

1Peter 11-07-08a

This is Friday the 8th of July 2011. We continue our study in the book of 1st Peter resuming in chapter 5 We're going to pick up in verse 4 We'll take a moment as is our custom to Focus our concentration by going to the Lord in prayer recognizing the importance of the ministry of God's Holy Spirit Without which I can't do a good job of presenting and you can't do a good job of listening. So it's a great benefit and a wonderful blessing that God has Given us his spirit to enable us to do what cannot be done in the power of our flesh gives us a window into eternal things and that's Pretty much the most interesting things there are so we'll take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer and then we will begin father we thank you for the Providential Grace that has been ours this past week the watch care you have taken over us the provision you have made the prayers that you have answered and the Guidance that you have provided to us through your word and through your spirit.

We thank you for this opportunity to gather and to Enjoy the mutual up building that comes from our fellowship from the gifts that you have distributed amongst us Everything we have comes through you every good and perfect gift has come in from you Through the Lord Jesus. We thank you for that We thank you for this passage that is before us the truth that it contains The light that it sheds on our path. We pray that as we study together We will see its pertinence and its applicability to our Situation and our circumstances and that seeing that we'll remember it.

It will become incorporated into those Objects of faith and resources in our soul that enable us to live a life that is pleasing in your sight and Glorifying to the Lord Jesus in whose name we pray. Amen You'll remember two weeks ago since we were gone last week that in chapter 5 Peter talking to the assembly the group of believers that have Regathered themselves so to speak we started out in chapter 1 looking at the scattered Believers that have gone to these faraway places, but having been scattered they nevertheless find a few of each other in those towns and and gather for fellowship and for Instruction in the word and for the things that God has instructed us to assemble so the scattered Saints get together and In their midst are going to be those that are further along those that are not so far along might be women might be men might be young people might be old people, but one of the manifest Benefits of getting together is that God can bless us through the function of ministry What are the three hats that every believer wears? Priesthood which is in what direction toward God Ministry which is in what direction? Horizontal and applies directly to whom us believers and then ambassador which is the Everyone who is not yet a part of our fellowship But we hope that they become that or become a part of some fellowship within the body of Christ priesthood ministry and ambassadorship when we gather in a group like this our Intention is not to evangelize you can go to many Sunday morning church services and get evangelized up one side and down the other I got evangelized my whole Growing up life. I heard so many invitations and altar calls that I was Starting to think I needed to walk the aisle just for some relief.

Just okay. You can stop asking me to come forward But if you get saved at an early age, which thank the Lord I did then all of these altar calls You're just kind of well, you know be praying for others, you know head bowed eyes closed And but it's when there is so much evangelism within the church you get the idea that well, they don't really think we're saved We must look like a bunch of reprobates because we keep getting the gospel Sunday after Sunday after Sunday I'm all in favor if you have a large group and you don't know who's in it It's wonderful to make sure the gospel has been made clear If you want to give an appeal if you believe in a public profession, you know God bless you, but in a normal healthy Christian fellowship. Our purpose is not evangelism The only time you hear me present the facts of the gospel in our church is Mainly so that we all have it straight in our minds should the occasion arise for you to share those facts with somebody in your Periphery that's the way evangelism typically works Most people get saved Through the friendship and the sharing of the gospel in a one-on-one context You know not to say that Billy Graham and that altar calls have not been effective But most people hear about the Word of God in a conversation with somebody else who is sharing their faith and that's the model so we need to certainly be able to present those facts clearly and and we Rehearse those and go over it from time to time to be sure we know what they are if somebody said I want what you've got I you seem to have a hope you seem to be optimistic the Tribulations of this life don't seem to really faze you like they do me and what is it about you that gives you that? equanimity and that Steady course that you steer.

Why do you seem to have that happiness? We say well It's because I've got a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and I know the purpose of my life and God makes provisions for me and he comforts me and encourages me and guides me and lays before me a bright future and and I'm not worried about death and I I'm gonna have a Reunion with those who have gone before there's a whole nother life ahead This is just preparation for it and I'm excited about the plan of God I think it's a great thing and I'm Grateful to God for including me in it through the work of his son the Lord Jesus Christ Who solved the problem of sin and the problem of death? Everybody knows instinctively that they are a sinner. Everybody knows that you do not have to convince somebody that they're a sinner They may protest that they're a good person. They are protesting too much.

They know just like you and I know we are rascals we are Infected with something on the inside Everybody knows that and there's only three truths. Jesus said the gospel is simple. It's sin righteousness and judgment.

We are all infected and Headed for death because of sin We need the righteousness of God if we are going to escape this temporal life and this eternal judgment and spend an eternity in the realms of God where righteousness and glory are Omnipresent we have to somehow partake of that life and that righteousness and the only way we can get it is as a gift the Lord Jesus Christ died and Paid the penalty for our sins so that the gift of God could be given to us And all we have to do is accept it and that's the gospel. You don't have to talk about the heathen You don't have to talk about heaven for those who can't believe what happens to babies, you know What about the

Philistines you don't have to worry about any of that? That is the gospel if anybody starts asking those questions just say are you interested in Philistine salvation baby salvation? Are you interested in your salvation? Let's talk about your salvation first Let's get that squared away. Then we can move on to other issues.

But the only thing I want to know right now is do you Feel inclined to Accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior That's the issue under discussion Don't let somebody drag you off into the weeds and beat you up and leave you bleeding and helpless But that's the gospel so when we gather as believers Our primary purpose is not to give each other the gospel. We've got the gospel praise God We are saved. We are heaven-bound.

We are glory bound. We are eternity bound. We have the Lord Jesus Christ evermore and that is the Glue that binds us together.

That is the common thread that weaves us into the fabric of the plan of God and and We're just grateful for it. But our purpose is instruction in the Word of God fellowship the Edification and the upbuilding that comes from that dynamic because God the Holy Spirit is like Uranium and the more of him you get in one place the more power there is and when we gather the the power of God is amplified in an exponential way and It is it's all of God it is all of grace So he says the elders who are in your midst because they have gathered they've made a fellowship They've gotten together. So there's going whoever's the eldest is the elder You could have people that nobody been saved more than two years But whoever got saved first if they've been growing in grace, they're the elder so the elders who are among you I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ and a partaker of the glory that will be revealed and this Is a summation of the themes of this letter, isn't it? Hasn't he been talking all along about the glory that is set before us he began Encouraging these people Telling them God has a purpose for your life.

Don't be thinking that you're some sort of accidental Distribution of people into the far-flung realms of the Roman Empire God has designated you he chose you to be this scattered person He needs people that know what the gospel is know who Jesus Christ is know what is going on in the realm of? truth right where you are and he chose you and That's true ever since it is true for us. Each of us is exactly where God Knew that we would be We have truth from the Word of God and we are shining as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation and God knows how to string his lights. He doesn't just fling him.

We're not firecrackers. We're not we're not Roman candles Especially not the kind that we've often shot at home that tip over and start scattering the onlookers God has a plan each of us is positioned. We're more like the stars in the constellations It would be exceedingly difficult for mankind up until GPS to ever do any nighttime navigation if the stars were various if they were Chaotic every time you look up in the sky.

Well, it's just a whole new ballgame up there I have told y'all before how grateful I was for the

fixity of the stars when I was in Lebanon and the firing batteries there that belonged to the Lebanese were shooting themselves and They were scratching their head saying I don't understand why when we fire artillery rounds our own people Frantically get on the radio and say stop that you're blowing us up when they thought they were You know inflicting harm on the enemy they they were inflicting harm on themselves and they had oriented the guns of their batteries In this one particular location By setting up their aiming circle, which is the reference point for all six or eight guns they set it up where they could get a little bit of light and it was under a under a light pole a light pole with a gigantic electric cable going up the side so that the magnetic needle with which they set the aiming circle was going Wow Toward the pole and they said oh, so that's north Alright, and so their their guns were whopper jawed beyond all description Somehow they didn't put together that the Sun was no longer rising in the east and setting in the West But they were off by a significant amount. Well how to fix that we didn't have GPS we didn't have other things but what we did have is a technique called Polaris coach AB and These are stars up in the vicinity of your you know Your big dipper star points to Polaris and then another star in the in the dipper There is coach AB in the little dippers coach AB so you can use a book and do a bunch of fancy math, which I used to know how to do and By measuring the angle of those two stars, you can get a very precise latitude and And figure out where you are. So we did that Ratcheted the guns around the way they were supposed to go in the next time They shot a mission surprise surprise the rounds went where they were supposed to but it's because of the stars People have been navigating, you know for thousands of years by looking up into the sky those stars are exactly where they are supposed to be the tribes of Israel each of them the twelve were associated with a constellation and It's a part of the fabric of the universe that God designed To pertain to and benefit this earth You are a fixed star.

You are a light not randomly placed Specifically placed we've got to hold our place. We've got to shine our light Might be a dim star might you know coach AB is kind of hard to spot. I Couldn't see it the first night.

I tried because we had a little bit of overcast I could see Polaris It could not see coach AB and wait told the Lebanese we got to wait I Can't remember who's later that night or the next night, but I had to wait until I could see it because it's a dim star But it's the only one the table lets you figure all of this fancy stuff out with and so I needed to see it when I could see it we we used it So he says I am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ where we are Positioned we are going to suffer May not be suffering now be grateful be thankful and Then when we do suffer be grateful and be thankful it is necessary Evil in the world is necessary. This is the thing atheists don't understand well if there's a God How could he let horrible things happen? how can these little girls be killed by their mothers and how can they get off scot-free and how can that you know people are Raging and shaking their fist and where is the justice and where is God and why did he allow hurricanes and earthquakes to to? Here's here is a thought I'll I'll share with you on that and I heard somebody make this point this morning, and I thought it was good suppose God did intervene Anytime something bad was about to happen. There's gonna be a hurricane in New

Orleans there's going to be an earthquake in Haiti.

There's going to be a Massacre somebody's about to kill their child suppose every time that hat was about to happen the God that the atheists claim we ought to have acted and intervened nobody ever Suffered nobody ever died prematurely everybody at the age of 98 sort of said well family It's been nice knowing you, but I'm really ready to go and let me just roll over and fall asleep, and oh I see the Loved ones on the farther shore and adios And it was just wafted to glory on the wings of angels, and there was never any suffering never any heartache never any disaster no evil Robber takes out a gun tries to shoot you the bullet just drops to the ground Can't rob you can't beat you up nothing bad ever happens because the God the atheists Have thought we should have always stops evil right in its tracks How much of a sense of need do you think we would have for eternity for heaven for? Resurrection for escape from this life. How much horror would we have for sin and for evil we talk about evil I don't I understand in the abstract that somebody might disobey God, but didn't seem like it'd be so bad I mean just do your own thing instead of God's thing how bad could that be the only way for us to understand why God? Cannot allow evil in the universe is for him to allow it long enough for us to learn the lesson and We with our free will having seen what we have seen will go into the eternal future and into the thousands and millions and billions Of trillions of years of eternity future never again Entertaining the thought that entered Satan's heart when he said I will Five times we'll never do it. We've seen it.

It's sickening. It's horrifying sin has been shown to be sin indeed death and suffering and the Rot and the decay and the stench of sin is in our nostrils and we will never Get over that we're never gonna say well all of this heaven stuff and all this glory and all of this fantastic life with God Seems pretty good But I wonder what it would be like if and that's thought will die right there because it's been done It's been tried and the memory of it is like the eternal flame on John Kennedy's grave It will never go out the flames of hell will be right over there burning the lake of fire will never be quenched Anytime somebody begins this is why God doesn't have to strap us down on good in eternity, right? He doesn't have to take away some part of our mind that has free choice and free will All we have to do is look to our left. There's the eternal flames of the lake of fire and we think bad idea bad bad idea But the only way we know how bad is for God to allow it this notion that atheists have well The Christians have no answer for the God that allows evil if he's strong enough to prevent it then why doesn't he and if he is strong enough and he doesn't then he's a bad God because he's just mercilessly letting people suffer and you know, he's One way or another he's he shouldn't be worshipped They're very shallow one-ply thinkers God's ways are higher than our ways.

His plan is smarter than our plan and You have to allow your child Sometimes to do the foolish thing and suffer the consequences that you told them they were going to suffer But they thought they were smarter. So, all right, go ahead Run through the house with something sharp in your hand. Good luck.

I Tried to tell you I tried to warn you you didn't listen well God sometimes Parents have to do that.

We do that carefully and in limited ways where they're not going to do anything It's going to cost a lot of money. Hopefully or Or traumatize us or them too much not necessarily in that order but the Point that Peter is making here.

He made it in the first chapter and he's making it now. He says I Who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ? God didn't say. All right, you're gonna suffer It's sort of like let me take a I know you're all shocked at me now So I'll take a less harmful example suppose you're trying to tell your child you need to keep that sunscreen on you or you're gonna Get burned and they don't want to bother with the sunscreen.

It's greasy. It smells bad I don't want to smell like a salad and they don't want to put it on So you say all right. Well, you and I are both going to go out with no sunscreen and We'll see how the day goes and when they get burned you get burned Maybe you keep them in your shadow and you take the burn and you say see what happens with no sunscreen Look at my back.

Look at my shoulders. Look at my nose Look at my eyebrows. Look at the skin flaking and peeling off of me.

Look at the the crispiness Jesus Christ Acting in the plan and purpose of God Did not just say all right, you want to know what sin is like go down there and experience the suffering He came and suffered Like us he was tested in all points like as we are he bore our infirmities He was wounded and bruised for our transgressions and our iniquities. He took our stripes So that we could be healed and he's not an impersonal God saying. All right, we'll just suffer God became man and suffered a greater amount of pain than anything we could ever know or understand and It's an expression of his love and an expression of his grace So when Peter says I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ He's been talking about suffering all through this book hasn't he y'all are gonna have a tough time in this world You shall have tribulation Be of good cheer the Lord Jesus Christ has overcome the world But the fact that he's overcome the world doesn't change the fact that we're still going to go through tribulation After you have suffered a while you inherit Why does God let us suffer? Well, do you want a memory to preserve your good attitude all through eternity or not? Do you want that vaccination and that inoculation against evil? Welling up as a potential or a possibility like it did in the heart of Satan Do you really want that in the future or do you you know? do you want a little momentary sting for a shot or do you want to get the disease later on that will kill you and God says it's a momentary light affliction, but it is working for us an eternal weight of glory That's what this letter has been about Peter is encouraging He says look you're there for a reason your sufferings are designed and planned It's never above what you're able to bear as Paul tells us So don't think it's strange concerning the fiery trial which tries you back in chapter 4 verse 12 Peter says look I saw the sufferings of Christ and when I tell you these things I'm not just talking out of the front of my face.

I have seen this and I am telling you this is the love and the compassion and the grace of God that he allows us to suffer I've seen the sufferings of Christ and we're not going through anything

like what he went through and And also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed and that phrase at the end of verse 1 is really the key When you get to the crown of glory that does not fade away in verse 4 and we're going to talk about crowns Really? Sorry Brian's not here tonight because I saved this for him, but I've got to go ahead and do it so we can move Forward so he'll have to get the recording Brian you're listening to me now Out of time, but I'm talking to you and on your behalf and for you at your specific request Brian asked me to do these crowns and I am going to do them. This is Brian Russell, by the way Brian Elmore already knows he's earned his crowns. So I don't have to I don't have to he knows this I know because he and I have sat in the same classes in the past But I have a little bit of what I think might be Fresh perspective on this for us.

And so I want to go over these the idea of crowns or rewards in Scripture Before we leave this passage He says here that the elders who serve as faithful examples to the flock and we talked last time about the fact that this can Be any of us if you're around any believer that isn't as far along as you are in the particular area that happens to be Getting tested you're the elder They might have been a believer 20 years You might have been a believer two years at least in the active sense of it And yet maybe you know something about a particular kind of suffering that they don't know about Maybe you know something about a particular kind of endurance or a particular way to express faith That's just not a part of their realm. It doesn't have to be longevity It can just be experience, but in some way shape or form we have something beneficial We can share with somebody something we know that they don't yet know And and it isn't just that we know it and we need to tell them It's that they're looking to us. They're looking to us as an example or as a as a source of information It's much better to wait till you're asked than to just volunteer the the wisdom, you know, oh, I see you're suffering there Let me take you out of my wing and explain to you how I got through this We would like to be asked we would like to be perhaps just an example Don't even have to talk just live it out and let that be the communication Be that as it may Peter says if you are a faithful elder in The midst of the flock you're not doing what you do to be seen by men.

You're not doing it for gain You're not doing it for glory. You're not doing it because you like lording it over people and Mentoring them and discipling them and not to say that those aren't good things But if you're doing it because you like being the mentor and the disciple or you need to get out of that business Any of us need to get out of that business. You can't do it because you Think of yourself as as being up there, you know Running somebody else's life, but when we do it, right Peter says You will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away So what is this crown of glory that does not fade away? I Suggested to you last time that I don't think that there are That there's a a poster like we used to have on our wall and or in the middle of our reef points when we were mid shipment, here's all of the military Medals and you got to figure out what their order is and if you ever get any of these ribbons you got to put them on and just the right sequence because this one outranks that One and your national defense goes here and humanitarian service goes there and your overseas deployment goes here And that's just a

ribbon not a medal So when you put on your dress uniform, don't expect to be hanging a you know, all of these details Well, the Bible never presents the rewards of eternity in that fashion Do you ever see a hierarchical ranking of rewards? We know that that there will be those who are going to shine brighter a Star differs from star in glory.

So shall it be in the resurrection? But the Bible never says now if you're faithful for five days out of the ten Smyrna, you'll get the the bronze crown I'm gonna test you ten days if you can last seven days you get the silver crown if you make it the whole ten days gold crown gold crown and And you know if you persevered in some other situation before the ten days gold crown with a ruby Second award you might go another ten days third award It's it's just I mean It's so foreign to the way the Bible talks about this that I think Even to the extent that we have said well, there are these five crowns I think we've overdone it personally and and I'll explain why if you want to believe in the five crowns god bless you We'll find out you'll probably have all five and I'll be looking at them and admiring them But I I just I honestly can't find it presented that way in Scripture. So We're going to I want to do this as a unit So we're going to go ahead and pause here and take our break when we come back We are going to look at all of the passages in the New Testament to talk about These crowns and see if we can find there are some clues and in all of the reading I did and I read everything I could find everybody's Studies on these crowns and there are some clues that I just haven't seen anybody really pick up and address So maybe they aren't clues. You can be the judge.

We'll look at him when we come back from the break