



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V26 N24 June 16, 2024

HIGHER UP

“True Grace”

1 Peter 5:12-14

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Grace

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”

Colossians 3:13



What's the point of Peter's first epistle?

Grace—it's not just something *received*; it's also something *dispensed*. Believers are most familiar with grace *received*. Paul writes about it in Ephesians 2. “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved” (vv. 1-5). And then he caps off what he writes: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast” (vv. 8-9).

The creed of the Core Competency Grace zeroes in on that other aspect of grace, *grace dispensed*: “I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.” Sadly, believers are not as familiar with *grace dispensed*. Put differently, too often believers dispense *ungrace* rather than *grace*—both to those *inside* as well as *outside* the Christian community. Philip Yancey laments and chides Christians for this in his classic treatment of the subject in *What's So Amazing About Grace?* In it he writes: “Christians have spent enormous energy over the years debating and decreeing truth; every church defends its particular version. But what about grace? How rare to find a church competing to ‘out-grace’ its rivals. Grace is Christianity's best gift to the world, a spiritual nova in our midst exerting a force stronger than vengeance, stronger than racism, stronger than hate. Sadly, to a world desperate for this grace the church sometimes presents one more form of ungrace” (30).

The fact that he has *grace dispensed* in mind becomes clear in his following words: “Mark Twain used to talk about people who were ‘good

in the worst sense of the word,’ a phrase that, for many, captures the reputation of Christians today. Recently I have been asking a question of strangers—for example, seatmates on an airplane—when I strike up a conversation, ‘When I say the words ‘evangelical Christian’ what comes to mind?’ In reply, mostly I hear political descriptions: of strident pro-life activists, or gay-rights opponents, or proposals for censoring the Internet. I hear references to the Moral Majority, an organization disbanded years ago. Not once—*not once*—have I heard a description redolent of grace. Apparently that is not the aroma Christians give off in the world” (31).

Ironically, we Christians all too often dispense *ungrace* to those who need *grace* the most—sinners, like ourselves, who need our “forgiveness, mercy and generosity,” and not our judgment. Yancey tells this story to illustrate my point. “A divorced woman recently told me of standing in the sanctuary of her church with her 15-year-old daughter when the pastor's wife approached. ‘I hear you are divorcing. What I can't understand is that if you love Jesus and he loves Jesus, why are you doing that?’ The pastor's wife had never really spoken to my friend before, and her brusque rebuke in the daughter's presence stunned my friend. ‘The pain of it was that my husband and I both did love Jesus, but the marriage was broken beyond mending. If she had just put her arms around me and said, ‘I'm so sorry. . . .’” (31).

The pastor's wife could have done that without either condoning the specific behavior that might have led to the divorce or without approving of divorce in general. And yet, some seem determined to wield *ungrace* as a club against those perceived to sin. Still, if God didn't send his Son into the world to condemn the world, it seems unlikely that he has sent any of us to do that. Christians must remember the words of Jesus: “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment” (Mt 12:36 KJV).

1

EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read 1 Peter 5:12-14

12 *With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.*

13 *She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love.*

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

Read in another translation

12 *Through Silvanus, whom I know to be a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, in order to encourage you and testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it. 13 The church in Babylon, chosen together with you, greets you, and so does Mark, my son. 14 Greet one another with a loving kiss. Peace to all of you who are in Christ. (NET)*

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "Silas" in v. 12.
- Circle "testifying" in v. 12.
- Underline "true grace" in v. 12.
- Circle "She" in v. 13.
- Circle "Babylon" in v. 13.
- Circle "chosen" in v. 13.
- Circle "Mark" in v. 13.
- Bracket "kiss of love" in v. 14.
- Circle "Peace" in v. 14.
- Bracket "in Christ" in v. 14.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. In verse 13, Peter's helper is named "Silas" in the NIV and "Silvanus" in the NET. Explain.
2. List a few things you know about him from other passages in the New Testament (cf. Ac 15:22-33; 15:40-18:5; 1Th 1:1; 2Th 1:1).
3. How *exactly* did he help Peter?
4. Identify the two *purposes* for which Peter wrote his epistle.
5. To *whom* does "She" refer in verse 13? (See note.)
6. From *where* is Peter writing? (See note on "Babylon.")
7. *Who* was Mark and *what* was his relationship to Peter? (See note.)
8. Peter exhorted his readers to "stand fast" in "the true grace of God." Paraphrase what that means given his readers' situation.
9. Peter opens and closes his letter with references to "peace." Why would this prayer-wish have special significance for his readers?
10. **Discussion:** Talk about what it means to be "in Christ."

Commentary On The Text

The closing of Peter's first epistle is recorded in 5:12-14. It contains what is to be expected in a letter's closing. It contains a reference to the writing of the letter, personal greetings, and a final prayer-wish. One commentator describes its contents this way. "Peter ends the letter with a brief concluding section. In verse 12 he begins by noting the role of Silvanus [in the writing of the letter], but then immediately reverts to another word of exhortation. Verses 13 and 14 contain personal greeting and a benediction of peace" (Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter*, TNTC, 199).

In verse 12, Peter identifies Silas (NIV), i.e., Silvanus (NET), as the person who helped with the writing of the epistle—some Greek names had a longer and shorter form (Grudem, 199). He is a recognized leader among the believers in the early church chosen to carry the letter containing findings of the Jerusalem Council to Antioch (Ac 15:22)—headquarters of the mission to the Gentiles. Later he joined Paul on his second missionary journey, after Paul's falling-out with Barnabas (Ac 15:36-40; 15:40-18:5). Some think Silas served as Peter's *amanuensis*, who helped in composing the letter. More likely, he simply delivered the letter to its recipients. Peter calls him a "faithful brother," which likely implies that "he is one who can be trusted not only to deliver the letter safely to distant churches scattered over a large area, but also to enlarge upon its message and answer questions as necessary, for he is one who knows the apostle's mind" (Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC, 151).

In the same sentence, Peter reveals his two-fold purpose for writing: to *encourage* and to *testify*, that is, to testify to "the true grace of God" described throughout the epistle and to encourage his readers to "stand fast in it" in spite of the suffering that might cause them to waver. Put differently, he describes his letter as a combination of moral commands (*exhorting*) and factual doctrinal teaching (*testifying*) to the effect that "this is the true grace of God." "The word *this* is best understood to refer to the entire way of life described in the letter as a whole. The entire Christian life is one of *grace*—God's daily bestowal of blessings, strength, help, forgiveness, and fellowship with himself. All of which we need, none of which we ever deserve. All is of *grace*, every day" (Grudem, 201).

Verses 13 and 14 contain *personal* greetings, but from *whom*? From the church in Rome. The feminine pronoun "She" is most likely a reference to the church where Peter is located (the Greek noun, *ekklesia* translated "church," is feminine). The expression "chosen together with you" (cf. 1:2) suggests as well that Peter has a body of believers in mind. And Peter is located in "Babylon," which most likely is a cryptic reference to Rome (there is good evidence that Peter was in Rome about the time this letter was written). And from John Mark. He was the young man who for some reason did not continue with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Ac 15:37-38), but later, following being disciplined by Barnabas, was sent for by Paul, because he was helpful to the apostle in his ministry (2Ti 4:11). What's more, "It is widely accepted that the second of the four Gospels in the NT was compiled by John Mark in Rome, and that it is largely based on Peter's preaching and on the apostle's memories of what Jesus said and did" (Hillyer, 152). Peter then instructs his readers to "Greet one another with a kiss of love." This familial kiss on the cheek or forehead has largely been replaced in the West by a warm handshake or warm charismatic hug, but is still practiced in Christian communities in Europe and elsewhere. Peter then ends his epistle on a note of peace. "Peter closed as he began (1 Peter 1:2), encouraging Christians in the midst of persecution by praying for **peace** (*eirēnē*), which is abundantly available to all **who are in Christ**, the Prince of Peace" (Roger M. Raymer, 1 Peter, in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 857).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 12 **Silas** I.e. "Silvanus" (NET), who "is undoubtedly the same person as the one mentioned in Acts 15:22-33; 15:40-18:5; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1" (Edwin A. Blum, "1 Peter," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 12, 253). "For years scholars have argued that the expression 'with the help of Silas' described Silas's help in *writing* the letter. Such aid, it was argued, helps explain how 'unschooled, ordinary men' (Acts 4:13), among whom was Peter, could write a letter as refined as 1 Peter. Such a view is permissible. On the other hand, some today argue that Silas was the one who delivered the letter. The preponderance of literary evidence supports the second position, for ancient expressions similar to Peter's wording here speak almost uniformly of the carrier of the letter, not its amanuensis" (Scot McKnight, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 Peter*, 279; see too Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter*, TNTC, 199-200).

v. 12 **testifying** Cf. "in order to encourage and testify" (NET). "These are participles ('encouraging and testifying') show purpose. The pronoun object 'you' is omitted in Greek but implied by the context" (The NET Bible, 27tn on 1Pe 5:12). "Testifying (*epimartyrein*, yet another Greek word occurring in the NT only here): To declare emphatically, to speak clearly of what one knows to be true" (Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC, 153).

v. 12 **true grace** Cf. "this is the true grace of God," "this" referring to what he has "briefly" written. Put differently, his letter contains a full expression of the true grace of God in which they should stand. "It is as if he were saying 'I know first hand that the grace of God, what he gives, is completely sufficient for every demand made upon a Christian life: that **grace is true**, 'the genuine article.' So **stand fast in it!** Persevere to the very end along the Christian way, regardless of what happens'" (Hillyer, 152). "They are to stand fast for the gospel and resist the temptation to cave in under the pressure of suffering" (McKnight, 280).

v. 13 **She** "She" probably refers to the church in the town where Peter was when he wrote this letter (cf. 2 John 1, 4). The Greek word for church (*ekklesia*) is feminine, though the word *ekklesia* does not appear in 1 Peter. Some commentators have suggested that Peter referred to his wife as 'she.' But this seems unlikely to me, since none of the other epistle writers in the New Testament referred to their wives. God chose the church together with the believers to whom Peter sent this epistle" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on 1 Peter," 2024 ed., 111, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1peter.pdf).

v. 13 **Babylon** "'Babylon' may refer to Babylon on the Euphrates River. Another view is that it refers to a Roman colony in Egypt. However this seems more likely to be a veiled metaphorical reference to Rome, where Peter spent the last years of his life. The technical name for this figure of speech is *atbash* (i.e., a code name). We know that John 'Mark' was in Rome (Col. 4:10). But why would Peter have called Rome 'Babylon'? Probably he did so because Rome was the capital of the pagan world when he wrote. The Christians had come to think of Rome as another Babylon" (Constable, 115). "There is good evidence outside the New Testament that Peter was in Rome about the time this letter was written (see Introduction, pp. 34f.), and it is best to understand Babylon as a reference to Rome (just as in Rev. 16:19; 17:5; 18:2)" (Grudem, 201).

v. 13 **chosen** Like Peter's readers, the believers in Rome were "chosen according to the foreknowledge of God" (1:2).

v. 13 **Mark** "**Mark** is John Mark (Acts 12:12), one of Paul's companions on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:5). Paul mentions him several times in his letters (Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philem. 24)" (Hillyer, 154). He was not a blood relative of Paul, but a spiritual son.

v. 14 **kiss of love** "The familial kiss probably forms the background to the NT practice, for all fellow-Christians were considered brothers and sisters. This affectionate kissing was normally on the cheeks, forehead, or hands. We can assume such to be the practice here . . . In calling it the 'kiss of love' Peter not only brings out the meaning of kiss ('kiss,' *philema* in Greek, comes from *phileo*, a verb indicating familial and friendly as opposed to erotic love), but also expresses the proper relationship among the members of the Christian community ('love' here is the typical Christian term for love, *agape*, used also in 1:22; 4:8)" (Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, NICNT, 204-205).

v. 14 **peace** "In the midst of their persecution Peter prayed that his readers might experience God's surpassing 'peace' (Phil. 4:6-7). 'Peace' expresses the common Jewish blessing: *Shalom*. This epistle opens and closes with a prayer for peace (cf. 1:2)" (Constable, 116).

v. 14 **in Christ** "To be *in Christ* is to be united with him for all the benefits of redemption; it is the status of all true believers as soon as they have become Christians, and they remain in Christ for all eternity" (Grudem, 202).

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Stand fast in the true grace of God.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

Let's pretend your kids are in sixth grade and have been part of Central Bible Church since they were born. As part of Central Kids, they have gone through nearly two full rotations of a preschool chronological Bible curriculum and since kindergarten studied the books of Romans, Nehemiah, 1 and 2 Timothy, Mark, Exodus, 1 and 2 Thessalonians and 1 Peter. Your kids have studied more of the Bible than many grown adults and they haven't even hit their teens. I know you're thinking, "Wow! What a fabulous children's ministry. It's unbelievable!" While we agree, we also fully recognize we're only a tiny part of your child's discipleship. Dads, your spiritual leadership over the home has far more weight in the growth and development of your child than anything they'll ever learn in our building. When you tell Bible stories, pray with your child, marvel at God's goodness, model repentance or dole out discipline with grace and love, you're doing more to point your child's heart toward Christ than any lesson we could ever teach. We celebrate you this week. We realize you have a tremendous amount of responsibility on your shoulders and want you to know how much we truly appreciate you. Thanks for making hard decisions and going to work every day and smoking brisket and telling really terrible jokes that make us shake our heads. Above all, we thank you for leading your family to grow in righteousness and godliness. God blessed us with the gift of our dads and we celebrate you! Proverbs 20:7: "The righteous man walks in his integrity; His children are blessed after him."

What Does The Bible Say?

Read 1 Peter 5:12-14

1. Name the two people Peter mentions in this letter.
2. How does Peter refer to Silas and Mark?
3. What does Peter say to stand fast in?

What Do You Think?

Why does Peter mention Babylon?

What Do You Do?

You've just completed your study of 1 Peter. Scroll through the book again and look at the titles. What have you learned from this study?

CORE COMPETENCY: Grace

I show forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 29:11

"The Lord gives strength to His people; the Lord blesses His people with peace."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- I completed my Bible Study
- I memorized this week's verse
- I brought my Bible to church
- I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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