Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: July 6, 2014

Sermon Title: God Will Have the Last Word

Series Title: The First Letter of Peter

Text: 1 Peter 5:5-14

Author: Patrick J. Griffiths ©2014
Introduction:

“Suffering is inevitable. And, it will make you grow bitter or better, depending on how you handle it. It is significant that in Jesus’ parable of the sower, two of the three soils that failed to produce a crop represent people who did not know how to handle suffering. The rocky soil, Jesus explained, pictures those who receive the word joyfully at first, but do not sink down roots, so that when affliction or persecution comes, they fall away. The thorny ground reflects those who seem to grow for a while, but then allow, among other things, the worries of the world to choke out the word so that it does not bear fruit unto eternal life (Mark 4:16-19). If you don’t learn how to handle affliction, worries, and other kinds of suffering, you will not persevere as a Christian. On the other hand, if you do learn how to handle suffering, you will grow solid through it. Peter here gives us four strategies for growing solid through suffering: To grow solid through suffering, humble yourself before God, resist the devil, trust the Lord, and stand firm in God’s grace with the saints.”

THE BIG PICTURE:

In the circumstances of life, there is great strain. Inevitably, we work to resolve, diminish, and control the situation. When intensity increases, we doubt God’s control, His care, and finishing well. The devil cultivates such unbelief. He works to see us fail, struggle, and doubt. Such emotions paralyze us and rob us of rest and peace. God invites us to humble ourselves before Him and to trust Him. Because He has already taken our burden of sin, He can easily handle the rest. By trusting Him, we resist the devil. Because of who He is, the end is certain. God will have the last word.

This is the message Peter brings to those who suffer under injustice and he calls them to submit to such injustice knowing God is in control, He does care, and He will have the last word.

Our text notes this movement.

Outline:

I. The gospel changes our relationship to our circumstances (vv. 5-7)

- 5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.
- 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. (1 Pet. 5:5-7)
Because of who God is and what He has done, we can submit ourselves under the injustice and suffering of life. In this submission, God gives grace. God invites us to drape on Him our cares. We give Him our anxiety and He gives us His peace. We bow our knees before Him and He receives from us our worry and confusion.

Because of the gospel, humility marks us. This text reminds us that we cannot in our own strength win. Only Jesus can. The therefore of verse six introduces a conclusion from the text just cited.

Submission is a sign of new birth. Our ultimate submission is to God. We humbly recognize our lost state and complete inability to save ourselves. We submit to God’s Word. Because of the greater submission, all lesser acts of submission are easy.

Part of this humility is under human institutions, unreasonable masters, unbelieving spouses, spouses in general, and leadership in the local church. When we submit ourselves to others, we are submitting to God. Know this, in time, such suffering and submission will end and you will be exalted, glorified. In light of this, do not allow the cares of this world to consume you.

The Scripture is not random or arbitrary. Notice what Peter does. He intentionally couples humility with anxiety. Both are issues of control. Will you humble yourself, give your situation to God, and recognize it is from Him, sustained by Him, and for Him or will you try to “fix” it yourself? If you do not let God, you will be anxious. The “cure” for anxiety is trust. For me and many like me, this is a constant battle. We know with our intellect God is in control, but our emotion grabs us and wrestles us to the ground to the point of anger and rage and frustration.

“The point is that casting your anxiety on God is somehow part humbling yourself. Casting your anxiety on God is crucial if you are going to humble yourself under God’s hand and clothe yourself with humility toward each other. Casting your anxiety on God is not simply a separate thing that you do after you humble yourself. It's something you do in order to humble yourself, or in the process of humbling yourself.”

Consider Peter’s two thoughts.

A. Clothe yourself with humility

All acts of submission, humility are under God. The secondary object is only a shadow of our act.

Before God, we are all the same. Humbling yourself under the mighty hand of God believes what He has written is true and that He will have the last word. The issue is one of trust.

Not having to justify yourself, vindicate yourself, safe face, or promote oneself takes humility. God invites us to make our story about Him and not us.
B. Cast your anxiety on God

The New Testament uses the word cast twice. Its only other occurrence is when people cast their garments upon the colt Jesus rode into Jerusalem at His triumphal entry.

- And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. (Luke 19:35, KJV)

- Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. (1 Pet. 5:7, KJV)

God invites us to cast our pressing cares on Him as one would a cover a piece of furniture with a large blanket.

“This word ‘casting’ in verse 7 occurs one other time in the New Testament—in Luke 19:35, in exactly the same form. It's Palm Sunday and the disciples have been sent to get the donkey for Jesus to ride on. Then verse 35 says, ‘They brought it to Jesus, and casting their garments on the colt, they set Jesus on it.’ So the meaning is simple and straightforward: if you have a garment on and you want an animal to carry it for you, you ‘cast’ the garment on the animal. In this way you don't carry it anymore. It's on the animal not on you. The donkey works for you and lifts your load. Well, God is willing to carry your anxieties the same way a donkey carries your baggage. One of the greatest things about the God of the Bible is that he commands us to let him work for us before commanding us to work for him. ‘Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest’ (Matthew 11:28). ‘Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you’ (Psalm 55:22). ‘Even to your old age I am He, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save’ (Isaiah 46:4). ‘From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides thee, who works for those who wait for him’ (Isaiah 64:4). God wants to be a burden bearer because it demonstrates his power and puts him in a class by himself among the so-called gods of the universe. ‘No one has seen a God besides thee, who works for those who wait for him.’ So throw the garments of your anxiety onto him. He wants to carry it.”

When God placed on His Son our sin, the burden He bore was immeasurable. Now He invites us to give Him those “lesser” things.

The New Testament uses the word care six times.

- He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. (Matt. 13:22, KJV; See also Mark 4:19)

- And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. (Luke 8:14, KJV)

- And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. (Luke 21:34, KJV)
• Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. (2 Cor. 11:28, KJV)

• Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. (1 Pet. 5:7, KJV)

The cares noted rob us of joy. They steal from us God’s rest. All that “stuff” consuming us, distracts us from focusing on the sufficiency of Jesus Christ. Those are the cares of this world.

It is the same idea behind Peter’s word “entrusting.”

“The Greek word translated ‘anxieties’ comes from a word meaning to divide. Anxieties divide our minds, so that we cannot concentrate on anything else. Someone has defined ‘worry’ as ‘a small trickle of fear that meanders through the mind until it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained.’ Thus worries and anxieties distract us from the productive things God wants us to do and consume us by diverting all our thoughts into these channels of fear.”

Peter says cast your care on Him because He cares for you. Think of who is saying this. Peter continually butted up against this truth.

1. In the storm, “Master, do you not care that we perish?” (Mark 4:37, 38)


Peter openly wore his passion. He always spoke his heart even if his mind lagged far behind.

The word used of our Lord caring is different than the one used earlier. The New Testament uses it ten times.

• And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men (Matt. 22:16, KJV; see also Mark 12:14).

• And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? (Mark 4:38, KJV)

• But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. (Luke 10:40, KJV)

• The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. (John 10:13, KJV)

• This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. (John 12:6, KJV)
• Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things. (Acts 18:17, KJV)

• Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. (1 Cor. 7:21, KJV)

• For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? (1 Cor. 9:9, KJV)

• Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. (1 Pet. 5:7, KJV)

Care here is compassion and concern. It is the quality of caring. Right now, you find yourself in the context of care. Lay it on God.

Not only does the gospel change our relationship to our circumstances, but also to the devil.

II. The gospel changes our relationship to the devil (vv. 8-9)

• 8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. (1 Pet. 5:8, 9)

The devil desires for us to think we can handle our circumstances. God desires for us to entrust ourselves to Him who judges righteously. God is our faithful creator. Notice what this text tells us about the devil.

A. The gospel awakens us to the larger Story

a. The Story is always one of conflicting Seeds

We have shared this many times. The Bible storyline speaks of two seeds in conflict. It began in the Garden of Eden and ends at the cross.

“His chief objective is to make Christians apostatize from the faith because of the strains and sufferings which he brings to them.”

“The scene Peter sketches in this verse and the next is not a courtroom proceeding at all – whether on earth or in heaven – but a universal conflict between the devil and the people of God, with the whole world as its arena.”

The way we fight the devil is resting in God’s finished work.

b. Be sober, be alert, resist him, firm in your faith

“More likely, however, these strong imperatives are simply a call to the readers to prepare themselves in mind and spirit for decisive battle with their one great enemy.”
Because of this conflict, we are to stay mentally alert and engaged. Again, I would see all four statements as synonymous. Do not fall asleep. Stand fast, dig in and become stiff in your resolute against the serpent’s seed. Peter strings along multiple words to reinforce the idea of not quitting and not giving up.

“To resist the devil is not to engage in hostile action against anyone, but to trust God.”

B. The devil is involved in our suffering

We should avoid two extremes when suffering. First, our suffering is purely physical. Second, all suffering is of the devil. I believe everything is within the Story. However, I do not think all suffering is of the devil.

“Peter describes him as ‘your adversary, the devil.’ ‘Adversary’ means an opponent in a lawsuit. ‘Devil’ means ‘slanderer,’ one who throws things against you. He is described as the ‘accuser of the brethren’ (Rev. 12:10). His strategy is often to hit you when you’re under some intense trial.”

“The devil’s purpose is the ruin of men. He is a ‘peripatetic’ (peripatei) like the peripatetic philosophers who walked as they talked. Satan wants all of us and sifts us all (Lu 22:31).”

“The lion here is not the crouching lion—the lion stealthfully creeping towards his foe—but it is the raging monarch of the woods, who by his terrible roar would intimidate all so that they might become an easy prey. The particular thing referred to here, doubtless, is persecution, resembling in its terrors a roaring lion.”

He does not pounce as it to catch us off guard. He roars and to let us know he is here. His intent is to cause fear, to paralyze us into inactivity. Sometimes I will be watching a suspenseful show and I am expecting someone or something to jump out and when it does I still jump up and scream like a little girl [no insult intended to little girls]. I am fully aware of who the devil is and what the devil is up to and still when he roars, I jump and scream.

C. He desires to change our relationship with and response to suffering

This idea or theme is constant in 1 Peter. Let us note three challenges by the devil.

a. God is not in control

I am the one who determines how my life will be lived. I determine my own destiny. Remember the poem Invictus?

b. God does not care; if He did, I would not be suffering.

Peter takes this thought head on.
c. Our suffering has no meaning or purpose

Often we find ourselves in the dark place and we ask the simple question, “What’s the use? Why even try?” Friend, who you are and where you are is no accident. There is a purpose behind who you are and where you are.

D. Our experiences are not uncommon or unknown, thus hold fast.

Others elsewhere are experiencing the same thing. If we could be open about our struggles, we would see others like us fail and others like us are battle anxiety and care. Yet in our solidarity, we can find hope and strength.

Finally, our text notes how the gospel changes our relationship to God.

III. The gospel changes our relationship to the future (vv. 10-14)

- 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 is dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Pet. 5:10, 11)

- 12 Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard him), I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it! 13 She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does my son, Mark. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ. (1 Pet. 5:12-14)

We are in a world of care. In addition, the devil seeks our destruction. The end seems so uncertain. Failure is present. Will we make it? Can we finish well? This text answers for us the question.

“Verse 10 assures the reader in solemn phrases that God in his grace will strengthen and confirm the believers so that they do not fall.”

Peter makes five finishing statements.

A. After you have suffered for a little while (“in this world you will have tribulation,” John 16:33a)

Do not let suffering consume you. “Christian suffering pales in comparison to the great vindication to come.”

B. The God of all grace who called you (“But be of good cheer, Jesus has overcome, John 16:33b)

The God of all grace is the Almighty God of verse 7 and the God to whom belongs all dominion in verse 14. He is the one who judges impartially (1:17), righteously (2:23), and is a faithful creator (4:19). Peter does not relent as to who calls who. Remember 1 Peter 1:3? God calls us to be born again.
C. Will Himself perfect you

God finishes what He begins. “The four verbs are roughly synonymous. It is possible that the first of them is preliminary to the others in implying restoration, or the setting right of unhappy circumstances. The actual context is the idea that God ‘called you in Christ to his eternal glory.’ The emphasis keeps the focus on God.”

Think about this. Peter’s failures are legendary.

1. Peter does not understand a Parable (On at least 3 occasions recorded) Matt 15:15, Mk 4:10, Matt 16:7-8.
   Jesus patiently explains it to Peter, instructing Him

2. Peter and the disciples prevent the children from coming to Jesus (Mk 10:17).
   Jesus is indignant with them, but does not reject them, instead He instructs them.

3. Peter fails to continue walking on water (Matt 14:31).
   Jesus rescues him and instructs him — “Doubt was not necessary, Peter.”

4. Peter’s sin—he is filled with selfish ambition arguing and contenting that he is the greatest of the disciples! (3 times – Mk 9:33, Mk 10:35, Lk 22:24).
   Jesus is patient with the Apostles, the leaders of the young church and instructs them.

5. Peter is offended and angered by James and John’s attempt to secure the greatest reward from Jesus (Mk 10:35).
   Jesus physically gathers them back together in a group (they had separated) and instructs them how to be truly great. Also reveals that they were “used to Jesus granting requests.”

6. Peter “takes Jesus aside” and attacks Jesus’ intent to atone for human sin thru suffering, death (Matt16:22, Mk9:33, 34).
   Jesus sharply disciplines Peter, instructs them all, but does NOT reject Peter or his call to lead.
   Jesus turned (away from Peter) and looked at his disciples and rebuked Peter, “Get behind Me Satan!” Then Jesus calls the crowd to him w/the disciples and says, “If you would follow Me, deny yourself…” (context of Peter’s agenda for His own life).

7. Peter interrupts a Holy moment between Jesus, Moses & Elijah and offers to build tree branch shelters for holy Saints and Jesus. The Father speaks and instructs Peter.
   Jesus speaks (Matt 17:7) and encourages them “not to be afraid.”

8. Peter speaks for Jesus to those who gather the Temple Tax and commits Jesus to certain actions (Matt 17:24).
   Jesus is patient and instructs Peter (vs chiding Peter for not consulting Him).
9. Peter worries about himself and his sacrifice to follow Jesus: “What will there be for us? We have left everything to follow you” (Matt 19:27). 
   Jesus is patience and reveals their future to them which is instruction.

10. Peter resists’ Jesus intent to wash his feet (John 13:8). 
    Jesus patiently instructs Peter.

11. Peter fails and falls asleep in Gethsemane (Matt 26:40 & 41, 43 & 44). 
    Jesus instructs him about his “weak flesh and willing spirit”. No rejection.

12. Peter publicly denies being associated with Jesus in any way with 1) an Oath and 2) with Curses (Matt 26:72 & 74). 
    Jesus forgives, restores and instructs Peter.

13. Peter is overwhelmed with His sin and failure and quits “being an Apostle” and goes back to fishing as a business (Jn 21:3). 
    Jesus patiently restores Him to the place of leading His church. No rejection.

If anyone took comfort in this truth, it was Peter.

D. To Him is dominion forever and ever, Amen.

He is able to justify and glorify because He rules.

E. Stand firm in it!

This is grace and we are not to veer from it.

F. Kiss and be at peace (live well in community)

The gospel always creates community. As noted throughout this Letter, as a church we must learn to “play well with others.” Christianity is a community event. Friend, it is a wonderful thing to be a part of a believing community where the gospel is celebrated and community is formed. This gathering is for our good.

The true grace of God is how God Himself will perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish His people for His glory and their joy. THAT is grace! When the dust settles from the onslaught of the unbelieving and your persistent failure, GOD WILL HAVE THE LAST WORD! He guarantees at His revelation, in the day of visitation when he will judge the living and the dead that His people will be perfect, confirmed, strengthened, and established. Friend, there can be no greater word of encouragement to your current struggle, limp hands, bowed heads, fevered minds, broken bodies and weak knees. GOD WILL HAVE THE LAST WORD!
**Shepherding the Sheep:** (What is the NEXT STEP?)

1. Learn to live acknowledging God as the author of your story.
2. Learn to resist the devil by resting in God.
3. Learn to rest in the finished work of Jesus for your present standing and final judgment.

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10. A.T. Robertson’s *NT Word Pictures* on 1 Peter 5:8.
11. Albert Barnes' *NT Commentary* on 1 Peter 5:8.