

1 Peter: encouragement to stand fast by the true grace of God (1 Peter 5v12)

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.

The apostle Peter wrote his first letter from Rome around 62-63 AD, that is about 30 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. In 5v12, at the end of the letter, he explains his reason for writing.

He wants his readers, who were Christians scattered, isolated in tiny churches across the vast Roman empire, to have courage.

We need courage when we are facing something difficult. And life for these Christians was difficult. They were facing many trials, especially opposition to their faith in Christ from the communities in which they lived. Nero was the emperor at the time Peter wrote. The infamous slaughter of Christians who Nero blamed for the fire in Rome was in 64AD. So, living as a Christian was not a route to popularity!

He puts courage into them by testifying, teaching them of the true grace of God, then urging them to live by it, to stand fast in it.

Notice the order. The more deeply we understand the depths of God's grace to us, the more willing we will be to live distinctively different lives based on that grace in the place where God has chosen to put us.

And notice the word true. Then, as now, there were false versions of the Christian gospel circulating. Messages of 'cheap grace' where you supposedly got all the benefits of being a Christian but without any need for repentance from sin and no expectation of struggles or suffering in this world.

As we study this letter together in coming days let us pray that God will teach us more of his truly amazing grace to us in Christ, so that we will be encouraged to stand fast in it and live for Christ in every area of life.