

An Eternal Perspective and Closing Thoughts

by Anton Bosch

This sermon from 1 Peter chapter 5 emphasizes the importance of humility, submission, and enduring suffering in the face of trials. It highlights the need to trust in God's grace, resist the devil, and focus on the eternal glory promised through Christ Jesus. The sermon encourages believers to stand firm, be established, strengthened, and settled by God, ultimately giving Him all the glory and dominion forever.

Scripture: 1 Peter 5:5, 1 Peter 5:6, 1 Peter 5:8, 1 Peter 5:10, 1 Peter 5:11, 1 Peter 5:12, 1 Peter 5:13, 1 Peter 5:14, 1 Peter 5:14

Topics: "Humility", "Enduring Trials"

Description

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Transcript

So, 1 Peter chapter 5, and we'll read from 5 through the end of the chapter. 1 Peter chapter 5, reading from 5 through the end of the chapter. 1 Peter 5, 5. Likewise, you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders.

Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be close with humility. For God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. 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.

To Him be the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. 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.

She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you, and so does Mark my son. Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus.

Amen. So, Peter is now coming to the end of the book, and we're in verse 10. We began verse 10 last week.

And so, may the God of all grace. And so, the trials that we face and that we have to deal with, we need grace. And he is reminding us of the fact that God is the God of all grace, not just some, but all grace.

And He has called us to His eternal glory. So, He's reminding us that in the midst of the trials, we need to look up because there is the God of all grace, and we come boldly to that throne of grace that we may find grace to help in a time of need. But we also need to look forward to the reward that is coming, the eternal glory by Christ Jesus.

So, He has called us to that end. He has not called us to suffer. It's easy to get fixated on our suffering and to say, well, you know, things are difficult, things are hard.

This is what it's all about. And obviously, that's when people lose hope. But we need to keep our eyes on the goal and on the end of the conversation.

And He has not called us to suffering, but He has called us to eternal glory. And it is by Christ Jesus. It is through Christ Jesus that we have those things.

We don't have them because of who we are or because of our own merit, but we have them because of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, He says then, after you have suffered a while, after you have suffered a while. And so, He is reminding us of the temporary nature of suffering.

And we say, well, you know, it looks like some things will never end. And the time that we're struggling with the problems of the virus, it's really going to be a year, I reckon, and then there'll be an antidote and we'll be out of it. But right now, it looks like it's forever.

It looks like it's going to be forever that we're going to be outside. And if you got the newsletter this afternoon, if you didn't, then let me know and I'll give you a copy of it. But I reckon it's another three weeks, four weeks, and hopefully we can go back inside.

So there is an end. There is hope at the end. And so, even if we spend our lives living in an oppressive country like northern Korea or some of these places, even that is temporary.

And we look at that and we say, well, you know, how can it be temporary? If someone is born into an oppressive system like that and becomes a Christian and spends all of their life suffering under the most extreme oppression and difficulty, well, it's still temporary. It is just a while. And the reason why it is temporary is because He has just told us.

He has called us to eternal glory. To eternal glory. And so, He's comparing eternity to the time of our sojourn here.

Remember that we're strangers and pilgrims. We're passing through. And if we're passing through, we're going somewhere else.

We're headed to glory. And so, in the meantime, it is a temporary suffering in the light of eternity. It is a brief period of suffering in the light of eternity.

In fact, He told us that before at the beginning of the book in chapter 1 and verse 6. He said, In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while. For a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials. Now, obviously, when we are earthly minded, if we are carnal in our thinking, if our perspective is worldly, well, then it doesn't look like a little while.

And that's the key to getting this thing in this right perspective. And that is to see things from a biblical, from a godly perspective, from an eternal perspective. And yes, when we look at things from a human perspective, we say, Well, it's 70 years, 80 years, maybe 100 years if you're angry.

And that's what we've got. No, in fact, that is nothing. It is a vapor.

The Scripture says, It is here today, it's gone tomorrow. But eternity is forever. And we need to have an eternal perspective.

We need to understand that whatever it is that we're dealing with in our lives, whatever we're dealing with in the church here is temporary. It is only for a while, because eternity is coming, and eternity is a long, long time. So we've got to get our perspective right.

When we don't get our perspective right, it becomes very difficult to see things in their proper perspective. I remember when I was at school, I thought that I would be in this terrible place. I hated school.

It was a bad experience for me. And I thought I would be there forever. It would never end.

And yet, it's like yesterday, and that was, I don't know, 60 years ago, 50 years ago, that I left school. And so when you're in the situation, you think it's never going to end. You need to take a step back and say, No, in fact, this is very small in the light of the overall picture.

We need to see things from God's point of view, from God's perspective. So He says that He has called us to His eternal glory, that after you've suffered a while, so there's going to be an end after you have suffered. So He's clearly saying it's not going to continue forever.

After you've suffered for a while, He is going to do four things. And these four things are almost identical. In fact, when you look at the different translations, you'll find that the words are transposed.

The word establish is used at the end instead of strengthen in some translations. And it's not because they mix the words up, but because the Greek words are so very close together. They're very, very similar words.

So why is He then using similar words instead of different words? Well, I believe that what He is doing, what the Spirit is doing, is He is just emphasizing the point. Instead of saying that after you've suffered a while, He's going to establish, establish, establish, establish you, He's using four different words to say basically the same thing. So it's a means of emphasis.

And He is saying then that after we have suffered, what He is going to do, obviously it's Christ Jesus, who will perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. So there are little differences between them, and I'm going to try and pull out those little differences. The first thing He's going to do is perfect us.

Remember that word perfect also means complete. Or in some context, mature. But He's really speaking here about completing us, perfecting us.

When will we be perfected? When will we be perfect? Now I know that some of us think that we are already perfect. But we're not really. We may be justified as far as God is concerned.

He sees us as those who are just and who have never sinned. But we know that we are far from perfect. When will we be perfect? When we see Jesus.

We will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. And we will be like Him. On that day we will be complete.

We will be perfect. So He is saying that the perfection is coming. And He's going to perfect us once all of this is over.

Obviously He is perfecting us right now. So there's an ongoing process, and then there's a culmination, and there's a completion that happens at the end of time. Inna and I like to watch these home improvement programs, and they're quite amazing.

I wish that it was real. But within half an hour they've demolished the whole house, and they've rebuilt the whole thing, and in the last three minutes everything comes together. Suddenly there's paint on the walls and tiles and furniture and carpeting, and everything is just done literally in the last five minutes.

Well, in a sense, our journey is going to be like that. There's going to be this long period of God doing the things that He does in our lives. And a lot of that has to do with demolition, where He has to break down all of the stuff that we brought with us out of the world and from our previous life.

So there's a lot of rubbish that has to be removed. You remember when Ezra and Nehemiah rebuilt Jerusalem, it says that there was much rubble that needed to be removed. So they had to get rid of the rubbish first before they could begin to lay the foundation.

And so unfortunately in some of our lives, God seems to have to spend an inordinate amount of time trying to get rid of the rubbish so that He can get down to a proper foundation. And then, of course, He begins to do the foundation, begins to do the other work. But in the last—not in the last five minutes, but in the last fraction of a second, in the twinkling of an eye, the work will be complete.

And it will seem that nothing is—that it's just such a slow process. And then suddenly, when He comes, it's all going to be done, and it's going to be—we're going to be perfect. We're going to be complete.

He will—now, let me just take one step back on these four things, because there is an aspect of these that is now, and then there's an aspect that is not yet. So there's an aspect in which once we have gone through a period of suffering, and for all of us, and even for those who find themselves in oppressive countries where they are physically suffering for the gospel, there are times of intense suffering, and then there are times when the pressure lets off. And we all have those times.

And when we go through these times of suffering, He brings us through on the other side, and He establishes us. So there's a short-term aspect to this, and then there's a long-term aspect. And so there's a long-term where He finally completes the work, and He finally matures us and completes us.

And then the word establish. Establish. And I think that's a good translation.

Sets us firmly. When something is established, it is immovable. It is sure.

You talk about—we talk about establishing a business. When is a business established? Well, some people say a year, some people say three years, but once you've got everything sorted out and your system's working, you've got the finances working, and everything is working, the business is established. It is firm.

It is not going to move. And so He's going to perfect us—sorry, He's going to perfect us, and He's going to establish us, set us in a firm foundation. On a firm foundation, so that we are not easily moved, so that we are settled.

And you'll see the similarity to that word settled. I'll come back to that in a few moments. So then strengthen you.

Strengthen us. So He strengthens us during the trials, but He strengthens us as we come out of the trials, because when we come out of the trials, we're able to look back and we're able to say, yes, with a mighty hand, God has brought us out. Remember Israel coming out of Egypt, and they're able to look back while they were going through the Red Sea.

The Egyptians were behind them. They weren't particularly excited about that process, but once they came to the Promised Land, they were able to look back and they were able to say that God has brought us out and He has strengthened us. And so He will strengthen us, and He strengthens us in the trial, but He strengthens us particularly when we come out on the other side and our faith is strengthened, and we're able to look back and we're able to say, yes, God is faithful.

We thought that we were going to sink. You remember the disciples in the boat a couple of Saturdays ago. They really thought they were going to sink until Jesus stilled the storm, and they were able to come out and they were able to say, yes, the Lord has brought us through.

Their faith was strengthened. Oh, He of little faith, He says to them. But when they come out on the other side, they've come to another level.

And that's what happens during times of suffering and times of persecution and times of trial is that there are times of growth. There are times when while things seem to be going very hard, there are times when, in fact, we send down our roots deeply. Down here we don't really have different seasons, but on the East Coast you'll see that the trees all die off in the winter, and it looks like nothing is happening.

But, in fact, those are very important times when the tree is strengthened and it sends down its roots and the hardness of the wood is being established within the rings of the wood. It's a time, if they just had summer, the tree becomes weak, and that's one of the problems we have here in LA is the trees break so easily and the wind blows them over because they haven't gone through times of winter where the tree becomes hardened. And so God brings us through those times where we are strengthened, when we are hardened and toughened up and we're able to come out.

And then when the summer comes again and things go easy again, there's a growth spurt and we're able to go ahead because we've now been established firmly in our relationship with Him and in our faith. And so He strengthens us and then finally settles you. Again, this idea of being established or being immovable.

We use that term particularly when you build houses and we say that houses sometimes settle. This building is not settling anymore. This building is settled.

It's been here for 50 years. It is settled. It's not cracking.

It's not moving. It is firmly established. But a new building moves a little bit as it settles on its foundation and it becomes solid.

And so He needs to settle us so that we are not moved so easily, so we're not so emotional in our response to trials, in our response to various things, so that we are firm and not blown to a throw by every wind of doctrine, not blown about by every difficulty and every attack that comes from the evil one, and so that we may be settled, that we may be firm and established. And obviously He does these things for us, but these things are done in Him. It's in Him that we are made perfect.

It's in Him that we are established. It's in Him that we are strengthened. It's in Him that we are settled.

He is our firm foundation. All right, so verse 11 then. Now Peter is drawing the book to a close, and he's doing his greetings and his benediction.

So to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. To Him be the glory and dominion forever and ever.

Amen. Now remember that we can't add to God's glory. We can't add to His dominion, His authority, His supremacy.

He is those things. Whether we give Him glory doesn't make Him more glorious. He is glorious in Himself.

So what He is saying here, and whenever we find these phrases right through the New Testament and in the Old Testament, is that we need to establish His glory in our own hearts. We need to give Him glory. Not because He needs the glory, but because we need to give Him the glory.

Because we need to tell Him that we are awed by His glory. Not for His sake, but for our sake. He is not a human being.

Human beings need to be told all the time that they're wonderful. They need to be told all the time that they're the greatest. But God doesn't need that.

He doesn't have those kind of character flaws that needs to be elevated all the time. He is elevated. He is high and lifted up.

And all we can do is to acknowledge who He is. Acknowledge His glory. So to Him be glory.

Not just now, but forever and ever. Amen. So what will we be doing in eternity? We'll be glorifying Him.

We'll be worshipping Him. We'll be magnifying His name. And so to Him be the glory.

The glory does not go to man. And I think that He is reminding us of what we need to give to the Lord, glory. But also He's reminding us that it needs to go to Him.

So you can read the sentence in two ways. To Him be the glory. Or to Him be the glory.

And so the glory doesn't go to man. Now, remember that this is a time when Caesar worship or emperor worship is being instituted. And that Christians were being forced to worship.

This was just at the beginning of that period. That would become worse and worse under the different Caesars, and Nero would begin that process, and then it would just get worse and worse for the next couple of hundred years. And so part of that process was the worship of Caesar.

And so you were required, and this was beginning right at this time, and Peter, as we see in a moment, is writing, I believe, from Rome, from the capital, from where the emperor is ruling. And so you were required every year to visit the local magistrate's office or whatever it was, and to burn some incense. They would have some coals or a little fire going, and you would burn some incense, and you would say, Hail Caesar! And by saying that, you have worshipped Caesar.

You have glorified Him, and then you get a letter of absolution to say that you've done this thing, and you can now go back and worship whatever other god you want. Of course, for the Christians, this was a problem, because to Him be the glory. To Him be the dominion.

So the glory cannot go to man. I'm very sad when I watch Christians glorifying preachers, glorifying politicians, literally worshipping these people, giving them glory, giving them power in the sense of dominion. No, to Him belongs those things.

There is no glory to be going to any man, doesn't matter how great he may be in our eyes. There is no dominion that belongs to Him. And so to Him be the glory and the dominion.

Of course, that word dominion means the authority, the power to rule. And so He has the power. He has the authority.

He is the ruler, and He is the sovereign. He is the sovereign. There is no power beyond Him.

There is no power that He bows before. He is the ultimate form of power and of authority. And so we need to give Him the glory in our lives, and we need to give Him the dominion.

So what is it that we glorify? What is it that has dominion in our lives? And of course, this is not just about a vocal expression and saying, well, to Him be glory, to Him be dominion. Now I've done that. No, this is more than just a vocal expression.

This is a thing I do, that I live. Glorifying Him in everything that I say and do. So even in our sufferings, are we glorifying Him? And unfortunately, many Christians do not glorify the Lord through the way that they live.

They bring disgrace upon Him. And remember the verse in Romans where Paul is quoting the Old Testament, and he says, because of you His name is being blasphemed. And so right now in America, the name of Christ, the name of the gospel is being defamed because of the behavior of Christians, or so-called Christians.

They are not glorifying Him. They are bringing dishonor upon the name of Christ. And I'm not going to cite examples.

We just see this on the news and on the radio all the time. Churches, preachers, Christians, organizations, dishonoring the name of Christ instead of glorifying Him in everything that they say and do. And then who has the dominion? It's one thing to say that, and remember this sort of connects to the model prayer that the Lord Jesus gives us, to Him be the honor and the glory, and the power, the power, the dominion.

And so it's one thing to say, well, He has all dominion in the universe. He is the God of all gods. He is the Lord of all lords.

There is nothing that is not under His feet. But that's really not the question. The question is what is in my own heart.

Who is ruling in my life? And unfortunately the problem is that many times it's self that is ruling, that has dominion. And so we say, well, to Him belongs the dominion. But in fact we want to make that true in the universe.

We want to make that true in America. But it's not true in our own hearts. And so the dominion needs to be His.

He needs to be the one who dominates. And of course He's not dominating in a dictatorial way, as a dictator or a tyrant. But we need to willingly bow before Him and say, Lord, You're the boss.

You're the boss of me. You're the one who calls the shots. And whatever You tell me to do, I do.

Whatever You want from me, I give. Because You have the dominion. You are the sovereign.

You are the supreme King of glory. And then, of course, the word Amen. May it be so.

May it be true. And of course we need to say Amen. May this be true in our hearts.

May this be true in our church. May this be true in our community. He's doing the greetings bit.

And so he says, By Silvanus, our faithful brother, as I said to him. Silvanus is the Roman name or the Latin name for Silas, which is his Greek name. And you remember that Silas traveled with Paul.

A lot of his journeys, Silas was with him. Remember when they were beaten and thrown into the jail in the stocks and they were singing in the middle of the night. It was Paul and Silas who were there singing together.

So Silas had been, or Silvanus had been with Paul, had traveled with Paul on many of his journeys. And he is saying that he is our faithful brother. Let me just go back to that little word again.

Remember we need to pay attention to these little words. By, by. Why does he say by? Well, I'm not exactly sure.

There are different thoughts. It seems that there are two possibilities, or let's say three possibilities. Why does he say by Silvanus? Because remember you have to take some of these bits in parentheses out or in commas out to get the bottom line.

So let's take out our faithful brother as I consider him. Take that out because it's in commas. By Silvanus I have written to you briefly.

By Silvanus I have written to you. So the first possibility is that Silvanus is the scribe or the secretary who is writing for Peter in this part of Asia. So that's the second thing.

This was a job that Silvanus or Silas had done before. Remember that in Acts chapter 17 or 19, sorry I can't remember, when the council in Jerusalem met together concerning the issue of circumcised, the

council then writes a letter and they send it to the churches. By the hands of Silvanus and Silas, the same man, carried the letter from Jerusalem to the Gentile churches.

And so it's very likely that he is both the secretary and so that's the third option. Either he's the secretary or he's the courier or he's both. I believe that in fact he is both.

And so he writes the letter and then he carries the letter and takes it to the various places. And obviously the different places he would go, they would read the letter, they may make a copy of it. They had very nice Xerox machines those days.

No, they would copy it by hand and then he would take it to the next place, they would read it and so on. And so by Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him. So this man had been in the faith for a long time and he had proven himself to be faithful, to be reliable.

Remember that this is the primary qualification that God is looking for in every Christian and particularly in those who want to be involved in the work of God. Faithfulness, dependability, reliability. Not here today and gone tomorrow.

Not untrustworthy. Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of the Lord.

What he is looking for is faithfulness. He's not looking for performance. The world is looking for performance.

The world is looking for success. God is not interested in our performance. He's not interested in our success because He is the one who gives the success.

He is the one who blesses the work. What all He's looking for from us is that we are faithful, that we are faithful in the little things, that He might appoint us over the bigger things. And unfortunately, many Christians want to be faithful in the big things.

They say, well, I'll be faithful in big things, but they can't be faithful in the little things. No, we need to be faithful in the small things. And Silvanus begins his ministry just as a brother in the local church in Jerusalem probably, and he's just faithful in his attendance to begin with.

That's where it begins. Faithful in his attendance. Faithful in praying.

Faithful in reading the Scriptures. Faithful in his relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful in his obedience to the Lord.

And then the Lord gives him something a little bit more to do, to carry a letter from Jerusalem to the outlying churches. And then they would establish a central point. Ephesus was a point like that.

And then He would send them out from there, and they would be preaching in the area. Or He would preach and begin the work, and He would move on to the next place, and He would leave some of these guys behind, and they would take care of the work until the local brethren had been raised up. So He has proven Himself.

And remember, this is many years down the road, and He has been faithful all along. And here's the other thing about faithfulness before I move on, is that faithfulness needs to be to the end. What we are seeing today is many ministers of the gospel who may have been faithful at some stage, but now in these last

days are no longer being faithful, but they are selling out to all sorts of other things, whether it's money or fame or power or politics or whatever it is, or pleasures, or, you know, the list goes on and on and on.

But it seems every week now we're hearing, we're reading about men who may have been faithful 40 years, 50 years, who have become unfaithful. No, our faithfulness needs to endure to the end. And so God also judges, and God sees what we don't see.

So we may say someone is faithful when in fact God sees that behind the scenes they're not that faithful. So what Peter is saying is, as far as my judgment is able to go, I consider him to be faithful. Now he says, I have written to you briefly.

It's just five chapters, not a long letter. When you consider the letter to the Romans, 16 chapters, and the letters to the Corinthians, multiple, multiple chapters, this is only four chapters. It's taken us over a year to get through the four chapters.

But so he says, I've written to you briefly, and I've done so exhorting, and exhorting, and encouraging, and testifying that this is the true... in which... I want to establish and confirm that what you believe... Remember Peter had personally committed, committed the truths, and taught them, and trained them. And so Peter is saying, this is it. And so, what is it? Well, we'd have to begin at chapter one again, and then go right through the whole book.

But Peter is saying, this is the grace... this is the gospel, in the first letter of Peter. And so, this is the truth. This is the true grace of God.

In other words, there is not a... there is a false grace. This is the true grace. What is the central theme of the book? Suffering.

And Peter is saying, this is the true grace. Suffering. Because that's how it all began, with Jesus on the cross.

So those who are saying, teaching a gospel of a... of prosperity, a gospel with no suffering, where everything is just great and easy and wonderful, is not the true grace of God, is not the true gospel. I saw a clip of a particular man yesterday, and what this woman was saying is, this man must be a man of God. Look how prosperous, how rich he is.

He could not have been so rich if it wasn't that God was blessing him. That is not the true gospel. That is not the true grace of God.

And in fact, the true grace of God is written in the blood of the martyrs. And he says, this is what you are standing in. All right, now, I'm going to, very quickly, because we're running out of time, and I trust that you can go home, and just, because you may have difficulty, I can't put this all on the screen.

But Peter begins the letter, and he ends the letter in the same way. In the first two verses, there are four things that appear again in the last three verses. The first is Peter.

It begins in chapter 1, verse 1, Peter. He ends saying, I have written to you. He begins, and he says in the second verse, to the elect of those who are dispersed, to the chosen ones.

And I'm not going to deal with that whole thing again. This is not Calvinism. And then he ends by saying, to those in Babylon, elect with you, chosen with you.

So he's beginning with election, he's ending with election. He begins with the dispersion, to those who are scattered in Pontius Galatia, Cappadocia, and the different parts of Asia. He ends from Babylon.

So he's writing to Asia, he is writing from Babylon. Don't worry about Babylon, I'm going to come there. Peace to you.

His initial greeting, peace to you. His final greeting is goodbye, peace to you. So you can see that there's a unity that flows from the beginning through to the end.

He begins the same way as he ends. So you can go home, take those first two verses, the last three verses, and find the parallels between those. All right, now verse 13, and I'm going to rush through because I do want to finish the book, and I think we have two more verses.

She who is in Babylon. Babylon, we believe, we can't be 100% sure, but we don't believe that he was writing from the literal Babylon. It didn't exist, as far as I know, at that time.

And Peter certainly didn't go up there. So what we believe that this is, is a code word for Rome. Remember the background.

Persecution is intensifying against the Christians, and it is coming from Rome. So Peter doesn't want to compromise them, he doesn't want to compromise Silas, who's carrying the letter, and so he's using a code word, and we find the same word in the book of Revelation. What is Babylon? Babylon is the Antichrist system at the end time.

And so Babylon is the code word, the synonym, if you will, for that which is the system which stands against Christ. And so Rome was that which stood against Christ. Rome killed the Lord Jesus Christ, crucified Him, and then persecuted the Christians for 300 years.

So who is she? And there are all sorts of crazy ideas here. Some say it's Peter's wife. Well, there's just no reason for that.

Who is he writing to? Remember the context. He's writing to those in the dispersion in Asia. And he is writing to the churches.

He's not writing to individuals. And so I believe what he is writing from is the church in Rome. Why she? Is the church the bridegroom or the bride? Church is the bride.

So from God's perspective, the church is female. Now please don't misquote me. I know that the heresy hunters will say, well, you know, he said the church is all female.

No, the church is a woman. She is the bride of Christ. And so we should really not speak about the church as it but as she because that's the relationship we have with the Lord Jesus.

So I believe what he is writing from is from the church that is in Rome. Now just by the way, Peter did not establish the church in Rome. Neither did Paul.

The church in Rome was established by Christians who had been dispersed from Jerusalem. And that's another whole story. Peter had not been there until the very end of his ministry.

And so she who is in Babylon, elect together with you. So clearly he's not speaking about an individual. He is talking about the church.

And remember this word elect. The word elect does not refer to individuals. It refers to the church, that God has chosen the church, those that make up the body of Christ.

And so you are chosen, he is saying. The churches in Asia Minor are chosen, elect. And he's saying the church in Jerusalem, in Babylon, in Rome is elect, chosen.

So he's reminding us of our special relationship with God and the special relationship that the church in Rome had. So the church in Rome is greeting you. This is common.

Remember that in all of Paul's letters, he ends those letters with greetings from those in the church that he is writing from. And then so does Mark, my son. Mark here is John Mark.

And you should remember him from the book of Acts. John Mark went with Paul on his first mission journey. And then he AWOLed.

He defected. He just got too hard. And he ran back to Jerusalem.

And then there's a dispute between Paul and Barnabas because on the next trip, Barnabas wanted to take Mark with him again. And Paul says, No, he's a scaredy cat. I'm not taking him with me.

And so they separated. And Paul takes Silas, I think, and then Barnabas takes Mark. Now Mark grew up a little bit.

And so Paul's estimation of Mark changes so that when it gets to the letters to Timothy, Paul speaks about Mark in 2 Timothy, and he says that Mark has great value to me. And so Paul had changed his mind about Mark as Mark had changed. And so this is the same Mark.

He was also the author of the gospel, according to Mark. And so Peter says, He is my son. He is his son in the faith.

Now obviously not his physical son, but his son in the faith. All right, verse 14, last verse. Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Now this creates all sorts of difficulties, and I know that there are cults and sects that say, well, we must kiss one another on the lips, particularly men kissing men and women kissing women. I don't believe that that is what he is promoting. What he is speaking about is greet one another affectionately and how we do that depends on our culture.

Some cultures rub noses. Other cultures kiss on the lips. Other cultures kiss on the cheek.

Other cultures hug. And in the COVID culture, we just stand six feet away, we say hi. Now I don't believe that you can build a doctrine out of this and say you must shake hands.

Yes, it's great to shake hands. I'm looking forward to the day that we can do that again because at least it's some kind of physical contact, but right now it's just not wise to do that. And I don't believe we're breaking any command.

The point is not how I'm doing it. The point is why am I doing it. What spirit, what emotion am I doing it with? And we can greet one another, and we're really not greeting one another.

It's just a formality, hi and bye. But there's no warmth in it. There's no real love in it.

The emphasis here is not on the kiss. The emphasis is on greeting with love, greeting with love. And so there's a need for us to be intentional in the way that we greet one another, that we at least look one another in the eye, even if that's all we can see beyond the mask.

And even if you can't see whether I'm smiling or frowning, at least there needs to be some kind of expression from my body language, if that's all we can do, that I acknowledge you, I see you, I love you, I appreciate you. All right. Last sentence.

Peace to you all. Remember, he begins the letter with greeting them with peace. Peace to you.

Let me remind you. Peace between me and God. Peace between me and my brother.

And particularly peace between me and me. Many Christians don't have peace because they're not at peace with themselves. Many Christians don't have peace because they're not at peace with God, because they're fighting God.

They're resisting God, and God is resisting them. We need to be at peace with ourselves. We need to be at peace amongst one another in the body of Christ.

We need to, above all, be at peace with the Lord. So peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. That's the only thing that matters, that we are in Christ Jesus.

May it be so. Amen. Father, we thank you for your word.

Thank you, Lord, for this wonderful letter that Peter wrote 2,000 years ago and is still relevant and applicable to us today. Lord, I pray that we may not forget what we have heard over this year and a half that we've been studying this book, but, Lord, that we may read it again and again. Lord, that your Spirit would remind us of the things that Peter has written and the things that we have taught over this period of time.

Lord, that these may be translated into reality, that they may not just be stuff that happened 2,000 years ago, stuff that's in the Bible, but, Lord, that they may be real things. As we go through the book, Lord, and we speak about our relationships between husbands and wives, between servants and masters, between young and old, Lord, that as we look at our attitude towards suffering, as we look at our attitude towards the world and our testimony in the world, Lord, remind us of these things. Above all, help us, Lord, to be doers of your word and not just those who have memorized or know the theory, but, Lord, that these may be realities and practical things in our lives.

I pray this in Jesus' name. I pray that you would go with us now, keep us, protect us, bring us together again safely on Saturday. I pray this in Jesus' name.

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