

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

1 Peter 5:10-14

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. This week we'll be reading 1 Peter chapter 5, and today we'll read from verse 10 to verse 14.

In a time when the saints were generally experiencing suffering, Peter first encouraged the elders in the church to share in the sufferings of Christ and to shepherd God's flock according to His will. They were to do this not for personal gain or by lording it over those entrusted to them, but by being examples to the flock. When Christ appears, the elders would then receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. Next, Peter exhorted all the saints in the church to clothe themselves with humility and learn the lesson of mutual submission. They were to cast all their anxieties on God, experiencing His care, and to be sober and vigilant in resisting Satan's attacks.

In all things, God uses His mighty hand to arrange circumstances, support us, exalt us, and protect us so that we can stand against Satan's attacks. The past two thousand years of church history testify to God's mighty hand leading the church on the path of sanctification toward a glorious end. As the end of the age draws near, the hope is now in sight. In concluding this letter, Peter brings forth the promises of God.

Verse 10: "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."

God has called us in Christ with the purpose of us attaining His eternal glory. Christ is not only the Lamb of God who accomplished our redemption, enabling us to become God's children through faith; He is also the Lion of Judah who has

defeated our enemies, cleared away obstacles, and paved a victorious path. Now, we are to follow in Christ's footsteps towards glory. On this path, we will temporarily experience suffering, but God is the God of all grace. Peter loves to emphasize the diversity of grace by using adjectives. Here, he refers to "all grace" to highlight the various kinds of grace available to us. When we experience different kinds of suffering, God has already prepared corresponding graces for us to draw upon. Therefore, the key to enduring suffering is to exercise faith to access the appropriate grace, which in turn perfects our faith.

Peter then uses four verbs to describe the steps of spiritual growth resulting from growing faith. The Chinese Union Version translates three of these verbs, while the ASV translation closely matches the original Greek with four verbs: "Perfect," "Confirm," "Strengthen," and "Establish." God's precise arrangement of various circumstances, which on the surface may appear as our suffering, is actually targeting the areas of our lives that need adjustment the most. God also provides the corresponding grace for us to learn to access through faith. This process leads to genuine life transformation, which involves four steps corresponding to the four verbs: perfecting, confirming, strengthening, and establishing.

The first step is perfection, which involves filling in the gaps and healing the wounds and regrets in our lives, making us whole. The second step is confirmation, which means allowing the wounds to heal, stabilizing our lives so we are no longer swayed by the winds of change or the tides of trends. The third step is strengthening, where our weaknesses are turned into strength, providing support for the structure of our lives. Once our lives are strengthened, we can overcome the same challenges when they arise again. And the fourth step is establishing, allowing us to be built up in Christ, which means we can be rooted and grounded in Christ..

In the Gospels, we see Peter as candid, impulsive, and sometimes rash. By the time he wrote 1 Peter, he had become gentle, peaceful, and full of wisdom. Through his own life's experiences, Peter shows us the necessary steps for spiritual growth. He is confident that God's will is for us to attain glory. For this ultimate purpose, God arranges various circumstances, allowing us to suffer

temporarily. These sufferings are trials we must undergo; they are meant to perfect us, confirm us, strengthen us, and establish us, ultimately leading us to glory. Therefore, we should treasure these circumstances, as they test our faith and will result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Peter assures us that we will be perfected, confirmed, strengthened, and ultimately established in Christ. A saint who is rooted and grounded in Christ will surely follow Jesus Christ into glory.

Verse 11: "To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

At this point, Peter's burden is lifted; he has said all he wanted to say. Finally, he brings forth praise to God: "To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever." It is truly wonderful that God, in His power, will bring His many sons into glory. Peter's letter begins with praise to God and ends with praise to God. A mature saint is someone who frequently praises and worships God.

From verses 12 to 14, Peter extends greetings and blessings. The greetings and blessings at the end of each letter are important historical records that help us understand the development of the early church.

Verse 12: "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."

Peter begins by saying, "I have written to you briefly," and from Peter's writing, we can see that he is truly rich in his spiritual experience at this time. Every word he writes is often accompanied by many adjectives and descriptive phrases, indicating that he has a deep experience of each divine matter. Therefore, each matter is experienced from different perspectives and described in different ways. Peter, at this stage, resembles a treasure trove. Although he only briefly wrote this letter, we can see that every word is precious, and almost the entire book is filled

with golden verses. Peter's attainment of such spiritual height and richness is truly enviable.

After writing this letter, Peter entrusted it to his faithful brother, Silas, to deliver it to the saints in Asia. At this time, Peter was already advanced in age and no longer suited for long travels, so he asked a brother to deliver it on his behalf. Who is Silas? Silas appears many times in the Acts of the Apostles. He was originally a brother from the Jerusalem church, and since Peter had been an elder in the Jerusalem church, he must have known Silas well.

In Acts 15, Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem to handle negotiations on behalf of the Antioch church. Acts 15 records the famous Jerusalem Council, which primarily discussed whether Gentiles needed to observe the Old Testament ceremonial laws. After much discussion, James made a decision, which they wrote in a letter and selected people to deliver. In Acts 15:22, it states, "Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren."

So we see that Silas later became a leader among the younger generation in the church. He was sent by the Jerusalem church to Antioch along with Paul and Barnabas to explain to the saints in Antioch the final decision of the Jerusalem Council. After they went to Antioch, Acts 15:32 mentions, "Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words." Thus, Silas was not only a leader among the young people in the Jerusalem church but also a prophet himself. After going to Antioch, Silas stayed there. In Acts 15:40-41, it says that Paul was beginning his second missionary journey: "But Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. "Paul's second missionary journey started from Antioch and took a land route through regions such as Pontus, Galatia, and Cappadocia, which are the same areas to which Peter was writing. So, Peter chose Silas to deliver the letter, perhaps because he was familiar with the saints in that region.

Silas accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey to Europe, entering the first city in Europe, Philippi. In Acts 16:25, Paul and Silas were both arrested and imprisoned. At midnight, they were praying and singing hymns to God, which led to a miracle: a great earthquake that resulted in the conversion of the jailer, thereby establishing the Philippian church. Thus, Silas became a very close co-worker with Paul. When Peter wrote his letter, seeing Silas as faithful, he entrusted him to deliver it to the churches in Asia.

Peter encouraged them, "testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand." So, Silas was not merely a courier but likely read the letter aloud and had fellowship with the brethren. Since he was a prophet, he gave good exhortations to the brethren, proving to them that this was the true grace of God. In English, "true grace" is translated as "true Grace," emphasizing that it is genuine grace.

Peter's experience of grace was very rich, which is why he liked to add adjectives to describe grace. In 1 Peter, he mentions four different types of grace: In 1:2, he says, "Grace to you and peace be multiplied," referring to Multiplied Grace. In 4:10, he talks about Manifold Grace, describing it as "the manifold grace of God." In 5:10, he speaks of "all grace," which is translated as "the God of all grace." In 5:12, he mentions True Grace, saying, "this is the true grace of God in which you stand."

Dear brothers and sisters, we have all experienced God's grace, but how many ways can you describe grace? Have you experienced grace as deeply as Peter did? We gain victory through grace, grow in grace, and will be perfected and matured in grace. This grace will accompany us throughout our lives. Ultimately, God wants to make each of us an exemplar of grace. This grace will not only become our composition but also our glory, showcasing to the world that we are sinners who have received the Lord's grace. Peter understood the wonders, richness, and greatness of grace, and he encouraged the saints to stand firm in this grace.

Verse 13: "She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son."

Here, Peter reveals his location. At this time, he was in Babylon. However, according to church history, there is no record of Peter ever visiting Babylon. When the Roman government began persecuting Christians, believers often used Babylon as a code name for Rome to conceal their movements and safely navigate in and out of the city. Church history records that Peter lived in Rome for a period, and it was likely during that time that he wrote this letter. Therefore, many biblical scholars believe that Babylon here refers to Rome.

Peter says, "She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you." The Chinese Union Version translates this as "the church," but in the original text, there is only a feminine pronoun, which is "she." Some scholars think this refers to Peter's wife because Peter had traveled with his wife to visit the churches. However, it can also refer to the church in Rome, as the church is considered the bride of Christ and is often represented with feminine pronouns.

He then says, "So does Mark my son." This Mark is the author of the Gospel of Mark. When we read the Gospel of Mark, it was mentioned that Mark came from a wealthy family and had a large house in Jerusalem. Jesus, during His ministry on earth, often stayed at Mark's house with His disciples when visiting Jerusalem. The Last Supper was also held in the upper room of Mark's house, which is famously known as the Upper Room. Therefore, Mark was likely familiar with Jesus and His disciples. It is traditionally believed that Peter led Mark to faith in Jesus, which is why Peter calls him his son, indicating a spiritual son. At this time, Mark was with Peter.

In Paul's first missionary journey, he initially took Mark with him, but when they reached Pamphylia, Mark left them. Because of this incident, Paul refused to take Mark with him on his second missionary journey. However, later, under Barnabas's guidance, Mark matured and, nurtured by Peter, eventually became an important assistant in Paul's ministry. Since the churches in these five regions were mostly established by Paul, they should have been familiar with Mark. Therefore, Peter specifically sends greetings from Mark to them.

Verse 14: “Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.”

This is Peter's final greeting, using the customary practice of greeting one another with a kiss of love and wishing peace to those who are in Christ.

Dear brothers and sisters, thank the Lord! After five weeks, God has led us through the book of 1 Peter, and we have seen that Peter is truly a rich apostle. In him, we find hope. Peter, through his own experiences, tells us that this hope comes from experiencing salvation of the soul, gradually accumulating in heaven to become our inheritance. Thank you, brothers and sisters, for your companionship. Next week, we will begin reading 2 Peter.

Let us pray together, offering thanks and praise to God: Dear Abba Father, we thank You so much. In Peter, we see how You used Your mighty hand to provide various circumstances for him, not only allowing him to experience them but also lifting him up. What we see before us is a mature, seasoned, and hopeful Peter. How we long for our lives to be like his. Thank You for adjusting us through our daily reading of the Scriptures, motivating us with Your Word, and using Your mighty hand to protect us. Help us to reach the heights of Peter and continue to lead us on the path ahead. We pray in the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ.