

God's Blessings For The Faithful

(1 Peter 5:6-11)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Recently I presented a lesson on why people come to God. This focused on how coming to God requires that we realize we are sinners, and that God is our only hope of salvation.
2. As somewhat of a follow-up to that sermon, I want to talk about what God does for those who come and are faithful to him.
3. I want to talk about this because *coming to God* for salvation is just the beginning of a life of *faithfulness* that must be lived if we hope to receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10 – “Do not fear what you are about to **suffer**. Behold, the devil is about to **cast some of you into prison**, so that you will be **tested**, and you will have **tribulation** for ten days. **Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.**”). From this passage we see that...
 - A. Faithfulness is required no matter what we face here in this life.
 - B. Being faithful *can*, and at times, *will* be hard.
 - C. In the end all that we must face and endure will be worth it.
4. And that in a nutshell is what I want to talk about this morning. For, our main text, 1 Peter 5:6-11, addresses the need for faithfulness, what it requires, and the blessings God gives to the faithful.

BODY:

- I. **Faithfulness requires humility** (5:6-7 – “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷ casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”).
 - A. The faithful must humble themselves under God’s mighty hand (5:6a).
 1. Though this should be a natural response to knowing God (i.e., His powerful, mighty hand), this is a real struggle for us.
 - a. We feel more confident when we do things ourselves and feel we are in control.
 - b. We do not want to relinquish that control, or *perceived control*, to another.
 - c. But, if we are honest with ourselves, we know that this approach takes a toll on the quality of our lives and hurts our relationship with God. More about this shortly.
 2. Faithfulness requires trust that though we are not in control, God is able to deal with the things of life and that His grace will be sufficient for us. Think about it this way:
 - a. If you were drowning and a trained lifeguard came upon you, what would he/she say to you? “Calm down, stop struggling, and let **me** save you!”
 - b. What would humility (and wisdom) require of you? **Submission!**
 - i. Though we know this, how easy would it be for us to do that?
 - ii. For, even in this situation one will try to climb their savior to save themselves!
 - c. So, humility is a mindset that must be pondered, worked on, and intentionally applied!
 - B. This humility requires *trusting God* no matter what we might face because He cares for us (5:7).
 1. Worrying about life and its difficulties shows a lack of humility.
 - a. Why? Because worry is self-focused, not God-focused.
 - b. Worry and its *fretful thinking* is all about “What am **I** going to do about this...or about that?!” and says to God that **I** must take command and fix things myself.
 2. Humility means accepting that we do not have to fix every problem ourselves, or by ourselves.
 - a. God says cast every *care, worry, anxiety* upon Him because He *cares for us*.
 - b. What would be the point of this if God is not, or cannot, do anything about those cares?
 - c. When someone says to us “Let me worry about that,” we respond with “What are you going to **do**?” Worry says that God that we think He cannot or will not do a thing!
 - C. Only when we humble ourselves and cast our cares on Him will He bless us (5:6 – “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that **He may exalt you at the proper time**”; Jas. 4:10 – “Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will *exalt* you.”).
 1. **Exalt** – to lift up...in dignity, happiness, honor, position, power (**Thayer, BDAG**).

- a. This is the same word used of Jesus being “lifted up” on the cross (Jn. 3:14), which resulted in His exaltation to the Father’s right hand as the Savior (Acts 2:33) and in His drawing the world to Him (Jn. 8:28; 12:32).
- b. So, just as Christ faced hardships and crucifixion trusting in the Father to exalt Him at the proper time, we must face life and death with the same trust in God (Phil. 2:5-11).
2. Humility means accepting that our exaltation will come **at the proper time**.
 - a. That time could be *in this life* through greater spirituality, fellowship with Him, responsibility, honor, etc.
 - b. That time could be when *Jesus Christ is revealed* (1 Pet. 1:6-7 – “In this you greatly rejoice, even though now **for a little while**, if necessary, you **have been distressed by various trials**,⁷ so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, **even though tested by fire**, may be found **to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ**”).
3. So, the faithful humbly submit to God, despite facing trials and tribulation, knowing that at the right time God will bring us honor and glory by His mighty hand.

II. Faithfulness requires sobriety and alertness (5:8 – “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”).

A. Faithfulness requires spiritual watchfulness (5:8a).

1. Just as one walking down a dangerous/treacherous trail would be careful and alert, we are to be sober and watchful concerning the danger and treachery of Satan and His ways.
2. **Sober** – not mental or spiritual ‘drunk,’ rational, to be well balanced, self-controlled (**BDAG**); to be calm and collected in spirit, circumspect (i.e., careful to consider circumstances and consequences – **Thayer**).
 - a. A drunken, unbalanced individual will not fare well on a treacherous and dangerous path!
 - b. If we are going to be successful in dealing with Satan’s attacks, we must be rational, calm, and collected to properly evaluate the dangers of our situation and respond.
3. **Alert** – be watchful (**BDAG**), to watch, be attentive, actively cautious (**Thayer**).
 - a. The idea is to keep our focus, to not allow our attention to wander, so that we can see sin and temptation *for what it is* when Satan’s attacks come.
 - b. Christians cannot live in the spiritual drowsiness of the world because the world mindlessly falls prey, day after day, to Satan’s destructive attacks.

B. Being sober and alert is vital because the *devil* wants to destroy us (5:8b).

1. Note how Satan is described as our:
 - a. **Adversary** – opponent (one who opposes us – *rp*), whether as an enemy or in a lawsuit (**BDAG, Thayer**)
 - b. **Devil** – false accuser, slanderer, one who maligns us (**Thayer, BDAG, Vine**)
 - c. If we by faith know we have such an enemy, it should cause us to be on guard for his attacks!
 - d. For, all that Satan presents, no matter what form it might be, is there with the intent to bring us injury and condemnation!
2. If Satan’s desire to oppose, accuse, and condemn us is not enough, his lion-like characteristics should cause great concern.
 - a. How would you act if you knew a lion was on the prowl outside this building?
 - b. Well, that same sobriety and alertness is needed because the devil is:
 - i. Like a **lion** driven to **roaring** by its **hunger**. The devil is **hungry** for you.
 - ii. Like a **prowling** lion looking for an opportunity to **attack**. And Satan will attack you suddenly, viciously, often when you are unsuspectingly engaged in routine activities.
 - iii. Like a lion in that he wants to completely **devour you**, to swallow you, to destroy you, your life, and your saving relationship with Christ.
3. We need to take these things seriously and be ever prepared for the fight.

III. Faithfulness requires resisting the devil (5:9-11 – “But resist him [devil], firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in

the world. ¹⁰ After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. ¹¹ To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.”)

A. The faithful must *resist the devil firm in their faith* (5:9).

1. These are encouraging words that are echoed by James (Ja. 4:7 – “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”).
 - a. Why are they encouraging? Because they give us hope that if we will trust God and obey, our efforts to resist the devil will be successful.
 - b. But know that in both passages *resist* implies active, determined opposition, often through confrontation. So, again, we must be prepared to fight.
 - c. We will not be successful if we are *going with the flow*.
2. Success requires *standing firm in your faith*.
 - a. This means, as we said from the beginning, trusting that God’s might will bring victory.
 - b. If we believe this, we will seek God’s help to stand against Satan through the means He has provided, requiring regular reading of his word and seeking His help in prayer!
 - c. By doing these you can “Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil” (Eph. 6:11).
3. We are not alone in our suffering.
 - a. This is because, as Peter reminds us, *suffering* is a result of *living the Christian life*.
 - i. It comes by **professing Christ’s name** (4:14 – “If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.”).
 - ii. It comes by **rejecting sin** (4:4 – “In all this, they [world] are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you”).
 - iii. It comes by **doing what is good** (4:19 – “So those who suffer according to God’s will should, while doing what is good, entrust themselves to a faithful Creator.” – HCSB).
 - b. This is not to say that we take courage in others’ pain but is to remind us that others are facing the same struggles...and winning...and we can too!
 - c. So, be encouraged and refuse to entertain the thought of “poor me, nobody has it as bad as I do!” For, that is a tool of Satan to draw us away from Christ!

B. Suffering results in blessings (5:10 – “After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.”).

1. Though we cannot avoid suffering, it is fortunate that our suffering is only for a little while, whether in relationship to this life, or especially eternal life (Rom. 8:18 – “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”).
2. So, do not forget that after we have faithfully suffered, God’s blessings will come.
 - a. This promise comes from the *God of all grace*, which is no small statement about God.
 - i. Grace – favor, goodwill, which includes the practical application of that favor/goodwill (**BDAG**)
 - ii. So, God, who is the source of everything that brings *unmerited, undeserved favor or goodwill* to men, has promised to bless you! So, why would we not believe it?
 - b. This promise comes from the God *who has called* each of us to participate in and enjoy *His eternal glory in Christ*.
 - i. This salvation resulting in eternal glory with God through Jesus’ amazing sacrifice is why we obeyed the gospel in the first place!
 - ii. If we trust God for that, surely we can trust Him to bless us for our suffering!
3. God blesses the faithful!
 - a. These blessings come in the form of God:
 - i. Perfecting us – to put into proper condition, to make complete (**BDAG**), to strengthen, perfect, complete, make one what one ought to be (**Thayer**)

- ii. Confirming us – establish, strengthen (**BDAG**), to strengthen, make firm, confirm one’s mind (**Thayer**)
 - iii. Strengthening us –to make strong (**BDAG, Thayer**).
 - iv. Establishing us – to make stable, establish (give us a strong stance, or foundation - *rp*) (**BDAG, Thayer**)
- b. God is going to bless the faithful by making us strong enough to win!
- i. God is going to bless us with whatever we need to get through this life and be saved!
 - ii. If you will hold on to God, he will make you a more complete person, one who is confirmed, or proven, in your faith, one who is strong, one who has the foundation upon which to stand until the end.
 - iii. With such sure promises before us, it is only fitting that God be glorified. For, truly “To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen!” (5:11)

CONCLUSION:

1. So, I encourage you to humbly live your life in faithfulness to God, trusting in His mighty hand to uphold you, bless you, and exalt you with eternal glory. For, His mighty hand will not fail you!
2. Will you come to Jesus today, to the one who died for you on the cross that you might receive grace and be forgiven of your sins and receive eternal life?
3. Will you come in F-R-C-Bp?