

# For the Sake of Prayer

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[ 0 : 00 ] You're listening to the sermon podcast of Grace Reformed Church in Spring Hill, Tennessee. To learn more about us, visit our website at [gracereformed.org](http://gracereformed.org).

And now, today's sermon. Sometimes we have to break apart passages because there's so much in them, it's hard to get through it in one service.

And so we're going to do a little bit of a review, but this morning really is on verse 7, explaining what Peter means for the sake of your prayers.

Prayer is probably the most complicated part of the Christian life. When I ask most Christians about prayer or their thoughts on prayer, they respond with, well, I don't know what I'm doing when I pray, or I don't do it enough for sure, or I never really feel like it works.

It feels like my prayers bounce off the ceiling. Peter provides some spiritual insight here for that very problem, for this very feeling that we have into the power of prayer in our lives.

[ 1 : 08 ] There's a direct connection to our experience in prayer and how we choose to live for the Father. This is why Peter is mentioning it here. But he's also mentioned it multiple times before. If you look at chapter 3, Peter gives us two other warnings concerning prayer.

Both are related to receiving God's instructions to protect our hearts and protect our minds. And when we reject God's instructions, it does have an impact in the way in which we utilize prayer.

This is 1 Peter 3 and verse 7. He says, And then in that same chapter, verse 12, Paul quotes Psalm 32.

And he's talking about how the church should love each other and care for each other and live sacrificially. And then he quotes Psalms and he said in verse 12, For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer.

But the face of the Lord is against those who are evil. This is very similar, if you want to mark this in your Bible, or you can turn there with me to Matthew chapter 6, where Jesus is talking about prayer as well.

[ 2 : 27 ] And he says something very powerful that is hard for us at times to stomach, but this helps us understand the nature of the gospel and why the gospel is so powerful in our life.

Jesus says in Matthew 6, 11, while teaching the disciples on prayer, he says, Jesus warns us about this.

These are passages that, to be frank, are often very helpful for me. I have to stand up here and preach forgiveness to you and tell you that you must forgive. And it's very hard for me to know that these passages are here and think that there are, I have justification for not offering forgiveness to others.

There is something about harboring that which we do not have the right. We are not the judge of others. So we must offer forgiveness. But many people, I think, underestimate the effects of when we hear God's instructions for our protection, to guide and direct us, we underestimate the effects of that on our life when it comes to the concept and the power of prayer.

We don't really understand the supernatural nature of prayer, which is what we're going to cover today. Most of us have gone from discouraged about prayer to outright hopelessness, probably, at some point.

[ 4 : 12 ] I understand. But I promise you, hope is coming. So if you're sitting here and you're like, first of all, I'm already feeling guilty for my own sin. And number two, I don't feel like I'm very good at prayer. So thanks, John.

Have a good Sunday. Let's go eat Mexican, right? Comfort food. Well, before I want to explain Peter's point, he is assuming that you have a biblical understanding of prayer.

So we're going to take a little bit of a time, and I just want to make sure that we're all in the same place when Paul or Peter, somebody with a P, is mentioning prayer, that we all agree on what it means.

So this is a series I did a couple of years ago. If you want to go back and listen to it, it was about a nine-part series on prayer that we did. So I would define prayer this way. After all the research I've done throughout all the years, I think prayer, in summary, the way that the Bible presents it is this.

Prayer is the greatest act of dependence in the Christian life. Prayer is the greatest act of dependence in the Christian life. I mean, if you boil it down, prayer is admitting one lacks power and resources that must be fulfilled by God, right?

[ 5 : 27 ] This is why we make petitions or make requests. Here are some of the things that we pray for and that we're encouraged to pray for and at times commanded to pray for. Forgiveness, comfort, guidance, grace, mercy, wisdom, strength, hope, endurance.

The list could go on. Prayer is so much part of the Christian life, it is safe to say that it is for Christians what breathing is for humans.

This is the way that the New Testament describes it for us. This is why we are called to pray without ceasing. Throughout our day, we have reasons to be in communion with God, asking Him for His help, comfort, and power.

But here's the big problem with our view of prayer. And I think all of us would admit to this, that at times we struggle to believe that it actually works, and not only does it work, I'll use this from last week, it actually is supernatural or magical in its nature.

I believe Satan has successfully blinded our eyes, not only from the benefits of prayer, but the supernatural nature of prayer. Here are the two ways I think Satan has blinded us, if you're taking notes this morning.

[ 6 : 48 ] First of all, he's blinded us to our need of prayer. And then secondly, the power in prayer. This idea of our need for prayer, this is the point of Peter's letter, which is what we're going to get to in a moment.

We are so enslaved to our sin, and our minds are controlled by these passions, that instead of seeking God for help, we use our own means and our own strength, either to try and get us out of these sins, or to find ourselves diving deeper into them, because we enjoy them.

And we're so intoxicated by sin, that we turn our hearts and our bodies away from the Father, and spend our mental energy pursuing gratification. Well, we don't need God to help us gratify our flesh, do we?

We can do that just fine on our own. And Satan shows us that we can get what we want, simply with a little bit of effort, to gratify the flesh does not take supernatural power, but yet it comes from a supernatural source.

This is why Paul says, you're not wrestling against flesh and blood, but someone who wants to take you out spiritually. This really leads us to, Satan is attacking us at our need of prayer.

[ 8 : 07 ] If our desire for life is just to be happy, gratified, and satisfied, you don't need God for that. Did you know that? If you want to gratify the flesh, and just be happy, you don't need him for that.

You can do that all on your own. Therefore, you can find your days being spent, months at a time, without being in communion with God, because, well, we're just living life in the pursuit of the flesh.

But when you realize you cannot ultimately find joy and satisfaction, and that you're a prisoner of your own body, and your mind is the one imprisoning you, you're going to need a power that's outside of yourself.

And this is where the power of prayer comes in. I was trying to think about this idea of prayer for a little bit. This is how my brain works, so if you want to know what does John do when he's not meeting with people in his office, welcome to the cabinet of my brain.

It's very scary. But I was thinking about just the idea of the act of prayer. All right? So, without ever opening our mouth, going to a temple, making any kind of a sacrifice, because of who we are in Christ, in this new reality, in the new covenant, within our own mind, you can start a conversation with the king of the universe.

[ 9 : 32 ] Turn with me real quick, just to see in contrast, how you go from a magical conversation with God to not so magical. Turn with me to 1 Kings chapter 18.

All other gods in the Bible, or outside of the Bible, in our world, do not have this power. And I think it's fascinating. You must speak out loud, you must draw their attention, and you must keep their attention with some kind of sacrifice, so that they hear your request, and they possibly respond.

It's transactional in nature. You come to them as a transaction. So this story is about the 450 prophets of Baal, or Baal, however you want to say it, and Elijah. And I find this story fascinating, because you learn a lot, not only about God, but you learn a lot about the spiritual realm.

So God is trying to show Israel just how foolish it is to serve other gods, and how that they are not accessible as he is, nor are they as powerful as he is. So he tells these prophets to get two bulls, they're going to make a sacrifice, and they're going to see which god can actually burn the altar.

And so he goes ahead and lets the prophets of Baal go first. Elijah does. And they start doing their prayers, and they start walking around. It says they are limping around, which I don't know what that means.

[ 10 : 58 ] You know, I guess they're showing sorrow around the altar. But listen to what Elijah finally says in verse 26. So 1 Kings 18, 26. And they took the bull that was given them, and they prepared it, and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, O Baal, answer us.

But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar they had made. I guess they were pouting. And at noon, Elijah mocked them, saying, Cry out loud, for he is a god.

Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself. That is the actual translation, by the way. Or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must awaken.

And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out upon them. And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation.

But there was no voice. No one answered. No one paid attention. Now sometimes people read this and say that's because the gods don't exist.

[ 12 : 10 ] But that's not technically why that story is being told. That story is being told because the gods aren't always accessible no matter how much you make a sacrifice, no matter what it is that you need. This very being that they're worshipping, God actually, Jesus in Matthew 12, 27, he says that this is Satan.

He calls him Beelzebub, which means in Greek the prince Baal. And he is describing, they are accusing Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub. And he's telling them that is technically blasphemous to say that it's the case.

But the reason why I mention this is that as I was thinking about the idea of paganism and the idea of praying to a god, you see, these other spirit beings, fallen angels, whatever you want to call them, demons, that these gods are, they cannot read your thoughts.

They cannot be inside your mind. You actually have to somehow, wherever they're at in the universe, draw their attention and then hopefully gain their blessing. But our God in his kindness lives inside of us, knows not only our thoughts, but our emotions and our affections.

And he says, dear child, never be afraid to take a moment and pray. at any moment, at any time of the day, you can not only not have to speak it, you can just think out of help and I will hear.

[ 13 : 47 ] And that is, that is an unreal, that's not a reality we understand. I mean, there are times I wish that I could send my thoughts across the room to my wife to tell her like, you know, it's time for us to go.

We need to leave. And now we have text messaging so it's almost the same. But, there was a comfort in reality that prayer is something that never leaves me and it doesn't matter what situation I find myself in, I always have access to all of the promises of God at any moment.

This is why Paul says, you can be in a constant state of dependence, asking God for help, guidance, wisdom, forgiveness, and mercy because there is not a position or place that it requires you to be in.

Now this, this is important, the reason why I draw this out because Peter's about to tell you what causes that to go away and it's hindered. He says, there's something that hinders you from accessing God in that way.

We'll get to that in a minute. So, we do not utilize prayer as often as we should because I think we've been distracted by its power but we also don't utilize prayer and as I mentioned before because we do find this joy from our flesh and from the gratifications of what this world can bring but this is where Peter steps in and says, here's what's causing it.

[ 15 : 24 ] So, this is verse, so turn with me to 1 Peter chapter 4 and we're going to start working through this text. A little bit of a review to get us ready for the last verse. He is warning the church, you're about to face all kinds of suffering and trials, temptations and struggles.

You're going to need your father's help. Here's what's hurting you. So, this is verse 1. So, Peter's telling the church that because the way that this world is filled with sin and it pursues sin, when we decide to resist it, it will bring suffering.

The only way to endure that kind of suffering, you're going to need a supernatural strength to do so. This is where we're talking about the gospel and the reminders that we have in prayer. But if we refuse to give into the sin, the experience is not only suffering, but it says that they malign you, they mock you with their words.

So, if we choose to live for the king, to fulfill his will, as Peter has called us to, which is to share the kingdom, not only our words, but our actions, we will feel the consequences of it in our flesh.

So, Peter goes on to name some types of sins that will help us identify, oh, these are the things that will enslave us, entrap us, but also cause us to be distracted.

[ 17 : 01 ] Instead of depending ourselves on God's strength by his love and mercy through prayer, we will find ourselves depending upon these sins, which then distract us.

The first one he mentions is sensuality. Again, I started to step back and go, you know, there's a lot of words in the Bible that we kind of read and we just don't even stop and ask, well, what does that mean?

What does sensuality mean? Right? We were talking, I was explaining a story in the Old Testament to someone this week and they literally looked at me and they go, you're serious?

That's in the Bible? I said, how many times have you read your Bible? They're like, a lot. See, this is what we do. We read things, we don't understand what it means and we just keep going, but we miss the application. So what does Peter mean by sensuality?

Well, I did a little bit of a deep dive into the Greek word just to kind of make sure that we're not missing the sense because sensuality is different from other types of sense. It's different from fornication.

[ 18 : 00 ] It's different from, of acts. So there's a, there's a, there's a stronger meaning to it and this is, this is from one commentator, it's there. This is what the Greek word is trying to explain is this.

It basically denotes a lack of self-control. The behavior and view is often sexual but the more general idea is absence from restraint. So anything I desire, I'm not gonna restrain myself from it.

He goes on to say, sensuality is basically doing whatever I want, however I want, whenever I want, with or to whoever I want. Is the, it's the, you can't tell me what to do mindset.

The Greco-Roman world was full of it. Numbness of conscience always seeking pleasure in its extreme would be the description of sensuality.

So just like in Peter's day, I think Americans experienced this as well. This kind of a, a shock to rejecting, I mean it's not a shock for us to see them rejecting a pullback in appetites, a pullback in attitudes.

[ 19 : 07 ] conversations. We, we feel it and hear it, not only in our music but just in conversations. Don't tell me what I can and can't do. You are not the judge of me.

I am free to say, watch, act, and wear what I want. I am the ultimate judge of what is right and wrong. This is why Peter warns in verse four, with respect to this, they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery and malign you.

When we say, no actually, I am, my body and my mind and my heart is controlled by Christ for the love of Christ controls me. I constrain myself. I don't just allow myself to pursue whatever I feel and they will make fun of you.

What are some forms of sensuality the church falls into today? Remember the definition, an unbridled lust without concern for consequence. So I have four of them if you want to write these down.

These are the four, there's more, but these are the four that as I was doing research on that I came up with. First of all, sensuality has to do with entertainment. I mean, how many times has Peter warned us about the intoxication of the mind?

[ 20 : 26 ] Right? This is 1 Peter 4, 7. He says, the end of all things is at hand. Therefore, be self-controlled and sober-minded. So this would be, the opposite of that would be careless and intoxicated.

I'm often shocked at what Christians entertain themselves with and don't think there will be a consequence within their hearts and within their minds and the actions.

We fill our minds with sensual images and dialogues. No matter how funny it might be, the dirty jokes and obscene language is still the very thing that's called sensual, what we're supposed to refrain from.

And yet, I have heard this. What right do you have to tell me what I can watch? I don't have any right. I don't tell you what you should watch. But the Bible is talking to us about the dangers of sensuality intoxicating our mind.

And it's for the sake of not only God's will but also the promises of prayer. If our minds are being filled with this, we're not in dependence upon His grace and His mercy.

[ 21 : 41 ] Our minds are controlled with another power. So what comes into our ears and our eyes as a believer will be seen in other areas of our lives. This is a promise that's throughout Scripture.

I've seen it in my own heart. I've seen it in the hearts of people around me. When we are careless and we allow ourselves to be entertained with the very thing that God warns us is powerfully going to control us, we will see the results in it.

So this is why Peter's like, you're going to have to say no and when you do, the culture around you is going to call you a crazy fundamentalist. But remember, they're the ones that's blind.

They're the ones that can't see and they're the ones who are indulging in their flesh. So what they call me, it's kind of like I told you last week, when a blind person makes comments about my dress, I tend not to pay attention.

They can't see what I'm wearing. Number two, sensuality also has to do with, here's a dangerous one, what we wear. This is often what is meant by sensual.

[ 22 : 49 ] This is why Paul wrote the young pastor Timothy and said to his congregants, this is 1 Timothy 2.9, likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel with modesty and self-control.

Man, Americans, we do not want to hear this. But we have a very sensual attitude when it comes to the things that we wear. Don't tell me what the line is.

Don't tell me what I can wear. If you don't like it, don't look. This is my body. Well, this is the very definitions of sensuality. We take and remove concerns. Let me just read the definition again.

It's basically doing what I want, however I want, whenever I want, or to whomever I want. It's the you can't tell me what to do kind of mindset. This is the sensuality. We're controlled by our passions.

We're not controlled by the mind of Christ. So Peter says, this is the will of God for you, that you reject this kind of an attitude and you will be mocked for it. This is true for both men and women.

[ 23 : 54 ] This is, if you want to turn right there with me, 1 Corinthians 6, verse 19. I think sometimes we forget these verses are here. But they're here, and I used to hear these verses just as you turn there.

I used to hear them as legalism. I used to hear them as, and they were definitely used in wrong context. But when I remember this is a freedom from slavery, this allows me to keep my mind in such a place where I can really draw on the joy of Christ and be in communion with Him instead of my mind being controlled by lust and sinful desires.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6, verse 19 and 20, he says, or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you whom you have from God?

You are not your own for you were bought with a price so glorify God in your body. Sensuality says, my body's for me, for what I want.

The hope of the gospel sets us free from that mindset, and Paul says, oh no, your body can be used to bring glory to God.

[ 25 : 00 ] Man, that's so different, right? Who's glorified by the way in which you selfishly act? What value do you bring to the world or to others?

How is the world going to be changed for better by your sensuality? Yet, when you decide that my body is for God's glory, people can go from death to life.

They can be set free. They can be loved in ways that you will never be able to love them because sensually is selfish. But yet, when we give God our bodies, it only benefits and glorifies God.

So that means we are not free to say, well I can wear what I want, but we think to ourselves, I want to address myself in such a way that my king is honored and glorified and that others benefit from me, not only in the way in which I dress, but the way in which I speak and I present myself.

And this leads to the point number three that sensuality has to do with our behavior. This is the same dictionary there as it says, examples of sensuality include indecent bodily movement, unchaste handling of males and females, and even many Christians seem to think it's okay to engage in all sorts of sensual, arousing, physical contact.

[ 26 : 26 ] And he goes on with definitions for the sake I'm not going to read this morning. In contrast, God's will is that each of you know how to possess, this is 1 Thessalonians 4 through 5, that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passions like the Gentiles who do not know God.

That's the contrast, right? I think this is even practical when we're thinking about relationships and those who are pursuing marriage. Sure, they may not be sleeping together in a marital act, but their conduct is sensual because it's all about how I feel and the passions of my own flesh.

This is why at times I sit down with couples who are in premarital counseling and I talk to them about the differences between those who want to honor Christ with their body and lay my life down for the benefit of others, which means if you say you love this young man, you love this young woman, you are always going to do what is best for them.

Always. You're always going to protect them. Sensual, if you're going to live a sensual life, you're going to try and get as much as you can to satisfy that which God has told you will enslave you.

And as Christians, I find myself, it's either done really, but I think Satan is the one who came up with like the modern Christian dating view of like put potato sacks and tie, you know, tie paper bags around our head.

[ 27 : 57 ] Everybody's like, ew, that's like, no one wants to, I think he came up with that. The modern view of clean dating because what do we, we don't want anything like that so we'll revolt to the other side and just let the world tell us how to act.

And the world is not driven by God's glory, his freedom, his grace, and gospel. They're driven by sensuality. So I'm at a point as a pastor and as a dad to where we have to allow scripture to be the one that guides us.

And I find it very, very comforting to me when Peter says, when you do this, prepare your mind to act as Christ act. You will be mocked and you will suffer.

So I know there are many who will hear this message whether in this room or out of this room and look at me and say, how dare you say those things? And all I'm gonna say is I just quoted Jesus and the scriptures, take it up with them.

And I find comfort in knowing that if I get those criticisms, he was warning us this would happen. I'm not gonna spend a lot of time on this one but sensuality also is evidenced in our speech.

[ 29 : 01 ] The commentator goes on to say that unwholesome words and filthiness and coarse jesting which comes from Ephesians 4, 29, and 5, 4 is also ways in which sensuality could be meant.

So the word really does have a big, it covers a lot when Peter say Christians should not be sensual in nature. The reason why I wanted to spend so much time on sensuality is I think the other ones we have a pretty clear connection with and understanding and doesn't take as much explanation and we know that we should not be participating in these.

And so this is verse 3 if you're with me, 1 Peter 4, 3. For the time that has passed suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality. Passions, this is very similar to sensuality but it adds things like food and money and fame, anything that we are passionate towards that is other than Christ.

Drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties and lawless idolatries or idolatry. With respect to this, they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery and malign you.

Now I've covered verses 4 through 6 so we're not going to revisit that this morning. I just wanted to give this as an overview so that we can fully understand the last statements in Peter in verse 7.

[ 30 : 25 ] So if you jump with me to verse 7 Peter says this, the end of all things is at hand. Peter uses this word telos telos.

Sometimes I just use Greek words to impress you. It should not mean anything additional for you other than you should feel really smart. Then my pastor uses Greek words. I'm also giving you a brain break from drowning you in heaviness.

But the word telos is often misunderstood. It's used often in the Bible. And at times when we think the word end and the end of all things, we think of end time theology. that's not necessarily what Peter means here or often the New Testament writers.

The Bible is written in stages. We have the stage that first began which is creation and then we have the fall. And then we're waiting from between the fall and the Messiah.

That's the stage where we're waiting for the fulfillment of the Messiah. The Messiah comes. That stage is fulfilled. He raises from the grave and brings justification for all.

[ 31 : 32 ] And now we're in what's called the last stage. One commentator wrote it this way. Refer to the last stage of a process as well as the outcome or a goal.

Peter is saying that because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, his readers are living in the last stage of God's great redemptive plan. And the goal of that plan is being realized.

So he's trying to call them into like there are no more stages left. We're not waiting for anything else to happen. It's all happened. How you live now affects the last stage.

The coming of Christ which is this is when all things end when Jesus comes back. So we are a part of this plan. So he's saying let me remind you that Jesus' return can happen at any moment.



At any time at all. So when we fail when we are in this constant fight with our flesh we are either giving ourselves over to the very thing that is enslaving and causing people to be under judgment or we can be set free living the suffering and in doing so as he says in chapter 3 be ready to give an answer of the hope that lies within you.

[ 32 : 46 ] You can either be a light or you are the one that's leading others into slavery. So this is why he says verse 7 in the latter part he says therefore because it's the end of the stage it's the end of the time therefore be self-controlled and be sober minded for the sake of your prayers.

For the very dependence that you have on God if you do not get control of your body and you do not get control of your mind then you are going to be wandering in the world without God's power.

The very promise he says I am with you always. You can come to me you can cast all your anxieties on me you can confess your sins to me at any moment you can ask for mercy and grace and wisdom whenever you need it.

I love how James says this if you lack wisdom ask God and he will give it to you without repute meaning he'll never rebuke you for asking for more wisdom.

I was pretty foolish today I definitely was not open to reason I could use some more wisdom today. I gave you some yesterday you used it all up already no that's what he means without repute every single day God I need wisdom today I'm a foolish man Lord I need mercy I have failed I need grace I can't believe he says when you are not controlling your body and you are not controlling your mind then the power of Christ through prayer is also no longer in effect.

[ 34 : 17 ] so Peter is saying do in the midst of the suffering in the importance of the end of this world in the importance of the advancement of the king do not allow your minds to be intoxicated with these sins.

Turn with me as we end our time this morning to Luke chapter 21 I have two more passages Luke 1 and Romans 5 so Luke 21 Jesus is about to leave he's talking to his disciples he's using the very same concept Peter is using Peter kind of just repackages it a little bit I remember I was having a conversation with someone in our church a while back we were talking about prayer and just the sinfulness of our hearts and how passions like sensuality can control us and they said to me you know I never wanted to pray because I was afraid God was going to take away the very thing I was enjoying what a powerful statement he was at least being honest and when he said that I felt so guilty I was like oh man I think I need to be more honest at times I don't want to pray because I enjoy my sin I enjoy fulfilling my sinful desires this is Luke 21 33

Jesus says it a little bit different but heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away verse 34 but watch yourselves lest your heart be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap for it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth but stay awake at all times praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are coming to take place and to stand before the son of man Jesus is warning his disciples I mean this has been the warning that we and how is it that we stay awake and how is it that we stay focused he's saying it's by prayer it's by resting in the sufficiency and constant communion with our king so what if you're here this morning and you're caught you're like

John there's no way I'm going to go home and be able to do this I've been so trapped for so long I've been hiding my sin for so long I am stuck in a rut that I don't think I could ever get out of what do I do to return me to Romans chapter 5 see the solution is not to try harder the solution isn't to go home and create a checklist for you the solution is to repent repent means stop trying to do this in your own strength and return to the very power that saved you originally look at verse 1 Romans 5 1 therefore since we have been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ child brothers and sisters you are still at peace with God nothing can separate you from this love this isn't this isn't true about you if you obey this is true about you because it was given to you by grace you have peace with God because God is the one who determined it not you see at times we forget well God's angry with me so I'm gonna go ahead and just do what I want anyways or one day

I'll clean up my act no you won't but it is healthy and good to remember that I have peace with God based upon what Christ has done not based upon what I do verse 2 through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God where's the joy and the hope it's by grace we stand did you notice he didn't say by obedience we stand it's by grace we stand it's faith in what Christ has done for us so our faith also gives us this access to grace leading us to hope not despair I find that people stay in sin longer because they don't actually know the gospel or they forget the gospel or they replace the gospel with good works it's not our own strength but the strength of Christ that sets us free look at verse 3 not only that but we rejoice in our suffering knowing that suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character and character produces hope and hope does not put us to shame because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us when we remind ourselves of where we stand by faith in God's grace because his love has been poured out into our hearts not based upon our performance it's at that moment we can say okay

[ 39 : 53 ] I'm going to run back to the Father in repentance I'm going to come back to him into his love into his forgiveness into his kindness and I'm going to pick back up the suffering of saying no to the flesh and no to the world he says in this the more that you do this it produces endurance and character and the ultimate end it strengthens your hope I wish somebody would have told me this when I was younger that repentance is not me cleaning up my act it's not me trying harder to prove to God that I mean what I say it's taking God at his word and believing his love and grace is sufficient to even change me Paul says oh foolish Galatians why do you think you begin by faith and you are now going to repent yourself by obedience by works look at verse 6 for while we were still weak at the right time

Christ died for the ungodly you notice how he didn't say when you were weak he says while you were still weak because you're still weak today the same power to save you back then is the same power to sustain you to today you're just as weak as you were back then it's only by God's grace and power that lives within you so when I think about these calls I mean you can even go back and read the first four verses of Peter he uses the same concept that he's calling us to look at the power of Christ in the gospel so if you're sitting here this morning and you're trapped in some kind of a sin or you're like I don't want to pray I don't know how to pray my mind is so intoxicated I don't even know what's intoxicating me it is time for you to stop and run back to your father one because he loves you he has promised to care for you he has promised to empower you and there is a supernatural gift waiting for you and that is you can commune with him as rough and as dirty as it may sound at times prayer sounds like oh God

I really messed up and you know what he says I know I know you are forgiven it's not in my notes but I'm going to end here do you remember the story of the prodigal son I love that it's the prodigal son and not the prodigal you don't know why he never stopped being the son he never stopped being the son and the son when he finally got to his moment he's like I have indulged all to the sensuality I can I have tried to fulfill all this world has offered me and now I am with the pigs and he comes up with a plan remember what the plan was I'm going to go work off my debt so he comes and the guy can't even get home because the father's already waiting for him and what does the father do he continues to prove love and forgiveness and mercy and kindness and when the son begins to tell him his plan the father shuts it down and says let's go celebrate my son's return so whatever plan that you have to try and repent and tell God that you're going to earn back his favor he's here telling you right now

I'm shutting it down I'm shutting it down return return and for those of us who aren't as the prodigal at the moment Peter is saying please take serious the warning don't intoxicate yourself don't fall back be self-controlled you are in a literal battle of the mind trust in the sufficiency of Christ so that your prayer the hope that you have daily is not hindered let's pray our father we are so thankful that we don't need to be afraid of you we're not trying to earn our spot with you our relationship with you but we are so quick to replace you we are so easily intoxicated Lord may the warnings of Paul and Peter be helpful for us today that we might continue to walk in joy and peace and hope in Christ's name amen thanks for listening to the sermon podcast of Grace Reformed Church in Spring Hill Tennessee where everyone is in equal need of grace to plan a visit or to learn more about us visit our website at [gracereformed.org](https://gracereformed.org) tribute to entering the■■■■ to futureurch