

IV. I Peter in Biblical Perspective
The Elect in the Exile
“An Apostolic Prayer for Elect Exiles”
I Peter 1:1–2
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September 10, 2017 • Morning Sermon

We are in our fourth study of I Peter but I'd like to start by reading first from the Old Testament. Numbers 6:22–26 says [22] *The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [23] “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them, [24] The LORD bless you and keep you; [25] the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; [26] the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.* The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may this His Word be preached for you.

We believe the Bible is the Word of God. That is we believe the Bible is telling the truth when it says in II Timothy 3:16–17, [16] *All Scripture is breathed out (inspired) by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.* In other words, this is the Word of God but the Word of God comes to us through human authors and they don't quit being human when God uses them to bring His Word. He uses them in their humanity to bring His Word. Therefore when we talk about the doctrine of Divine Inspiration of the Scripture we like to use the word dynamic for it's not mechanical. It's not like Peter is sitting there and his hand sort of levitates so he goes to get a quill and thinks 'oh my I'm writing I Peter.' Nor is he like a secretary where God is just dictating it, although there are passages where God has dictated but it's organic, dynamic where it's the Spirit of God working through all the Scriptures as He works through forty plus human authors making full use of their humanity.

The Spirit of God is doing this with Peter. Peter was trilingual, a fisherman, a brother named Andrew, a wife, a mother-in-law and his wife traveled some with him in his ministries the Scriptures inform us. From all the 12 Disciples he had more privileges than any of them as he was drawn in with very intimate situations with Jesus. Because of what the Scriptures reveal about who Peter is we get to see what he is like as a human author. I'm trying to give you a reason why it has taken me four sermons to go through two verses.

A second aspect to this is that God also uses human conventions of the present age. In other words Peter is writing a letter like any first century person would have written a letter. Whenever you write a letter in the first century you always start it with three things. One is the person writing the letter is identified, the author. Secondly, is who the letter is being written to, the audience and thirdly, the author's deepest desire is identified at the outset of the letter.

So we took some time to see how Peter identified himself as the author. So I Peter 1:1–2 says [1] *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, [2] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.*

Peter identified himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ. So how did Simon, a brash and tempestuous fisherman who is called to be a Disciple of Christ end up three years later as Simon sent as an Apostle of Christ for now he is bold and humble. Look at this humility. Did you see all the privileges he received yet he doesn't call himself *the* Apostle of Jesus but *an* Apostle of

Jesus. He also identifies himself as belonging to Christ. This was important to learn these things about Peter because in learning these things we find out something about ourselves and that is when God saves us He breaks us. When God saves us by His grace, He breaks us in order to make us to use us for His glory and our joy. The objective is not brokenness but it is what He does in order to save us to make us to use us. What He did to Peter who was brash and tempestuous to be bold and humble is what He is doing to you and me.

Now we see the identification of His audience and He is writing to some very specific people that are found in five provinces that are today known as Turkey. He writes to them and tells them which also says to us that they are and we are elect exiles. The elect are the work of God's saving grace from all eternity and exiles of the Dispersion means that all who are Christians may have papers of citizenship in a nation but in reality from our perspective of our conversion we're all resident aliens. All of us are living on a green card. But unlike the Old Testament where the Dispersion was God's act of disciplinary judgment, in the New Testament the Dispersion is an act of God's salvation and commission. He saves us out of the nations but leaves us in those nations, tells us to reach all the nations and as Kingdom citizens to bring the Gospel of the Kingdom to all the nations.

Notice something about us being elect exiles. We're not good exiles where God elects us but we are elect exiles where we will never live as we ought in grace for Christ without knowing who we are by grace in Christ, and what we are through grace for Christ. The bumper sticker version of this is know-be-do. Know who you are in Christ, be who you are in Christ and then you're ready to do what you have been called to do for Christ. Every writer of Scripture takes pains to tell you who you are in Christ before they tell you what you do for Christ because our tendency is to think it's what we do that makes us who we are. No, it's what Jesus did that makes us who we are which is why we do what we do. So know who you are in Christ to be who you are in Christ and now you're ready to do what you do for Christ.

How did I get elect? There are three things according to I Peter 1–2 which says [1] *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, [2] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.*

First we were elect according to the foreknowledge of God. In other words, before you ever existed God chose to love you. The Father chose to intimately place His redeeming love upon you. Second is through the sanctification of the Spirit where He sent the Spirit of God to set you apart from your sin to Himself. Then how can a righteous God have that relationship with you? Thirdly, is for obedience to Christ and for the sprinkling with His blood. In the Old Testament there are three baptisms – water, blood and oil. He takes the baptism by blood where they would take the hyssop and sprinkle the object with blood, and says forget the blood of bulls and goats for the Lamb of God is the One who has sprinkled you clean so that you are now set free to obey Him. So that's who we are.

Now we come to the message of the letter, the strong desire that Peter wants to get across in his letter. Here is in I Peter 1:2b which says [2b] *May grace and peace be multiplied to you.* I'd love to take more time with you on just this one sentence because this is so crucial. This phrase 'grace and peace' is found more than 20 times in the New Testament and every time you see it, it always falls in that order of grace first and then peace. Why would something be repeated in God's Word? It is repeated only if it is important but we have two problems. Problem one is that we don't grasp the fact that if God repeats it then it's important. Problem

two is that our tendency is that if God repeats it we see it as redundancy and actually start dismissing it as unimportant.

If you have ever received a letter from me they all end with ‘grace and peace’ but I didn’t come up with that I just copied the writers in the Bible. Many times when we see this phrase we just think ‘oh that’s filler.’ If they have repeated it that many times they are telling you it’s important but it also tell us that our tendency is to just dismiss it as redundancy. That is why I want to spend this study looking at this phrase. Everything else in this epistle is an exposition of this phrase, this strong desire and prayer of Peter for the elect exiles. Three times of those twenty plus times this phrase is used, two times by Peter and one time by Paul, something is added to ‘grace and peace’ like this time here in I Peter 1:2b , grace and peace *by multiplied to you*. Why did he add ‘multiplied to you’ to this phrase?

First let’s look at the two essential requests which are grace and peace. Let’s start by looking at grace. What is grace? There are many definitions but I want to give you this one. Saving grace is the unmerited love of God irresistibly displayed and deployed in the salvation of sinners to the glory of God and their joy. So God’s grace is directly related to the love of God. The grace of God is what we use to describe God’s love in action. God’s grace is the unmerited, unsought, and undeserved love of God. Grace is the display and deployment of God’s love. God’s love for us is called grace because it is a gift which is unmerited, unsought and undeserved. I want to go a step further. It is not only undeserved but we are actually deserving of the opposite. It is ill deserved. Yet God has determined by all eternity by the Spirit through His Son Jesus to bring His unmerited, irresistibly displayed and deployed love of salvation to save sinners for the glory of God and for their joy.

Is this grace and peace New Testament? No, it is New Testament flower of the Old Testament plant. God delivered His people from the bondage of slavery in Egypt. He brought them out and took a man who is a type of Christ as high priest and his name is Aaron. Numbers 6:22–26 says [22] *The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [23] “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them, [24] The LORD bless you and keep you; [25] the LORD make his face to shine upon you and **be gracious to you**; [26] the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and **give you peace***. So it wasn’t just Peter and Paul who use this phrase but it’s Aaron, the prophets and it’s our only hope – grace and peace from God to us.

When God’s unmerited love comes to save sinners for His glory and our joy, what happens to us? Here are three things that happen. Number one is that it is lifesaving. Ephesians 2:1–5 says [1] *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins [2] in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— [3] among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. [4] But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—*

According to this text when the Gospel came to you, you were dead. We are asking God to do a revival work in our lives and one of the evidences of revival is personal evangelism which we want God to do through us in enormous ways. When we go share the Gospel we are resurrected dead people who have been brought to life and we’re talking to walking dead people. They are walking zombies because spiritually they are dead in their sins. The great news is that the very thing you are sharing is what He uses to bring them to life.

That is why Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3 that ‘you cannot see, hear or enter the Kingdom of God until you are born again.’ It’s not come to Jesus and you get born again but you have to get born again to come to Jesus because up until then you are dead. So today if you are in Christ and are a believer you are the product of a resurrection from a spiritual cemetery. He brought you from death unto life and He saved your life. When you were dead in your sins, God, being merciful, caused you to be born again to a living Hope in Jesus Christ. He saved you. You weren’t sin sick but you were sin dead and He brought you from death unto life. You weren’t just misguided and needed a spiritual coach but you needed a Savior who could bring you from death unto life. When the grace of God comes He raises the spiritually dead.

Secondly, you then get a new life status. Your new life status is that you now belong to Him. Ephesians 2:8–10 says [8] *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast. [10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.* After God saved us God made us right with Him.

Remember Job? Job is going through all these storms of life and his friends come to him and tell him that all this is happening to him because he is not right with God. Job says three times in response to them ‘how can any man be right with God?’ (Job 4:17; 9:2; 25:4). We’re all wrong with God. How can a man be right with God? There is only one way and that’s to put our hope in Jesus Christ alone who by His grace eradicates our sin, gives us His righteousness so that we are forgiven, received and accepted in the beloved. Therefore we are now right with God and God has no controversy with you or condemnations against you or no charges against you because the blood of Jesus Christ has wiped the slate clean and in its place He has put His righteousness. So that you are not only forgiven but you are right with God. Romans 8:1 says [1] *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

Thirdly, you have a lifestyle change. Titus 2:11–15 says [11] *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, [12] training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, [13] waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, [14] who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. [15] Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.*

God’s grace is not a theoretical, theological abstraction for it is the Person of Jesus and that is looking at the Incarnation. The grace of God has Appeared (the Incarnation). He has done a lifestyle change for we who lived in sin now may have some sin living in us but we hate and we’re not sworn assassins of our own sins. We want to kill our sins, not to be saved but because of our Savior. This is our new lifestyle – sin killing, Christ exalting becomes the desire of our heart, imperfectly lived out and not lived out to be a Christian but lived out because of Christ in us. He has set us free from the power and dominion of sin. There has been a lifesaving work because He has changed our status so that we’re right with God and all condemnation has been removed in Jesus Christ. Now we are not only right with God but we have God right within us, bearing witness with us so that we hate sin and love our Savior. And we ask God that we might grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

So I would be remiss if I didn’t bring out the theological terms that His grace gives us. Lifesaving is that we have been born again and it’s called regeneration. Our life status is that we are right with God with no condemnation and the Bible calls that justification. This brings us to a life style change and the Bible calls that sanctification where we are growing in, not for, the

grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. And when that grace comes guess what is always tied to it, peace. So what is peace?

Peace is because of God's relentless grace in Christ, His people enjoy peace from God, peace with God and the peace of God. You can't have this peace without God's grace. So if God's grace is at work in your life you have had a lifesaving change, a life status change and a life style change where God is working in your life, convicting you, growing you in grace so that you are becoming zealous for good deeds and there is an attendant blessing that God has sent from Himself through His Son to you which is peace from God in Christ, peace with God in Christ and the peace of God in Christ. So let's walk through these three.

First is the peace from God in Christ. John 16:33 says *[33] I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.* One of the names of Jesus is the Prince of Peace. The Gospel is known as the Gospel of peace. In the world you have tribulation but in Him you have peace. It won't be in promiscuous sex or drunkenness or drugs that you will get peace. Sure you can medicate yourself for a moment with all of those things. Jesus says 'My peace I give to you, not as the world gives, take courage for I have overcome the world.'

Peace from God in Christ then leads to peace with God. Romans 5:1 says *[1] Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* All controversy, all condemnation and all charges have been put aside. Romans 8:33–34 says *[33] Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. [34] Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.* You have peace with God.

Now we have the peace of God in Christ. Philippians 4:4–9 says *[4] Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. [5] Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; [6] do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. [7] And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

[8] Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. [9] What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

I remember when I was in Uganda in 1986 while the civil war was still going on and they told me if something happened I would have to get to the US Embassy. I was ready to die for Jesus but I wasn't looking to die for Jesus so I was glad to go to the Embassy. I'll never forget seeing those two marines standing there at the entrance at century. I thought 'let me go stand behind them.' Peace! With all due respect to all of our military personnel, as a believer let me tell you who stands guard at the door of your heart and mind – it's Jesus! He says 'My peace I give to you.' We not only have the peace with God but the peace of God that surpasses all comprehension in Christ.

So what is the singular extent of Peter's request? It is one quick word. He wants it multiplied. Normally he would just say 'grace and peace to you' but three times Peter and Paul say 'grace and peace be multiplied to you.' One translation here says 'in abundance to you' or 'in fullest measure' but I like the ESV here that says 'be multiplied to you' for the concept is exponential. Three times in the epistle Peter will build on this by calling it multifaceted or manifold peace. Peter wants you to have multiplied peace in your life. The idea isn't like peace

getting added but it's peace multiplying in your life. It's all kinds of peace in your life where 2 times 2 is 4 peace, 4 times 4 is 16 peace, etc... It's exponential peace!

In Jesus Christ you get saving grace, serving grace, sustaining grace, supernatural grace, unstoppable grace, living grace, dying grace and you get all this multifaceted, manifold, multiplied grace in every day of your life and as your days are so shall your strength be. And grace is greater than all of your sins. It's the wonderful grace of Jesus and that's what you get. That's amazing grace! You don't just get one dose when you get converted for He just keeps multiplying it in your life. May grace and peace be multiplied to you exponentially.

So here's the takeaway. So why would the Apostle Peter (Paul and Aaron) make this prayer for grace and peace to be multiplied for 'elect exiles'? Here are the four reasons they are praying for this. Number one is because of who we are apart from Christ. Apart from Christ I am helpless and hopeless. I am not sin sick but sin dead. I need God's grace to set me free, to be born again, to be right with God, to grow for God and I am not just undeserving but ill deserving. Every time I get to Easter this is what I think of – for one time in all of history, men and women, had God where they could put their hands on Him and what did they do with Him? They killed Him. I know the appropriate thing for me to say here is 'that's my heart' but I would be remiss if I didn't tell you that's your heart too. You and I were born with a Christ killing heart. I don't need a patch up but I need a new heart, a new record, a new life, I need grace and peace multiplied to me. I need grace that is greater than all my sin.

The second reason they are praying for grace and peace to be multiplied to you is because of what we will face for Christ. Jesus said 'If they persecuted Me how much more are they going to persecute you.' Peter will warn them in this epistle that a fiery ordeal is coming. You will suffer for Christ's sake, as a Christian and some will be put to death for Christ. Peter himself is writing this letter in 62 AD, Paul has just been freed from prison about three months earlier when Peter wrote this letter in Rome and Paul is in Rome. Paul will get re-imprisoned and put to death and about two years later Peter will be put to death. He will have to die for Christ.

We are in a broken world and all these things will be happening to us. Everything that can happen to an unbeliever except for God's condemning judgment can and does happen to believers in this world. We lose jobs, we get sick, we face death and all those things happen constantly. I need grace and peace multiplied in this broken world today to stay faithful to Christ. I need grace and peace to be multiplied also because I'm in a hostile world that can easily move from opposition to persecution.

The third reason they are praying for this grace and peace to be multiplied to you is because of how we are to live for Christ. When people begin mocking me what am I supposed to do? Here is what Peter will tell me just a little later in this letter. I Peter 3:15–17 says [15] *but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,* [16] *having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. [17] For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.* Don't return evil for evil for the same people that are going to put you to death by policy, honor the Caesar, honor the king.

So how am I going to live this life in truth and love, the life I'm to live for Christ? This is not the life I live for salvation. Here are all these religions that tell you to kill your kids, give this or that or do this or that which are all these religions of works and I have this glorious truth that God has loved sinners. He has went to the cross, died a death He didn't need to die for me

who had a debt, He paid a debt He didn't owe for me who had a debt I couldn't pay, who loved me when I didn't love Him, who wanted me when I didn't want Him, who didn't need me but loved me and you would think when I shared this glorious truth that people would say 'Let me have that!'

Instead the most virulent opposition against anything called religion is saved for Christianity, why? Number one is that no one wants to be told they are a sinner and need a Savior. We are more than happy to be told we need religion. To be told you're a sinner and need a Savior is a scandal. Two, to be told you can't save yourself and your religion can't save you is a scandal. Three to be told you have to be saved by grace is a scandal. Why would this be a scandal? Well, we sing it when we sing the hymn *Come Thou Fount* when it says;

O to grace how great a debtor

Daily I'm constrained to be!

Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,

Bind my wandering heart to Thee.

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,

Prone to leave the God I love;

Here's my heart, O take and seal it,

Seal it for Thy courts above.

Nobody wants to become a debtor to grace without God changing their heart. They look at their mom and dad making their decisions for Jesus imperfectly but they say 'I don't want that, I don't want to be a debtor to grace.' It's a scandal unless God's grace comes in our life. So when I proclaim the Gospel in Word and deed and the world is scandalized I need grace and peace to be multiplied to me so that I don't go in a corner and start pouting or I don't get angry but I stay the course to be bold and humble at the same time.

The fourth reason they pray for grace and peace to be multiplied to me and I can ask for it is because of how great our God is. The grace of God has appeared – Immanuel, Jesus, full of grace and truth. When I start thinking of talking about exponential grace (grace and peace multiplied) this is the question that comes to my mind – is He ever going to run out because all His people need grace and peace? No. God's grace comes from Jesus. God's grace comes from God and the same God who is infinite has infinite grace. You can't exhaust His amazing, wonderful, infinite grace.

Dear friend, I don't know where you are today but you are never so far away that God's grace can't save you so come to Him. You are never so deep into depravity that God's grace can't wash you clean so come to Jesus. You are never so blasphemous that He can't turn your heart to love Him so come to Him. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Thank You for the grace and peace that is found in You from Christ. Thank You O God, for the way that You send it. I know there are some reading this today who are drawn and looking because You are drawing them and they are seeking. God, would You undress our ears from the clothes of unbelief that we might hear our Savior and we might hear His church that says 'come to Me'? Come to Me all of you that are weary and heavy laden for I'll give you rest. Come for My grace is multiplied and sufficient. My peace is glorious and triumphant, come! If you would like to pray with someone about anything call us here at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200. We give You praise Father, in Jesus' Name, because of Your grace and peace, it is well with our soul, Amen.

Power Point

INTRODUCTION/REVIEW:

When God saves us by His grace, He breaks us, to make us, to use us for His glory and our joy.

We will never live as we ought in grace for Christ without knowing who we are by grace IN Christ, and what we are through grace FOR Christ.

God's grace is the unmerited love of God irresistibly displayed and deployed in the salvation of sinners to the glory of God and their joy.

TWO ESSENTIAL REQUESTS

I. GRACE

- Life Saving – Eph. 2:1–5
- Life Status – Eph. 2:8–10
- Life Style – Titus 2:11–15

Because of God's relentless grace, His people enjoy both peace with God, and the peace of God.

II. PEACE

- From God in Christ – John 16:33
- With God in Christ – Rom. 5:1
- Of God in Christ – Phil. 4:7–9

ONE EXTENT REQUEST

Multiplied to you

LIFE TAKEAWAYS

So why would the Apostle Peter make this prayer for grace and peace to be multiplied for “elect exiles?”

- *Because of who we are apart from Christ*
- *Because of what we will face for Christ*
- *Because of how we are to live for Christ*
- *Because of how great our God is*