

The God of All Grace and The True Grace of God

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[0 : 00] We're going to round off our studies this evening in 1 Peter. This is our 26th study out of this letter. I trust that as we've gone through it, we've known something of the letter as it applies to our own circumstances. And as we followed the argument of Peter, as he's writing to those, as we've seen so often in the letter, that our suffering in different ways and being challenged in different ways for what they believe and for their Christian lives. I trust that I and yourselves have come to benefit from knowing these teachings of 1 Peter as they're particularly appropriate also for our own circumstances today. And as it comes to the end of the letter, Peter really rounds it off in a way that's quite similar really to how he began.

And we're going to look at two things from these remaining verses, particularly from verse 10, down to the end of the chapter. First of all, he speaks here about an assurance from knowing God. You can summarize it like that, an assurance from knowing God in verses 10 and 11. After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace who has called us to his eternal glory in Christ will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. And then secondly, he speaks about an assurance from other believers by Silvanus, a faithful brother I have written briefly to you. And she who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. So here is Peter saying, this is what is going to lend you the assurance that you require as you dwell your minds upon it.

First of all, you have an assurance from knowing God and from knowing three things, who he is, what he has done, and what he will yet do. And as he comes to speak about that in verse 10, you see how he is saying that after you have suffered for a little while, a little while longer, that is indicative of the God of all grace, will himself restore, confirm, and so on.

After you have suffered a little while. It is better, I think, with the beginning of verse 10 there to have the word but instead of the word and, because what he is saying is that the same kinds of sufferings in verse 9 are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. I mean, just spoken, as we saw last time, of the devil prowling around and how we are to resist him in the faith, that is the faith, the gospel, the teachings that God has given us, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world but after you have suffered for a little while.

[3 : 08] In other words, it is a contrast between what you are presently experiencing and what God is yet going to do, especially what he is going to do finally as you will be brought, he says, going back to the beginning of the letter, to the inheritance that God has kept for you and reserved for you in heaven.

And that is really one of the things that we have to consider ourselves, where he is saying here that after you have suffered for a little while, then he says this comes into effect when he is writing there about God.

That is one of our problems, isn't it, that we actually see ourselves and our present difficulties and the challenges we face and especially when they become fairly acute or painful or challenging to that extent.

We tend to actually have our minds so taken up with them that we lose something of a sense of dimension, something of a sense of balance, something of a sense of comparison, if you like. And consistently in the Bible, especially in the New Testament epistles, we are brought up to confront this great teaching that as we go through the inevitable difficulties that the Christian life includes.

[4 : 22] We are to actually learn that they are actually relatively insignificant compared to eternity, compared to the eternity of God's people especially.

Now that doesn't mean that the sufferings are insignificant, that we shouldn't bother about them, that we should in some way or other be disturbed if we feel pain, if we feel the bite of the world and if we are concerned about that.

That is always going to be the case. There is nothing wrong in feeling that and knowing that. What Peter is saying, as Paul himself said, is that we must learn to apply this sense or this vision of dimensions to our present situation.

We have to set it alongside eternity. And he is saying here, after you have suffered, for a little while. Because when you place it alongside of eternity, it is a little while.

Even if we have a whole lifespan of difficulty and of trial as Christians. When you set that beside eternity, it really isn't a very long stretch, is it?

[5 : 34] And Peter is really trying to encourage those that he is sending this letter to, and God is seeking to encourage us as we read this for ourselves, to really have things in perspective.

Psalms 30 and verse 4, for example, the psalmist puts it in this wonderful imagery where he says, Though afflictions or sufferings last for a night, yet joy comes with the morning.

Sometimes the night can feel really long. If you are suffering, if you are in pain, the night seems much, much longer then. It takes up your mind so often.

Those people who can hardly sleep because of pain and because of anxiety, as well as physical pain or mental anguish, whatever it is, we tend in that and other things to really be taken up with it to the extent that we feel that is really so big and so great.

We forget that there is a morning coming and that when morning comes, joy comes in the morning. That is especially true of our spiritual life, of our affliction spiritually, because that is what morning is, the morning of redemption, the morning of the completion of our redemption in Christ in heaven.

[6 : 55] It is leaving behind the darkness, the night, the pains. And Peter is really saying, remember always to have your dimensions like that, to be, in fact, as Paul himself wrote to the Romans in chapter 8, for I reckon, he said, and this is a man who knew suffering beyond what you and I know, a man who really had learned what it was to suffer for Christ and for obedience and faithfulness to Christ.

But he said, for I reckon, this is my calculation, this is the conclusion I have come to, he said, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us.

In other words, Paul is really using this balancing act, if you like, between the sufferings of this present time and the glory that is to be revealed in us, the glory that awaits God's people.

And he is saying, think of a gigantic set of balances. Put all your sufferings, he is saying, on one side of these balances, the method of weighing that you used to have still used, but the balances, you know, with the weight on one side and you put something on the other side until they balance out.

Well, he says, put all the sufferings, he is saying, of the present time on the one side of these great balances and then put the glory that shall be revealed in us on the other side and you'll find that the glory is of far greater significance and the balance goes down in that direction.

[8 : 24] Because the word glory in the Bible, literally, especially in the Old Testament, actually means something weighty. The glory of God, in a sense, describes the weightiness of God, the significance of God, the greatness of God as God.

And the glory that awaits the Lord's people, as Peter is encouraging us to think in those terms, it far outweighs the present sufferings, whatever they may be.

Now, that's very easy for us to say when we're preaching. It's very easy for us to say this in theory. It's not so easy when you're suffering, when you are going through the deserts of this life spiritually. Nevertheless, Peter knows that that's what these people themselves are experiencing. Yet, this is what he's saying. The same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world, but after you have suffered for a little while, then think of what's following it. And I know it's difficult for us, impossible for us, really in this life, to appreciate this fully, but I believe that the Bible gives us the warrant to conclude this, that the glory of that world to come for the Lord's people, if we can put it this way, will be all the more enjoyable because they have experienced its opposite in the sufferings of this world.

[10 : 02] When you've come to really taste bitterness, something that's contrastingly sweet feels all the more and tastes all the more sweet because of the bitterness of what you've tasted.

Well, that's how it is spiritually as well. And it's surely the case that in heaven, the Lord's people will bless God, will thank God for the bitter things they experienced, knowing now what they contributed to their life heavenwards.

And Peter is reminding us then of that dimension. It's a little while. Take encouragement from what Peter is saying. Place it in the light of eternity.

Measure it as he would have us to try and measure it. So that's the first thing. Assurance from knowing God in the sense in which our sufferings are for a little while compared to eternity.

But secondly, assurance from knowing God as the one who presides over all of these difficulties and these trials and all of our present life indeed. After you've suffered a while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish.

[11:18] Now he's saying there, here is something really towards your encouragement and your assurance as a Christian. To know that everything is presided over by God, by this God.

Not the God that the world imagines the Bible speaks about. Not the God even that we ourselves might imagine him to be or have imagined him to be at one time.

But the God who is here, the God of all grace, what he is, what he has already done, he has called us to his eternal glory in Christ, what he will yet do, he will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, establish you.

Let's look at that briefly. He is first of all, in himself, the God of all grace. What is that saying to us? It's saying to you and to me tonight, whatever your need is, however great your need is, however deep your need is, however long lasting you may have seen your need to be, however much your need fills your mind, however much you find your need impossible to describe, here's the answer to it.

[12:30] Here's the provision against it. The God of all grace. Whatever your need is tonight, whatever variety of need exists within this building, and that is really great, a great variety of need.

We're all different. We're all in different circumstances. We all have different ways of thinking, different experiences in life. We all have different kinds of relationships. We all have different settings in the world.

But what God is saying is, this God, as the God of all grace, this grace, as the grace of God, is all that you need to meet the variety of your need, the depth of your need, the extent of your need.

It doesn't matter what it is. It doesn't matter how great a sinner you may see yourself to be. It doesn't matter how much you really need to cope with what you have in providence, what you meet with in the world.

It doesn't matter how great that opposition to you tonight is in the world against you for following Christ. The answer to all of that, the solution to all of that, the provision against all of that, is the God of all grace.

[13:47] grace. There is no need for which there is no grace. And God is never lacking in grace, as he looks out on the variety of need among his people.

Whatever your need tonight personally is, God is saying to you, I can more than match that in my grace. In everything that I am, as the God of grace, as the grace has been revealed in Christ, God of undeserved favor, the God of power, of might, of limitless ability, all of these things you can subsume under and being the God of grace, the God of all grace.

From that point of view, you could say that there is no grace outside of God, at least not this kind of grace. It's all within himself, and he has in himself all the grace that we require.

But then he goes on to speak about what he has already done, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ. Now, in the Bible, the New Testament speaks about calling us, in this kind of context, it really means the kind of thing that you speak of as a powerful summons that God sends out through the gospel.

There is such a thing as the gospel call, where we are called to repentance, called to believe in Christ, called to place our trust in him. That's the outward call of the gospel.

[15:20] He's talking here about another call, the call of God powerfully that brings us to be joined to Christ. Christ. The call of God that calls us unto his eternal glory in Christ.

You know what a summons is? When somebody needs to appear in court, a summons is sent out, a citation, if you like, or a summons, with the detail, the necessary detail, specifying the time, the place, and it's delivered so that it requires a response.

And not to respond to a summons is really serious. Get you into serious trouble anybody who has a summons and doesn't actually appear in response to that summons.

But the thing is, the summons itself that you might receive in the ordinary sense, it does not carry with it the ability or the inevitability that you will respond to it.

You can refuse it. You can refuse it and pay the consequences. But this summons of God, this powerful, saving summons of God, as God, through the gospel and by the work of his Holy Spirit, comes in such a way as to summon us into life, into possession of life, into being joined to Christ, you see, that summons doesn't just come to summon you, to call you to do this.

[16:50] It brings in its own bosom. It brings in its own hands, if you like. Because it's God's summons, it brings the enabling, the ability for you to respond.

Isn't that a great thing? Catechism defines it so well in effectual calling. Where that effectual calling, rightly called, is effectual calling, is the catechism's word, where the calling of God is made effectual because it's his call.

What does it say? Well, among other things, it says, he persuades and enables us to embrace Jesus Christ. It's not a summons that just comes to persuade you to embrace Jesus Christ as he's offered in the gospel.

It's more than just a persuasion of you that you need Christ. It is that. But there's the enabling because you can be persuaded tonight that you need Christ and still say about yourself rightly, well, I'm persuaded that I need Christ.

I'm persuaded that God in his grace has given everything I need in Christ to meet my need. But I don't have the ability myself. I don't have the ability myself to respond to that.

[18:07] I'd love to respond to it, but I can't. Well, you don't have to because God is saying, in this sense of it, God is bringing the ability to respond in his call. And that doesn't mean that you should sit back or I should sit back and say, well, let God do his work.

Nothing is required of me. Oh, yes, there is. You're required to repent of sin. You're required to turn to Christ. You're required to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

You're required to bow the knee to Christ, to give your mind, your whole person to Christ. The fact that God sends his powerful summons to enable us to embrace Jesus Christ doesn't do away with God's call that addresses our responsibility.

The effectual call addresses our inability. The gospel call addresses our responsibility. We are responsible, tonight, you and I, for our relationship with God and what it is and where we're at. Because you cannot say to God, well, I learned from your word that there's such a thing as this powerful summons, this call, and therefore I concluded that there's nothing required of me to do.

[19:25] No, you're required to repent of sin, to turn to Christ, to turn from sin, to confess your sins, to seek this Lord and his salvation, and to come to embrace him.

That's a responsibility that God enables us to respond to by his effectual call. So here is what he's saying. This is your encouragement. He's saying, this is not something you've created for yourselves.

God didn't say, now I have sent my son into the world and he's died on the cross. Now it's up to you what you do with it. No, God is saying, I sent my son into the world to die for my people, and in order to secure that salvation in their own person and in their own experience, I persuade and I enable them, I call them to Christ, to be joined to him, to come to possess this salvation for themselves.

He has called us, he says, into, he has called us to his eternal glory in Christ. Now that's a remarkable phrase in itself. We need to deal with it a lot more swiftly than we would really like to. You remember, Peter was on the Mount of Transfiguration, and he saw something of the glory of Christ in that. And in the gospel records of it, we find, in Luke, for example, we find him saying that Moses and Elijah appeared in glory with Christ.

[21:01] Christ was transfigured, his own personal glory shone forth through his body and through his clothes. That was the glory that belonged to him as the Son of God.

But there's a surrounding glory, the whole thing is marked by glory. And these two individuals appear with him in glory. And when Peter came to write his second letter in chapter 1, verse 17, this is how he put it.

He says, We were, verse 16, we didn't follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was born to him by the majestic glory, this is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.

We ourselves heard this very voice born from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. Peter knew from his own experience that there was glory associated with Christ.

[22 : 07] And what he's now conveying in this letter and in this verse to us and to those he wrote to is that the glory that belongs to Christ personally is something that's accompanied by a glory for his people.

And that glory for his people is what God has called them unto. God has called them to glory, to share with Jesus in that whole, well, words fail us really to describe it, that whole environment of glory.

Go back to the verse we chose from Romans chapter 8, I reckon the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us.

The glory that will be ours at that moment, at that time, for all eternity. And that's what God has called us to.

To share with Christ in his triumph over sin, over death, over the devil. He's just been talking about the devil, to be watchful against him.

[23 : 14] That he's like a prowling lion. He wants to devour you. He wants to spoil your peace. He wants, if it were possible, even to remove the salvation that God has given you, though he can't. But he'll try and persuade you that he can.

He might even try and persuade you that you've lost it. I'll resist him, he says, firm in your faith. Look to the God of all grace and look to his call because he has called us to nothing short of his eternal glory.

And as you go through the various difficulties of life as a Christian, remember your calling.

Remember that you have been called to nothing less than to share with Christ in that eternal glory that is heaven, that is glory, that is God's provision for us.

And that's what he has already done. He has called us to that eternal glory. And then, what's yet to remain, he will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

I'll just very briefly these four words because they're important. But notice what he's saying. He himself, and that's really emphasized in the Greek text of this verse. He himself will do this.

[24 : 37] He who has called you to his eternal glory will himself do this. God's not going to send a deputy. He's not going to send someone less than himself to do this work for him.

He will do it. That's your great privilege tonight as a Christian. That it is God himself who's working in your life. That it's God himself who has done all this for you already.

That it's God himself who has called you to his eternal glory. That it's God himself who will yet do these four things. Restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

It's not depending on your ability. It's not depending on somebody else to do this for you. God himself will do it. And what is it he will do?

Well, he will restore you. This is not just something that awaits eternity for it to begin. What Peter is saying is that this is already underway, but it's going to be completed when the Lord comes, when he brings his people to heaven after the resurrection, the judgment, and so on.

[25 : 45] But he's saying this is God is going to do this. He's going to restore. And the word means to mend something or to put it back into place. It's used literally of the disciples when they were mending their nets where Jesus came to call them into discipleship.

Some of them, he came across them mending their nets. They were fixing or filling in the holes in the nets that were the result of a night's fishing or caught on the rocks or whatever.

Or it's used of something surgeons do or something you've maybe have done yourself when a bone becomes dislocated, a joint becomes dislocated, it's put back into place, it's restored.

It's fixed back the way it should be. That's really the word that's used and it's got a whole range of importance in terms of it being used in a context of salvation.

God himself will restore. We're needing restoration. We need to be refixed. We need our life to be put back the way they should be. Not only in terms of our relationship to God, but in terms even of everything that's in our very souls that have gone completely out of sorts through our sin and through our fall, through our depravity, which we caused ourselves when we sinned in Adam.

[27 : 08] Every part of our soul then became disjointed just like a computer over which you've thrown a bucket of water. It doesn't function the way it was designed to function.

That's how it is with your mind, with your conscience, with your understanding, with your affections. All these things as they comprise your whole soul or inner spirit, even the physical side of us doesn't function the way it ought, the way it was designed to.

But you see, God in his grace, that's why he's the God of all grace. It's grace that is in the business of fixing this. When God comes to restore you, what he's really doing is taking what is disjointed, what is broken, what needs to be put back together again.

That's what he's doing. That's what our renewal in Christ is about. Is there anyone who doesn't know of this for themselves?

Are you tonight the same as you've always been? Is your soul still disjointed? Are your faculties still not working properly, not saying they're perfect, we're not perfect in this life?

[28 : 26] But do you see things the way you've always seen them? Is Christ the same to you as he was since the day you were born? How do you see your relationship to God?

What about your affections? Do you love the law of God? The commandments of God? As much as the promises of God?

Well, when God restores us inwardly, these are the things he brings about. He brings about the opposite of what we are naturally. So he himself will restore.

And then he says he will confirm. A word that means to establish or make steady because our lives are not steady. Our lives are not balanced. They've gone out of balance, out of kilter.

That's why God in his salvation is busy not just restoring, putting back together, mending, but giving steadiness. Giving us a balance to life.

[29 : 26] Thirdly, strengthening. Similar to the word confirm. It's used in Ephesians chapter 3 verse 16 for example, which speaks about the strengthening.

Paul is praying that God will strengthen you by his spirit in the inner man, in the inner person, in your souls. Because we're weak. We're flabby.

We don't have a structure to ourselves spiritually or morally till God begins to build us properly together again. And he will strengthen you.

He will by his grace strengthen you. You don't have the strength or I don't have the strength myself to cope, not just to cope, but to overcome and to benefit from these afflictions that the apostle is writing to.

When he's writing to these people, he's not suggesting that they have in themselves as Christians, now that they're Christians, that God has given them everything they need and he has just taken a back seat. And they can just rely on themselves from now on to strengthen themselves, to have that particular spiritual and moral backbone, if you like, or reinforcement to their lives.

[30 : 39] Oh, he says, God will do this for you. The God of all grace by his grace will do this. And what a wonderful source of encouragement that is to you and I tonight.

We know our weakness, our proneness to just virtually collapse under challenges and how ourselves fall into temptations, how we give in so often to the flesh and to the devil and to the world. Well, don't be discouraged by that. Go to the God of all grace. Ask him to strengthen you, to give you further reinforcement. And then he will establish you, which means literally to have a safe foundation.

The words used in Matthew 7 in the parable of the wise and the foolish person, the wise man built his house upon the rock. Founded it upon the rock.

And that, he says, is what God is doing. That's what the God of grace of all grace is about. Because when he rescues us out of the pit of sin, as Psalm 40 puts it so eloquently, he doesn't just take us out of the pit of sin and then put us onto sinking sand or onto something that's going to be very movable under your feet spiritually.

[31 : 58] He places your feet upon a rock. That rock is Jesus. He's not going to move in the challenges of the world as you face them.

You may move. We may give in at times. We may fluctuate as we do. But the rock doesn't move. The foundation doesn't budge an inch. And he will establish you.

He will make you more and more to be embedded into that firm foundation. And what a wonderful encouragement that is. When again we think of how flimsy a foundation we ourselves could build.

Just think of yourself just now or myself being required to build some sort of foundation against death. Something that would meet the greatness of what death is and death as the great depriver.

And build a foundation against it so that you would overcome it and climb above it. Think of you being left and my being left to build some sort of foundation that will be adequate to meet the judgment of God.

[33 : 10] Can't do it can we? Don't have to. God's already done it for us in Jesus. He will already he will as he has already called you to his eternal glory in order to get you there.

Certainly he will restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you. Assurance then from knowing God and just briefly assurance from other believers.

He speaks about Silvanus. I think he's saying here he's sending this letter with Silvanus to be delivered to these people that he's writing to. And he's mentioning him here as a faithful brother so that those that will receive this letter will actually know that the apostle has in fact approved of this Silvanus that he has as full backing and therefore they can trust him.

And they can trust what he's doing in bringing this letter from Peter. Then he goes on to say I've written briefly to you exhorting that this is the true grace of God.

By that he means everything he has said here in the letter, everything he said regarding suffering, regarding how we are to view suffering, regarding God in relation to our suffering, regarding what he's done in Jesus Christ and in the sufferings of Jesus, this he says is the true grace of God.

[34 : 35] You go out there tonight not just to the world and his wordiness. Go out to some species of teaching that passes itself off as Christianity. Peter was well aware of it in his own day.

The false teaching that had come into the church by the time the apostles themselves came to the end of their lives in this world. People were saying you need to add to faith in Christ something other than that, something you do yourself.

You need to regard the sufferings of this present life as certain groups of a charismatic persuasion will tell you. You need to actually regard these as out of place in the Christian life and will send you stuff that will help you to cope with all that, that will help you to overcome and will banish these demons.

Now, says Peter, that's not some strange out of place thing that's happening. in your life as we saw earlier in chapter 4 verse 15, don't be surprised. Don't think it's something strange.

Don't think it's out of place. This is God's handling of your life. This is the true grace of God. Friends, tonight if there's one thing you and I need to know and to be convinced about, it's this, what is indeed the true grace of God?

[36 : 00] from the God of all grace, the true grace of God comes in his management of our lives.

But then he says, she who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark my son.

Now just bear with me a couple of minutes and we'll be finished with that. She who is at Babylon is a reference, it seems, almost certainly to the church in Rome.

It looks like this was written by Peter from Rome and where himself was the prisoner. And as he wrote from Rome, he described the church in Rome as she who is at Babylon.

Why would he say Babylon? Is he just using coded language to protect them? Well, no. He's going back to the Old Testament. He's going back to the great enemy of the church or of God's people in the Old Testament.

Babylon, the powers of Babylon, the enmity that Babylon had for the people of God, where the people of God ended up for 70 years captive in Babylon. Babylon is used throughout the Bible, and again go forward to the book of the Revelation, where Babylon is judged, where the powers of this world, as they represented in Babylon in the Old Testament, where they're going to be judged by God.

[37 : 21] So Babylon really stands as a name that's synonymous with the great enemy of God and his people. Satan and his forces, the forces of darkness, through whatever agencies they work, that's Babylon.

Babylon is all around you tonight. God has placed us in Babylon. That's why the letter of Peter is so important. But he's saying here literally, she who is at Babylon, this church in Rome, sends you greetings.

greetings. It's so encouraging to receive greetings from fellow Christians, especially when they're going through the same sufferings, the same circumstances.

When you get a letter or when you get a text or something, it's so easy nowadays, isn't it? And I have to confess to my own feelings in not being in any way as much up to speed with these things

as I should be.

So easy to send a text or to send a letter or a card or something just to assure somebody you know is going through a tough time. Look, I've been there. I know something of what that means.

[38 : 31] And then to say something of what you experienced of God and point them to God as Peter's doing in his letter. What great encouragement that would bring when he's saying they're actually going through in verse 9 the same kinds of sufferings as you and I are, as you are, he says to them.

So it's mutual greetings important for encouragement. But you know, physical presence is much better still.

When we can at all pay a visit to somebody in need, just to be with them. Just to say, look, I'm remembering you. Even if you can't do much for them, you've no idea how much that sometimes means to someone in real need.

You know, that's in the old days as we speak about, and when I say the old days, I'm thinking of myself as now getting old as well. But in the old days, when I was a youngster, it was very common to just engage in that part of the village and go through in every village, just to go visiting, just to pop into your neighbor sometime through the day, usually every day.

That's why your ancestors gave so much value to visiting people. people, and that's why they visited, because they received and gave encouragement through personal presence and assurance to others and from others by that.

[40 : 00] And greet one another with a kiss of love. Something that has been debased, degenerated into sensuality and how it's all too easy for it to descend to that.

And yet Peter wasn't in any way embarrassed by writing, greet one another with the kiss of love. We should not be afraid, even in the world in which we live, to show our Christian love outwardly. Even if it does mean giving a kiss of love wherever appropriate. It doesn't mean when I go to the door tonight that I'm going to greet everybody with a kiss of love.

It's difficult enough to shake hands with everybody. But what I'm saying is in all seriousness, this is something Peter is not embarrassed, and Paul says the same thing, he calls it the holy kiss, a holy kiss.

It's a sign of affection, and where should there be an outward sign of affection as much as among the Lord's people in one to another? So don't be embarrassed about this. Don't think, what's the world going to think about this?

[41 : 14] It's the world that's actually debased this very thing. And if there's one thing we need to do is to recover certain practices, certain words that are used in the Bible, the word pride is one of them, the word gay is another one, and bring them back to their biblical use because they've come to be debased in human sinfulness.

And here is one of them as well, the kiss of love, outward affections. So we've gone through the letter of Peter sometimes all too quickly, but as I said, I hope we've benefited different ways from that.

I'm going to leave you with a question. What would you say is the key verse or the key phrase passage in 1 Peter for yourself to convey the message that it conveys?

Well, there are so many. One thing we have to say, whatever one you choose, this is the great message of Peter. God, as the God of all grace, is utterly dependable.

But you need to step out in faith. Give yourself to him. In order to experience that and enjoy that for yourself.

[42 : 40] Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for your grace. We thank you for the description you make of yourself to us as the God of all grace. Oh, Lord, we thank you for all that flows from your grace to us, for the many practical as well as spiritual benefits that we receive from you each day of our lives.

Like the psalmist, we would say, Lord, if we were to number them, they are past our ability to do so. Bless to us your own word of truth again this evening. Continue to bless us as a people.

Help us to bear one another in love before you. We seek this seeking your glory and your praise in all of these things for Jesus' sake. Amen. Now we're going to conclude our worship this evening, singing tonight in conclusion in Psalm 84.

Psalm 84 4 on page 339. Sing to the tune Weatherby. We're singing verses 8 to 12. Lord God of hosts, my prayer here, O Jacob's God, give ear.

See God our shield look on the face of thine anointed dear. Let me just say to the young ones here tonight how good it is to see you. It was a wee bit longer than usual tonight because we wanted to finish this letter.

[44 : 00] But I'm grateful to you not only for being here but for your patience and for your listening. It's really so important for us as older ones to have you present with us.

So thank you for that. Lord God of hosts, my prayer here, O Jacob's God, give ear. God of God, give ear.

My prayer here, O Jacob, God, give ear.

See God our shield look on the face of thine anointed dear.

For in thy court one day excels a thousand brother in.

[45 : 13] My God, God, give us will like he adore and dwell in tents of sin.

For God the Lord, a sun and shield, in grace and glory, glory, give, and will withhold no good from them that uprightly do live.

O thou thou that are the Lord of hosts, that man is truly blessed, who bide the sure in confidence on thee alone doth rest.

If you allow me to go to the main door, please, after the benediction. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.