

The God of all grace

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

- [0 : 0 0] Let's turn to 1 Peter chapter 5 for the final one of our studies for a moment at least in 1 Peter. 1 Peter chapter 5 and we're considering verse 10 especially tonight.
- But the God of all grace who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus after that ye have suffered a while make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.
- To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Now as we do come to this final study to round off these past 27 or so studies that have gone previously to this one.
- We are conscious that here in this verse we find some of the features that we've seen previously. As Peter as it were draws them into this final concluding summary that he gives to these people that he's writing to in this particular verse.
- And what he does as you will notice is draw their minds to one dominant feature. To the feature of God himself. Because he wants them to leave this letter that he has been writing to them with this whole concept of God as the God of all grace.
- [1 : 3 7] To be the chief feature that they bear in their minds constantly. Everything that has gone before us as it were is now bringing it into relation to this God of all grace.
- And he wants them to leave this letter with this consciousness of God. And indeed with an enlargement of their understanding of God.
- As all these other matters that he's spoken about are brought into relation to God himself. And surely friends that ought to be our own particular attitude and approach also.
- As we come to this summarizing study in Peter. Because we remember of course that it's not simply a letter of Peter written to strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia and so on.
- It is a letter of God to you and I. We've read it through. We've studied it in some detail. We ought now to be asking ourselves.
- [2 : 4 7] Has it indeed enlarged our conception of God? Has it given us an insight into how all things in our lives must be brought into relation to God?
- Has it enlarged our love of God? Has it enlarged and deepened our commitment to God? Has all this letter that has gone before to us brought us to this point of conviction?
- That now more than ever before we are aware in our lives of the God of all grace. How we trust that that is how we also would round off our studies in this letter.
- And there are three things about God that we might just notice for a little this evening. First of all, from this text, what God is.
- And then secondly, what God has done. And then thirdly, what God will yet do. Three very simple points.
- [3 : 5 6] What God is. What God has done. And what God will yet do. What God is, first of all. Confining it, of course, to what we find in the text.
- And even then, recognizing the limits of our mind. What God is, is brought before us in this phrase. This title that Peter gives, or that God is giving to himself through Peter.

The God of all grace. What does he mean by the God of all grace? What kind of things are brought into that particular phrase?

Because it's imperative that we understand it. Because it has a bearing on all the rest of the text. It is as the God of all grace.

That the rest of the text follows. As what God has done and what God will do. The God of all grace. When we think of the God of all grace.

[4 : 58] Or of the grace of God. We must never imagine that grace is something of. Like a benign kind of attitude. That it's simply a glance, as it were.

In our direction. That it is something which we might find in ourselves. Where we have a certain mental disposition towards others.

That we have a kind of attitude of leniency towards others. That our grace, as it were, goes out to them. No, the grace of God is far more than that.

It involves that attitude of mind on the part of God. But the grace of God is first of all. The power of God. We can never separate the power of God.

From the grace of God. And from this phrase. The God of all grace. Because it is, as Paul writes. By grace you are saved. And if it's by grace you are saved.

[6 : 01] It is the grace that is the power of God. The grace that brings the power of God. Because grace is divine power in action.

You and I are dead as sinners. Let's be fully persuaded of that. And dead things cannot move. Dead things cannot bring about life for themselves.

As Paul writes to the Ephesians as we've read it. You who were dead in trespasses and sins. And in order for that deadness to be reversed.

In order for there to be life in that deadness. It takes the grace of God. The grace that is the power of God. Nobody here that is converted.

Has been converted through a program of education. Or through the advice of a minister or minister. Or through the good teaching or the witness of Christians.

[7 : 09] All that might be and necessarily is involved in it. But that itself is not what converts. Or what brings about salvation. Or life to those who are dead.

It is nothing less than the power of God. The grace of God. The grace that comes in a demonstrable power. Let's read again what Paul writes in Ephesians.

Remember as we saw in chapter 1 there. How he's talking about the power that God has displayed. In verse 19. What is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe.

According to the working of his mighty power. Which he wrought in Christ. When he raised him from the dead. And set him at his own right hand.

That is the grace of God. And you notice throughout the whole of that chapter. And into the next chapter. When Paul is delineating. And setting out that whole vista.

[8 : 14] That view as it were. That reaches into the distance of eternity. That vista of salvation we might call it. Right up to the point of predestination.

What does he say about it constantly. Throughout that chapter. All to the praise. For his glorious grace. The grace of God.

Is the power of God. And he goes into that next chapter. Chapter 2. Where he speaks about. Even when we were dead in sins. How he has quickened us together with Christ.

Raised us up together. Made us sit together with Christ. In heavenly places. In Christ Jesus. The grace of God.

Is the power of God. The power that is involved. In the quickening of the dead. Resurrection power. Resurrection power.

[9 : 14] Divine power. The God of all grace. But the power of God and the grace of God.

Is not just a bare of a naked power. As we might put it. Because power is something that can actually lend itself to destruction. As well as to creation.

As well as to creation. Power can destroy. As well as build up. It is not a naked power. A bare power.

An uncontrolled power. That we find in the grace of God. Because it's a power. Directed. In love.

Because the grace of God. Is the love of God. It is the grace of God. That God bestows. In love. Upon sinners.

[10 : 08] The love of God. And the grace of God. In their combination. Power. Directed. By love. Love that goes out. Towards the sinner. For the sinner's benefit.

The kindness of God. The benevolence of God. The goodness of God. The bounty of God.

As he showers his blessing upon. Sinners such as we are. Go back again to Ephesians. Chapter 2 verse 7.

And notice these words. That in the ages to come. He might show the exceeding riches of his grace. How? Where? In his kindness toward us.

Through Christ Jesus. For by grace. Are you saved through faith. And that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God. The grace of God.

[11 : 06] Involves. The power of God. But power that is directed. In love. Towards sinners. A power that is directed. For your benefit.

And for my benefit. And that is what links in with what we said this morning. On true Christian love. As being the reciprocating thing. That shows the love of God himself.

Why does God love sinners? Is it simply for the sake of love itself? Or simply for his own satisfaction?

Well there is a sense in which we can say. It is for his own satisfaction. We are fully justified. We believe from scripture. In saying that God does take satisfaction.

In bestowing love upon sinners. But there is more than that to it. Because his love is benevolent love. Because his love is directed towards sinners.

[12 : 09] Not just for the kind of satisfaction. That we might take. Out of showing love to someone. Simply for our own self gain. But out of benefiting.

The object of the love. God loves. The person that is the object of his love. And he loves the person that is the object of his love.

For the sake of bestowing benefit upon that person. When we are talking about the grace of God. And the God of all grace. It is the grace that is power.

And love. And benevolence. Designed to benefit. People who don't deserve it. By grace.

You are saved. When he goes on now to speak about other things in this text. What he wants us to carry with us. Is that it is as such.

[13 : 11] That God has done what he has done. And will do what he will do. It is as the God of all grace. The God whose grace is the power of God.

And the love of God. And the benevolence of God. The God of all grace. It is as such. That we must now view God. In all that we have to see.

In what follows in the text. Peter says. But now. The God of all grace. What then.

Secondly. Does Peter say to us here. God has already done. The God of all grace. Who has called us. Into his eternal glory.

By Christ Jesus. What he has done. Is that he has called his people. That he has called. Those here who are addressed by Peter.

[14:14] He has called us. He says. Into or unto his eternal glory. By Christ Jesus. Let's just. Examine that for a little together.

You remember. We saw. The whole concept of calling. Throughout this letter. Peter talks about being called.

In chapter one. Unto holiness. In chapter two. He calls. He. He. He. He speaks about being called. Out of darkness.

Into his marvelous light. He speaks about being called. Into a brotherhood. Of being called. Into a life. Of certain afflictions. And now.

In chapter five. In this conclusion. He is capping it all. By saying. He has called us. Into his. Eternal glory. By Christ Jesus. And you remember.

[15:10] We said. In these occasions. When we saw the word. Called. When we're talking about. Effectual calling. It's not just an invitation. And it's not just a summons.

It is something that includes. The enabling. The capacity to respond. Effectual calling. As the work of God's grace. Is something that includes.

Within it. Both a summons. To the sinner. To arrest him. And the capacity. To comply. With the summons. He. As the catechism puts it.

Persuades. And enables us. To embrace. To embrace. Jesus Christ. Freely offered. In the gospel. When the bible speaks of this kind of calling of God.

Speaks about the calling that has. The power of grace within it. To give sufficiency. To give. And to give. To give. To give. And to give. Compliance.

[16:10] And ability. And enabling. In respect to his own demands. How completely. Is our salvation of grace.

Jesus Christ. How many? But you notice he's saying. That he has called us. By. Jesus Christ. And the words.

By Christ Jesus. Fit more intimately with. Called us. Than into his eternal glory. He's really saying. The God of all grace.

Who has called us. By Christ Jesus. unto his eternal glory. What does he mean? What does he project by saying he has called us by Christ Jesus?

Well, what he is saying is that Christ is absolutely indispensable to every single thing that he's going to speak about and has spoken about.

[17:05] The calling of which he is speaking is the calling that is through Christ Jesus. He's taking us to the very substance of our faith and salvation, taking us to the foundation, taking us to the core, taking us to the center, whatever word we use, Christ himself is the fundamental aspect to our whole salvation.

Take these words away by Christ Jesus, the God of all grace. has no meaning itself, but in relation to that.

The word called has no meaning, but in relation to that. And all that is following of what God will yet do has no meaning, but in relation to that, to this Christ Jesus, by whom we have been called.

Isn't that what we saw also in our studies? That God has chosen his people, elect of God, as Paul puts it, chosen in him, in Ephesians 1, in him before the foundation of the world.

And as we saw in chapter 1 here, God has chosen them with a view to sprinkling and obedience of the blood of Christ.

[18 : 37] We saw that they are those who are termed as loving the Lord, though now they see him not. We saw that they are waiting for the Lord, for the appearance of the Lord.

We saw that their whole life is dominated, not only in the present life, but towards the future, by the whole concept of Jesus Christ. There is nothing, in other words, more crucial, more central, more precious to these called people of God than the person of Jesus Christ.

Take him away, and you have nothing left. Is he? Is that crucial to you now, tonight?

Is he the central feature in your life? Is he the one round whom your whole life revolves? Does he take up the whole of your vision so that every other matter in your life is brought into relation to him?

And so that all that Peter is here speaking about of what God has done and God will yet do is for you meaningful in Christ Jesus? Is he truly tonight in your heart of hearts the one who sits enthroned?

[19 : 56] Lord? Is it the case that we've seen all these studies in 1 Peter and still you cannot say for yourself this Christ is my Christ this Lord is my Lord this beloved is my beloved and I am his.

this is what Peter is saying there is nothing more central to the life of the people of God than the person of Christ take the person of Christ away there's no religion there's no calling there's no grace nothing is meaningful but in Christ Jesus everything becomes meaningful and all things are in him and he is all in all to all who would be God's people the God of all grace who has called us by Christ Jesus to what has he called them?

He has called us he says unto his eternal glory in other words if he is not central in your life if it is still the case that you are not in Christ that he is not your personal redeemer that you are still out with the security that is in him then look at all that you are absent from and look at all that you are excluded from and look at all that still lies beyond your reach he has called us he says unto his eternal glory and in the original text that word his is most emphatic he has called us unto the eternal glory that is of him that belongs to him his own eternal glory that's what he has called us to that is what the people of God have been called effectually into it might even appear on the surface to be rather arrogant were it not that the word we have before us is inspired sculpture to imagine that you or I could ever have such an inheritance as to be called into the glory that is

God's but we must understand what has taken place in Christ himself first of all no human being ever had a share in the glory of God humans were certainly blessed out of that glory humans knew of the grace of God generation after generation in his benevolence and kindness and love and compassion from that glory God spoke to them from that glory God blessed them but this is infinitely more now in that glory they are apart because what happened in Jesus Christ is as you well know that God became one of us and that humanness that he assumed is a humanness now that is brought with him into this very immediate glory of

God in Jesus Christ's own humanness and humanity we find humanness sharing the glory of God staggering isn't it the dust of the earth on the throne of the universe but we cannot leave it at that because the Bible teaches us that the people of God that have been called by God are not just going to in some way reflect the glory of God but are going to be themselves correlative to that glory they are going to be in that glory their being is going to consist of the glory that is God's own glory not essentially in the way it belongs to God of course not essentially in the way it belongs to the Son that alone belongs to God and to

[24 : 45] God alone we are not made gods neither are we given equality to the Son of God but the point is we are called into his glory a glory that is to do with the restoration of the image of God in redeemed humanity the image that lies defaced and spoiled through the fallen through the sin of Adam and God is restoring that image to its perfection through Jesus Christ and through those who are called into his glory in him let me just remind you very briefly in passing of some texts that bear that out for us you remember how it is put for us in the great prayer of Jesus himself in John 17 the glory which thou gavest me

I have given to them that they might be one even as we are one the glory of being in fellowship with God and the glory of oneness as God is one what a profound privilege and you remember and you remember those that he foreknew them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son not just of the humanness of Christ but the image of his son is how Paul puts it and Paul again in 2nd Corinthians 3 puts it we with unveiled faces beholding us in a mirror the glory of the Lord are being changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the spirit of the Lord or go to Philippians 3:21 where he's speaking again about waiting for Christ from heaven the place where we wait for the saviour who he says will change our vile body or the body of our humiliation the present conditions that we know of he's going to change it so that it may be fashioned like unto the body of his glory according to what according to the power whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself there is the concluding consummating act of grace to make us in perfection to be like our redeemer and it is not to be in his glory in such a way as a mirror reflect light it doesn't mean that we're going to reflect the glory of God in that kind of way that the glory of God will be reflected from us as in a mirror it means far more than that but in the renewed understanding the whole concept of knowledge of God fellowship with God service of God communion with God the full enjoying of God as the catechism puts it to all eternity that is what it means whatever it will consist of in actuality all we can say of it now is that we will be the likeness of Christ and that those who will be in that eternal glory will be that likeness and will be that likeness in perfection that is what God has called us to that is what God is now doing and what God has already done to those that he has called in Jesus Christ he is now busy preparing them for that to be in perfection that which now they have been called into he has called us into his eternal glory by Christ Jesus for let us steep our minds in that glory that we will yet be because that is what brings meaning and that brings comfort and that brings perseverance into the very present

Christian life isn't that what he is saying here after that you have suffered a while he is bringing the sufferings of this while into direct relation to that into which we have been called yes we have been called into suffering but the suffering as we have seen before is a prelude to glory and the glory is nothing less than the eternal glory of God the more we have our minds filled with what we are and will be in Christ the more our lives here in this world whatever sufferings they will be the more they will be what Peter is speaking of a little while they are not to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us that is what God has done for those who are in Christ he has called us into his eternal glory and that is the lot of all who will yet be called into Christ Jesus for all who are truly Christ's and for whom Christ is their saviour tonight this is the unspeakable privilege that is theirs they are called into his eternal glory and then thirdly and finally he is still to do something what God will yet do after that you have suffered a while make you perfect establish strengthen settle you and he is giving us four verbs therefore very powerful verbs and in fact they have the idea although they are here in the form of a desire or a wish or a prayer may God do this as it were as they are in the original text they really take the form of a what we might what we might call a certainty it is a future activity but that is an activity that is certain to be done on the part of God that is the meaning that is the kind of language used this is what

God will certainly do for you because this is what God's whole program of salvation involves what is it then that God will yet certainly do well we could take the four words because they are very closely related in meaning and what they mean if we take them together generally is that God will bring to completion to establishment to complete abiding permanent fulfillment all that he has begun in calling us in Jesus Christ God will do every single detail that needs to be done to make us truly as we've said the image the glory of God but if we take the words more slowly and just very briefly in turn we'll find that there are different shades of meaning that give us a glimpse of some very precious truths he's first of all saying make you perfect and that is a word that's used for restoring something that was broken bringing it back to a complete and restored state but the thing is in terms of salvation

God is not piecing things together is he we've spoken about his image being defiled and broken his creation is marred by sin your sin and my sin man's sin the creation itself is groaning as Paul says waiting for that time of the liberty of the glory of the sons of God and it will be released from the bondage of decay what we find is that God is restoring but he's restoring not by piecing together but by recreation by recreating again in Christ Jesus and through Christ Jesus the whole logic of 2nd Corinthians 5 that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself and you'll find in the same passage if any man be in Christ

[34 : 16] Jesus he is a new creation or go to Colossians 3 where Paul speaks about having put on the new man created a new in the image of him that created him recreation a refashioning re-creating by the power of grace and it doesn't cease with that because the very final consummation the appearance of Christ is a time associated with the new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness when he's talking about making you perfect it is that whole program of re-creation that he's speaking about isn't it a privilege for you and I as restored as re-created as redeemed sinners to be at the very center of that re-creation of God that God is again going to pronounce as he did at the beginning as being very good that is what we have in Jesus

Christ that is what grace itself provides the God of all grace make you perfect will bring about you perfect restoration and the second two words establish and strengthen just briefly bring before us making something strong or lending support what it means is that it's inconceivable that anyone that God has called in Jesus Christ should be without his strength the strength that his grace provides you cannot think of a person that is in Christ being without the strength of God or at least the strength of God in all its availability for him the whole logic of grace is that his grace is sufficient for us and that in our weakness his strength is made perfect he will strengthen you he will establish you he will support you for every single one that copes through the grace that is in Christ it is the promise of certainty that what

God the God who has called us will do yet for us who are called is that he will indeed establish and strength right up to the final consummating strength amen oh lord our god may we indeed find the grace that would be offered unto the humble we need thy grace at all times even to bring us to thy keep and we know that thy grace is promised to those that humble themselves for thou dost resist the proud but give grace unto the hungry and do thou we pray thee give that hunger and thirst to us that we may open our mouths wide and receive of thee of thy grace that which would fill our souls so that even as with marrow and was fat our souls shall fill be then shall our joyful lips sing praises unto thee oh lord we confess that thou art worthy to receive all our praise and to receive all the humility of disposition that we may ever give towards thee for we know that in all things thou knowest the end from the beginning for thou art alpha and omega the first and the last we pray lord that we might be given that grace to realize such each and every day bless to us thine own work grant that it may by thy spirit's hand so be driven into our consciousness that it too may humble us before you and that we may indeed in the presence of the eternal so realize that this is indeed but our proper position to be prostrate before thee that in an attitude of mind that is submissive we may give all place of preeminence to thee as our

God go before us oh lord to shepherd us to use in thine own way that which thou seest we have need of and may we at all times give heed to thee as one who is all wise so that we may know in due time of thine exaltation accept our praise now and cleanse all that is of sin for Jesus sake we ask Amen