

Prayer - 1 Peter 5:10, 11, Part 2

by A.W. Pink

The sermon emphasizes the God of all grace, who has called us unto His eternal glory, and explores the concept of regeneration, justification, and glorification as the grand end that God had in view from the beginning.

Scripture: Hosea 14:4, Matthew 12:31, John 17:24, Romans 8:30, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Ephesians 2:8, Colossians 1:12, 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, Hebrews 4:16, 1 Peter 2:9

Topics: "Effectual Calling", "God's Grace"

Description

A.W. Pink emphasizes the profound nature of God's grace in his sermon on 1 Peter 5:10-11, illustrating how God's effectual call brings believers from darkness into His marvelous light. He explains that this calling is rooted in God's eternal purpose and is a testament to His unchanging love and grace towards His chosen people. Pink highlights that regeneration is a result of divine predestination, and that God's grace is abundant and tailored to meet our needs, especially in times of trial. He reassures believers that their calling to eternal glory is secured through their union with Christ, and encourages them to trust in God's promises as they navigate their spiritual journey. Ultimately, Pink calls for a deeper appreciation of God's grace, which is the foundation of our hope and assurance in salvation.

Transcript

"But the God of all grace, who bath called us." In the last chapter (utilizing Goodwin's analysis) it was pointed out that this most blessed title has respect to what God is in Himself, what He is in His eternal purpose, and what He is in His actings toward His people. Here, in the words just quoted, we see the three things joined together in a reference to God's effectual call, whereby He brings a soul out of nature's darkness into His own marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9). This special inward call of the Holy Spirit, which immediately and infallibly produces repentance and faith in its object, thus furnishes the first evident or outward proof that the new believer receives that God is in truth to him "the God of all grace." Though that was not the first outgoing of God's heart to him, nevertheless, it is the proof that His love had been set upon him from all eternity. "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called" (Rom. 8:30). God has "from the beginning chosen you [His people] to salvation" (2 Thess. 2:13, 14, brackets mine). In due time He brings about their salvation by the invincible operations of the Spirit, who capacitates and causes them to believe the Gospel. They believe through grace (Acts 18:27), for faith is the gift of Divine grace (Eph. 2:8), and it is given them because they belong to "the election of grace" (Rom. 11:5). They belong to that favored election because the God of all grace has, from eternity past, singled them out to be the everlasting monuments of His grace.

Regeneration Is the Fruit of Election, Not Its Cause

That it was the grace that was in the heart of God that moved Him to call us is clear from 2 Timothy 1:9: "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Regeneration (or effectual calling) is the consequence, and not the cause, of Divine predestination. God resolved to love us with an unchangeable love, and that love designed that we should be partakers of His eternal glory. His good will toward us moves Him so infallibly to carry out all the resolutions of His free grace toward us that nothing can thwart it, though in the exercise of His grace He always acts in a way that is consistent with His other perfections. None magnified the grace of God more than Goodwin; yet when asked, "Does the Divine prerogative of grace mean that God saves men, continue they what they will?" he answered,

God forbid. We deny such a sovereignty so understood, as if it saved any man without rule, much less against rule. The very verse which speaks of God as "the God of all grace" in relation to our salvation adds "who hath called us," and our calling is a holy one (2 Tim. 1:9). Though the foundation of the Lord standeth sure, yet it is added, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19), or he cannot be saved.

It helps us to gain a better understanding of this Divine title, "the God of all grace," if we compare it with another found in 2 Corinthians 1:3: "the God of all comfort." The main distinction between the two lies in the latter being more restricted to the dispensing aspect of God's grace, as the words that follow show: "Who comforteth us in all our tribulation" (2 Cor. 1:4). As "the God of all comfort," He is not only the Bestower of all real consolation and the Sustainer under all trials, but also the Giver of all temporal comforts or mercies. For whatever natural refreshment or benefit we derive from His creatures is due alone to His blessing them to us. In like manner, He is the God of all grace: seeking grace, quickening grace, pardoning grace, cleansing grace, providing grace, recovering grace, preserving grace, glorifying grace--grace of every kind, and of full measure. Yet though the expression "the God of all comfort" serves to illustrate the title we are here considering, nevertheless, it falls short of it. For God's dispensations of grace are more extensive than those of His comfort. In certain cases God gives grace where He does not give comfort. For instance, His illuminating grace brings with it the pangs of conviction of sin, which sometimes last a lengthy season before any relief is granted. Also, under His chastening rod, sustaining grace is vouchsafed where comfort is withheld.

God Dispenses All Manner of Grace Precisely According to Need

Not only is there every conceivable kind of grace available for us in God, but He often gives it forth precisely at the hour of our need; for then does His freely bestowed favor obtain the best opportunity in which to show itself. We are freely invited to come boldly to the throne of grace that we may "find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16), or as Solomon expressed it, that the Lord God might maintain the cause of His people Israel "at all times, as the matter shall require" (1 Kings 8:59). Such is our gracious God, ministering to us at all times as well as in all matters. The Apostle Paul declares (speaking to believers), "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man [that is, but such as is ordinary to fallen human nature, for the sin against the Holy Spirit is only committed by such as have an uncommon affinity with Satan and his evil designs to thwart the gracious reign of Christ]; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13, brackets mine). The Lord Christ declared, "All manner of sin and blasphemy [with the exception just mentioned above] shall be forgiven unto men"

(Matthew 12:31, brackets mine). For the God of all grace works repentance for and forgives all sorts of sins, those committed after conversion as well as those before--as the cases of David and Peter show. Says He, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely" (Hosea 14:4). Full cause has each of us to say feelingly from experience, "the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant" (1 Tim. 1:14).

The Infallible Proof of His Abundant Grace Toward Us Who Are His

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory." Here is the greatest and grandest proof that He is indeed the God of all grace to His people. No more convincing and blessed evidence is needed to make manifest the good will that he bears them. The abundant grace that is in His heart toward them and the beneficent design He has for them are made clearly evident herein. They are "the called [ones] according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:18, brackets mine), namely, that "eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:11). The effectual call that brings forth from death to life is the first open breaking forth of God's electing grace, and it is the foundation of all the actings of His grace toward them afterwards. It is then that He commences that "good work" of His in them that He ultimately shall complete in "the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). By it they are called to a life of holiness here and to a life of glory hereafter. In the clause "who hath called us unto his eternal glory," we are informed that those of us who were once "by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3) but now by God's grace are "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4) shall also be sharers of God's own eternal glory. Though God's effectual call does not bring them into the actual possession of it at once, yet it fully qualifies and fits them to partake of His glory forever. Thus the Apostle Paul tells the Colossians that he is "giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12).

But let us look beyond the most delightful of the streams of grace to their common Fountain. It is the infinite grace that is in the nature of God that engages itself to make good His beneficent purpose and that continually supplies those streams. It is to be well noted that when God uttered that great charter of grace, "[I] will be gracious to whom I will be gracious," He prefaced it with these words: "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee" (Ex. 33:19, brackets mine). All of that grace and mercy that is in Jehovah Himself, and that is to be made known to His people, was to engage the attention of Moses before his mind turned to consider the sum of His decrees or purposing grace. The veritable ocean of goodness that is in God is engaged in promoting the good of His people. It was that goodness that He caused to pass before His servant's eyes. Moses was heartened by beholding such an illimitable wealth of benevolence, so much so that he was fully assured that the God of all grace would indeed be gracious to those whom He had chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. It is that essential grace rooted in the very being of God that is to be the first object of faith; and the more our faith is directed toward the same the more our souls will be upheld in the hour of trial, persuaded that such a One cannot fail us.

The Argument on Which Peter Bases His Petition

Fourthly, let us consider the plea upon which the Apostle Peter bases his request: "who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus." This clause is undoubtedly brought in to magnify God and to exemplify His wondrous grace. Yet considered separately, in relation to the prayer as a whole, it is the plea made by the apostle in support of the petition that follows. He was making request that God would perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle His saints. It was tantamount to arguing, "Since Thou hast already done the greater, grant them the lesser; seeing that they are to be sharers of Thine eternal glory in Christ, give them what they need while they remain in this world that is passing away." If our hearts were

more engaged with who it is that has called us, and to what He has appointed us, not only would our mouths be opened wider but we should be more confident of their being filled with God's praises. It is none other than Jehovah, who sits resplendent on His throne surrounded by the adoring celestial hosts, who will shortly say to each of us, "Come unto Me and feast thyself on My perfections." Think you that He will withhold anything that is truly for your good? If He has called me to heaven, is there anything needful on earth that He will deny me?

A most powerful and prevalent plea this is! First, it is as though the apostle were saying, "Have Thou respect unto the works of Thy hand. Thou hast indeed called them out of darkness into light, but they are still fearfully ignorant. It is Thy gracious pleasure that they should spend eternity in Thine immediate presence on high, but they are here in the wilderness and are compassed with infirmities. Then, in view of both the one and the other, carry on all those other workings of grace toward and in them that are needful in order to bring them to glory." What God has already done for us should not only be a ground of confident expectation of what He shall yet do (2 Cor. 1:10), but it should be used by us as an argument when making our requests to God. "Since Thou hast regenerated me, make me now to grow in grace. Since Thou hast put into my heart a hatred of sin and a hunger after righteousness, intensify the same. Since Thou hast made me a branch of the Vine, make me a very fruitful one. Since Thou hast united me to Thy dear Son, enable me to show forth His praises, to honor Him in my daily life, and thus to commend Him to those who know Him not." But I am somewhat anticipating the next division.

Our Calling and Justification a Cause for Great Praise and Expectation

In that one work of calling, God has shown Himself to be the God of all grace to you, and that should greatly strengthen and confirm your faith in Him. "Whom he cabled, them he also justified" (Rom. 8:30, ital. mine). Justification consists of two things: (1) God's forgiving us and pronouncing us to be "not guilty," just as though we had never sinned; and (2) God's pronouncing us to be righteous," just as though we had obeyed all His commandments to perfection. To estimate the plenitude of His grace in forgiveness you must calculate the number and heinousness of your sins. They were more than the hairs of your head; for you were "born like a wild ass's colt" (Job 11:12), and from the first dawns of reason every imagination of the thoughts of your heart was only evil continually (Gen. 6:5). As for their criminality, most of your sins were committed against the voice of conscience, and they consisted of privileges despised and mercies abused. Nevertheless, His Word declares that He has "forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 2:13). How that should melt your heart and move you to adore "the God of all grace." How it should make you fully persuaded that He will continue dealing with you not according to your deserts but according to His own goodness and benignity. True, He has not yet rid you of indwelling corruption, but that affords further occasion for Him to display His longsuffering grace toward you.

But wonderful as is such a favor, yet the forgiveness of sins is only half of the legal side of our salvation, and the negative and inferior part of it at that. Though everything recorded against me on the debit side has been blotted out, still there stands not a single item to my credit on the other side. From the hour of my birth to the moment of my conversion not one good deed has been registered to my account, for none of my actions proceeded from a pure principle, not being performed for God's glory. Issuing from a filthy fountain, the streams of my best works were polluted (Isa. 64:6). How then could God justify me, or declare me to have met the required standard? That standard is a perfect and perpetual conformity to the Divine Law, for nothing less secures its reward. Here again the wondrous riches of Divine grace appear. God has not only blotted out all my iniquities but has credited to my account a full and flawless righteousness, having imputed to me the perfect obedience of His incarnate Son. "For if by one man's

offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ... For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made [that is, legally constituted] righteous" (Rom. 5:17, 19, ital. and brackets mine). When God effectually cabled you, He clothed you "with the robe of [Christ's] righteousness" (Isa. 61:10, brackets mine), and that investiture conveyed to you an inalienable right to the inheritance (Rom. 8:17).

Glorification Was, from the Beginning, God's Ultimate Goal for Us

"Who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus." When God regenerates a soul He gives him faith. By exercising faith in Christ, that which disqualified him for eternal glory (namely, his pollution, guilt, and love of sinning) is removed, and a sure title to heaven is bestowed. God's effectual call is both our qualification for, and a down payment on, eternal glory. Our glorification was the grand end that God had in view from the beginning, and all that He does for us and works in us here are but means and prerequisites to that end. Next to His own glory therein, our glorification is God's supreme design in electing and calling us. "God hath from the beginning chosen you... to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:13, 14, ital. mine). "Moreover whom he did predestinate... them he also glorified" (Rom. 8:30). "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34). Each of these texts sets forth the fact that Christ's believing people are to inherit the heavenly kingdom and eternal glory of the triune God. Nothing less than that was what the God of all grace set His heart upon as the portion of His dear children. Hence, when our election is first made manifest by His effectual call, God is so intent upon this glory that He immediately gives us a title to it.

Goodwin gave a striking illustration of what we have just said from God's dealings with David. While David was but a mere shepherd boy, God sent Samuel to anoint him king in the open view of his father and brethren (1 Sam. 16:13). By that solemn act God invested him with a visible and irrevocable right to the kingdom of Judah and Israel. His actual possession thereof God delayed for many years. Nevertheless, his Divine title thereto was bestowed at His anointing, and God engaged Himself to make it good, swearing not to repent of it. Then God suffered Saul (a figure of Satan), who marshaled all the military forces of his kingdom and most of his subjects, to do his worst. This He did in order to demonstrate that no counsel of His can be thwarted. Though for a season David was exposed like a partridge on the mountains and had to flee from place to place, nevertheless, he was miraculously preserved by God and ultimately brought to the throne. So at regeneration God anoints us with His Spirit, sets us apart, and gives us a title to everlasting glory. And though afterwards He lets loose fierce enemies upon us, leaving us to the hardest of wrestlings and fightings with them, yet His mighty hand is over us, succoring and strengthening us and restoring us when we are temporarily overcome and taken captive.

Nothing Transitory About the Glory to Which We Are Called

God has not called us to an evanescent but to an eternal glory, giving us title to it at the new birth. At that time a spiritual life was communicated to the soul, a life that is indestructible, incorruptible, and therefore everlasting. Moreover, we then received "the spirit of glory" (1 Peter 4:14) as "the earnest of our inheritance" (Eph. 1:13, 14). Further, the image of Christ is being progressively wrought in our hearts during this life, which the Apostle Paul calls being "changed... from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18). Not only are we thereby made "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12), but we are then given an eternal right of glory. For by regeneration or effectual calling God begets us to the

inheritance (1 Peter 1:3, 4); a title thereto is given us at that moment that holds good forever. That title is ours both by the covenant stipulation of God and by the testamentary bequest of the Mediator (Heb. 9:15). "If children, then heirs; heirs of God," says Paul (Rom. 8:17). Thomas Goodwin sums it up this way:

Put these three things together: first, that that glory we are called unto is in itself eternal; second, that that person who is called hath a degree of that glory begun in him that shall never die or perish; third, that he hath a right unto the eternity of it, and that from the time of his calling, and the argument is complete.

That "eternal glory" is "the exceeding riches of his grace" that He will lavish upon His people in the endless ages to come (Eph. 2:4-7), and as those verses tell us, even now we--legally and federally--"sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

"Who hath called us unto his eternal glory." God has not only called us into a state of grace--"this grace wherein we stand"--but to a state of glory, eternal glory, His eternal glory, so that we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2). These two things are inseparably connected: "the LORD will give grace and glory" (Ps. 84:11). Although we are the persons to be glorified by it, it is His glory that is put upon us. Obviously so, for we are wholly poor, empty creatures whom God will fill with the riches of His glory. Truly it is "the God of all grace" who does this for us. Neither creation nor providence, nor even His dealings with the elect in this life, fully displays the abundance of His grace. Only in heaven will its utmost height be seen and enjoyed. It is there that the ultimate manifestation of God's glory will be made, namely, the very honor and ineffable splendor with which Deity invests Himself. Not only shall we behold that glory forever, but it is to be communicated to us. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matthew 13:43). The glory of God will so completely fill and irradiate our souls that it will break forth from our bodies. Then will the eternal purpose of God be fully accomplished. Then will all our fondest hopes be perfectly realized. Then will God be "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

Eternal Glory Is Ours by Our Union with Christ

"Who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus." The last part of this clause would perhaps better be translated "in Christ Jesus," signifying that our being called to bask in the eternal glory of God is by virtue of our union with Christ Jesus. The glory pertains to Him who is our Head, and it is communicated to us only because we are His members. Christ is the first and grand Proprietor of it, and He shares it with those whom the Father gave to Him (John 17:5, 22, 24). Christ Jesus is the Center of all the eternal counsels of God, which "he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:11). All the promises of God "in him [Christ] are yea, and in him Amen" (2 Cor. 1:20, brackets mine). God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph. 1:3). We are heirs of God because we are joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). As all the Divine purposes of grace were formed in Christ, so they are effectually performed and established by Him. For Zecharias, while blessing God for having "raised up an horn of salvation," added, "To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant" (Luke 1:68-72). We are "preserved in Jesus Christ" (Jude 1). Since God has "called [us] unto the fellowship of his Son" (1 Cor. 1:9, brackets mine), that is, to be partakers (in due proportion) of all that He is partaker of Himself, Christ our Joint-heir and Representative has entered into possession of that glorious inheritance and in our names is keeping it for us (Heb. 6:20).

All Our Hope Is Bound Up in Christ Alone

Does it seem too good to be true that "the God of all grace" is your God? Are there times when you doubt whether He has personally called you? Does it surpass your faith, Christian reader, that God has actually

cabled you to His eternal glory? Then let me leave this closing thought with you. All this is by and in Christ Jesus! His grace is stored up in Christ (John 1:14-18), the effectual call comes by Christ (Rom. 1:6), and the eternal glory is reached through Him. Was not His blood sufficient to purchase everlasting blessings for hell-deserving sinners? Then look not at your unworthiness, but at the infinite worthiness and merits of Him who is the Friend of publicans and sinners. Whether our faith takes it in or not, infallibly certain it is this prayer of His will be answered: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory" (John 17:24). That beholding will not be a transient one, such as the apostles enjoyed on the mount of transfiguration, but for evermore. As it has often been pointed out, when the queen of Sheba contrasted her brief visit to Solomon's court with the privilege of those who resided there, she exclaimed, "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee" (1 Kings 10:8, ital. mine). Such will be our blissful lot throughout the endless ages.

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