

Catford Lectures 2009-2010

Part 11

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[00:00:01] Good afternoon, everyone. It's good to see so many of you here. Could we start with hymn number 275, please? Our God is light, and though we go across a trackless wild, Our Saviour's footsteps ever show the path for every child. The whole hymn, please, number 275.

Our God is light, and though we go across a trackless wild, Our Saviour's footsteps ever show the path for every child.

[00:01:07] At ev'ry step, how freshly blue, The shore of heav'n we guide, The faithful and forbearing Lamb, That never turns aside.

Thou weariest not, most gracious Lord, Thou quivering, weary crow, [00:02:08] And seizing the sustaining word, Thou giv'st our hearts to love.

This bitter water's meadow first Thy cross has laid ensleep, When all our glad and visionless [00:03:03] Lost shade could retreat.

The manna canter's springing well Suffice for every need.

And nature's grace, her stories tell How well thy path does lead.

In the name of the Lord Jesus, amen.

[00:04:03] We also sing hymn number 101, please.

It is not with uncertain step we tread our desert way.

A well-known voice has called us up to everlasting day. The whole hymn, please, number 101. It is not with uncertain step we tread our desert way.

A well-known voice has called us up to everlasting day.

The voice of him who here has trod [00:05:06] Along the trackless way And on the road which leads to God Where once we've lost its way.

He leads us not alone to trace A path across the ways But leads us still with living grace Homeward bound to emace.

[00:06:02] See how fast stands the heavenly door When glory shines below.

To light the way he's gone before The coming bliss to show.

In patience then we tread the road Of faith and courage tried.

And just the law which bears its load [00:07:01] Thou must draw with due piety.

Could we turn, please, to Peter's first epistle and read the last chapter.

First epistle of Peter, chapter 5, from verse 1. 1 Peter 5, verse 1. The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder and a witness of the suffering of Christ and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Feed the flock of God which is among you, [00:08:01] taking the oversight thereof not by constraint but willingly, nor for filthy lucre but of a ready mind, neither as being lords over God's heritage but being ensembles to the flock.

And when the chief shepherd shall appear, he shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you, be subject one to another and be clothed with humility, for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon him, for he cares for you.

[00:09:07] Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he might devour, whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who has called us to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. To him be the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

By Silvanus, a faithful brother, unto you, [00:10:02] as I suppose I have written briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.

To the church that is at Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you, and so does Marcus my son.

Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen. Peter, of course, is much remembered for the fact that although he loved the Lord much, he also failed. And yet the Lord was able to give him a task, and he was able to say to him even before Peter had fallen, [00:11:05] and once thou art returned, strengthen thy brethren. And I suppose this epistle here is part of that work which the Lord had confided to Peter. He writes to his brethren. Now, primarily, of course, these were Christians who were Jews before, and therefore they were in the care of Peter especially.

But I dare say Peter also wrote this epistle to strengthen us. And there is a good deal of very practical guidance in this epistle and also in this chapter we have read. Now, in the first verse, Peter addresses himself to the elders which are among you, [00:12:03] and he gives them an exhortation which we will come to, I hope, in verse 2, which is, feed the flock of God.

But first of all, the question arises, who exactly was Peter addressing here? And there are two ways of understanding this because the word elder is used in two different ways. The obvious meaning is that it refers to elder persons, elder men in particular.

But secondly, the word is also used for those brothers who had the office of an elder.

Now, this raises a little question here right in the beginning. Well, what actually is meant? Is it experience or is it office?

Now, when we say office, [00:13:01] not talking about an office with a desk and a computer where you go to do your work. We are talking about a charge which is not exactly the same thing as a gift. It is something that is exercised in a locality, in a town.

And you read in the Acts of the Apostles already that the apostles appointed men who had certain qualifications as elders. There is one verse that is very important there which we might just read in Acts 14 because sadly it is sometimes misrepresented a little bit. But this is Acts 14.23 where it speaks about Paul and those with him and it says, And when they, that's Paul and his companions, [00:14:03] had ordained them elders in every church.

Now, some have tried to make this verse mean that the believers in those assemblies voted in order to choose elders.

But this is not what it says. It says the apostles chose for them elders in every church.

And that's what they did, especially in newly formed assemblies where you had Christians who had been converted out of Hesonism, Gentiles.

And in order to make sure that there was oversight, the apostles appointed such elders.

And by the way, it was only apostles and those who had received a specific command and authority [00:15:06] from the apostles who could do this. You all know that Titus is one example.

Now, when I just a minute ago used the word oversight, it might just be good to explain this as well briefly. There are two words that are used for the same people. One is elders.

The other is overseers.

The first talks about the, you might say, the experience and the dignity. The second talks more about the actual work they had to do. And you find that both words are used of the same people in Acts 20 where it says Paul called the elders from Ephesus and then he speaks to them and he says, take heed of yourselves and of the flock in whom the Lord has set you as overseers.

[00:16:05] So he tells the elders that they are overseers. Now, that's what we mean by official elders.

Now, in this verse here, there are several reasons why it might not actually be the official elders that are meant. In the first place, there is no article before the word, so it just means elder ones, not a specific group of the elders. You also find that in verse 5 it says, likewise ye younger.

So it seems that there is a correspondence. There is something for the elder ones. Nobody needs to be disappointed. There will also be something for the younger ones. But it just is another argument for showing that [00:17:03] it might not be the office in view here. Also that Peter calls himself a fellow elder as opposed to an apostle as he might have done if it was a matter of authority.

However, Peter does use the word oversight in verse 2 and he tells them how they should not go about having this oversight.

Peter, as I mentioned, writes to Christians who were Jews before and official elders, and that's another argument, were normally appointed in assemblies where you had predominantly heathens that had been converted.

Now, given that that is the case, [00:18:05] you might actually argue that it doesn't make such a big difference because as in the assemblies in heathen territory you had at the time appointed elders, so you had in the assemblies where there were predominantly those who had been Jews before, you had elder brothers who also took responsibility. And in one sense, this is very much like our situation today where we haven't got apostles, we haven't got apostolic delegates, and we cannot appoint elders. But we do hope that there are, and we give thanks for those that are there, that there are brothers who meet the qualifications that are outlined in 1 Timothy 3 and in Titus 1.

And in this passage, then, [00:19:01] we have an exhortation to such who are privileged in this way to look after something that is very precious to God, namely his flock.

But before Peter comes to this, he gives three titles, or he mentions three characteristics of himself, and these three are important for this particular exhortation. He says, first of all, I am writing to you as a fellow elder. I know something about the challenges of your position. I know something about the difficulties and the possible frustrations connected with this work. But, he says, I am secondly a witness of the sufferings of Christ. Now, there are witnesses and witnesses. You can either, I would call this witness passively, like, for example, the women in the Gospels. [00:20:04] They witnessed how the Lord was crucified, and then they witnessed how he was put into the grave. That means they observed.

But then you also have active witness, and this is what is meant here, which is really the same word as martyr. It is somebody who testifies, somebody who speaks publicly and who bears witness to a certain thing.

Now, that's important here because Peter says, I am bearing testimony to the sufferings of Christ. And, you know, that's a good basis for exhorting someone in a difficult position. He says, part of my ministry is to speak about how much Christ suffers. And if you have that before you, you won't be that disappointed if you bear some sufferings [00:21:03] in your responsibility as elders.

But, thirdly, and that's beautiful as well, he says, I'm also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.

You may find things difficult. You may find that, you know, the sheep are running all over the place. It's really not easy to look after that flock. You may find it's a real challenge. But he says, you know what? I am already a partaker of the glory. Now, you've got something that's of typical Peter here. Peter is very down-to-earth. It's kind of, you might say, the wilderness perspective. He doesn't see the believers like Paul as joined together in one body, united to Christ, their head in heaven. He doesn't talk about the mystery. [00:22:01] With Peter, it's very basic. He says, you are individuals. You are in the wilderness. You are on a journey. But at the end of that journey, there is the glory. And here, in order to encourage those he writes to, he says, I'm already a partaker of that glory that shall be revealed. It's beautiful how Peter presents this. If you just look at Chapter 1, and these are four references now in this epistle. In Chapter 1, it says, in verse 5, he speaks about the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Then, the next thing that is being revealed, in verse 13, he says, [00:23:04] and hope to the end for the grace that is brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Now, thirdly, in Chapter 4 and verse 13, but rejoice in so much as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings that when his glory shall be revealed, he may be glad also with exceeding joy.

Did you get that?

Four items that are being revealed at that great revelation. Number one, their salvation. And when Peter talks about salvation, with one exception, which is 1 verse 9, where it says salvation of your souls, he talks of full salvation of body, soul, and spirit. [00:24:04] And he points us to the moment when Christ will be revealed in glory, and he says, at that moment in time, your salvation will be revealed.

Second point was the grace. When Christ appears in glory, and we appear with him, then something that we appreciate now already will then be revealed, and that is his grace.

And the third aspect was this unspeakable joy. The revelation of Christ will be an occasion of joy for us. And here in 5 verse 1, we have the fourth point. It is the revelation of the glory of Christ. And for Peter, this was so real. He says, you know, I'm a partaker of this now. And if I write these practical things to you, some exhortations, [00:25:02] I really do this as a partaker of that future glory.

Now, then the exhortation itself is feed the flock of God. Now, feeding is perhaps not exactly right or enough. You may find a literal translation that uses the word shepherd. Shepherd the flock of God. Now, feeding is certainly part of this. If the shepherd wants to keep a flock together in one place, and if the flock is in a barren place where there is no food, no pasture, he will have a lot of trouble keeping the sheep there. So the first thing is feeding. But then shepherding comprises more. It also means to have an eye on the flock. It means to be observant when a sheep distances itself from the flock.

[00:26:03] That's normally a sign of danger. There may be a sheep that doesn't walk like the other sheep walk, and that is a sign where the shepherd would say, look what is going on here. So shepherding would be caring, observing, and looking after this flock.

Now, when I say this flock, it says here, and that's very important, the flock of God. You ever heard people talking about their flock? Somebody who says, I'm a pastor. I'm looking after a flock of 200. My flock is 250.

Well, it shouldn't be his flock at all. It is the flock of God.

And that is exactly the point made a little later here in the next verse.

[00:27:02] We should not regard those who are Christ's as our possession. They are the possession of Christ. They are the flock of God. And whatever we can do for their benefit, we should do in this perspective that actually we want to help along those who belong to that flock of God. Now, sometimes we learn best by negatives.

And if we're told how not to do it, it sheds some light on how it should be done. Taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. There are two dangers here. One danger is that somebody wants to do a spiritual work. He wants to be involved with the flock of God, but it is for the wrong incentives. [00:28:05] It is for financial gain.

And that is, again, sadly, it is a principle that has become very widespread in Christendom where Christian service is carried out for financial benefit.

And Peter says very clearly this is not how it should be done, but nor should it be done by constraint. This would be someone who feels a responsibility, who says, I've got to do it, but I really don't like it very much. And he says neither of these would be the right perspective. The right perspective would be willingly and of a ready mind. Neither, verse 3, as being the Lord's, I just say here over God's heritage, but in my Bible and probably in yours, God is in italics. [00:29:01] And that means it's not there in the original. And generally it's a good idea when it's not there in the original then not to put it there. Now, I read another translation for you where it says, not as lording over your possessions. Now, that is the point.

Those who have a responsibility in relation to believers should not regard them as their possession. They should not regard themselves as lords, but they should do this as a service. Well, you might say, how can they do it then? If they don't act as lords, if they don't command, how can they then make the flock move in a certain direction? How can they make sure that the sheep go the right way and that they get the right food? [00:30:01] Well, just read on.

It says, but being ensembles to the flock, being models for the flock.

Sometimes we're not conscious of this, but being a model or giving an example is a very powerful thing indeed. Just remember our youngest son a few days ago. He came downstairs in the morning. He was wearing my shoes. He also had found himself a tie and put it on. He had a bag in his hand.

He looked at us, showed us his bag, and he said, computer, computer. Then he looked and said, I'm dead. I'm going to work.

He was already with the big shoes and the tie in the bag. Now, I never particularly tried to teach him how you would go about going to work, but he must have been looking. [00:31:05] I suppose that's how it works with this matter of being models. Sometimes we may not be conscious of this. Peter says, I go fishing, and then the others say, well, we go fishing as well. Another occasion is a child comes running. Mom, mom, my little brother or sister, whatever, has done a really stupid thing, something really bad. The mother says, well, what have you done? Well, I did the same.

I did it first.

Well, that's the power of imitation.

Peter says, if we want to give positive guidance, and one almost feels reluctant to speak about this, because one feels that one has done so many things which one rather wouldn't be imitated. [00:32:01] It's just so much more important to think about this, being examples to the flock. Whatever we do, we must be ready for it to be imitated by others. And when the chief shepherd, verse 4, shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Sheep are not well known for being particularly grateful. Sheep wouldn't run after the shepherd and give him a reward. And perhaps some of the elders might say, well, it's a real burden, Peter, what you're asking of us here. It's quite hard work. And sometimes, you know, when you tell someone you're not really going the right way, they don't really like it. And it's not a rewarding thing. And Peter says it is a rewarding thing. Just look in the right direction, the chief shepherd. [00:33:02] Now, first of all, you know, even those who have some responsibility, Peter says we are only under shepherds. And we need to look at the chief shepherd, the Lord Jesus. And it's a very beautiful title. We know him well as the good shepherd. The character of the good shepherd, based on John 10, is that he lays down his life for the sheep. At the cross, on the cross, you see the good shepherd. But Hebrews 13 talks about the great shepherd. And the great shepherd is the one whom God brought again from among the dead. So in resurrection, you see the Lord as the great shepherd. But you can also see the Lord as the chief, the first or highest shepherd. And this is where? This is again at his appearing, when the chief shepherd shall appear. [00:34:05] So death, resurrection, appearing, good, great, and chief shepherd.

And Peter says, if you have your eye on that, which, by the way, is a good perspective to be encouraged, to think of the day which is no longer the day of small things, but a day when, as it says, Christ will come in glory with might and power.

And then it says, you shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

You know the martyrs, they get the crown of life.

Paul, at the end of his life, having lived righteously, having fought the good fight, he says, what I get is the crown of righteousness and those who love his appearing. [00:35:06] But here, for the shepherds who do this, or elders who do this sometimes not so glorious work, Peter says, at the appearing, you will receive the crown of glory. And that is one that lasts. It's not like one of those crowns made of twigs for somebody who's won the race, the Olympic game, which shortly afterwards would be fading away, but it will be lasting. Likewise, verse 5, ye younger.

Now, I know that we always have trouble fitting ourselves into categories. And I'm sure many have been thinking about, well, who actually in this room here, who is this, the younger, and who are the elders? [00:36:03] Well, perhaps I can make a simple suggestion. I would suggest that most of us are younger than some others. And most of us are older than some others.

And that makes it very easy. We then have guidance as to how we should act, what our attitude should be towards those who are younger, where we should be trying to help them along in their Christian pathway. And then secondly, what should our attitude be towards those who are older? And that's what we come to here. And the attitude should be, submit yourselves to those who are elder. Now, you might say that's not something I like. It's not something I was taught at school either. I was

told I need to use my elbows and I need to get to the top and I need to do this and that, but not submit. [00:37:02] Well, that's the divine guidance.

And I believe it's something very healthy. It's something that would do away with a great deal of difficulties we have locally if we were better at submitting. First of all, towards those who are elder, and then to one another. I remember a time, actually, where I was quite worked up about something that, in my view, was just going completely wrong. And I went to some brothers' meetings and I tried to make it so plain how wrong it all was. And I told an older brother about it at one time, and he said to me, look, your responsibility is to give your view.

Tell your brethren what you believe and tell them why you believe it, and then why don't you leave the decision for them? [00:38:03] And just say, look, I've told you what my conviction is, and now I would like to leave you to decide. This first sounded very strange to me. And then I thought, well, actually, I'll try that out. And today I do think it was a very good piece of advice. And it's actually very much in line with what we find here. Submit yourselves to the elder and all of you be subject to one another. I actually find that if something is presented in a way, in the spirit of this verse, that you find more open ears and others will listen better to what is being suggested. Now, it says here, clothed with humility. It's the picture of a garment that you are clothed with. [00:39:02] It surrounds you and it's almost inseparably connected with yourself.

You take it with you where you go. And this is how humility should accompany us on our way.

And then a reason is given, for God resists the proud. We don't want that, do we? We don't want to be in a position where God actually has to actively resist us and be against us. You remember that this happened to some people, and sometimes people who made a good start. My first example is Nebuchadnezzar, and he had been given a high position by God, but then the moment came when he exhorted himself in his pride, and then God had to resist him, and he had to say, Nebuchadnezzar, you will become like the animals in the field. [00:40:06] There's another example that comes to mind, which is Uzziah. Uzziah was 16 when he became king.

He reigned 51 years.

His career was as steep as it can be. If you read 2 Chronicles 26, you find what he did, how he built towers. He strengthened the cities. He went to war. He overcame the enemies. He made them tributaries. He had engineers employed in order to do research and develop machines that could be used for various purposes, and he just did such a good job as a king.

And then the tragic verse comes, and when he had become great, his heart became exalted, or exalted himself.

[00:41:07] And then it says that God had to resist him. You know, when he exalted himself, he then said, I want to be more than a king. I want to be more than God has given me. I want to burn incense in the temple. And then the priest came and withstood him, and he became angry. And that's another sign of pride. If one is on the wrong way, and somebody tells me I get angry, that's really the attitude of pride. And then God had to slay him with leprosy on his forehead.

That was the end of this king who had gone such a good way for such a long time. God resisted the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. And that's a real encouragement. If we are able, with the

Lord's help and by his grace, to say, all right, I feel differently, [00:42:05] but I now submit to this, and I listen to what my brother says, and if we go this way of humility, we have the Lord on our side. And the Lord says he will give grace for this attitude. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God.

Again, humbling ourselves is not something that comes naturally, but just think of the mighty hand of God. What has the mighty hand of God done? The mighty hand of God executed judgment on Christ on the cross. It pleased Jehovah to bruise him, and Christ endured this. Now, if Christ took that place, and if the mighty hand of God did this and was still right, should we not take that place? [00:43:04] I'm not speaking about atoning sufferings, but I'm speaking about just humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God and saying, actually, what this mighty hand does right now, it hurts me, but the mighty hand of God is always right.

That he may exalt you in due time.

Now, that's always the order in God's ways. If somebody exalts himself, God has to discipline him. But if somebody humbles himself under the mighty hand of God, God will exalt him. And the best example is Christ. Philippians 2, he humbled himself.

And he went down step by step, even to the death of the cross. And then it says, and therefore, God has highly exalted him, has given him a name that is above every name. And this is a principle in the kingdom of God. [00:44:03] The principle in the world is exalt yourself and try to get ahead of your neighbor. The principle in the kingdom of God is humble yourself, and God, leave the exaltation, leave the exalting bit to God. He will do this in due time.

Casting all your care upon him, for he cares for you. Now, we do find this difficult sometimes, casting our care upon him. We quite like to keep it on. You all know this story of the old lady with a big rucksack who was offered a lift by a farmer on a truck, and she accepted, gratefully accepted that lift, but she did keep her rucksack on. And when the farmer asked, look, why are you doing this? She says, well, I'm so grateful you give me a lift on your truck, but I want to help a little bit as well, and I keep my rucksack on my back. Now, that is like praying and getting up and being just as worried as before. [00:45:01] Now, why do we find it so difficult to leave the rucksack there?

May I suggest we find verse 7 difficult because we haven't gone through verse 6? If we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and we say, what is happening to me right now? Actually, God is right.

Then I'm in a good position to actually cast my care upon him and leave it there. Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, is a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. Being sober means free from influences that would cloud our perception. Being vigilant means we have to watch, we have to be alert. [00:46:04] Now, the reason given is that actually the flock is in danger. Just connect this with the first verse. You've got to look after the flock, but there is a lion walking around. Now, any good shepherd who cares for his flock, he would be very much alert if he was told actually there is a lion walking around, and he only wants to do one thing. He wants to devour sheep from your flock.

And this is the warning here. This adversary is there, presented here as the roaring lion.

A roaring lion is actually one of the most frightening things you can ever experience in your life. Just before it goes for the prey, you have this loud, roaring sound.

This is how Satan acts. He frightens through persecution.

[00:47:04] Now, that fits very well into Peter, and it's very interesting how this same adversary is presented in different scriptures.

Before I come to this, we should remember that we have a very powerful enemy, but this enemy is a creature. God created him.

He is far more intelligent and powerful than we are, but he is not omnipotent, he is not omniscious, and he is not omnipresent. He is presented in Ezekiel 28 as a cherub who lifted himself up in pride, who wanted to be as God, and therefore God had to cast him down.

[00:48:04] And this is actually confirmed in the New Testament in 1 Timothy 3, where it speaks of the snare of the devil, and it's talked there about a novice who may become proud if you give a novice the job of an elder. And it says this is actually how Satan fell through pride. But in the New Testament epistles, it's very interesting how the same enemy is presented in different ways in different epistles. And we're in danger that we'll run out of time a little bit. I'll be short, but just very briefly. In Romans, Paul had taught that the believers had died with Christ, that there was no good in them, and that their old man was crucified. [00:49:02] And to the Romans, Paul can say it's not going to be long, and Satan will be trodden under your feet. Now, in 1 Corinthians, you had a case of grave immorality, and Paul had to say such one needs to be delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, for discipline, for sufferings. Now, the Corinthians were carnal, and that's why in 2 Corinthians, Paul has to warn them and has to say, actually, Satan comes like an angel of light. And if you are carnal, if you aren't careful, you will be deceived by Satan. In Ephesians, Paul introduces us to the wonderful inheritance in the land. And there he says in the end, but watch out, you'll have warfare. And there you need the whole armor of God to stand against the wiles of the devil [00:50:04] who wants to rob you of the enjoyment of that inheritance. Now, in Colossians, it is a matter of the person of Christ and his work, the preeminence of his person and his work. And there it says that Christ held a triumph over him. He defeated him through his work.

In 1 Thessalonians, the devil is mentioned again.

In 2 Thessalonians, you have a description of the time of the end, where Antichrist comes, and you find that the devil is presented in that context. Now, then there are more references.

[00:51:02] We mentioned 1 Timothy, where it's the question of the elder and the initial sin of the enemy is mentioned.

Then in Hebrews, you find that this enemy is actually the one who had the power of death. But then the better one, Christ, overcame him in death. In James 4, he is a defeated enemy, and it says, Resist him, and he will flee from you. Now, here in Peter, as we said earlier, the believers are on their way through the wilderness, and there they have this persecution, this terror from the side of Satan, and that's how he's presented here. But let's not look at this without Revelation. In Revelation, you find that he will actually be cast from heaven, where he has still access now. [00:52:05] He will be bound for 1,000 years in the abyss, in the pit, and then in the end, he will be thrown into the lake of

fire. Now, that was just a little footnote to show that this enemy we have before us, we don't want to sort of minister on this very much. I don't think I ever heard an address on this, but nor should we be ignorant about him. It's much better to be occupied with Christ, but we should know what is presented. And here he is presented as the opposing, as it says here, adversary. But it says, verse 9, Resist.

God is on our side. God is stronger. Therefore, we can resist steadfast in the faith. And we know that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. [00:53:05] That's again Peter's perspective. He doesn't see us like Paul in the heavenly places. He doesn't see us as one body. He sees us as individuals who are still in the world facing these struggles, but also experiencing the help of God. And that's verse 10. The God of all grace.

You know, there may be struggles, but on our side, we have the God of all grace. And it says, He has called us to his eternal glory. Now, here in the end of the epistle, Peter converges to Paul's line.

You might have thought that Peter had a different, well, and he does have a different emphasis in his ministry, but he does not contradict Paul. He talks about the grace, and in this verse, he actually speaks about the eternal glory. [00:54:06] Normally, it's always the glory at the end of the pathway when Christ appears. Now, he talks about the eternal glory to which we have been called in Christ. Now, if it's in Christ that we've been called to that eternal glory, we can be sure we will get there. His desire is that they might be perfected, established, strengthened, and settled. And the conclusion, you might say, is in verse 11, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. He's the one whose grace we need in every step, from conversion, through instruction, through restoration, through working for him, everything is his grace. And therefore, if he brings us through to the end, our wish even now is to him be the glory and dominion forever. [00:55:11] Now, last thing is a footnote.

In verse 12, he links himself with Silvanus, again, one who had worked with Paul. It's another connection with Paul. And he says, actually, what I've been saying to you is I've been testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand. Initially, Peter had a little difficulty with this concept of grace. Actually, we all had, because it first means you have failed. Otherwise, you don't need grace. But here, Peter says, actually, I'm not contradicting Paul. What I've been testifying to you is perfectly in line. I've been speaking about the true grace of God wherein you stand. [00:56:04] Now, verse 13, the church that is is really the church that isn't. It's in italics again. There is no church in that verse. And it just says she that is. And we can be certain that this is Peter's wife and that Peter ministered in Babylon where there were many Jews because his command was to strengthen his brethren. And therefore, he would have looked after Jewish believers, Jewish Christians in other places as well. And also, there are greetings then from Marcus, the restored once failing servant. Greet one another with a kiss of charity. Fortunately, we haven't got time to speak about this now. Paul speaks about a holy kiss.

[00:57:01] Peter speaks about the kiss of love. And just say so much, it's good if our relationships are characterized by both of these, by holiness and by love. Peace be to you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen. Could we sing hymn number 202?

About the eternal glory. What will it be to dwell above? 202. [00:58:10] Is love so bright and full?

This dreary pain.

No heart can think.

No tongue can tell.

What joy it will be with Christ to dwell.

No heart can think.

No tongue can tell.

What joy it will be with Christ to dwell.

[00:59:08] When sin no more obstructs the sight.

And flesh and scent deceive no more.

When we shall see the Prince of Light.

And all his works of grace expound.

What heights and depths of love divine.

[01:00:04] Will death through endless ages shine.

What heights and depths of love divine.

Will death through endless ages shine.

And God has fixed the happy day.

When the world's tears shall demise.

[01:01:03] When he will wipe these tears away.

And fill our hearts with glad surprise.

To hear his voice and see his face.

And know the fullness of his grace.

To hear his voice and see his face.

And know the fullness of his grace.

[01:02:17] Amen.