

Last week we covered the role of leadership in the body and the response of submission from those in the body to the leadership which God has appointed over their lives. As we noted, submission is the way of God. The Son to the Father, the bride to the Son, and the sheep to the shepherd. If this is something you struggle with, then you will be stuck and will not be able to move on until this is dealt with. After all, submission is, in part, how God protects and cares for His people. Now let's pick back up in the second half of **5:5** where the Spirit follows the command to always live in a submitted relationship with your leaders and directs this same heart and attitude toward our relationships with one another in the body.

1 Peter 5:5

... and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.

All of you; not some of you, not those who feel like it; but all of you. There is no exception for those with bad attitudes. Not a single one of us is exempted from this command. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. Here we are given still another command. "Clothe yourself" is in the *ao*rist *middle imperative*. So it is to be our way of life, from beginning to end (*ao*rist); it is a decision that we must dig deep down into our soul and choose to make (*middle*); and we are commanded (*imperative*) to make this decision such that our entire life is defined by humility toward one another. The Spirit uses the metaphor of clothing because humility is

something we have to put on and refuse to take off. And like an awesome coat, if we are clothed with humility it will be easily recognized by all others. Clothing ourselves in humility is by no means natural; it is something we have to intentionally choose to do. Furthermore, no one is going to dress you; you have to choose to dress yourself. You have to pick out that specific garment and put it on.

This word “humility” however has always boggled my mind. I have seen so many people try and be humble; and it just does not work. It is an ugly piece of clothing that they need to take off and take off now. The Greek word translated “humility” means to have lowliness of mind. But even that does not quite fit in our brains. Trying to clothe yourself with “lowliness of mind” could lead to some very weird and unnatural religious acts. This understanding adds even more confusion to what humility practically means. Thus, as I have wrestled with this concept, the best correlation I could come up with to practically capture this notion of humility and lowliness of mind is from what we studied in ***Philippians 2:3-8***.

Philippians 2:3-8

Do ***nothing*** from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

I believe that obedience to this command, to “clothe yourselves with humility toward one another,” will capture a comprehensive and practical expression of God’s agape love toward one another. Do **nothing** from selfishness or empty conceit, but regard one another as more important than yourselves. **Nothing** is a very absolute word; there is no back door way of escape from this word (it is like “all of you”). You see, it does not matter what title you have in the body, what gifting you have been endowed with, how important or prosperous you are in this world, how busy you are, or how demanding the expectations are on your life, you are to approach each relationship in the body as if that person is more important than you. That is “lowliness of mind.” I know many of us kind of do this, but I cannot say that we have fully embraced this mindset as our way of life.

To have lowliness of mind means that like Christ you are willing to empty yourself (in other words, demand nothing and be entitled to nothing in relationship), and take the form of a bond-servant—a voluntary servant of others. And your obedience in this regard is to be to the point of death—even death on a cross. Yet, so many of you are afraid that you will be taken advantage of, used, and manipulated by others; therefore, you stay behind your walls of self-protection and refuse to consider others as more important than yourself. However, in order to obey this command to clothe yourself with humility, you must be willing to crucify your flesh (all that demands to be served, to be noticed, to be important, to be catered to, and to be appreciated) and let the Spirit bring it under the waters of judgment in order that you might consider those in this body more important than yourself. This is taking this concept of an alien and stranger to its extreme. This is

trusting that God will be all that He promises to be: your Protector, Defender, Justice, and so on. But since this is a command, this is to be your life. Humility toward one another is to define the life of the **Beloved**.

If you are not willing to go to this extreme in your relationships with one another, then you are not clothing yourself with humility toward one another and you are not obedient to the Word of God. Don't fool yourself. You are still selfish and think that you and your needs and wants are more important than the needs of others. The Spirit draws a very hard line here. You see, God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. God literally sets Himself against those who try to be above others (which is what this word translated as "proud" means). And "opposed" is in the *present middle indicative*. That means He will oppose you in your now, it is a decision He has made, and it is a statement of fact. Again, He is not playing here; this is serious. Jesus will set Himself in opposition to you. I remember the first time I really struggled with this notion it bothered me. I thought, "Wait a minute, I thought I was the **Beloved**, I thought I was your son, I thought I was your precious possession. How then can you willingly choose to stand in opposition to me?" It was hard for me to understand. Then He brought me to **James 4:4-7**.

James 4:4-7

You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD,

BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

And then it came to me. I am the **Beloved**, I am His son, and I am His precious possession; but my flesh is His sworn enemy. He hates my flesh. If I decide to live in my flesh, I make myself an enemy of God. It is what I do; and, as a result, He lives in opposition to me. God never moves away from me; but I am the one who turns from Him and places myself in a position where His face is literally turned against me (**3:12**). This is my doing. And as a consequence of my choice to be friends with this world and to give myself (like an adulteress) to other lovers, I invoke His jealous rage over my life as He works to induce me to return to Him.

And imagine, I do all this simply by acting as one who is above others—as one who is proud. You see being proud is an attitude of one who has chosen to make their abode in this world; it is not the attitude of the **Beloved** and one whose home is in the heavens. I would not naturally think that a prideful attitude would make me a full-on enemy of God; but it does. You see, this attitude keeps me from being a vessel of God's agape love towards others in the body. It keeps me loving, thinking about, and serving myself. It is sick and it is gross. That is why *Philippians 2:3* says do **nothing** from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind, consider others as more important than yourself. This principle should drive all our decisions because everything we do impacts someone in this body.

Living like an alien and stranger, living as the **Beloved**, means I must walk the pathway of death in order that I might live in order that I might love. The excuses we make to serve ourselves and prioritize ourselves are terrible. They may be how we feel; but they are not how God feels. Jesus did not choose to prioritize His own

life above ours; and we should never choose to prioritize our life above others. I know this sounds impossible and even overwhelming, but it is the fruit of the design point. It is possible if you let Jesus live in and through your life. It is possible by faith. I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me. And this life I know live in the flesh I live *by faith* in the Son of God who loves me and gave Himself for me. (***Galatians 2:20-21***). By faith and by the power of the new life in me, I can give myself for those in this body and so can you.

This whole verse is pulled from ***Proverbs 3:34***: “Though He scoffs at the scoffers, yet He gives grace to the afflicted.” God gives grace to the humble. Grace, like humility is another one of those words that is hard to get our minds around since it has been such an overused and I think misunderstood word. I believe grace means that if you are willing to consider others as more important than yourself, He will give you the ability to clothe yourself with humility. His divine influence on your mind and emotions will be so powerful that you will be able to live this supernatural alien lifestyle even though, in this moment, you may not seem how it is possible to consider others more important than yourself. But if you make the decision of obedience, He will ensure that you have the supernatural ability to obey and follow through with your obedience. That is grace. It is God giving us what we could never on our own possess. Once again this was captured in our studies in ***Philippians***.

Philippians 2:12-13

Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your

salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. *For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.*

This perfectly captures this notion of how God gives grace to the humble: He gives you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him. By the way, “gives” is in the *present active indicative*. He enables you in the now to be obedient and being in the *indicative*, this is a statement of fact. Thus, if you are in a situation with someone where you are tempted to prioritize yourself in some selfish way, you can stop and ask Jesus for the help to be obedient, and He will give it in your now. If you align your mind and emotions with His, you will find that you will quite naturally supernaturally do all that He desires of you. Just be willing, ask, and receive.

1 Peter 5:6-7

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

This is such an ominous phrase that it should be read with a booming voice like thunder: *humble yourself under the mighty hand of God*. But that is just how we tend to run with things; but this is actually a beautiful and sensitive statement. You see, “humble yourselves” is in the *arist passive imperative*. Yes, it is a command; something we are to obey. It is to be our way of life, from beginning to end (hence, the *arist* tense). Therefore, humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God is to define our lives. But here is the sensitive part, it is in the *passive* voice. That

means this is something which God does in and through us. This is not in the *middle* voice, something of which we have to dig down deep and muster up the strength and the courage to obey. Rather, this is a result of the work of God. In other words, He is our obedience and this obedience will be the fruit of walking the path of death so that we might live and love. Humility is a fruit of the design point: I have been crucified with Christ.

Once again, let's go back to our definition of the word "humble" and apply it to this command. We are to consider God's ways more important than our ways, we are to consider His desires for our life more important than our desires, and we are to do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but always consider Him first. We are to let ourselves be crucified to our flesh, have a sober mind and be of sound judgment, so He can cause us to walk in obedience to Him. If we believe the truth and make our decisions according to the truth, He will ensure our obedience to the truth. It is what He does.

Now, I believe that this phrase the "mighty hand of God" was not intended to strike fear in our souls (even though that is how we read it). But like "humble yourselves," this is a very sensitive statement. The Spirit reminds us of the fact that God is mighty and strong and above all others; therefore, He has the actual ability to lift us up at the proper time. And in the meantime, we are safe to humble ourselves before God even though that places in us in a weak and vulnerable position because we are never really at risk. His hand is too mighty. Someone will have to get through Him to get to us and that is simply not going to happen. Thus, there is no other place we should want to be than under His mighty hand.

Besides, the Lord our God Almighty intends to honor us for our obedience; and,

at just the right time, will lift us up. When we humble ourselves taking on the form of a bond-servant, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross, He will lift us up or exalt us. He won't let us be continually overrun. Look at Jesus. He was crushed and completely trampled over, but three-days later He rose from the dead and then in the sight of all those who loved Him He was lifted up to heaven in a cloud of glory to be seated at His Father's right hand. And in a similar manner, God will raise His mighty hand and lift us up at just the right time.

But in the meantime, until the right time arrives, you are to cast all your anxiety or cares on Him, because He cares for you. The Greek literally says cast all your distractions on Him. To "cast" means to throw upon and it is in the *aorist active participle*. So casting all our distractions and causes of anxiety upon Him is to be how we live, it is to be our way of life from beginning to end, and we are to be actively and continually about this. Not surprising, this rendering does not leave you any time to take on your own cares and causes of anxiety. The distractions in your life are His job to handle; not yours!

How many of you live with such constant anxiety in your body? How many of you let worry and fear course through your veins? How many of you are constantly twisting and turning in your mind unable to settle and know any true peace? Tragically, you have given yourself the time and opportunity to internalize and take on the distractions of your life even though you have no ability to change anything about your life. As Jesus said in **Matthew 5:36**, you don't even have the ability to change one hair on your head from white to black, so why are you trying to manage and carry your burdens. Many others have tried it before you; and, without exception, they have failed. So learn by example; it is not worth trying to play god.

Even as I am speaking some of you are anxiously fretting wondering how in the world you are ever going to stop. Well, going back to **5:6**, you need to trust that He has a mighty hand. After all, He is the Lord your God Almighty. He knows what worries and afflicts you because He is the one who appointed each situation that you are going through. He is the one that is responsible for bringing it into your life for the purpose of what He wants you to learn from that situation. He knows what needs to be burned off of your flesh and He knows exactly the right amount of fire you must endure. We studied that in **1:6-7**. As the Lord, everything is perfectly planned and prescribed in painstaking detail; and, as your' God Almighty, with His mighty hand, He ensures that you endure only what He has prescribed and allowed. So in this you can rest. This is an issue of faith: actively believing the truth.

When talking about these life distractions, people speak of their job, their boss, their finances, their spouse, their kids, their whatever. But rarely do they stop and think that this is not really about their job, their boss, their finances, their spouse, their kids, and so on; this is about what God is doing in their life. This is about God executing His plan to completely eradicate their flesh. This is about God giving them opportunity to give Him access in and to their life. This is about God preparing them for the right time that He might lift them up. This is about their sharing in His sufferings so they might share in the power of His resurrection (His grace). This is about His preparing them to be a vessel of His agape love.

You need to get this perspective, hold to this perspective, and constantly be aware of why things are happening. With this perspective, you can be a person who has joy and rest even in the midst of great turmoil. After all, *He cares for you* and that is a statement of fact (it is in the *present active indicative*). Thus, you can be

confident that every moment of your now, which means during the very thing that is causing you trouble, He cares for you. It is what He does and it describes your constant real-time relationship with the Lord. He cares for you. This needs to become to you a matter of faith; you need to actively believe this truth regardless of what you might think or feel. He cares for you; you matter to Him.

1 Peter 5:8-9

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

When we are worried and filled with anxiety, it is impossible to be of sober spirit or to be alert—impossible. Our worry and anxiety keeps us focused on the “me” and it is such a destabilizing way of living. Both “be of sober spirit” and “be on the alert” or “keep awake” are commands (*aorist active imperative*). Again, these are matters of obedience, which means we can choose to live this way day-in-and-day-out. Remember, God never commands us to do anything that He has not already equipped us to obey. Having stable emotions (sober spirit) and an alert and steady mind are to be the way of life for the **Beloved**. It is to define our life. And for those of you who still think your emotions are impossible and a monster that simply cannot be tamed, He has commanded you to obey. Therefore, He has made it possible (by His grace) for you to align your emotions with the truth that He is the

Lord your God Almighty; thus, you can choose to believe it, bet your life on it, and cast your cares upon the Lord and live as one who is sober of spirit. It is not just possible, it is His expectation that you will choose to live this way.

Now we have a reason that we are to be emotionally balanced and very, very alert. The devil, our adversary, our enemy, the one who always opposes us, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. What a horrifying word picture. Lions are terrible; they are fierce, merciless, and they literally devour their prey and rip its meat off its body quite often while its prey is still alive. It does not bother to snap its neck or cut off its air or anything like that; it just starts tearing at its flesh until its prey eventually dies in sheer agony and pain. That is what the devil is like. This picture captures perfectly the devil's attitude toward us: he just wants to take what he can take and tear it from our bodies. And if we are not alert and sober of spirit that is exactly what He does.

The devil roars and makes himself known; he does not lurk in secrecy. He makes it very clear that he is on the hunt and he intends to kill (this makes our getting caught in his grasp even more tragic). We should hear his roar and run away; however, we tend to be so focused on the "me" that we that we are easy prey. Thus, this command to be of sober spirit and on the alert is about saving our lives. And since roaring is in the *present middle participle*, we know that the devil is always, in our now, roaring and will continually roar. It is what he does as he paces back and forth and waits for his shot. Let that roar alert you to the seriousness of your obsession with the "me" and your obsession with your fleshly lusts of self-pity and self-love. This is not a game. Your adversary is playing for keeps and he wants to take life away from you and watch you suffer. He enjoys it; to him it's a matter

of conquest and total domination. He does not just want a part of you; but all of you—He wants to entirely dominate your soul.

And he is walking about the flock even now (“prowls” is in the *present active indicative*); this is a statement of fact. Even if we don’t see the devil pacing back and forth, even if we don’t listen to his roar, he is there and he is watching and waiting ready to attack at just the right time. Again, take this by faith. If you do, you will realize there is never a good time to obsess on the “me” (which is why you were commanded to do **nothing** from selfishness of empty conceit). Again, it is a command that is intended to save your life and protect you from the devil.

He is also continually seeking someone to devour (“seeking” is in the *present active participle*). This is happening now and is continually happening. For those of you who have been refusing to eat of the Word that you are being fed and as a result are weak and are hanging out on the periphery of the flock, you are in serious danger. You keep living as if you have all the time in the world to obsess on the “me;” but you don’t. The devil is biding his time and he is even now seeking; it is what he does. Make no mistake; he hates you. And if he has not yet attacked, it is because he knows the perfect time which will inflict the most damage. After all, he is not just interested in biting you and walking away; he is interested in devouring you—or, in the Greek, to gulp you down in your entirety. This reminds me of a passage we studied in **Hebrews** that frames the nature of this savage attack.

Hebrews 6:4-8

For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the

heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame. For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

For those of you who were not here, this passage is not directed to unbelievers but to believers and is a follow on from the warnings which God gave in **Hebrews 3-4**. In other words, if you resist God and refuse to eat of the good food that He is giving you, if you insist on obsessing on the “me” and indulging in the fleshly lusts of self-pity and self-love, eventually you will reach a point where God will honor and respect your decision to not believe and He will swear in His wrath that you will not get to experience His promise of peace and rest; instead, you will wander in the wilderness of religion until you die. And that is exactly what the enemy wants. It is at this moment that you will find yourself in the grasp of his bite and he will devour you. That is why the Spirit said that today, while there still remains a chance to enter into the rest, before you get to the point of no return, do not harden you hearts. Don't go past that place where God will let you just remain in your departure, remain in your unbelief, and let your life play out in the flesh (just the way you seem to want it) wandering in the wilderness of religion. In other words, the Spirit is exhorting you to not put God in the position where He decides to

completely honor your choice to not believe in the truth and lets you remain in that place where you have chosen and continually chosen opposition to Him.

Sadly, this happens over and over again; we have seen it and it is awful. We have seen those who could never get over their love of themselves and for what they want out of this world; and they have been captured in the terrible grasp of the devil. The life of an alien and stranger, the life of the **Beloved**, is full-on and intense and there is no quitting, pulling back, nor compromise. It is all the way because if you stop and obsess on yourself, the devil is there and he is waiting for his next victim. And for those who get devoured in in the devil's grasp, there is no escape; it is impossible to renew them to repentance. And the tragic thing is that the fruit of their life will be worthless and will end up being burned. And that is not just a "scary" phrase to be thrown about. This is real. Their lives will have a definite and marked impact on other people. Kids will be damaged, spouses, family members, friends, and so on. The fruit of their life will be worthless.

I also want to mention that the Spirit purposely uses the word "devil" and not Satan or Lucifer or even the demons. And that is because He does not want us to miss the method through which the enemy devours. "Devil" literally means the accuser or slanderer. The enemy will accuse and slander God to us, us to God, and us to ourselves. He is always focusing us on our failures and limitations provoking our shame and our desire for goodness. He is always tempting us to think poorly of God and the job He does in our lives. He is always tempting us to make an accusation against God's love for us. And on and on it goes. This is how he works. If you feed on the Word of God, you will become very familiar with this dark voice and start to learn how to identify it distinctly from both God's voice and your own

voice. But the dark voice is deceptive and cunning, which is why you are commanded to be of sober spirit and on the alert. You do not want to give the enemy this opportunity in your life. If you are on the fringe, it is time to apply all that we have learned both in **1 Peter** and **Haggai**. Apply it. Make it your life. It is your only refuge and pathway of escape. Your very life is at stake here.

But resist him (the devil), firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. Here we have still another command: resist the devil, firm in your faith. “Resist” is in the *aorist active imperative*. So you are commanded to live resisting the devil. It is what you are to actively do day-in-and-day-out; resisting the devil is to describe your life from beginning to end. Thus, fighting the devil is not what you are to do when he attacks and gets his teeth on you. Very few victims escape the bite of the lion. That is why you to never give him that chance to bite you; and you do that by living in resistance to the devil.

Resist him, firm in your faith. That means that your power of fighting the enemy comes when you make the choice to actively believe the truths we have learned and to bet your life on them. For example, if you settle with the fact that Jesus is the Lord your God Almighty and you are His **Beloved**, and His desire is that you be conformed in to His very own image, then everything in this life makes sense. It all has purpose, it all has reason, and it is all glorious. It sure may suck and be horrible, but you can endure all things with a sober spirit and an alert mind knowing that God is merely bringing you into your glory so He can live in and through you and you can be a vessel of His agape love. This is how you resist the devil—by faith. You can choose to believe that all that happens is necessary and is never something to

worry or fret over because He cares for you. And by the way, “firm” is a translation of the Greek word “*stereos*” or where we get the word steroid. It means stiff, strong, stable, steadfast, and sure, and it all is to describe our relationship to faith. Resist the devil firm in your faith.

Then the Spirit comforts us by saying that we are not alone in this; we must know that the same experiences of suffering are even now being accomplished by our brethren who are in the world. It is the way of life for the **Beloved**; it is how God causes us to live and to love. It is also how we come to bear the mark of true identity and ownership. I know that sometimes it feels as if we are all alone and the only ones going through the difficulty and testing that God has been taking us through; but we are not alone. There are others all around the world. And one day we will be together and we will rejoice in each other and will be bonded by the fact that we each bear the mark of God’s agape love.

Next, we come to one of the most glorious passages that has ministered to me time and time again as I have undergone the floods of judgment. This passage always gave me hope, even in the midst of sheer terror, and it has always drawn me closer to Jesus. It adjusted my perspective such that I could embrace whatever it was He was asking me to endure. I hope it does the same for you.

1 Peter 5:10-11

After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Hallelujah. What a promise. After you have suffered for just a little while. The Greek actually makes it even more extreme. Your suffering is considered to be “puny” in light of the life which Jesus has promised you. Your suffering is necessary; but, praise Jesus, it will only be necessary for a little while. The God of all grace, or the God of all supernatural enablement, the God who gives you everything you need to deal with your allotted time of suffering, who called you—yes you—to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. And all of these statements are in the *indicative*, so they are to be understood as a statement of fact—Jesus will do it. How personal and intimate is that promise?

Jesus will perfect or complete you, confirm or set you resolutely in the right direction, strengthen or enable you, and establish you or fix you firmly in place such that you will be immovable. That is what He is going to do with your suffering; this is His goal for bringing about all that He prescribes for your life. That is not a bad deal. Think about how the masses walk through this life in weakness, fear, insecurity, instability, filled with worry, and anxiety until their last dying day; but you have been chosen for freedom, strength, and rest. Even now, you are being given the opportunity to be completed in Christ, to find and stay on the right path, to be without weakness, and to be able to endure and support others. And He will make you, if you let Him, steadfast and immovable always abounding in the work of the Lord. These are the personal attributes of a true alien and stranger; these are the attribute of the true **Beloved**. These are the attributes to which you can look forward. They can be yours; Jesus wants them to be yours; you just have to be willing to let Him have His way with you. Adopt the mindset of the **Beloved** now; it

will save your life.

To Him be dominion forever and ever, Amen. Before you say Amen (or let it be), you have to understand what you are agreeing to. To agree with this phrase would be to confess that Jesus is the ultimate power over all things, including your life. It is agreeing that He has not just the power and the ability to completely dominate you, He has the right. It is a right He has taken from the devil. Now you can say Amen, or “let it be.” This is a firm and trustworthy statement. I want you to say Amen, but if you do keep in mind that God will not just hear it but He will act upon it. He will understand it to be a plea (like baptism) for a good conscience (**3:21**). He wants to be the conqueror of your soul and He wants you to let Him do His job before the devil conquers you and has his way with you. Amen!

This brings us to the end of **1 Peter** with the exception of Peter’s closing remarks. The Spirit packed so much into these 5 chapters it is amazing and for me has been life changing. I understand the Lord’s heart and His intentions for our lives so much more than ever before. I understand how the true **Beloved** live and what marks their lives. Our challenge will be to keep running toward these opportunities that God has given us to know Him more deeply and intimately. We must not go back to obsessing on the “me” and on all our fleshly lusts of self-pity and self-love. They have dominated us for too long; it is time for Jesus to have this dominion in our lives. Amen. We must complete the journey to be the aliens and strangers that we have been called to be. It is our destiny; let’s let Him have His way.

1 Peter 5:12-14

Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard him), I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it! She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does my son, Mark. Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.

This is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it! The full exchange is the only way to know God's supernatural empowerment for your life. It must be His life for yours where He is your goodness, He is your strength, He is your righteousness, He is your life, and He is your all things all the time. Stand firm in this truth! Peter writing from Rome (code named "Babylon") signs off with a nice little touch: greet one another with a kiss of God's agape love. Yes, we are to share a level of deep intimacy and trust with one another. And peace be to all who are in Christ.

Let's Pray