

1 Peter 5:10

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“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” KJV

We will read another translation, the NIV, which may assist some to understand this verse a little better:

“And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.” NIV

This verse is part of the Apostle Peter’s concluding thoughts in his first letter. In the first chapter we read in 1:1 that Peter was writing to the spirit-begotten Jews who were scattered among the Gentiles (hence “strangers”), those living outside of Israel. However, his insights, instructions, admonitions, and encouragements are equally applicable to all the brethren throughout the Gospel Age.

In several ways he is, in fact, referring back to the opening thoughts of his letter. We will compare a few and make some observations on these.

A. In 1:2 it states “God the Father” and “Grace and peace be yours in abundance.”

It is God our heavenly Father who is able to provide the “all grace” that we need and desire. First, we need His grace through our sin atonement through His gift of His only begotten Son Jesus. A FREE gift—not earned—a Free gift is not something we deserved. In fact, this gift was provided long before we even knew we were desperately in need of it! And although it is a Free Gift to us, in fact it was very costly to our heavenly Father and to His Son Jesus.

Think for a moment that our Father, in designing His Plan of the Ages, determined that the absolute best way to bring about the eternal blessing for all His creatures included that they would need to endure sufferings for a time, and that their sufferings would, in fact, cause Himself to suffer!

An example of this we read in Jeremiah 9:10. In part: “I will weep and wail for the mountains and take up a lament concerning the desert pastures —they are desolate and untraveled...”

Yes, God Almighty shed tears over the impending desolation of Israel—His Land and His people—that He Himself had to bring about their necessary punishment and discipline.

How much more painful to Him must have been the sufferings and dying of His only begotten!

In Reprint 3160 we read:

“The Father declared, 'This is my beloved Son,' and the Son said, 'I delight to do thy will.' How blessed this fellowship! It was a fellowship of joy and a fellowship of suffering— of joy in a common anticipation of the future glory—and of suffering in MUTUAL PARTICIPATION of the preliminary trials to secure that end. The Son suffered in his humiliation and his dying agony. The FATHER SUFFERED in giving His only begotten Son— an intensity of suffering which the loving yearning hearts of devoted parents can best imagine and appreciate.”

And similarly in Reprint 1833 we read of God’s emotions in the giving of His perfect gift:

“This gift of divine love was another indication of the COST TO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER of His great and marvelous plan. Not only did He behold the fall into sin of a large proportion of his family, but their recovery cost the sacrifice of the dearest treasure of His heart, and the subjection of his beloved one to the most abject humiliation, ignominy, suffering and death. Again, the illustration of a parent’s love assists us in comprehending the cost of this manifestation of Jehovah’s love. With what tender and yearning emotions of love must He have made this sacrifice of His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased. In addition to all the graces of his character manifested since the very dawn of his being, was now added the further grace of full submission to the divine will, even when the pathway pointed out was one of pain and humiliation.

Ah, did the Father let him go on that errand of mercy without the slightest sensation of sorrowful emotion? Had He no perceptions of the pangs of a father’s love when the arrows of death pierced the heart of His beloved Son? When our dear Lord said, ‘My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death,’ and again, ‘Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt’, did it touch no sympathetic chord in the heart of the Eternal? Yea, verily: the unfeigned love of the FATHER SYMPATHETICALLY SHARED IN the Lord’s sorrow. The principle taught in the divine Word, that true love weeps with those that weep and rejoices with those that rejoice, is one which is also exemplified in the divine character.... But God could, and did, sacrifice at great cost to His loving, fatherly nature, the dearest treasure of His heart, and thus He manifested the great love wherewith He loved His deceived and

fallen creatures. If this sacrifice cost Him nothing; if it were impossible for His mind to realize any painful emotion even under such a circumstance; then the gift of His Son would be no manifestation of love; FOR THAT WHICH COSTS NOTHING MANIFESTS NOTHING!"

How wonderfully God demonstrated His sacrifice of His only Begotten Son by instructing Abraham to offer up Isaac! Yet with these two, God stopped them before the fatal blow, instead providing a ram caught in the thicket.

But the grace of our God does not end with His providing the Free gift of Jesus as our Ransom, our Redeemer. This is common to Adam and all his offspring. But for us, God has provided Jesus as a New Creature, the Head of the Body of New Creatures, the Bridegroom for his Bride, the Captain of our Salvation. A High Priest of our profession (Heb. 3:1). If he is the High Priest of our profession, then we must be Under-Priests, professing to offer ourselves as living sacrifices, made acceptable to God by the imputed merit of our Redeemer.

We needed a perfect example of how a New Creature is to conduct itself. How we can be set apart from the worldly, but still live among, and with, those of the world. Jesus taught us how we need to change the way in which we think and reach our decisions.

He was perfected as a New Creature through the disciplines of suffering—by gaining insights into faith, patience, long-suffering, kindness, charity—by practicing these fruits of the spirit in everyday life.

This is really a part of the grace of God, that He has provided us with such an example!

Our God of all grace has also provided us with His Word. We find His entire Plan of the Ages outlined and demonstrated by comparing scripture with scripture. We find His Word confirming and harmoniously satisfying to our searching, yearning hearts! We also have all the wonderful examples of so many faithful of the Ancient Worthies as well as disciples in the New Testament.

By His grace He bestows upon us the enlightening influences of His Spirit of holiness. This power of His Spirit manifests itself in a number of ways in our lives.

The Spirit of truth shows us God's character attributes working seamlessly in the execution of His Plans. Truth teaches us how we should think about our conduct, words and actions. Truth has revealed to us His high calling to be part of His New Creation.

The Spirit of holiness helps us have proper reverence toward Him. It causes us to want to be acceptable to Him, so that if we are faithful unto death, we will be properly prepared in our characters to be given our New Creature bodies through our resurrection to the divine spirit nature! We will not feel uncomfortable dwelling in the heavenly courts, for then all of our inherited Adamic weaknesses and frailties will be gone! We shall know even as we are known! Will we feel astounded then? Yes, I imagine we will, for we have never experienced what it is like to have a brain and body that can and will act in perfect harmony with our heart intentions—our true motives.

B. Brother Peter writes that our God of all grace has CALLED US TO HIS ETERNAL GLORY IN CHRIST. Wow! this too was brought out by Peter in chapter 1:2-5. We have responded to this grand invitation—the one calling, one hope of glory. We have been spirit-begotten to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Because we believe that Jesus died for us and that God resurrected him to the divine nature, so too, that same God, and that same Jesus, that same power, is available and working in us. That New Creature in our minds is the active power of His Spirit, both motivating us and encouraging us to persevere, because we can see the glorious outcome in our predecessor Jesus, our High Priest.

We are in Christ when God accepts our consecration vows to be dead to self-will and to become alive to the doing of God's will throughout our days. As this Spirit came upon Jesus at the age of 30, it transformed him and directed him throughout his earthly ministry, ending on the cross. It guided him through all of his sufferings, granting him the stamina to continue - granting him the peace of heart knowing that each suffering he endured was part of his education for the grand work that lay beyond the valley of tears.

This aspect of grace is what Brother Paul wrote of in 2 Corinthians 12:9, in part:

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness...”

You see, God's grace is giving strength to Paul to be able to press on, to endure, to eventually overcome.

We want to read a little more of the context here in 2 Corinthians 12 because we might easily read over these verses and miss an extremely important aspect of God's grace to us.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10:

“To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me ‘My

grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness'. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

We read of how Paul's prayer had been to have one affliction in the flesh to be removed. However, when he received the understanding that, in fact, it was God's design for him to have afflictions and trials that caused him to endure sufferings, Paul then had the mental attitude of DELIGHTING in all of the following 5 categories of suffering – for Christ's sake or, in other words, because of his living his life as a faithful Christian.

So, it is all by grace. By grace we and all mankind have been redeemed out of death. By grace we have been invited to come into the Christ by our consecration vows and become New Creatures, adopted by the spirit of sonship prospectively into God's immortal family. By grace His spirit has enlightened us to be able to understand His plans and designs. Grace is what gives us the power to persevere by faith through all the necessary educational trials of life in the Narrow Way. And it is by grace that we might achieve that crystalized character of godliness, of Christ-likeness, that will result in our resurrection change to immortality – the glory of eternity.

"After we have suffered a little while". This is stated in 1 Peter 5:10, but it is also stated in chapter 1:6, which reads:

"In this you greatly rejoice, though now, for a little while, you are to endure distress through various trials."

This expression, "a little while," really means the time of our life since we started in this Narrow Way of sacrifice. For some it is relatively short in duration – 5, 10, 25, 40 or more years. The "little while" is meant to be in contrast to the promised "eternal glory". However, it takes great faith on our part to keep in mind that we are only in training now. It is just like when we were school age children. Our years of attending school seemed so long! Yet, compared to our adult life, perhaps another 60 or more years after our schooling, how short a time our formal education period seems.

Our faith, combined with the grace of mental and physical strength to endure, is what is necessary for our success in running the race set before us.

As we know, the suffering our heavenly Father permits us to experience is designed to assist us in developing a Christ-like character. Anyone of us can say or write out what we are willing to endure for the LORD and for the Truth and for righteousness' sake. But it is all just theory or good intentions unless we are tried or

tested by fiery hardships. Just as we considered earlier, the Father and His Son had a partnership in suffering. It is the end results that will have eternal benefits.

It is helpful to remember that not all of the LORD'S children will suffer in the same way or in the same amount. Our Father has designed it so that He will have someone in the 144,000 Little Flock that will be able to relate to those of similar personalities and experiences among the human family. At times, when a person visits a doctor with great pain, the physician or nurse may ask them the question: "what is your level of pain on a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 being no pain and 10 being extreme pain?" Why do they need to ask a patient that question? It is because there is not an accurate test that can precisely determine the amount of pain a person is going through. And furthermore, it is understood that a person's pain is really their own reality, not that of the physician or nurse.

And when it comes to emotional pain and suffering, one cannot quantify someone else's grief, depression, anxiety, sorrow or heartache. But our heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus do know. They can perfectly know. In fact, they can know us better than we might know ourselves.

It is at times like this, while we are in our greatest distress, that we cannot even put in to words what we are feeling or thinking. See Paul's words in Romans 8:22-28:

"For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. And not only them, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, that is, the deliverance of our body (The Christ Body Members). For we are saved by hope but hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for it? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

Likewise the spirit also helps our weaknesses, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the spirit itself makes intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searches the hearts knows what is the inclination of the spirit, because it (our spirit), makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

When we understand that the word "spirit" in these verses is actually referring to OUR spirit, we can truly grasp the intended comfort. We do not need to be able to put into words our struggles and concerns, for our Father knows what is in our hearts and in our minds. There is a wonderful sub-heading in the 5th Volume, "Groanings Which Cannot Be Uttered." I will read a small quote from page 288:

“The mistake is in supposing that it is God’s Spirit which supplicates. On the contrary, the Spirit which maketh intercession for us is our own spirit, the spirit of the saint, which supplicates God, and often fails to express itself properly. “

How great is our God of all graces! He is both willing and able to hear what we want to express in words but cannot!

Returning to 1 Peter 5:10, there is a very important thought that the King James translation does not make clear. It is the words “will Himself” which is found in the Diaglott, Rotherham’s and the NIV. Yes, it is God Himself, our heavenly Father, who oversees our sufferings so that they will have the intended effect upon His children.

We often express the thought that God provides all that we need in order to make our Calling and Election sure. He provides us with the Holy Spirit of understanding, and of Truth. He provides us with His Word. He gave us His Son for our standing At-One-Ment with Him through sin-atonement. He provides our guardian angels that always behold His face. That is, they always have access to Him on our behalf. And, really so much more. Furthermore, He provided us with Jesus as our Advocate. He is the one who lives to make positive appeals for us. Think of his instructions – “whatsoever you ask in my name shall be given you” for an example.

God gives us the exceedingly great and precious promises – such promised grace comes with the appropriate overruling providences. He gives us reasons to hope, both now and for the future. And faith. All the fulfilled prophecies are meant to increase or strengthen our faith in Him. In fact, God has prewritten history that is yet to come to pass! Who can do that but God Almighty!

Yet there seems to be something more to this expression: “will Himself.” We suggest that Peter wants us to reflect on how our Father so loves us and is so very much interested in us – each one of us – personally, like a loving Father. He actually is involved in our individual development. Yes, He works through Jesus, our watch-care angels and any and all whom we come into contact with in our lives. But it is He Himself that knows how best to blend together just the right mixture of understanding, experience, suffering, comfort, strengthening, encouragement and chastisements that will bring about in us the best results.

In verse 10 there are 3 or 4 developments stated. There are some manuscript differences, however. We will consider the four words.

First, God “will Himself restore you...” The King James has “make you perfect”. This Greek word is very interesting because it is a very versatile word (Strong’s #2675). From "Thayer’s Lexicon" it lists the following possible usages: “to render, fit, sound,

complete. To mend, to repair. To equip, put in order, arrange, adjust. Fit or frame for one's self, prepare, so instructed and equipped. To strengthen, perfect, complete, make one what he ought to be."

This last expression, "make one what he ought to be," seems to best capture what Peter was trying to convey. God Himself is so parenting us as to help us make ourselves what we ought to be – that is- transformed into the character image of His own dear Son.

Our next word in order is "strong." We are to be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." (Eph. 6:10) Here in Ephesians the following verses outline how we are to put on the symbolic armor of God. But as we know, these symbols are describing what is actually taking place in our minds and hearts. They are outlining the various methods of thinking —believing—that we need to be daily engaging in. If we want stronger faith we need to study God's plan in an intelligent method, systematically, proving the truth concepts from the scriptures, for it is the Word of God that actually can impart strength to our faith. We have been provided with the absolute best and most effective study aids that have ever been written! The books "Studies in The Scriptures" could only have been written when the Lord determined it was the time for it. It had to wait until the Church was in their final stage of development – the Laodicean Church. For it is a harvest message, meant to draw out the LORD'S faithful children, "His People," to deliver them from the gross errors of the dark Ages past.

Let me remind you how Br. Russell, on pages 26-28 of the very first study in the First Volume of "Studies In The Scriptures," states that the errors of Papacy which had sprung up were due to be removed. That Luther had used the book of Revelation to identify Papacy as the "anti-Christ"! over the years I continue to be impressed with all the details and connections Br. Russell made in these Studies.

We can mentally list how God has been active in directing the affairs of our lives so as to create "Ebenezer's" of how God had delivered us. Often His deliverance was not from some outward enemy, but rather, from the home-grown enemies of righteousness that dwell in our own fallen habits of how we tend to think.

Another very important aspect of our "strength" is our Hope. Hope is listed with "faith" and "love" by Paul as one of the greatest spiritual developments.

As we read earlier in Romans 8, our Hope is in those things which we cannot now see. Hope has both an emotional and an intellectual aspect to it. Hope that is rooted in our studies and thoughtful reflection on the Word of God is to be accompanied by our emotional attachment to such a Plan of the Ages. What does this mean? It means we have grown to love and cherish God's divine plan so much that it motivates

us to want to be a part of it. Even more, to serve it now and always. It gives us hope and hope is part of our “strength.”

The next word is “firm” or “stablish”. This is Strong’s #4741 and although it has a few different emphases on meaning, they are so closely related that we might think of “being established, made firm.”

It is reasonable to conclude that our heavenly Father seeks to help us to become so convinced and convicted in our faith and hope, that we will be able to withstand all the various trials that come to us. The adversary will be trying to shake our confidence and thereby weaken our faith and hope in God, or in some part of our relationship to Him or Jesus, or perhaps trying to create doubts in our minds regarding His plan of the ages.

There can be times in our lives when we are overly occupied with temporal concerns and duties. We might go days, weeks or even months without taking the time to properly nurture our inward man – our New Creature mind. Slowly our affections can gravitate earthward, thereby allowing the beauties of the truth that had so motivated us to fade somewhat. The apostle Paul writes on this stating: “Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.” Col. 3:2. We see that it is to be part of our effort to daily “set our affections on spiritual themes.” we must make the effort because we dwell in fallen flesh and by nature we do not, will not, make this effort. To be “firm” and “established” we must develop a disciplined life style so that each day we have some routine that will cause us to think on spiritual matters. And we need to make sure that every week we attend the meetings that are available to us.

Our last word to consider in the KJV is “settle you.” In the NIV it is translated “steadfast.” The word is Strong’s #2311 and has the thought of “to lay the foundation, to make stable, establish.”

We will focus on the expression “to make stable.” Stability is a very desirable quality, though it is often taken for granted due to the very nature of what true stability is. Being stable has the thought of being reliable, someone that can be counted on, trusted to do the right thing, to be helpful, especially to those who are inconsistent by nature.

To be settled or stable also has the thought of being grounded, not flighty or fickle.

In Colossians 1:23:

“If you continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you have heard and which was preached in all creation which is under heaven, whereof I Paul, am made a minister.”

Here the thought of having our faith grounded and settled is contrasted with being moved away from the hope of the gospel. So, we can recognize that being stable in the faith is what is necessary to not lose our hope in the gospel message and assurances. There are times in a Christian's life when they are undergoing severe trials that a fellow Christian's stable, grounded faith can be of immense assurance. A stable Christian is not one that has to be telling everyone or anyone about their own strength of conviction. Rather, it is best when it is demonstrated in quiet, simple and meaningful ways.

And further in Colossians 2:7:

“Rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.”

How true it is that being thankful goes a long way in our being “rooted and built up.” A grateful heart demonstrates both a living faith in the great Creator, and also in Jesus, the way in which God appointed for us to approach Him.

Any of us who have been in the Narrow Way for some length of time can think back on those sincere brethren who started in the Narrow Way of consecration but really never solidified their faith. Perhaps with some it was due to being inconsistent in their personal studies and devotions. Perhaps lack of attending meetings consistently. For some it was other interests, earthly – temporal concerns that occupied their interests, crowding out their “setting their affections on things above.”

For some, having trials and differences among the brotherhood disillusioned them, weakening their confidence in the truth, and eventually they are sifted aside. But for those that are “stable” – “grounded” – “settled,” these very same trials cause them to further make the truth “their own.” That is, they study more consistently to enhance their relationship with their heavenly Father.

Now we would like to put this entire verse together after considering the various aspects of it, along with inserting a few of the Lexicon expressions.

1 Peter 5:10:

“And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself make you what you ought to be— strong, established and stable.”

How encouraging! Our God provides all the grace we will need. He invited us to be part of His divine, eternal family of immortals in Christ—as Body members under His Headship. Our Father directs the issues of our sufferings to the intent that we might be

properly developed in order to attain the characters that will meet the criteria of being “conformed into the image of His Son.” He desires that our sufferings, which we might endure by His strengthening grace, will make us strong in faith and hope. He will establish our beliefs into convictions, which will contribute in making us stable as mature, fully ripe Christian soldiers.

End.