

1 Peter 5:5-11 (ESV)

⁵ Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” ⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. ⁸ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your

adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. ¹⁰ And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹ To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

I greet you with, grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Risen Lord and the Holy Spirit who lives within us as believers, and empowering us.

We are looking today at a portion of our lesson from 1st Peter. The letter is divided into five chapters, one hundred five verses, the Word of God through Peter. This lesson is also in miniature what the entire letter is about. The verse that follows the lesson tells us why Peter wrote, when he says, “¹² **I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.**” (1 Peter 5:12 ESV) The letter is an encouragement to stand firm in grace of God, in our gift of salvation, and also our gift of living for Christ as Christian people. He gets very practical and specific about Christ, and about what living as a Christian looks like, as Christ lives through us. It is for all of us as Christians and an encouragement to our confirmands on this Confirmation Sunday. Our motivation to live this way is out of love for Christ, a desire as a new person in Christ to do what is right, and to be blessed by God, living for Him. It is easy to think blessing means wealth, health and prosperity, and yes, there are times of that, but also times of suffering, fiery trails that come upon all of us as we wait for the glory that is to come in heaven. We are going to talk about the five qualities of living, part of a larger list, that is found in our lesson and the reasons why this is a good idea. Peter tells us to be humble, to cast our cares on Him, which means to trust Him, to be sober-minded, to be watchful, and firm in your faith resisting the Devil and temptations. Each is accompanied by reasons. Peter writes this letter some thirty years after the resurrection of Jesus, and has experienced what he is teaching.

HUMILITY

We begin with humility. Humility is the opposite of pride. In the world, being self-sufficient and self-reliant is honored. But this just glorifies self, and fails to recognize you can not solve death and sin with self effort. Salvation and Christian living is a matter of receiving, in humility. Jesus said in Matthew 18, “³ **Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.** ⁴ **Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.**” (Matthew 18:3-4 ESV) Peter gives two more reasons for humility, in our lesson he says of God, “⁶ ... **at the proper time he may exalt you.**” (1 Peter 5:6 ESV) Exalting comes at God’s timing, and in the preceding verse, Peter quotes Proverbs 3:34 “⁵ ...**God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.**” (1 Peter 5:5 ESV) If you dig in your heels and insist on your way, God opposes you, your pride will be your downfall. We boast in Christ, we are a servant for Christ, but it is all Him working what is right through us, it is all Christ.

TRUST

Next is to trust God. That happens as we cast all our anxieties on Him, or your cares as the King James translation uses. We give everything to Christ, trusting Him. That trust is born out of the reality that He loves us and we trust Him for what is best. Paul told the Philippians, “⁶ **do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made know to God.** ⁷ **And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**” (Philippians 4:6-7 ESV) An abiding peace follows trust in Christ.

SOBER-MINDED

Next Peter speaks of being sober-minded. This includes balancing life’s important issues, having a right perspective, as well as avoiding the intoxicating elements of the world that include various drugs and controlled substances. You need to be able to think clearly. Right thinking comes from the source, God’s word that brings you truth and understanding. Peter says in chapter 1, “¹³ **therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set you hope fully on the grace that will be bought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ**” and in chapter 4, “⁷ **The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.**” (1 Peter 1:13, 4:7 ESV) This would also include being well rested and proper nutrition that effects the function of your mind.

WATCHFUL

Next we are watchful, being on guard. Why? Peter tells us the Devil is ready to devour. He wants to destroy you. So does what the Bible calls the flesh, an evil part of you. God spoke to Jeremiah about the heart of man saying, “⁹ **The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can**

know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9 NKJV) That person that is inside you that wants to do what is wrong, and is still there as a Christian, what the Bible calls the flesh, the sin nature, the old Adam. It is unredeemable and is to be resisted as one of the sources of temptation, which is the flesh, the world and the Devil. You resist not by attacking, but by being firm in your faith.

FIRM IN THE FAITH - RESISTING THE DEVIL

You are standing firm, or solid in your faith. To be solid in the faith is to be growing in the understanding of the Bible that grows and sustains our faith. Paul wrote to Timothy, "¹⁹ **...The Lord knows those who are his, and, "Let Everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."**(2 Timothy 2:19 ESV) Paul exhorts us, to be, "¹³ **...mature...the stature of the fullness of Christ,** ¹⁴ **... no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine...**¹⁵ **rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.**" (Ephesians 4:13-15 ESV) Peter closes his 2nd Epistle with the encouragement to grow, saying, "¹⁸ **But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.**" (2 Pet 3:18 ESV) The Bible is your spiritual food so that you may be strong in the power of the Lord. Receive the word.

RESTORE – CONFIRM – STRENGTHEN - ESTABLISHED

Peter reminds us in the next verse that we are going to suffer, and other believers are suffering too. In our suffering, Christ promises, "⁵ **I will never leave you nor forsake you**" (Hebrews 13:5 ESV) and He will take us "⁴ **...through the valley of the shadow of death**" (Psalm 23: 4 ESV) as glory awaits. Peter tells us Christ will restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish. He restores, eventually giving us a new perfect flesh. He confirms, or sets fast, He will do it. He strengthens, Jesus said, "⁹ **My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is make perfect in weakness**" (2 Corinthians 12:9 ESV) and He establishes, lay an unmovable foundation as we face the battles in this life with Him, as glory awaits.

PRAISE

Peter closes our section with a short doxology. A doxology is an expression of praise to God, saying who He is and what He has done. Overwhelmed by the grace of God both in salvation and Christian living he can not help but rejoice proclaiming the truth that all authority rests in Christ. Jesus is King and He rules. Dominion signifies strength and portrays God's sovereignty, his authority over everything, and that has been granted to the Son, our Lord Jesus. There are two simple questions from our lesson: Does He have dominion over you? Are you resisting his gift of salvation? Come to Christ. Are you resisting His gift of living trying to live the Christian life in your power. You need Christ, without Him you can do nothing he says. (John 15:5 ESV) I especially encourage our confirmands that they stand firm in the faith, resting

in Jesus, He has dominion. May you rest in Him, humble, trusting, being sober-minded, watchful, standing firm in Christ as He comes through the word.

In His name we pray, AMEN May the peace of God that passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. AMEN.