

1Peter 11-07-29b

Let's resume our study for the final time now in 1 Peter chapter 5. We're looking at the set of imperatives that Peter concludes his exhortatory epistle with here. Be sober, be vigilant, resist him. We have to be self-controlled and be watchful because Satan is out there.

It is his objective to distract us, to deflect us, to get us interested in something other than the master's business. Something other than that to which we have been called, for which we have been gifted and commissioned. If he can get us off mission, off track, off balance, off kilter, he has succeeded.

He is looking for people that he can swallow up, that he can carry off, take captive, sift. So what is the means of doing this? Watchfulness and self-control are necessary conditions. We have to be alert and we have to be self-possessed.

We've got to be balanced. If you've ever had any training in self-defense or in hand-to-hand combat, the very first thing they teach you, the very first day is how to stand. I was slightly insulted.

I've been standing for many years. I thought I knew how to keep my feet below and my head above. And they said, no, you don't know how to stand.

And they taught us how to stand because there's standing that's not good and there's standing that is very good for balance, for self-control, for resistance to deflection, resistance to being kicked or punched or attacked in some way. There is a good way to stand and there are bad ways to stand. And we have to learn how to control our bodies in a threat situation.

Have to learn to react instinctively, to parry a blow, to counter punch, to use leverage, to turn an attacker's force against him. But the very first thing you have to do is just learn how to stand. And it's a real interesting feeling when you begin to learn what balance is and to become aware so that you can be standing there looking relatively relaxed and flexible.

And all of a sudden, out of nowhere, when you're young, you can kick your heel up as high as your face and return that foot to the ground and your body has hardly moved. And you are capable of inflicting great force and violence because you know how to stand. You know how to balance.

You know how to be flexible, how to maintain your position. So Peter says the way to resist him in verse 9 is to begin by developing your sobriety, your self-control, your self-possession, your knowledge of how things work, and your watchfulness. Don't let yourself be fooled.

If you're watching a movie, if you don't like startling, if you don't like jumping, if you don't like your heart leaping into your throat, when you start hearing the warning music playing on the screen,

when someone unaccountably walks into a dangerous place and doesn't turn on the lights, for some reason the illumination is off, you know that they're going to start doing this fake startle where it's only the cat and then the next one really is the guy with the hockey mask on. You know that this is coming. So if you don't like your heart leaping into your mouth, if you don't like being startled by mirror images on a screen, you prepare yourself.

You pull out a little bit. You say, oh, yeah, I'm here in the room. I'm watching a movie.

Here's the other people. Here's the lamps. Here's the rug and the couch.

And that's just a TV. And if you're like me, I don't like being spooked. I don't like being startled.

And if I can see all of the makings of this, I know that this is what they're about to do. They're hoping to make me jump. Well, I am just contrary enough that I don't want to jump.

And so I pull out and I say, aha, OK, latex here, buckets of fake blood there, a guy jumping out from behind, you know, quick, quick cut, loud noise. Ha ha ha. You OK.

You're trying to scare us. Very good. But I pull out.

I don't let myself get so wrapped up in it that it becomes too real. And my natural instincts actually get triggered. Well, this is a helpful analogy.

When we think about this life, we tend to think that this is real. This is the verite. You know, we're in the cinema verite.

But reality is God. Reality is eternity. Reality is righteousness by faith.

Reality is the Lord Jesus Christ. Reality is the master's business to which we have been called. And we've got to pull out and say, you know what? This is the movie.

This is the devil. He's roaring. He's trying to get me to startle, trying to get me to run, trying to get me to drop my business and quit doing it, trying to get me to start squabbling with the other servants, beat the servants, stop giving them their food that I'm supposed to serve.

I see this. I know what it is. I take it for what it is.

And I'm not fooled. I'm not taken in. Resist the devil.

Resist him. Verse nine. The word resist here is the second part of our study tonight.

This is antihistamine, anthistamine. Your histamines are little components in your body that try to take care of intrusions, disruptions. They try to maintain the status.

Histamine in Greek means to stand. And we want to maintain the status quo. So you've got these histamines.

And what they want to do is go fix whatever's broken. They're released when there's some sort of a disturbance. And they say, hey, we've got to go in here and keep the peace, restore things to order.

Well, sometimes you don't want that to happen because they're marching on an enemy that doesn't need marching on or their presence is worse than the intrusion. You sniff a little pollen and the pollen is not so bad. It's a little tiny plant products that get stuck in your sinuses.

No problem. They'll wash away over time. But your histamines say, oh, no, intruder alert, intruder alert.

They go marching in and they swell up your mucous membranes and they start the post nasal and intranasal, intracranial spaces all oozing and flowing. And your eyes are watering and tearing and itching and you're sneezing and blowing and hacking and coughing. And it's your histamines going nuts and your histamines are a bigger problem than these little tiny grains of pollen.

And we say, well, get me some Claritin. Get me some Sudafed. Get me something that will anti my histamines.

I want to go against my histamines. I want to suppress them. I want to calm them down.

I want to block them. Well, oddly enough, that's the word you've got here. When it says resist, it's anti histamine.

Ant histamine is our word. It means to stand against. Obviously, anti means either against or sometimes instead of anti Christos.

You have histamine, which means to stand. It means to oppose. It is a middle voice.

And the middle is halfway between an active and a passive. And so it means stand yourself against. Oppose yourself against.

Be opposed to by involving yourself. It's right between the active. It doesn't say go oppose and it doesn't say be opposed.

It's middle. Oppose yourself against. Stand yourself against this thing.

You find this same word in Ephesians 6.13, one of our memory verse passages. Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to ant histamine in the evil day and having done all to histamine. To withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand.

You stand against the opposition in the evil day. And when the opposition drops away defeated, I'm still standing. One of these disco songs, I'm still standing.

Well, it's a nice, it's a good principle. You hope when all the battle is done and the smoke clears, you're one of the ones still up on his feet. Hopefully still alert.

Still self-possessed. Romans 9.9. I don't think that's quite my passage. It's close.

But if you turn to Romans 9.9. You remember this is the complaint lodged where it says, Why did he yet find fault for who has resisted his will? It's 19 rather than nine. Left out a uno there. Romans 9.19. The disciplined and intractable and fractious believer says, Why is God unhappy with me? Why would he be judging us? Why would we be on the short end of the stick here? Who of us has opposed his will? Who of us has ant histamine his will? Who has stood against it? God's got his will there.

We're not standing against it. What they're claiming is we haven't been enemies of God. But by their apathy, by their disobedience, by their indifference, by their substitute legalistic righteousness instead of the righteousness of God, they are in fact standing against God.

And they deny it. We're not standing against God. Who's standing against God? I'm not standing against God.

Are you standing against God? We're not standing against God. Why is he finding fault with us? We're not standing against him. They're trying to redefine resistance.

Redefine opposition. And that is not a fair assessment. They are opposing God.

And this is why, indeed, oh man, who are you to reply against God? Do you think God doesn't know who's opposing him? Do you think he doesn't know where there's resistance, where there is passive aggressive behavior, where there is occupation with something else so that you are effectively an enemy of the cross? He does know this. Same word. On to Istami.

Second Timothy chapter 3 and verse 8. You have Paul talking in his final letter to Timothy. And he says, Just as Janus and Jamberus resisted Moses, so do these men also resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith. We want to be a workman approved by God that needeth not to be ashamed, right? Study, be diligent, try hard to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

These men have corrupt minds and are disapproved concerning the faith. And Paul says they resist the truth, just the way Janus and Jamberus resisted Moses. They're no different than outright rebels.

We've got a better way. We've got a different plan. We're going to do our business instead of the master's business.

To be preoccupied, hear me now, to be preoccupied with the things of this life and the things of this world is to resist God, to resist the truth. We are supposed to be resisting Satan. We are

supposed to be opposed to the evil one, not opposed to God.

But if we let our minds get corrupted, if we let ourselves be deflected into petty squabbling, bickering, railing against the machine and so on, oh, woe is me, this is unfair. Why did I get the fuzzy end of the lollipop here? Not me again. I've had enough.

I've had it up to here. Aye, aye, me, me. This is ant is to me to God and it will be judged.

And you can't stand there saying, but Lord, why are you finding fault? I haven't resisted you. Yes, you have. If we allow ourselves to end up in this situation, James chapter four, verse seven, submit to God.

Remember James four, six, God resisted the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Therefore submit to God. Orient to the plan and purpose of God.

Focus on the plan and purpose of God. Be submissive to the program and the calling and the tasking, the business that God has assigned us. Submit to God.

Ant is to me, resist, stand opposed to, oppose yourself against the devil and he will flee from you. He will go roar at somebody else. He is all roar and no bite.

If you are steadfast in the faith, if you resist him, he's going to leave. He's going to run off and find some other person who will quake and be distracted and drop what they're doing and focus on him because of his mighty roar. So this is Peter's exhortation again in first Peter chapter five, verse nine.

Stand yourself against him. Steadfast in the faith. And this is not just words.

The faith is what we're hearing right now. Faith is content of the word of God. We're believing the promises of God.

We are viewing the world through the perspective that scripture gives us. That's why we come to Bible class on Friday nights when we could be doing other things. That's why we get up and come to church on Sunday morning.

That's why we try to spend some time in meditation. That's why we will go find a quiet place and pray. That's why we devote portions of our time every hour of every day to remembering who we are and why we're here.

Because that is what it means to be steadfast, to be consistent in the faith. Once a week on Friday, once a week on Sunday is not steadfast in the faith. Hearing the word and not being a doer, as James points out, is not being steadfast in the faith.

Steadfastness means consistency. It means I can look back over this past week. If I think about this day today, earlier today, this afternoon, lunchtime, late morning, mid morning, early morning,

sometime today, just stop and think.

If an angel brought out the book of the record of Friday, July 29, 2011, what does it say in terms of steadfastness of faith under the name Sam Hall or under the name fill in your name here? It's either there or it's not. And if it's not there, whose fault is it? It's ours. We know how to be steadfast in the faith.

I can give you a closed book test right now. Close your books. Take out your pencils and a piece of paper.

Here's your quiz question. How can you be steadfast in the faith? How can you resist the devil successfully? You already know. We've just covered it in this passage, haven't we? What is it? Nepho.

Be self-controlled. Gregoreo. Watch.

Pray. Cast your care. Throw your care on God in your steadfastness, in your faith, in your prayer.

Objectivity instead of subjectivity. I am going to disinvest myself from whatever it is that is creating care. If it is physical, if it is relational, if it is judgmental, if it is political, if it is emotional, whatever it may be, I am pulling out of that thing.

I'm not going to sit there on the couch and jump out of my own skin just because somebody puts a picture on my TV. I feel foolish. I feel silly.

There is no danger. I've let my body go into a fight or flight reaction over a flat picture. Come on.

Do I delight in that? There are people that do, and I just think they're twisted. Who wants to be startled? That's the most unpleasant thing. That's like, you know, there are some little kids that like being tickled.

I've never understood that. I have hated being ticklish from the time I was in the doctor's hands after I was born. Tickle me and don't spank me.

I don't like either one of them. They're both equally unpleasant. But there's, I don't know, there's perverse people that enjoy that kind of thing.

Nobody ought to enjoy getting caught up in the things of this life in a negative way and being distracted from the Master's business. So you know the answer to this. We know how to do this.

We know how to fulfill these imperatives. There is no excuse for this to happen tomorrow, Saturday, July the 30th, or Sunday, July the 31st, or any other day from now on, and probably not for many days past. We know how to do this.

It isn't a matter of knowledge. It's a matter of will. It's a matter of dedication.

It is a matter of commitment. It is a matter of taking seriously what's on the line. It's just eternity.

It's just our entire future with God. It's just the reflection of His glory for all of the ages to come. It's just benefit and privilege and opportunity and function and blessing and reward and inheritance in the Millennial Kingdom and in the Kingdom of the Father.

That's just the slight amount that's on the line. Why would we not want to do this? Why would we not be paying close attention? Why would we not be closely and diligently attending to the Master's business, not knowing when He is going to return from the far country? What is more important? What have we got going on that really has to put this on the back burner? I can't think of anything and it convicts me. It makes me ashamed of myself for not being more dedicated and more diligent and more committed and making practical use of the knowledge that I have and have had for a long time.

What's the matter with us that we don't do this? What excuse are we going to offer at the judgment seat of Christ knowing these things? What's our excuse? Well, there is no excuse. So, let's get with it. That's what Peter says.

Resist Him steadfast in the face. You know that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. This is the same for all of us.

This is a universal calling. There are no believers for whom this is not true. This same challenge is faced.

This same trouble is experienced by the brotherhood. We are brothers and sisters in Christ and all of us have this calling. We are all servants in the household.

We have all been given our task. We are all responsible to not be distracted. We are responsible to be self-possessed and to be alert.

May the God of all grace who called us to His eternal glory... Do you see how naturally this doxology flows out of that? It is God's grace that enables us to rise and meet this challenge, to stand against the devil. It's by God's grace. He has given us what we need to do.

We could never in a million years... We could never in a second last in front of Satan with his angelic power and his everlastingly long experience and his wisdom and his seductive power. We wouldn't have the first clue of how to resist him if it wasn't for God's grace. But He giveth more grace.

God gives grace to the humble. And because of that grace, the God of grace, who has called us to His eternal glory, His glory is on the line. That's what we're playing for here.

That's the table stakes. The glory of God. Is Satan going to rob it from us and take it away? Or are we going to maintain it and reflect it? That's what's on the line.

The God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus. That's our example. That's what we have seen in detail in Peter's earlier descriptions.

After you have suffered a while. This is a momentary, light affliction. This is oligos.

It doesn't even really say a while. It means you've suffered a little. What is an oligarchy? You remember? Anybody have poli sci? Government? What's an oligarchy? Ruled by a few.

Oligos means a little bit. It's like Jake Hess' song. Death ain't no big deal.

And our suffering here, our challenges here, ain't no big deal. It's oligos. After you have oligos, suffering just a little.

The God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself do some things. What is it He is going to do? The word order in Greek is interesting here. He says in verse 10, this is the Greek.

But the God of all grace, the one having called you with a view toward His eternal glory in Christ, after a little bit of suffering, will do four things. We have four future active indicatives here. Future statements of fact.

The first one is katartidzo. Katartidzo. This is to make adequate.

This is to establish, to make something effective. Katartidzo. Katartidzo.

The second one is steridzo. And we have had this word in our immediate context up in verse nine. When he said, resist him strong or steadfast in the faith, that's steridzo.

So if we are strong in the faith, God is going to strengthen us. It's sort of like when the man said, Lord, I believe. Help thou mine unbelief.

If we are faithful, He will increase our faith. If we are strong, He will increase our strength. To him that has, more will be given.

Him that has not, even the little he has will be taken away. So katartidzo. Literally, literally, if you read this out of the Bauer-Arndt-Gengrich, it says to cause to be in a condition to function well.

To be put in order. To restore. You take a thing that's kind of loose and falling apart and doesn't work well and you tighten it up.

You repaint it. You polish it. You lubricate it.

You replace the broken parts. You restore it to full function. This is what God will do.

After we have gone through this time of testing, God is going to restore us. He is going to bring us

to full function. He is going to strengthen us.

He is going to stenose us. Stenoso. Actually, it's steno.

And you have this translated as strengthen rather than you have perfect, establish, and strengthen. It's really more establish, strengthen, and to make strong. But this is to make strong in two different ways.

Steno is really only used here in the New Testament. This is the only place you have it. But there is a standing strength and there is an operative strength.

You might think of it as tensile strength. I've got an iron bar here and if I pull on it, if I try to bend it, it has static strength. It's not going to break.

It's not going to bend. It's not going to give. It's not going to dull.

If it has an edge, it's going to remain strong. You also have operational strength. You have strength to move things, to accomplish work, to perform functions.

And you've got two different aspects of that strength here. God is going to restore us to function so that we have enablement to do things. We have enabling strength and we have strength to retain our shape, to retain our form, to retain what it is that God has done for us.

So we not only have active strength, but we have passive strength. That's mainly the two ideas there. And then the final word we have here, the final future active indicative is Thameliao.

And Thameliao is translated here as settle, to settle. And this means to lay a foundation. And this is a reminder that this is preparation.

This is not an end in itself. We are being prepared. We're being restored.

We are being taught. We are learning and growing in faith for future function. And we're going to be established.

This is often reflected in the scripture. He says that the man who is faithful unto the end will be a pillar in the temple of my God. You remember that when you get to the letters of the seven churches? I will make him a pillar in the temple.

What good is that? That's structural. That's foundational. That's something on which you can build.

That is going to serve. That looks to the future. The temple is a functional place.

It's a place where people come and things happen. Stuff goes on there. There's activity.

There's benefit. There's teaching. And you're going to be a part of the structure of that thing.

Without you, the roof will fall down. You're essential to it. So, we are going to suffer a while here.

But if we can recognize that this is just training, this is just simulation, this is just to sharpen our reflexes and to teach us to have those instinctive reactions, learn how to balance, learn how to stand, learn how to resist, learn how to parry and counter, God is going to develop us and prepare us and settle us on a foundation because we're going to be useful to Him in the future. It looks ahead. It looks forward.

It's a really exciting thing to me to realize that it isn't just a matter of, oh, well, I flunked that test this time. Maybe I can pass that test next time. If I can learn these skills and master the things that God is calling me to in this life, I am ready for things that eye has not seen, ear has not heard, hasn't entered into the heart of man that God has prepared for me and for you.

This is initial. This is preparatory. This is foundational for the future, the eternal future, which is going to be lively, is going to be vigorously active.

It is not a freeze. It's not a painting. It's not a fresco.

It's not a little Raphael Cherubic scene. There is civilization. God is going to have extraordinary multi-dimensional, multi-galactic, multi-universal things going on like we cannot even comprehend.

What we can comprehend is that we will develop the skills to be useful and be ready and be a part of that eternal future, be a part of, an active part of that eternal life in the days ahead. To Him belongs the power forever. Connection to Him is everything.

Drawing on that power is the key. He finally says, through Silvanus, this is Silas. Remember Paul and Silas? This is the same guy.

Through Silas, whom I know to be a faithful brother. There were differences among the apostles. You have Paul and Apollos.

You've got Paul and Silas. You've got John Mark. He's in, he's out.

John Mark travels with Paul for a while and then he ends up with Peter. Silas was with Paul for a while and here he is with Peter. These men had different assignments, different audiences, different callings from the Lord, but there were men who were of service to them even though they were, you know, Paul is the apostle of the Gentiles, Peter is called to Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria until the end of the age and yet there are gifted men who can be of service.

One of the things that we'll see when we get to 2 Peter is the radically different style of Greek, so much so that they say Peter didn't write the second letter. It's just very different. Well, one of the reasons is I have written to you by means of, through Silas.

Silas has been hanging around with Paul. Silas has got, you see so many similarities here just in the Greek vocabulary, in the Greek construction here. Silas is helping Peter out.

Peter is in fact a blue-collar fisherman from Galilee. He's not erudite, has no advanced education, but Silas was able to take these fundamental thoughts and couch them in language that is beautiful and effective in this letter of 1 Peter and it is through Silas who apparently not only was the amanuensis and the scribe who took down this letter, who recorded Peter's thoughts and helped him draft this letter to send to the diaspora, but he is also going to carry it. He's going to deliver it and amplify it and flesh it out with all of the wonderful doctrinal knowledge that he has from hanging around with Paul and spending time with Peter.

What a great messenger. Wouldn't you love to get... This kind of reminds me of reminding my roommate the other day when we were at Navy back in the 70s. You know, James Taylor was huge.

James Taylor, you can't get in to see him, but the concert they had at Navy one year was Livingston Taylor. Livingston Taylor is a very gifted musician and vocalist. He sounds exactly like James Taylor.

He sang his brother's songs and he was great. He was relaxed about it. He made no bones about, hey, I'm basking in the glow of my brother's success and I'm glad to do it.

It's kind of like Frank Sinatra Jr. for decades traveled around and sang his father's songs and was glad to do it. Sounded an awful lot like his dad if you ever heard Frank Jr. So we got Livingston Taylor and look, if you can't get the Apostle Paul, he can only be one place at one time and he's in prison half the time or shipwrecked or something. You can't get Peter.

He's in prison. He's off somewhere. Here's Silas.

I mean, what do you want? Here's a guy that's the next best thing. Here's somebody that's been the right hand man and he's not just next best. He's got the power and the authority of the message of the Word of God in his hands, delivering it.

Helped Peter write the thing. Now he's going to go out there and read these letters out to some of these people who may not even be literate. Through Silas, through Silvanus, whom I know to be a faithful brother.

This is Peter saying, look, when you see this guy, treat him like you treat me. He is a faithful brother. I've written to you briefly in order to encourage you and testify that this is the true grace of God.

Makes sense, doesn't it? This is God's gracious provision for us. This is our calling. This is our supplies.

This is our tasking. This is our mission. This is our practical guide on how to get it done.

What else do you want? And here's Silas to wrap it all up with a bow and deliver it. And he delivered it to the Diaspora. He has delivered it to us through this beautifully written letter.

The church in Babylon, this is Rome, spiritual Babylon at the time. There's a lot you could say about this, about what was Babylon in the Jewish mind. What is Babylon? They are the power that has taken the people of God captive.

They are the authority that is able to oppress. They are the ones at a national level that we must be submissive to. What is your Old Testament picture for this situation that Peter finds his generation in? We are like the captives of Babylon.

We are like Ezekiel. We are like Daniel. We have the same obligation to be faithful.

Hananiah, Mishaël, Azariah, go into Babylonian schools. Learn it and learn it well. Get straight A's.

Be the best. Be submissive, but don't lose your faith. Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar.

Render to God the things that are God's. We should be great citizens. We should be compliant with all of the laws.

We should be great employees. We should be submissive to all of the authorities that we can be. The church in Babylon, chosen together with you, has got the same calling, the same choosing, the same grace of God, greets you, and so does Mark, my son.

This is why the Gospel of Mark is in the Inspired Canon of Scripture. It's got apostolic authority. Mark is Peter's right-hand guy.

Chip off the old block, spiritually speaking. He's going to deliver Peter's Gospel for us. Greet one another with a holy kiss, a loving kiss.

This is the difference between meeting a stranger, being introduced to somebody for the first time, and seeing a family member. What's the difference in your greeting? When I meet an elderly gentleman for the first time, I reach out and shake his hand. When I see my father, I hug him.

Why? Because I've got relationship. I've got history. I've got decades and so much in common with my father.

When we greet each other, we have so much in common. This is not greeting somebody in the world. There should be an automatic acceptance.

There should be a default positive response in the household of faith. That's what the holy kiss means. You don't have to get weird.

Please don't anybody come up and start holy kissing me. I'll get all creeped out. What is it talking about? A default warm acceptance.

We greet each other as family. We're not strangers. We're not suspicious.

We don't look askance. We don't hold grudges. We are affectionate.

We are for each other. We're on the same team. We're united.

We face outward the common foe. We don't make foes inside the house. We don't start civil wars.

Peace to all of you who are in Christ. And the closing benediction here is a reminder. Jesus said, Peace I give to you.

My peace I leave with you. Not as the world gives. One of the last things the Lord Jesus said that Peter heard on this earth was the Lord Jesus bestowing peace.

And He says, Peace to all of you who are in Christ. Not all believers are in Christ. If any man is in Christ, he's a new creation.

Old things are passed away. Old things have become new. But we can give that away.

We can fall from grace. We can be enemies of the cross. We can sell our birthright.

How do you know that you're on the road and beginning to do these things right, that you are diligent, that you are watchful, that you are prayerful, that you are applying, that you are laying hold of righteousness by faith? You've got peace. If we do not, at the end of the day, have peace, in this world you'll have tribulation, but be of good cheer. Have peace.

Even in the strife, I have overcome the world. If that peace is lacking, we need to look for what's wrong. Because regardless of how tough it gets, there is still that gift from the Lord Jesus.

If we're in Christ, we'll have peace. Well, this concludes our study of this great letter. We're going to take a break between the two epistles and do a special study, which we'll inaugurate next week.

We'll do that for some indeterminate length of time. Then we're going to move on to the second epistle of Peter. And we're going to see what Greek looks like when Silas isn't there to fix it.

And let me tell you, it's a whole different can of worms. But it'll be fun. Peter is still there.

His spirit and his heart are still there. But the Greek is quite different. We'll see that next time.

Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the opportunity to hear from the great apostle, Simon Peter, and to have these truths through his heart and from his hand. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will keep us ever mindful of these great exhortations, the great opportunities, the great potentials that we have because of Your grace.

And that in our self-possession, in our alertness, and in our resisting of those things that would draw us away from our calling, we will find Your peace. We will be worthy of and reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus, both now and in the ages to come. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen.