

Steadfast In Suffering

1 Peter 5:5-14

Pastor John Miller

A well-known favorite preacher of mine by the name of Henry Ward Beecher said these words. “God washes the eyes by tears until they can behold the invisible land where tears shall come no more.” I love that.

Peter’s writing to saints whose eyes have been washed with tears through suffering. Being a Christian does not immune you from the sorrows, from the trials and from the hardships of this world. But Jesus said, “Be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world.” And if you are a Christian, you are in Christ. And if you are in Christ, you are an overcomer; amen? And even though we have trials, even though we have trouble, even though we face suffering in this world—and the believers that Peter was writing to were suffering for a very specific cause: not because of sin, but because they followed the Savior. They were suffering for righteous sake; they were doing what was right, and they were being persecuted for it.

Maybe you are here this morning, and you’ve been living for Christ in your home and you’re being persecuted. Maybe you are living for Christ on the job and you’re being persecuted. Maybe you’ve lost your job because of your stand for Jesus Christ. Maybe you’ve lost some friends. Maybe you’ve lost some influence. Maybe people have come against you because of your commitment to Christ. These words of Peter, this morning, in closing are for you who are suffering and facing difficulty and adversity. Peter wants us to stand steadfast in times of suffering.

So what he does in these closing verses is he gives us four admonitions or four exhortations or four words of encouragement to make us strong and help us stand against suffering and persecution. Now, again this morning, they’re not going to appear on the screen, but I want you to pay attention to the text itself. But if you are taking notes, write these four points down. These are things we need to be in our lives if we’re going to stand steadfast in suffering.

Number one, we need to be clothed with humility. Write that down. Be clothed with humility. I want you to notice it with me. It’s in verses 5 and 6. Peter says, “Likewise, the younger, be subject...”—or submit—“...yourselves to the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and...”—here it is—“...be clothed with humility; for God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble.” Verse 6. “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God...”—why? —“...that He may exalt you in due time” or “in his own time.”

Now a little word I want you to see is “likewise” in verse 5. Why did he say “likewise”? Or we would translate it “in the same way.” Well, he just told the pastors that they need to submit to the Lord, the chief shepherd. In verse 4, he had said—go back with me there for a moment—he said, “When the chief shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that fades not away.” In verses 1 to 4 of chapter 5 he’s talking to pastors. He calls them elders. It’s a position in the church. And he tells them ultimately that they are the undershepherds, and that

they will give an account to Christ, Who is the chief shepherd. And we looked at that in depth last Sunday morning.

Then he starts, verse 5, with this phrase, "In the same way." So in the same way, what? In the same way that the pastor feeds the flock and he leads the flock with a humble heart, to the shepherd, who he'll account to one day, being Christ. So, he now says, you younger should submit yourselves to the older.

Now I want you to notice the word there "younger." "Ye younger" in my King James Bible. That is a reference to younger in age. Then when he says "the elder," that is a reference to older in age. You go, "Yeah, that's pretty clear. Why do you emphasize that?" Because in verse 1, an elder there is not necessarily older in age; that's a position. In verse 5, the elder is actually somebody who is old. Now we won't talk too much about what's an older person; okay? We all know age is relative; right? I remember when I was in my teens, I thought a 30-year-old person was over the hill. "Wow! That guy's like 30!" We'll just stop right there.

So in verse 1, an elder is a position in the church, a spiritual leader. But the word "elder" in verse 5 means an older person. So he says, "I want the younger people to submit to the older people." Wouldn't it be nice if young people, young whippersnappers, respected their elders? People who were old like me? Remember the good old days when younger people talked respectfully? "Yes, sir. No, sir. Yes, ma'am. No, ma'am." And when you were younger, just someone being older than you, you submitted to them. You deferred to them. You respected them. And you respected your elders. That's lost in our culture today.

You know what this verse is actually saying? He's saying that younger people in the church need to be respectful and submitted to older people in the church. It's funny that when you get old, you have all this life experience, but nobody asks you any questions. They figure you can't see, hear or talk anymore. "Oh, I talked to that dude. He doesn't know nothin'." Don't neglect submission to your elders. You can learn a lot. Can you imagine a 16-year-old coming to you and saying, "Father, mother, I'm young, and I need direction and guidance. Will you please counsel me and lead me." [Laughter.] Why are you laughing? Because you know it ain't gonna happen; right? Ain't no way your teenager is gonna go, "Yes, sir. No, ma'am. Yes, father. Whatever you say, I will do." What?! But wouldn't that be becoming? You know, sometimes I think, "If young kids would just listen to me!" you know. Been there, done that, you know. I could give some advise here. So that's actually what that verse is saying. You young folks submit to the older people in the church.

But then he quickly moves in, verse 5, to "All of you be subject one to another." You know what that would indicate? That submission's not just for a wife to a husband. Submission is for every one of us. We should all be submitted one to another.

And then Peter uses a word picture in verse 5. "Be clothed with humility." Now before you came to church this morning, some of you looked in your closet. "Should I wear this dress or that shirt or these pants?" You know, "What am I going to wear?" And some of you have a

nervous breakdown just trying to figure out what you're going to put on. And maybe you put three things on, and it's in a pile at home. And you finally figure out what you're going to wear to church. I'm going to tell you something you need to put on; okay? Every day you need to put on humility as a garment. This phrase is a word picture. Just like you'd put on your clothes, you put on every day, wherever you go—you'd put on humility.

Now I don't know if you've noticed last week and this week how Peter is drawing in these words of chapter 5 from his personal experience with the Lord. It's interesting in verse 1 where he says he was "a witness of the sufferings of Christ." So in Gethsemane and at Calvary, Peter saw Jesus suffering and he mentions that. And then in verse 2 he says, "Feed the flock of God which is among you." And he's drawing from John 21 when he met with Jesus on the Sea of Galilee, and Jesus said three times to Peter—what did he say?—"Feed my sheep. Feed my lambs." So Peter tells the elders to "Feed the flock of God." And then he draws, again here in verse 5, from this imagery and picture of John 13 when Jesus washed the disciples' feet.

You say, "Well, I don't understand." Well, in the story, the Bible says that Jesus arose from supper, and He laid aside His outer garment or tunic or coat, and He took a towel and He tied it around His waist. You know what that towel symbolized? It symbolized the lowest servant or slave in the household. A towel around the waist, a phrase that could be used of an apron that was put on by a servant who served. So he's saying that just as Jesus humbled Himself and put on the towel—and then what did He do? It's an expression of His humility; He got on His knees, and then He washed the disciples' feet. And Jesus concluded by saying, "If I, your Lord and master, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet." So He gave us an example of He who came from heaven and "took on the form of a servant and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."

Now if Jesus could come from heaven and die on a cross and wear a towel and wash feet, what should we, His followers, be and do? We should be humble servants. Christians should be marked not only by their love but by their humility. There's no room for pride in the Christian life. So we are to put on, in the church as we stand against opposition, humility. He's saying, "Be humble," the opposite of arrogance and conceit.

I heard of a young man who came to his pastor after a Sunday morning service in which the pastor preached like this on humility. He said, "Pastor, I have a problem with pride." The pastor said, "Well, how so?" "Every morning when I get up I just spend a lot of time looking at myself in the mirror. And I admire my good looks." The pastor said, "Young man, that's not a problem of pride. That's a problem of imagination." Yeah. I'm going to remember that when you come to me. That's a good one. What do you have to be proud of? If it weren't for the grace of God, we'd all be in hell right now. I just thought I'd encourage you. Everything's up hill from that. So "be clothed with humility."

Now Peter gives us two reasons. I want you to look at the text. In verses 5 and 6 he gives us two reasons why we should be humble, and they're powerful. Number one, "God..."—verse 5—"...resists the proud." Why should you be humble? Because "God resists the proud." Now

the word “resist” there is a military concept. It means to set an army in battle. So you picture a battle scene, and the armies all standing with their swords or with their rifles or their tanks. They’re all ready to do battle. This is the idea that God actually goes to war or declares war on the proud. That’s pretty heavy. God actually declares war on those who are proud.

Let me give you reason number two. It’s in verse 5. But God “gives grace...”—or favor—“...to...”—whom?—“...the humble.” The idea is that God will bless your life. God will pour His favor upon your life. God will strengthen you and God will help you by His grace.

Now those are two good reasons why you should be humble. Number one, God will oppose you, and number two, God will grace you if you are humble. So here’s the application, verse 6. “Humble yourselves...”—submit yourselves to God—“...therefore under the mighty hand of God...”—the power of God—“...that He...”—that is, God—“...may exalt you...”—when?—“...in due time.” This is a verse that ought to be put to memory by every Christian.

By the way, Peter is quoting from Proverbs 3:34, where it actually says there that God resists the proud. There’re things that God actually hates, and one of them is a proud look. God sets Himself in array against the proud. But God blesses, God gives favor, God gives grace to the humble. So here’s what we outta do; we outta humble ourselves.

Now humility, in its essence, is an attitude toward God. Not an outward, phony kind of humility where we talk softly. I’ve met Christians who talk soft, you know. It’s like, “Slap that dude! What’s wrong with you?” “I just want to be humble.” “No. You’re just being weird right now.” Nowhere in the Bible does it say “Be ye weird.” It doesn’t say that. Just be yourself. You know, if you’re an extrovert and outgoing, okay. But in your heart you’re humble. God looks at the heart. But I want to emphasize the idea that humility starts with looking at God and seeing God for who He is. In seeing God for who He is, we see ourselves for who we are. Sinners. Poor, wretched, naked and blind, deserving of nothing but hell. I tell you, that’ll bring about humility. When you see the Lord and you see yourself, it will humble your heart. But it’s an attitude toward God. And it says, verse 6, that when we do that, God will lift us up “in due time.” God’s timing is always perfect.

“You know, if I humble myself and serve others, people will walk all over me and they’ll step on me.” God will be with you. God will bless you. God will guide you. You want the ingredient for a blessed, happy life? Whether marriage or relationships? Humility. You humble yourself “under God’s might hand...”—that means God will give you His power—“...and He will exalt you in His own due time.” You’re looking to God and to His grace and His favor. So humility is foremost an attitude toward God. And God blesses the humble, but He fights against the proud.

But here’s my second point. I want you to write this down. Not only should you be clothed with humility, but we should be casting our anxiety. Write that down. Casting our anxiety, our worries or our fears. Look at it with me. Verse 7, one of the great verses of the Bible. Peter says, “Casting all your care upon Him, because He cares for you.” Now, again, without skipping a beat he says, “Be humble.” God will bless you. God will lift you up. What do you do when you

are humble? What do humble people do? I'll tell you what humble people do, verse 7. They cast their care upon God. They roll their burdens upon the Lord. He sustains them. The word "care" means anxiety or worries or fears.

All of us, from time to time, worry. We have fears. We worry about our marriage. We worry about our children. We worry about our health. We worry about other people that we love. We worry about finances. We have our fears. And some people have anxiety attacks and phobias. But this verse is actually telling us that "all," notice a-l-l, "all" our anxieties, big or small, past memories of sins and failures and shortcomings—give them to God. Present pressures in your marriage, on the job or in your home—whatever it might be.

Some of you came into church this morning carrying heavy burdens. Some of you don't know how you're going to make the mortgage payment. Some of you don't know what you're going to do. You've been diagnosed with cancer. Some of you are praying you won't have cancer and that the test won't come back positive. Some of you are worried about will my marriage survive. You're worried about your kids. Will they get into drugs? Will they marry the right person? Will their marriage end in divorce?

One of the most horrible pains a parent could bear is seeing their children go through divorce. And watching that, I see parents in pain, because their children are going through divorce. And the grandkids are affected by that. It's so painful.

But God wants you to do something today with those burdens you brought in here. He wants you to cast them on Him. Now that word "cast" in verse 7 is the same word used for casting a fishing net. I've been to the Sea of Galilee, and I've seen them actually throw nets out on that sea. Glass water and the nets thrown, and when it hits, it splashes on the sea and sinks. And just a beautiful picture of that casting. It means with decisive action, and in the Greek, it conveys a once-and-for-all act. So you throw it on the Lord and you leave it there.

Our tendency is to tell the Lord about our problems, and then we walk away still carrying them. It's like you have this big burden, so you go into the presence of the Lord. "Hey, Lord, have You seen what I'm going through?! Nobody knows the trouble I've seen." And Jesus says, "Yeah, tell Me about it." "Oh, this is happening. That's happening. Lord, it's so terrible, and it's really weighing me down. And I just wanted to tell You about it. Thank you, Jesus. I'll see you later." And you walk away [carrying a burden]. And the Lord's kind of like, "Ah, why don't you leave it here with Me?" "No, no; I'm getting used to my burdens. I've become good friends with them. We've been hanging out a long time. You know, Lord, it's enough that You saved me. I couldn't ask you to take my burden."

I heard the story about a guy who was walking down a country road with a big, heavy pack on his back. And another fella pulls up on a wagon and says, "Hey, jump in and I'll give you a ride." So he climbs up on the buckboard, and he's riding along and the guy driving the wagon says, "You know, you can take the pack off. You can put it in the back of the wagon. You don't have to carry that burden." And the guy says, "No; it's enough for you to give me a ride. I don't

want you to carry my burden also.” That’s just flat-out stupid.

But we do that; don’t we? “Just get me in them gates, Lord. Just get me in them gates. That’s all I ask, that I get to heaven. I want to see the cherubims. I just want to get to heaven.” That’s a little impersonation, by the way. “What’s wrong with Pastor Miller today?” “Just get me to heaven, Lord. You don’t have to deal with my marriage or my kids or my problems. I’ll figure it out. I’ll take care of it.” No. God actually wants you to turn them over to Him.

Now I want to give you some reasons why you should cast your cares upon the Lord. Because “He cares for you.” Cast them upon God. Why? Because “He cares for you.” How? By prayer. Now I’ve always loved verse 7, because it tells me that God cares about me and He wants to carry my anxieties.

You know that no one in this service this morning needs to leave the service with the same burdens you brought in. You can leave them here; amen? If you came worried about your health or your wealth or your marriage or your kids, or whatever—anything—you know that God knows and God cares? And we all know the Bible says that God loves us, but did you know that it says He actually cares about you? First He says, “Don’t have anxious worry,” but then it turns around and says, “God cares for you.” Now what does it mean? It means that God is mindful of you, that God is involved in your life, that God cares about your life, big or small. Your past worries, your present fears, your future concerns—whatever it might be—the Bible says in the Psalms, “Roll thy burdens upon the Lord, and He will sustain thee.”

The truth is that God does care about us, and if I worry, I’m saying that God doesn’t care. Think about that. Did you know that if you worry, you’re saying that God doesn’t care about you? God does care about you. He has the very hairs of your head numbered. And He said, “Consider the birds. They don’t gather in the barns, they don’t toil. Yet your Father feeds birds.” You ever notice that? You know, when you get really discouraged, just go to In-N-Out and watch out on the patio these birds getting free French-fries. I have to pay for them. They get them for free. That bums me out. I guess if I got really hungry, I could go to In-N-Out too. These little birds get these big old French fries. I one time saw a little sparrow had this big, old, honkin’ French-fry in his beak, and God brought this Scripture to my mind. “John, I’m feeding the birds. They’re My creation. You’re My child. And I’m going to take care of you.” What a blessing to remember that God’s promised to take care of you.

With Ethel Waters it became famous singing at the Billy Graham crusades “His Eye is on the Sparrow, and I know He watches me.” What a precious song that is. God takes care of birds. God will take care of me. So as you face your sorrows, as you face your suffering, as you face your fears, roll them upon the Lord, and He’ll sustain you. He cares about you.

Let me give you the third point, in light of suffering and sorrow, how you stand fast. It’s in verses 8 and 9. You have to be cautious of your adversary. Did you know that there really is a devil? Some of you know by experience; right? Some of you say, “Yeah, I’m married to him.” No. I know you might think he’s demon possessed, but calm down. Let’s read it; verses 8 and 9. “Be

sober, be vigilant...”—the point I’m making is be cautious, be wide awake—“...because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may devour.” So this is what we do, verse 9. “Resist him steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”

Now listen to me very carefully as I unpack these two verses, 8 and 9. We have an adversary; it’s very clear from this passage. And anyone who studies the Bible knows the devil is real, and he is your enemy. He’s not your friend. He hates you. He hates your marriage. He hates your kids. He hates your pastor. He hates your church. He hates all that is good and godly. Satan is real. The word “devil” could be translated “Satan,” which means “slanderer.” And he’s real and he’s powerful. Notice it’s conveyed again in this word picture. “As a roaring lion...”—verse 8 —“...he walks about seeking whom he may devour.” You can put your name in that verse.

You ever heard a lion roar? It’s radical. Years ago we were at the Portland Zoo up in Portland, Oregon, and we were all the way across the other side of the zoo, and we heard the lion roar [roaring]. It was radical. The first and only time I’ve ever heard a lion just rip a roar. It was amazing.

So what is he saying? He’s saying Satan is fierce. Satan is powerful. Satan is real. Satan is fierce and Satan is powerful. So you do well to be cautious of not playing into the devil’s camp. The word “devour” in verse 8 literally means “to gulp down.” I thought that was interesting. To gulp down. Satan wants to gulp you down. He wants to devour you. Jesus said, “He comes to kill, steal and to destroy.”

So what are we supposed to do? We need to “be sober” and we need to “be vigilant.” Now sober speaks of self controlled; don’t get drunk mentally or spiritually. Now I don’t recommend you get drunk anyway; okay? That you keep a clear mind. That you have a clear head. “Be sober.” And then secondly, “Be vigilant.” Be awake. Don’t go to sleep. Be watchful.

But don’t be stupid. That’s not in the Greek; I just threw that in there. And it’s not a theological term, but though I’m warning you of the devil right now, I don’t want you to go overboard and see a devil in every bush. “The devil made me do it” kind of thing. You eat too many donuts, “I’ve got the demon of donuts.” You know there is a donut demon, and if you eat too many, it will possess you. I’ve heard such nonsense. I’ve heard preachers trying to cast the demon of nicotine out of people. Now I don’t think people ought to smoke, but I’ve never read of a demon of nicotine in the Bible. That’s just silliness.

You know that you can sin really well without the devil? You don’t need the devil to sin. You’re a sinner. You’ve got a sinful nature. So don’t go overboard; where the car won’t start, the engine’s demon possessed. People get just stupid about the devil. Yes, there is a devil. Yes, he’s real. “But greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world.” Amen? And if you are a child of God, the devil cannot possess you. The devil cannot control you. He can oppress you. He can attack you. He can try to deceive you with false teaching. But your own sin will lead you astray quite well without the devil. But be cautious and be watchful.

And also be resistant. Notice in verse 9. Don't flee from the devil; stand and fight. The word is "resist." "Resist" the devil and he will flee from you. That's a promise. It's a military term. It means to "stand and fight against." It's the same word used in verse 5 where it says, "God resists the proud." It's telling us now that we should resist the devil. So take a stand against Satan. How? Verse 9 says, "Stand fast in the faith." Now, whenever you see "the faith," rather than "Stand fast in faith," it's not speaking of our subjective trust in God. It's speaking of "the faith," the body of truth that we believe that is found in the Scriptures. This is why Jude says, "Earnestly contend," fight for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints.

You know where one of the greatest battlegrounds between good and evil is raging between Satan and God? Over truth. And you know where truth is found? In the Bible. The first recorded statement out of the mouth of the devil in the Bible was "Did God really say that?" And he's been asking that question ever since. "Is the Bible really the word of God? Can you really trust the word of God? Did God really say that?" One of the greatest battlegrounds is over God's Word, so the way you and I stand against the devil is to stand in God's Word. Stand in the truth of God's Word, and be uncompromising for what is true. Be willing to even fight for the truth. Now things that aren't essentials we can kind of get along over, we can be loving and have room. But when it comes to the truth, there's no compromise. God's truth doesn't change. God's truth is found in His Word, and we need to know the Word.

When Paul writes to the Ephesian believers in chapter 6, he says that we "Put on the full armor of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." One aspect of that armor is the sword of what? The Spirit. Which is what? The Word of God. We have a belt of truth. We have a breastplate of righteousness. We have a helmet of salvation. We have our feet shod with the sandals of peace. And we have the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. That's how you stand and fight against the devil.

But I want you to notice, last but not least, verses 10 to 14. To be steadfast in suffering we need to be confident of our ultimate victory. So we need to be clothed with humility, we need to be casting our cares upon God and we need to be cautious of our enemy, our adversary. And last but not least, number four, we need to be confident that ours is the ultimate victory. Follow with me in verse 10. "But the God of all grace..."—Peter says—"...who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered for a while..."—so we do suffer, but notice it's only for a while. And then God's going to do something. He's going to—"... make you perfect..."—He's going to—"...establish you, strengthen you, settle you. To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Now the epistle closes technically at verse 11. But verses 12 to 14 is his conclusion of greetings. Notice it in verse 12. He says this letter was written "by Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose." Now what that means is that Peter dictated the letter to Silvanus. We know him as Silas. You say, "Well, how does that affect divine inspiration?" It doesn't. Peter was an apostle. He spoke with authority. So he dictated the letter to an amanuensis, whose name was Silas. We meet Silas in the book of Acts, the traveling companion of Paul. In Acts 16 they were beaten and thrown into prison in Philippi. And we know about the earthquake,

and so forth. Paul and Silas. So Silas was his secretary. And Peter dictated it to Silas, and some feel that he carried the epistle to the believers.

And then also I want you to notice in verse 12. He says, "I wrote." Now he's describing his own letter, 1 Peter. "I wrote briefly..."—so it's a short letter—"...exhorting..."—it's a letter of comfort and encouragement—"...and testifying..."—it's out of Peter's own life and experience—"...that this is the true grace of God wherein we..."—and here's our theme—"... stand." This is our theme for the epistle. This is God's true grace where we stand.

And then he says, "The church that is in Babylon, elect together with you, salutes you." We don't know for sure what Peter is saying here. In the Greek it is actually "she who is in Babylon greeteth you." So we don't know what the "she" who is in Babylon is. Is it the church? I think most likely. Is it Peter's wife? Possibly. And then what is Babylon? Babylon could be Rome; a kind of code name for Rome. The people at that time referred to Babylon as Rome. It could be the actual city in Mesopotamia. It could be Babylon. So we just really don't know. But Peter is saying that she, who is the elect in Babylon, greet you. It could be another congregation there where Peter was writing, whether Babylon or Rome, that he's saying hello.

And then he says, "And so doth Marcus my son," verse 13. And this is John Mark, again, the traveling companion of Paul. And then he closes, verse 14, "Greet one another with a kiss of love." Now you don't have to kiss each other today, but you should greet one another. Maybe a handshake will do. "Peace be with all you that are in Christ Jesus. Amen." How can we have confidence of ultimate victory? We are "in Christ Jesus."

Now go back with me to verses 10 and 11 and we'll wrap this up. In the King James version, verse 10 is rendered as a prayer. But almost all newer translations, rightly so, put it in the future tense making it a promise. As you read verse 10, it's not Peter praying that God would do that. It's Peter promising that God will do that. Now certainly God would answer Peter's prayer, but I believe verse 10 is a promise that we can be sure of. What does it say? "The God of all grace, who has called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after we've suffered awhile, will make us perfect, establish us, strengthen us and settle us." Peter is saying that the devil may attack you, you may stumble, but God will not let you fall. You can be confident that God will give you strength to stand. Ultimate victory is yours in Christ.

From my heart to your hearts this morning, if you're here and you're suffering and you're beaten down and you're filled with care and you're going through a time of testing, I want you to know you're going to heaven. And Paul says, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy of..."—or can be compared with—"...the glory that shall..."—future tense—"...be revealed." If for no other reason today you come to church, get your eyes on God and remember where you're headed. You know where you're going? To heaven. If you're a Christian, you're going to heaven. Amen? And you can be certain of ultimate victory.

Let me give you four reasons to be confident in God as a Christian. Notice them from the text. First of all, verse 10, He's the "God of all grace." You know how I'm going to get to heaven?

He's the God of all grace. Isn't that awesome? I don't deserve it. I don't merit it. It's not what I am. It's not my performance. It's God's grace that will get me to heaven. What begins with grace will end in glory. God's grace is sufficient; amen? In verse 10 of chapter 4 he said God's grace is manifold; God's grace is sufficient for whatever you need.

Paul had a thorn in his flesh, a "messenger of Satan to buffet him." And you know what Paul said? He said, "God's grace is sufficient for me. His strength is made perfect in my weakness." He said, "I'm going to glory in my weaknesses, because then the power of God can rest upon me." I want you to know today that there's power for you. God will strengthen you, and then one day, you'll go to heaven and God will transform you because He's the God of all grace.

The second assurance we have in verse 10 is that He's the God who calls us to eternal glory. "The God of all grace who's called us to eternal glory," which is a reference to heaven.

And then the third reason, He's the God who will transform us. I want you to notice that in verse 10. He says our suffering is only for, what? "A while." Our suffering is only for a while. You know if you could work out a deal with God where He could say, "I'll tell you what. I'm only going to let you suffer for one hour, and then I'm going to give you a whole lifetime of bliss." Wouldn't that be good? I could dig that. I could grit my teeth [gritting his teeth] one hour, and then the rest of my whole life, everything's perfect. A lifetime of suffering is one hour in light of eternity. Don't forget that.

I don't know what trouble you've seen. I don't know what trouble you're in. But a lifetime of suffering is not to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed. We have heaven waiting for us, and that's what he's saying to us. We can hope in God. God will what, verse 10? Make you "perfect." The word means "restore you." It literally means—you know what that phrase "make you perfect" means? In the King James it literally means "put you together." You feel like you don't have it together? You think like your life is falling apart? God will put you together. God will make you whole. He'll bring you to completion.

God will also, verse 10, "establish, and strengthen and settle you," or make you strong and firm and steadfast. It means that God will give us the strength we need for all our suffering and trials. Let me repeat that. God's grace brings us strength in all our needs of suffering and trials.

And then, verse 11, he says "to whom be praise and glory." He's the God of grace, the God of glory, the God who will make you strong, verse 11. Go back there with me in your Bible. "To whom be glory and dominion..."—for how long?—"...for ever and ever." Can you dig it? I can. That's not in the Greek. I just thought I'd throw that in there. This is a can-you-dig-it verse. He ends with that God gets all the glory, gets all the praise for what He has done. Doctrine always leads to doxology. The God of all grace, who's called you to glory, who will transform your life is a God who is to be praised and worshipped and honored. Amen?