men's judgments of us may be, and need desire no better epitaph than this-
-a faithful brother.

1 Peter

AN APOSTOLIC TESTIMONY AND EXHORTATION

[1 Peter 5:12.](#)

'I have written briefly,' says Peter. But his letter, in comparison with the other epistles of the New Testament, is not remarkably short; in fact, is longer than many of them. He regards it as short when measured by the greatness of its theme. For all words which are devoted to witnessing to the glory of God revealed in Jesus Christ, must be narrow and insufficient as compared with that, and after every utterance the speaker must feel how inadequate his utterance has been.

So, in that word 'briefly' we get a glimpse of the Apostle's conception of the transcendent greatness of the Gospel which he had to proclaim.

This verse seems to be a summary of the contents of the Epistle.

And if we observe the altered translation of the latter portion of my text which is given in the Revised Version, we shall

see that the verse is itself an example of both 'testifying' and exhorting.

For the last clause is not, as our Authorised Version renders it, 'Wherein ye stand'--a statement of a fact, however true that may be--but a commandment, 'In which stand fast.'

And so...

we have here the Apostle's all-sufficient teaching, and this all-comprehensive exhortation. He 'witnesses' that this is the true grace of God, and because it is, he exhorts, 'stand fast therein.'

Let us look at these two points.

I. Peter's testimony.

Now there is a very beautiful, though not, to superficial readers, obvious, significance in this testimony. ***'This is the true grace of God.'*** What is meant by 'this'? Not merely the teaching which he has been giving in the preceding part of the letter, but that which somebody else had been giving. Now these churches in Asia Minor, to whom this letter was sent, were in all probability founded by the Apostle Paul, or by men working under his direction: and the type of doctrine preached in them was what people nowadays call Pauline. And here Peter puts his seal on the teaching that had come from his brother Apostle, and says: 'The thing that you have learned, and that I have had no part in communicating to you, this is the true grace of God.' If such be the primary application of the words {and I think there can be little doubt that it is}, then we have an interesting evidence, all the stronger because unobtrusive, of the cordial understanding between the two great leaders of the Church in apostolic times; and the figments that have been set forth, with great learning and little common sense, about the differences that divided these great teachers of Christianity, melt away into thin air. Their division was only a division of the field of labour. 'They would that I should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision.' All the evidence confirms what Paul says, 'Whether it were they or I, so we preach, and so' all the converts 'believed.' Thus it is not without significance and beauty that we here see dimly through the ages Peter stretching out his hands to Paul's convert, and saying, 'This--which my beloved brother Paul taught you--this is the true grace of God.'

But, apart altogether from that thought, **note two things; the one, the substance of this witness-bearing; and the other, Peter's right to bear it.**

As to the substance of the testimony; 'grace' which has become a threadbare word in the minds of many people, used with very little conception of its true depth and beauty of meaning, is properly love in exercise towards inferior and sinful creatures who deserve something else.

Condescending, pardoning, and active love, is its proper meaning. And, says Peter, the inmost significance of the gospel is that it is the revelation of such a love as being in God's heart.

Another meaning springs out of this. That same message is not only a revelation of love, but it is a communication of the gifts of love. And **the 'true grace of God' is shorthand for all the rich abundance and variety and exuberant manifoldness and all-sufficiency of the sevenfold perfect gifts for spirit and heart which come from faith in Jesus Christ.**

The truths that lie here in the Gospel, the truths which glow and throb in this letter of Peter's, are the revelation and the communication to men of the rich gifts of the Divine heart, which will all flow into that soul which opens itself for the entrance of God's word.

And what are these truths? **The main theme of this letter is Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, that was slain.**

'Ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.' He dwells upon Christ's innocence, upon Christ's meekness; but most of all upon the Christ that died, 'whom, having not seen, we love, and in whom, though unseen, we, believing, receive the end of our faith'--and the end of the gospel--even the salvation of our souls.'

Thus, **dear brethren, this gospel, the gospel of the Divine Christ that died for our sins, and lives to give His Spirit to all waiting hearts; this is the true grace of God.**

It is very needful for us to keep in view always that lofty conception of what this gospel is, that we may not bring it down to the level of a mere theory of religion; nor think of it as a mere publication of dry doctrines; that we may not lose sight of what is the heart of it all, but may recognise this fact, that **a gospel out of which are struck, or in which are diminished, the truths of the sacrifice of Christ and His ever-living intercession for us, is not the true grace of God, and is neither a revelation of His love to inferior and sinful men, nor a communication of His gifts to our weakness.**

Let us remember Peter's witness. This--the full gospel of incarnation, sacrifice, resurrection, ascension, and reign in glory, and return as Judge--this, and nothing else, 'is the true grace of God.'

And this gospel is not exalted to its highest place unless it is regarded as such by our waiting and recipient hearts.

Further, what right had this man to take this position and say, 'I testify that this is the true grace of God'? He was no great genius; he did not know anything about comparative religion, which is nowadays supposed to be absolutely essential to understanding any one religion. He was not a scholar or a philosopher. What business had he to bring in his personality thus, as if he were an authority, and say, 'I testify that this is the true grace of God'?

Well there are two or three answers: one peculiar to him and others common to all Christian people. The one peculiar to him is, as I believe, that he was conscious, and rightly conscious, that **Jesus Christ had bestowed upon him the power to witness, and the authority to impose his testimony upon men as a word from God.**

In the most inartificial and matter-of-course way **Peter here lets us see the apostolic conception of apostolic authority.**

He had a right--not because of what he was himself, but because of the authority which Christ had conferred on him--to say to men, 'I do not ask you to give heed to me, Peter. I myself also am a man {as he said to Cornelius}, but I call on you to accept Christ's word, spoken through me, His commissioned messenger, when I testify, and through me Christ testifies, that this is the true grace of God.'

Now no one but an apostle has the right to say that; but we Christian people have a right to say something like it, and if we have not apostolic authority, we may have what is very nearly as good, and sometimes as powerful in its effect upon other people, and that is authority based on personal experience.

If we have plunged deep into the secrets of God, and lived closely and faithfully in communion with Him, and for ourselves have found the grace of God, His love and the gifts of His love, coming into our lives, and ennobling, calming, elevating each of us; then we, too, have a right to go to men and say, 'Never mind about me; never mind about whether I am wise or foolish, I do not argue, but **I tell you I have tasted the manna, and it is sweet.** I have drunk of the water, and it

comes cool and fresh from the rock. ***One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.*** I believed, and

therefore have I spoken, and on the strength of my own tasting of it, **I testify that this, which has done so much for me, is the true grace of God.'**

If we testify thus, and back up our witness with lives corresponding, some who are wholly untouched by a preacher's eloquence and controversialists' arguments, will probably be led by our attestation to make the experiment for themselves.

'Ye are My witnesses,' says God. He did not say, 'Ye are my advocates.'

He did not bid us argue for Him, but He bid us witness for Him.

II. Further, notice Peter's exhortation.

According to the right rendering the last clause is, as I have already said, 'in which stand fast.' The translation in the Authorised Version, 'in which ye stand,' gives a true thought, though not the Apostle's intention here. For, as a matter of fact, men cannot stand upright and firm unless their feet are planted on the rock of that true grace of God.

If our heels are well fixed on it, then our goings will be established.

It is no use talking to men about steadfastness of purpose, stability of life, erect independence, resistance to antagonistic forces, and all the rest, unless you give them something to stand upon.

If you talk so to a man who has his foot upon shifting sands or slippery clay; the more he tries the deeper will he sink into the one, or slide the further upon the other. **The best way to help men to stand fast is to give them something to stand upon.** And the only standing ground that will never yield, nor collapse, nor, like the quicksand with the tide round it, melt away, we do not know how, from beneath our feet, is 'the grace of God.' Or, as Dr. Watts says, in one of his now old-fashioned hymns:--

'Lo! on the solid Rock I stand, And all beside is shifting sand.'

However, that is not what the Apostle Peter meant. He says, 'See that you keep firmly your position in reference to this true grace of God.' Now I am not going to talk to you about intellectual difficulties in the way of hearty and whole-souled acceptance of the gospel revelation--difficulties which are very real and very widespread in these days, but

which possibly very slightly affect us; at least I hope so.

But whilst these slay their thousands, the difficulties that affect us all in the way of keeping a firm hold on, or firm standing in {for the two metaphors coalesce} the gospel, which is the true grace of God, are those that arise from two causes working in combination. One is our own poor weak hearts, wavering wills, strong passions, unbridled desires, forgetful minds; and the other is all that army and babel of seductions and inducements, in occupations legitimate and necessary, in enjoyments which are in themselves pure and innocent, in family delights, in home engagements, in pursuits of commerce or of daily business--all that crowd of things that tempt us to forget the true grace and to wander away in a foolish and vain search after vain and foolish substitutes.

Dear brethren, it is not so much because there are many adversaries in the intellectual world as because we are such weak creatures ourselves, and the world around us is so strong against us, that we need to say to one another and to ourselves, over and over again, **'Stand ye fast therein.'**

You cannot keep hold of a rope even, without the act of grasping tending to relax, and there must be a conscious and repeated tightening up of the muscles, or the very cord on which we hang for safety will slip through our relaxed palms. And however we may be convinced that there are no hope and no true blessedness for us except in keeping hold of God, we need that grasp to be tightened up by daily renewed efforts, or else it will certainly become slack, and we shall lose the thing that we should hold fast.

So, my text exhorts us against ourselves, and against the temptations of the world, which are always present with us, and are far more operative in bringing down the temperature of the Christian Church, and of its individual members, than any chilling that arises from intellectual doubts.

And how are we to obey the exhortation? Well, plainly, if 'this' is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, 'the true grace of God' which alone will give stability to our feet, then we 'shall not stand fast' in it unless we make conscious efforts to apprehend, and comprehend, and keep hold of it in our minds as well as in our hearts.

May I say one very plain word? I am very much afraid that people do not read their Bibles very much now {or if they do read them, they do not study them}, and that anything like an intelligent familiarity with the whole sweep of the great system {for it is a system} of Divine truth, evolved 'at sundry times and in divers manners' in this Word, is a very rare thing amongst even good people. They listen to sermons, with more or less attention; they read newspapers, no doubt; they read good little books, and magazines, and the like; and volumes that profess to be drawn from Scripture. These are all right

and good in their place. But **sure I am that a robust and firm grasp of the gospel, 'which is the grace of God,' is not possible with a starvation diet of Scripture.**

And so I would say, try to get hold of the depth and width of meaning in the Word.

Again, try to keep heart and mind in contact with it amidst distractions and daily duties. Try to bring the principles of the New Testament consciously to bear on the small details of everyday life. Do you look at your day's work through these spectacles? Does it ever occur to you, as you are going about your business, or your profession, or your domestic work, to ask yourselves what bearing the gospel and its truths have upon these?

If my ordinary, so-called secular, avocations are evacuated of reference to, and government by, the Word of God, I want to know what of my life is left as the sphere in which it is to work.

There is no need that religion and daily life should be kept apart as they are.

There is no reason why the experience of to-day, in shop, and counting-house, and kitchen, and study, should not cast light upon, and make more real to me, 'the true grace of God.'

Be sure that you desire, and ask for, and put yourself in the attitude of receiving, the gifts of that love, which are the graces of the Christian life. And when you have got them, apply them, 'that you may be able to withstand in the evil day; and, having done all, to stand.'

There are commands in Scripture that are repeated many times. The call to 'stand firm' is one of those commands. It appears all throughout the Bible.

Here are a few powerful verses in Scripture about standing firm:

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Ephesians 6:11

"Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil."

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Ephesians 6:13

"Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."

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1 Peter 5:9

"But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world."

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1 Corinthians 15:58

"Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

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Philippians 1:27

"Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

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1 Corinthians 16:13

"Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong."

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Philippians 4:1

"Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved."