

Living as people knowing the grace of God

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Preacher: Daniel Chapallaz

[0:00] The Christian life is hard, but under God's mighty and gracious hand, we may stand firm.! I've got three points for us this evening. Firstly, humble yourselves under God's mighty hand.

Humble yourselves under God's mighty hands. In the brief time that Becky and I have been married, I've seen some of my stubbornness.

Trying to do things on my own, even though Becky is there and I can ask her for help, and she wants me to ask her for help. So things like carrying four heavy bags of shopping out of the car into the flat, struggling at dragging them along.

Why don't you ask for help, Daniel? Or cooking in the kitchen and struggling to do it all in the time, and she said, why don't you ask me for help? I'm sitting here.

And of course, asking for help, it takes a bit of humility, doesn't it? And Peter recognizes that, and he says that in verse 6.

[1:19] Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.

In this letter, we have been told of the reality of suffering in the Christian life. And maybe we think in our times of suffering, in our times of trial, we can do it all on our own, and we're stubborn, and refuse to admit we need help.

But Peter says here, actually, you need to humble yourselves. You need to swallow your pride, and know that you are under God's mighty hand.

That's what Peter says. Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Recognize that you aren't God, that you can't do this on your own.

And unlike God, you don't see how your trial may end. But he knows, doesn't he, the beginning to the end. We don't even know how tomorrow is going to go.

[2:40] But we can rest in God's mighty hand. But maybe, at times, we doubt that God's hand is mighty.

And I'd love us, this will be the last kind of discussion-y bit together, just for a few minutes, read a couple of scriptures which speak about God's mighty hand.

They take us back to the Exodus. So, in your groups, just for a few moments, five minutes, no more, read these verses and then chat.

How does God show his mighty hand for them in their situation, both in those verses and throughout the book of Exodus? And how does that give us confidence to humble ourselves under his mighty hand, as we see God acting in history, specifically?

How does that give us a chance to have a good idea? The group it is in, they might want to start? Or does Phil want to start? No. Oh, we don't even know if it's working, to be fair.

[3:51] Doing strange things, but we'll see. Does anyone want to feed back on that first question? How does God show his mighty hand in the Israelite situation?

Mark? We were speaking about deliverance, how the Lord delivers the Israelites out of Egypt. Yeah.

And how did he deliver them? Through the Red Sea. Yeah. And by cursing the Egyptians, cursing Pharaoh. Yeah. Yeah.

We see God's mighty hand on those planes, those miraculous events. And then in the Red Sea, yeah. That parting of the waves. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. God changing Pharaoh's heart. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

[4:57] They will know that it is the Lord at work. It could only be the Lord at work. It could only be his mighty hand at work. As they live life under God's mighty hand. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. I was saying in our group when they let them go and they were heading out and then suddenly the Egyptians, they were chasing after them.

And at just the right time, the waves parted for the Israelites. And then as the Egyptians went in, they came down. And here in 1 Peter, it says, doesn't it, that he may lift you up in due time, kind of at just the right time.

And the Lord knows what the right time is, doesn't he? Second question. Anybody? Any thoughts?

[5:59] How does that give us confidence to humble ourselves under his mighty hand? Go on, Ray. Don't think we're above God.

Yeah. Yeah. Don't think we're above God. Yeah. And it's still the same God at work today.

Yeah. Yeah, he does. Yeah. Do you think there's something about accepting God's providence?

Because if God's hand sort of is on us in a certain way, for a certain purpose, some circumstances, we could rebel against that.

Mm. Yeah. Basically, he's saying just humble yourself accept that God knows what he's doing and as you're saying there's an element in which God's mighty hand might bring judgement as he did on the Egyptians but it's his hand isn't it so we humble ourselves under that we trust that all his ways are right they may see it like we may just think why God would you do it like this why would you let me go through this but we trust yeah he he's in his providence that his ways are right yeah well let's let's carry on so part of humbling ourselves under God's mighty hand is verse 7 cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you the suffering we may face in the Christian life living as aliens and exiles in this world it may well produce anxiety within us and anxiety itself it's not wrong but burdening ourselves with that worry thinking we can kind of handle that all on our own that is an act of pride that isn't humbling ourselves under God's mighty hand and so Peter says

Peter calls us cast all your anxiety upon him I wonder if you ever think about casting your worries upon the Lord praying Lord I'm feeling so anxious about this I don't even know why confident we can do that confidently in the Lord and his mighty hand in his mighty hand which can lift us up in due time at just the right time as it did in the exodus as it has done in the past and Peter says we can do that because he cares for you God cares for you maybe you doubt his care at times maybe when we're feeling anxious when we're going through a trial we doubt God's care for us but we don't need to and if you do remember the cross so some verses in 1 Peter in 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 18 to 19 it says

[9:30] Peter writes for you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors but with the precious blood of Christ a lamb without blemish or defect that know that God has redeemed you has done all you need for your salvation but by Jesus shedding his precious blood that's care giving him his very self for you God cares for you so much that he was willing to come die and shed his blood for you so you would be forgiven redeemed adopted as children of God God cares for you and so in humility don't believe you don't believe you can stand firm in a trial on your own that you can bear all this anxiety on your own but cast it upon the Lord humble yourselves before him and his mighty hand it is indeed mighty and by that we may stand firm secondly second thing resist and stand firm against the enemy

I would love to show you just a very brief it doesn't require sound a very brief video clip hopefully it will play maybe it won't I need to click a button here we go there's a gazelle shall we watch that again it's very brief no as a lion on the prowl trying to get that gazelle as some food but the gazelle manages to escape and that's a picture how witted him yes that's a picture of what we're told our enemy the devil is up to he is roaring around looking to devour verse 8 be alert and a sober mind your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour if that gazelle wasn't awake and sober he'd have been dead meat and Peter encourages us to be of alert and of sober mind because your enemy the devil he prowls around like a lion looking for someone to devour and so he says in verse 9 resist him standing firm in the faith because you know that the

family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings the Christian life is hard but under

God's mighty hands we may stand firm and it could be that during a trial during a time of suffering in the Christian life we may begin to think thoughts such as God doesn't really love me or I'm not really a Christian we begin to doubt God and his work and maybe these are devices that Satan is using as he's prowling around looking for someone to devour he's looking to take us away from God away from standing firm in our faith the Christian life is hard but under God's mighty hand we may stand firm we need to trust God's grace and keeping power but Peter tells us we need to do something to resist him standing firm in the faith one picture

I have is of a soldier with their armor on in battle against the enemy they protect themselves so they can stand firm and strong against the enemy and that's certainly a picture that the Bible picks up on Ephesians 6 famously where Paul writes finally be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes it's in the Lord and his mighty power power that we're told we can stand be strong in the Lord in his mighty power and as you go through that armor of God that Paul lists in Ephesians 6 it's a work of God it's his truth it's his righteousness it's his gospel which we put on it's the face which he gifts to us it's salvation which he gives to us it's the

Bible the sword of the spirit which he gives to us we stand in him and his work and there's a further encouragement that Peter gives us to help us to stand as well he encourages us in this letter to remember that we're not on our own we're not the only ones facing the Christian life verse 9 because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings you're not on your own in the Christian life you don't stand as a soldier on their own if a soldier was standing on their own they'd be very prone to attack nobody to help them support them we don't stand on our own we have fellow soldiers fighting the same battles and in the Christian life when things get hard we need one another when it feels like the enemy is attacking us when he's throwing his fiery darts his lies working his schemes trying to devour us maybe it feels at times like we're on our own but know that we're not your

[16:33] Christian family throughout the world is to undergoing the same kind of sufferings we have our Christian family very visibly here right in front of us now we can look around at one another and think yeah I'm not on my own but we've also got Christian brothers and sisters around Sussex we're members of the Sussex Gospel Partnership we stand with them we look to the UK we're members of the FIEC we know there's many churches around many Christians but not only in the UK but around the world imagine what sufferings Christians in North Korea in Sudan in Afghanistan are going through maybe some of them don't even see can't even imagine what being with other believers is like but know that we're not on our own and so

Peter says you're not on your own resist him standing firm in the faith we're living life under God's mighty hand we're standing in his power in his strength the armour of God that he gives to us and we have one another we have the family believers the Christian life is hard but under God's mighty hand we may stand firm and finally number three stand firm by his grace stand firm by his grace a key thing in this whole letter is that as strangers and exiles in the world we can expect to suffer in this hostile world but suffering as Christians it leads to glory we see that when Peter reminds us of Christ this group you wonderfully in your summary of when

Peter brought us to Jesus and Peter in this letter has spoken of Jesus how he suffered but he's now in glory and we suffer for a little while but we know that we're on the same pathway as Christ and he's in glory and that's where we're going to and that can help us to stand that thought will help us as we stand firm by his grace so verse 10 and the God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christ after you have suffered a little while will himself restore you and make you strong and steadfast to him be the power forever and ever though we may suffer here there is glory to come that's the perspective we have in the

Christian life the perspective of eternity this week agreed with Phil just a few days off in October half term and that actually has changed the perspective of the next few weeks looked so busy a week ago where am I going to have any rest but actually knowing that I'll have just a few days off makes all those sermons that need writing or those meetings that need happening or the light part that

needs running it changes the perspective that I have on the next few weeks it makes it feel like wow yeah I can look forward to a few days break and then carry on maybe you feel the same when the holiday is booked you have something to look forward to and you're living in the light of that just a few more months just a few more weeks and then I can have that break and in the Christian life we can look ahead too we can look ahead knowing as aliens and strangers in this world where we don't belong we know we're going home and we're going to glory we'll be eternally with God and his people in the new creation in a world where we'll be truly at home but maybe you doubt you could ever get there maybe wonder if you failed God too many times that's the devil prowling around and lying to us again isn't it we can be in no doubt because of God and his grace to us his grace which keeps us that's what Peter points us to in this verse verse 10 and the God of all grace he has called you into his eternal glory in Christ you are safe and secure held by his grace and so you may well suffer a little while on earth but know that he is going to restore you he is going to make you strong firm and steadfast and that's all to his praise and glory and so we are heading home the

[22:13] Christian life may be hard but we stand firm by God's grace and he will see us through to the ends and it's his grace that Peter has been writing of in this letter throughout this letter he's wanted to remind these believers of the true grace of God this grace of God that will keep us by which he will help us to stand firm and we ourselves need to stand firm and stand fast in this truth hold on to this truth this is wonderful!

truth that we trust in God and his keeping grace and though the trials though the suffering it will be hard it may well be hard but those 50 60 70 80 90 years whatever God blesses us with they are really just a little while a mere drop in the ocean compared to eternity that's where we're heading and so the Christian life is hard Peter has been very real and honest with us about that in this letter but he's also so encouraging as he's helped us to see even this evening we may just humble ourselves under God's mighty hand trust that all his ways are right and goods and we may stand firm till the end till we get to be in our eternal home all by

God and his grace so let's pray our father god we thank you that you are a gracious god you are a god who by your grace will keep us firm steadfast to the end and we pray that you would help us to indeed do what Peter calls us to here and humble ourselves under God's your mighty hand and we trust that you will keep us and indeed restore us and make us strong and firm and steadfast and we give you all the glory to you be the power forever and ever amen amen Amen.