

THE GRACE OF GOD IN THE ECONOMY OF GOD, Week 4

Grace in Peter's Epistles

Scripture Reading: 1 Pet. 1:2b, 10, 13; 2:19-20; 3:7; 4:10; 5:5, 10, 12; 2 Pet. 1:2; 3:18

- 1 Peter 1:2 Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father in the sanctification of the Spirit unto the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.
- 1 Peter 1:10 Concerning this salvation the prophets, who prophesied concerning the grace that was to come unto you, sought and searched diligently,
- 1 Peter 1:13 Therefore girding up the loins of your mind and being sober, set your hope perfectly on the grace being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
- 1 Peter 2:19 For this is grace, if anyone, because of a consciousness of God, bears sorrows by suffering unjustly.
- 1 Peter 2:20 For what glory is it if, while sinning and being buffeted, you endure? But if, while doing good and suffering, you endure, this is grace with God.
- 1 Peter 3:7 Husbands, in like manner dwell together with them according to knowledge, as with the weaker, female vessel, assigning honor to them as also to fellow heirs of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.
- 1 Peter 4:10 Each one, as he has received a gift, ministering it among yourselves as good stewards of the varied grace of God.
- 1 Peter 5:5 In like manner, younger men, be subject to elders; and all of you gird yourselves with humility toward one another, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.
- 1 Peter 5:10 But the God of all grace, He who has called you into His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground you.
- 1 Peter 5:12 Through Silvanus, the faithful brother, as I account him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying fully that this is the true grace of God; enter into this grace and stand in it.
- 2 Peter 1:2 Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the full knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;
- 2 Peter 3:18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and unto the day of eternity. Amen.

Day 1

- 1 Peter 1:2** Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father in the sanctification of the Spirit unto the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.
- 2 Peter 1:2** Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the full knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

- I. **Grace is the resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit** giving Himself freely to us, being everything to us, and doing everything in us, for us, and through us for our enjoyment—John 1:14, 16-17; 2 Cor. 1:8-9, 12; Gal. 2:20; cf. 1 Cor. 15:10.
- II. **The multiplication of grace is the grace that multiplies in our daily life** in the full knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; the grace of God in His economy is rich, multiplying, and abounding—1 Pet. 1:2b; 2 Pet. 1:2; John 1:16; Eph. 1:6-8; 2:7; Rom. 5:17, 21; 1 Tim. 1:14; Rev. 22:21:
 - A. Grace is multiplied to us through our sufferings, limitations, and weaknesses; grace is Christ as our Burden-bearer; the more burdens we have, **the more opportunities we have to experience Christ as grace**—2 Cor. 12:7-9; cf. 1:12, 15.
 - B. The enjoyment of the Lord as grace is with **those who love Him**—Eph. 6:24; John 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 1:8.
 - C. The enjoyment of the Lord as grace with His divine nature is by our **receiving and abiding in the word** of His grace, which includes all His precious and exceedingly great promises—Acts 20:32; 2 Pet. 1:4; Eph. 6:17-18.

Day 2

1 Peter 1:10-12 Concerning this salvation the prophets, who prophesied concerning the grace that was to come unto you, sought and searched diligently, Searching into what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ in them was making clear, testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glories after these. To them it was revealed that not to themselves but to you they ministered these things, which have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, which things angels long to look into.

III. The prophets in the Old Testament prophesied concerning the **grace that was to come unto us**—1 Pet. 1:10:

- A. The Spirit of Christ in the Old Testament prophets made them clear concerning **Christ coming as grace** to us through His **incarnation**, His sufferings in His **human living** and **crucifixion**, and His glories in His **resurrection, ascension, second coming**, and reigning for the application of God's full salvation to us—vv. 5, 9-10; cf. Psa. 22; Isa. 53; Dan. 9:26.
- B. Although the Spirit of Christ was constituted dispensationally through and with Christ's death and resurrection in the New Testament time (John 7:39; Rom. 8:9-11), the **function of the Spirit is eternal**, because He is the eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14).
- C. The Spirit of Christ, in His eternal function, was in the Old Testament prophets, making them clear concerning Christ coming to the New Testament believers to be the **all-sufficient and unlimited grace** of God's full salvation to them for their entry into the joy of the Lord in the kingdom age, which is the salvation of their souls—John 1:17; Heb. 10:29b; 1 Pet. 1:9; Matt. 25:21, 23.
- D. The Spirit of Christ applies God's full salvation as grace to us by two instrumentalities: the **prophesying of the Old Testament prophets** and the **preaching of the New Testament apostles**—1 Pet. 1:10-12; cf. Rev. 2:7a.

Day 3

1 Peter 1:13 Therefore girding up the loins of your mind and being sober, set your hope perfectly on the grace being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 1:9-10 Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the times of the ages But now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who nullified death and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel,

IV. The grace on which the believers set their hope perfectly **will be brought to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ**—1 Pet. 1:13:

- A. The grace being brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ refers to the **salvation of the soul as the consummation of God's full salvation**—vv. 5, 9-10:
 1. The grace given to us in Christ was bestowed on us before the world began—2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 2:11.
 2. God, who was in the beginning, became flesh in time **as grace for man to receive, possess, and enjoy**—John 1:1, 14, 16-17.
 3. The processed Triune God, who has been consummated as the all-inclusive, life-giving, and indwelling Spirit, **has become the Spirit of grace with our spirit**—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17; Heb. 10:29b; Gal. 6:18; Phil. 4:23.
- B. Day by day we should be **open vessels to be continual receivers of grace** and set our hope wholly and perfectly on this grace—Rom. 5:17; 1 Pet. 1:13.

Day 4

1 Peter 2:19-21 For this is grace, if anyone, because of a consciousness of God, bears sorrows by suffering unjustly. For what glory is it if, while sinning and being buffeted, you endure? But if, while doing good and suffering, you endure, this is grace with God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you a model so that you may follow in His steps;

V. Grace with God in 1 Peter 2:19-20 refers to the *motivation of the divine life within us and its expression in our living*, which becomes in our *behavior gracious and acceptable* in the eyes of both man and God:

- A. Grace as the processed Triune God for our enjoyment becomes our *inward motivation and outward expression* in our intimate fellowship with God and our consciousness of God; we all have to learn how to have grace, which is to *take grace, possess grace, use grace, and apply grace*—Heb. 12:28.
- B. The processed Triune God as grace received and enjoyed by us becomes *visibly expressed* for others to see in our holy living and church meetings—Acts 11:23.
- C. We have been called to enjoy and express Christ as grace in the midst of sufferings so that we may become a *reproduction, a xerox copy, of Christ as our model*, according to His God-man living—1 Pet. 2:20-21.

The making of xerox copies may be used to illustrate what Peter means by **Christ being a model for us**. In 1973 I gave a message on this entitled “Spiritual Xeroxing.” Christ’s living revealed in the four Gospels is the master copy used in this spiritual xeroxing. For xeroxing, we must first have a copy. The xeroxed copy made from this original is a reproduction, not an imitation. We know from experience that trying to imitate Christ does not work. We are not able to imitate Him. What we need is not imitation but *reproduction*. There is a great difference between imitation and reproduction.

In the process of spiritual xeroxing, the **Spirit of Christ is the light**, and the **riches of the divine life are the inking substance**. We are the paper on which the reproduction of the original is to be made. *This paper must be put under the light of the Holy Spirit, and it must pass through the inking substance in order to have the original copy—Christ Himself—reproduced on it*. Through this process we eventually become a reproduction of the original, a reproduction of Christ.

We have pointed out that the paper used in xeroxing must be **clean**. It should not have anything on it. For instance, we could never get anything xeroxed on a piece of newspaper. If you try to make a reproduction onto a piece of newspaper, nothing will come out clear. It is very important, therefore, for the paper to be clean. Peter refers to this clean “paper” in 1:22, where he speaks about the *purifying of our souls*. Much of what Peter writes in chapters one and two is related to producing clean paper for spiritual xeroxing. (*Life-Study of First Peter, chapter 20*)

Day 5

- 1 Peter 3:7** Husbands, in like manner dwell together with them according to knowledge, as with the weaker, female vessel, assigning honor to them as also to fellow heirs of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.
- 1 Peter 4:10** Each one, as he has received a gift, ministering it among yourselves as good stewards of the varied grace of God.

VI. The *grace of life is the inheritance of all the believers*, whether strong or weak—3:7:

- A. The *grace of life is God as life and life supply to us in His Divine Trinity*—the Father as the source of life, the Son as the course of life, and the Spirit as the flow of life, who flows within us, with the Son and the Father, as grace to us—1 John 5:11-12; John 7:38-39; Rev. 22:1.
- B. We are *heirs to inherit* the **grace of life** and *vessels to contain* the **grace of life**—1 Pet. 3:7; Eph. 1:14; 2 Cor. 4:7.

VII. The varied grace of God indicates the riches of the *grace of God in its varieties ministered by the saints one to another*—1 Pet. 4:10:

- A. The **varied grace of God** is the *rich supply of life*, which is the Triune God *ministered into us* in many aspects—2 Cor. 13:14; 12:9.
- B. We need to be **good stewards** of the varied grace of God, *speaking the words of grace* as the **oracles of God** and *ministering out* of the strength and power of grace, which God supplies—1 Pet. 4:10-11; Luke 4:22; Eph. 3:2; 4:29.

Day 6

- 1 Peter 5:5** In like manner, younger men, be subject to elders; and all of you gird yourselves with humility toward one another, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.
- 1 Peter 5:10** But the God of all grace, He who has called you into His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen, and ground you.

VIII. God gives **grace to the humble, but He **resists the proud**—1 Pet. 5:5:**

- A. In the church life all of us need to **gird ourselves with humility toward one another** so that we may enjoy God as the Grace-giver—cf. John 13:3-5.
- B. **Humility saves us from all kinds of destruction** and **invites God's grace**, whereas **pride makes us a top fool**—James 4:6; Psa. 138:6; Prov. 29:23.
- C. We must be willing to be made **humble, lowly, under the mighty hand of God** in His discipline and to throw our life with its care upon God, because He cares for us lovingly and faithfully—1 Pet. 5:5-7; cf. Psa. 55:22.

IX. “The God of all grace”—who has called the believers into His eternal glory—perfects, establishes, strengthens, and grounds** them through their sufferings; this “all grace” is the “true grace of God,” into which the believers should enter and in which they stand—1 Pet. 5:10, 12.**

X. The true grace of God is the grace in which, **together with the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the believers should grow unto His glory both now and unto the day of eternity; this is the concluding word of the apostle Peter's writings, indicating that whatever he has written is of, in, by, and through the grace of God—2 Pet. 3:18.**

In 5:5 Peter says that all of us should **gird ourselves with humility toward one another**. Everyone in the church, including the elders, should gird himself with humility. In 1:13 Peter charges us to gird up the loins of our mind, but here he indicates that our entire being needs to be girded.

The Greek word for “gird” here is derived from a noun meaning a slave's apron, **which girds up his loose garments in the service**. It is used here as a figure of speech, signifying the putting on of humility as a virtue in service. This figure comes evidently from Peter's impression of how the Lord girded Himself with a towel when He humbled Himself to wash the disciples' feet, especially Peter's.

Today carpenters and printers often wear aprons while they are working. In ancient times the people wore clothing that was loose. Therefore, because this loose clothing made it difficult to work, the slaves wore an apron to bind up their loose clothing. Peter uses this as a metaphor to indicate that **in the church life we all must learn how to gird up ourselves**. We should not be **loose** in any way. If we are loose, we may automatically become **proud**. We need to gird ourselves with humility. If we are girded with humility, we shall become **humble, careful persons**. We shall not be loose or careless. In the church life we all should put on the apron of humility. (*Life-Study of First Peter, chapter 33*)