

HIS MERCY AND GRACE FOR THE LOVE OF GOD

[1 Peter 1:1-2 (Greeting to the Elect Pilgrims)] Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the **foreknowledge** of God the Father, in **sanctification** of the Spirit, for **obedience** and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

[Grace and peace be multiplied to YOU! This is the Apostle Peter's letter to presumably the Jews who were of the Dispersion (parepidemos:para-alongside, epidemos-over the people; they were spread amongst the people over the region of what is now central Turkey. More importantly, they and we are encouraged and comforted by other "paras". It is not those of this world, of whom were are dispersed amongst, but the parakletos (Holy Spirit), & parakalountes (to which we are encouraging and exhorting one another, that is, our brothers and sisters in Christ!) Those of whom Peter addressed were described as those who were called by God into the **sanctification of the Holy Spirit**, that is, to live in and according to His holiness by their obedience and by the shedding of Jesus' blood for the remission of our sins. That goes perfectly along with **Ephesians 2:8-10**. Later, in chapter 2, Peter distinguishes the contrast between faith and disobedience. We read last week in the Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians, he greets them the same as Peter did saying, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now [parakalountes], being confident of this very thing, that **He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ** [Parakalantos, as we are His workmanship]; just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are **partakers with me of grace**. [So when Paul and Peter are saying "grace and peace to you", it is not just to receive grace and peace, but to walk in it, to live it!] For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your **love may abound** still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and **without offense** till the day of Christ, being filled with the **fruits of righteousness** which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (**Phil. 1:2-11**) Fruit of the Spirit, **Gal. 5:22-23**.]

[1 Peter 1:3-9 (A Heavenly Inheritance)] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, **reserved in heaven for you**,

who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly **rejoice**, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been **grieved** by various trials, that the **genuineness of your faith**, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is **tested by fire**, may be found to **praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ**, whom having not seen **you love**. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the **salvation of your souls**.

[While the salvation of our souls is certainly something we look forward to, of which we have an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, for those who love God we look especially forward to the praise, glory and honor of the **revelation of Jesus Christ!** We had a foreshadowing of that when Thomas saw the holes in Jesus' hands and side and said, "My Lord and my God!" (**John 20:28**) We can add to that, "My Lord, my God, and my Savior!" And also, the Apostle Paul says, "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again **to fear**, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father[!]" (**Romans 8:15**) While we have the Revelation/Apocalypse of Jesus Christ as the last book in our Bibles that reveals to us what is to come in the last of days, hopefully for all of us we look forward to THE revelation of Christ Jesus, to whom belongs all praise, honor and glory!]

1 Peter 1:10-12 (Prophecies of Christ) Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.

[A main prophecy of Christ Jesus and His sufferings is in **Isaiah 53**. "He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; [As He still does as we have fellowship with Him in His sufferings (**Philippians 3:10**) Yet "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. (**1 John 1:6**)] Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for **our peace** was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." (**Isaiah 53:4-5**) Transgression is the act of trespassing in a place that is contrary to the will of God. Iniquity is what resides in one's heart that is a moral disortion of the will of God. That is where we have the Apostle Paul

pleading with us by saying, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (**Romans 12:1-2**)]

1 Peter 1:13-16 (Living Before God Our Father)]

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the **revelation of Jesus Christ**; as **obedient** children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

[That can only be accomplished as we abide in Christ. Jesus said as much in **John 15:5-6**, "I am the Vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for **without Me you can do nothing**. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned." We cannot bear fruit on our own and we certainly cannot be holy as He is holy, on our own. Christ Jesus is our Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption. So then "He[She] who glories, let him[her] glory in the Lord." (**1 Corinthians 1:30**)] We can ONLY glory IN the Lord! Just as we will all one day be "glorified together" (**Romans 8:17**) in Christ!

1 Peter 1:17-21 (Living Before God Our Father)] And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

[Once again, our work is meant to be our obedience to His Word and the work that God is working in us. As we are told in **Isaiah 62:11**, "Indeed the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the world: "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Surely your salvation is coming; Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.' " That's us! Also once again we come across that word fear, as Peter said to conduct yourself in fear, the fear of the Lord. Same as what Paul said in what we read last week, "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always **obeyed**, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with **fear and trembling**; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure."

(**Philippians 2:12-13**) Both Paul and Peter's use of the word fear is the Greek word phobos, of which we get the word phobia, a fear of... Yet I will still say the same thing that I've been saying because it is the Word of God. The Apostle John tells us, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love." (**1 John 4:18**) Bottom line: God is perfecting His love in us! And as Jesus told His disciples, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that **your joy may be full**. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another." (John 15:11-17) As Jesus said the Great Commandments of God is to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind and to love others as ourselves. (**Mark 12:30-31**) Hopefully for all of us, we have a fear of God in our conduct, for He alone is God Almighty and one day each of us will be standing before Him, but also that we are **motivated by the love of God** as the Apostle Paul said, "Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." May we all be overflowing with the love of God and for others as we love God because He first loved us! (**1 John 4:19**) Our faith in Christ and our works in Christ are meaningless and empty without the love of God! The Apostle Paul said as much in **1 Corinthians 13**, that without love, it's nothing. "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (**1 Corinthians 13:4-7**) We can only expect to be able to do that in our surrenderedness (as a living sacrifice) to the will and love of God!]

1 Peter 1:22-25 (The Enduring Word)]

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the Word of the Lord endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

["And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace

and truth. (**John 1:14**) And "as many as received Him [the incorruptible seed], to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (**John 1:12-13**) And "the Word of the Lord endures forever!"

1 Peter 2:1-8 (Our Inheritance Through Christ's Blood)]

Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. [Ah, the love of God!] Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." [**Isaiah 28:16**] Therefore, to you who **believe**, He is precious; but to those who are **disobedient** [there's the contrast], "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

[If someone says, "I love God," [or, oh He's so precious!] and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also. (**1 John 4:20-21**) It goes beyond that. Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (**Matthew 5:43-48**) Now I don't think I am being presumptuous to say that none of us are yet perfected in the love of God but that is where He is leading us and we certainly don't want any root of bitterness or unforgiveness to begin growing in our hearts. That is contrary to what God intends for us and expects of us. That leads us away from the love of God and will only cause damage, to one's self AND to others.]

1 Peter 2:9-10 (His Chosen People)]

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

[His royal priesthood! "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain **mercy** and find **grace** to help in time of need." (**Hebrews 4:16**) For ourselves and for others, as we have a love for God and others and so that we may continue in the love of God and the grace of God. May we continue to receive His mercy and grace for the love of God! As the Apostle Paul stated, "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain." (**Galatians 2:21**) We are seeking His mercy and grace for the love of God, for our love of God and for His love to overflow in us that we may continue to love God and love other people.]

1 Peter 2:11-25 (Living Before the World) Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims [same as us, this is not our home], abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation. Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake [as long as one is not compromising their position in Christ], whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. **Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.** Servants [we can substitute that for employees], be submissive to your masters [bosses] with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, **when He was reviled, did not revile in return**; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

[Once again though, Jesus is our Wisdom. He will lead us in whether we stay and be His witness of truth and love or whether we need to move along. What we should be wanting is that we give no opportunity for a brother or sister in Christ to stumble because of our disobedience or for those of the world to say, "if that is what being a Christian is, I don't want it", unless they are rejecting Christ Himself. May we receive God's grace and mercy for His love to abound in us for His building of His eternal kingdom and for His glory!]