

Final Notes – Things not to forget.

1 Peter 5:6-14

Famous Last Words | There's a lot of pressure to be especially clever with your final breath. Or profound. One or the other. Or both, if you can manage. Your famous last words. Your final bit of wit or insight to share with the world. They're going to remember these words long after you're gone. Probably. Well, maybe for a few of us.

Bob Marley

Bob Marley is said to have left this world by saying, "Money can't buy life."

Bessie Smith

Blues singer Bessie Smith died saying, "I'm going, but I'm going in the name of the Lord."

William Seward

William Henry Seward, U.S. secretary of state and architect of the Alaska Purchase, was asked if he had any final words. He replied, "Nothing, only 'love one another.'"

Harriet Tubman

When Harriet Tubman was dying in 1913, she gathered her family around and they sang together. Her last words were "Swing low, sweet chariot."

The Internet will tell you that Beethoven said on his deathbed, "I shall hear in heaven," that Groucho Marx exclaimed, "Die, my dear? Why, that's the last thing I shall do!" and that Oscar Wilde griped, "This wallpaper will be the death of me—one of us will have to go," but there's not always much evidence to support those quotes as last words. So, whether those are true or not is up for some debate, but the idea of famous last words piqued my interest as I thought about how Peter, not on his deathbed, but finishing up this important correspondence, would end his letter to the church.

The last words of any letter or any conversation are often the most important. They are often words that are going to be emphasized and even ones that have been spoken before. Verse after verse before the closing, Peter will, from multiple angles, tell these believers to stand firm, hold on, and keep going. So, guess what he says in the closing. Stand firm.

Read 1Peter 5:6-14 | Stand firm. He doesn't want them to forget or to gloss over the critical idea. Life in a different kingdom is going to require them to be resolute. And that work as he has noted and as they know all too well, is hard. **Moreover, Peter reminds them once again that their travail will be short-lived and that God himself will set all things right.** But, here is the last piece of good news, they are not alone. There are those that send their greetings to this bedraggled group. They are all in this together. And they are in this with Christ, the one who brings peace. These are important things to not forget for life in a different kingdom.

Big Idea: Don't let your sufferings distract you from God's plans.

There are 4 things that Peter wants us NOT TO FORGET, so that we can stand firm, not letting our sufferings distract from God's plans. DON'T FORGET

Pride quickly makes our problems worse. (vv.6-7)

- (V6) Four imperatives form Peter's concluding exhortation in verses 6–9: (1) be humbled, therefore, under God's mighty hand (2) be clear-minded and (3) on the alert; and (4) take your stand against the devil.
- From humility before others, Peter passes to humility before God: *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God*. 'Therefore' connects this statement with the quotation in verse 5: if God opposes the proud it is true wisdom to humble oneself before him. Among other things this will involve bowing to God's wisdom, accepting the twists and turns of his providence, and entrusting all our concerns to him. Though this may well mean personal disadvantage in this life, it is always in the believer's interest to humble himself or herself before God so *that in due time he may exalt you*. **Humility – is not thinking less of yourself but thinking of yourself less.**
 - To "be humbled" implies a decision to remain faithful to Christ even knowing that humiliation will result. The command to be humbled *under God's mighty hand* is a command to accept, though not to seek, difficult circumstances as a part of God's deliverance, neither railing against God ("Why did this happen to me?" "What did I do to deserve this?") nor raging against those causing the difficulty, but rather blessing those who insult and injure (3:9).

What does it mean to humble ourselves under God's mighty hand? It is to live with an utter dependence upon his grace and mercy.

(v7) A key question – But who is going to look out for me?

- *Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you*. Peter continues the command of verse 6 ('Humble yourselves ...') with a participial phrase telling how this is to be done. Proper humility is attained **by** 'casting all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you'.
- Peter recognizes that a great barrier to putting others first and thinking of them as more important is the legitimate human concern '**But who then will care for me?**' The answer is that God himself will care for our needs. He is able to do so far better than we are (his hand is 'mighty', v. 6), and he wants to do so, for he continually *cares* for his children. **Therefore casting all your anxieties on him is the path to humility, freeing a person from constant concern for himself and enabling him or her truly to be concerned for the needs of others.**
- Clarification | As someone familiar with anxiety, do not hear this as a simplistic answer. "Don't worry, just trust God" can imply that if you are ever anxious or dealing with significant anxiety and mental health issues, that you are just not trusting God. I know many people who continue to trust God while they seek practical medical help and professional counseling to help them process anxiety, panic attacks, and the challenges that come with that.

Illustration/Application ideas – Who can you trust to watch out for your interests while you focus on other needs? **Casting your anxieties on God means trusting this promise that He cares for you and has the wisdom and power to put that care to work in your life.**

Pride, the opposite of humility, looks like self-sufficiency, self-reliance, looking out for #1 because no one else will. – FOR ME, trusting God with my kids, with my marriage, has been the biggest act of faith.

There is a 2nd thing that Peter wants us **NOT TO FORGET**, so that we can stand firm, not letting our sufferings distract from God's plans. **DON'T FORGET.**

Stay focused and steady. (vv.8-9)

- (V8) *A new section begins here with an admonition to spiritual watchfulness. Just as a person walking down a dangerous road might be advised to be alert and careful, so Peter's readers are warned, to be 'watching' for sin, for attacks of evil. **The opposite of this sober watchfulness is a kind of spiritual drowsiness in which one sees and responds to situations no differently than unbelievers, and God's perspective on each event is seldom if ever considered.***

Illustration | Staying focused and steady spiritually means being alert to our own tendency to wander toward sin and to be tripped up by the attacks of evil. It's seeing these things through God's eyes, not the culture's eyes. Not making time to talk to God and hear from Him, cutting yourself off relationally, dismissing your patterns of sin, filling the "God-shaped hole" in your life with other stuff, or not using the gifts God has given you to love others are all DANGEROUS warning signs. Wake up, be alert, turn to God and turn from sin. He offers you more grace today. Don't forget.

- *Peter already warned us that because the end is at hand, we are to keep our heads about us and think soberly (4:7). Now he reminds us once again to think soberly (5:8). This time, he adds that we're also to be "watchful." Sobriety and alertness are required because "your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." Peter is saying that the devil stands behind the evil intentions of our persecutors. Ever since the Garden of Eden, Satan has been seeking to "devour" God's people.*

Often Christians have either been obsessive or dismissive about the devil.

***"There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight."* - (The Screwtape Letters, Preface, C.S. Lewis)**

- *When we suffer, we may be tempted to think that life is better for everyone else—that if we only abandon Christ, our suffering will be relieved. But, we remain steadfast in our faith, knowing that our suffering is not unique. All Christians everywhere face similar suffering, and God is at work in all our suffering to strengthen our faith and perfect our character in order that we may obtain our imperishable inheritance.*

(V9) Instead – Stand Firm, knowing He will exalt us

- Far from saying that Christians should fear such a formidable adversary, Peter says, *Resist him, firm in your faith.* This is an encouraging verse, for it gives hope that Christian resistance to the devil's attacks will be successful. While it is wrong to ignore the devil's existence, it is also wrong to cower before him in fear: *Resist him!* The phrase *firm in your faith* implies a confidence that God will intervene and give the Christian victory, not defeat. The word *resist* implies active, determined opposition, often through confrontation.

- **How should Christians resist the devil?** Peter does not tell us, but Paul's discussion of the equipment for spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6:10–18 guides us. In practical terms, all the positive resources of the Christian life are to be used — prayer, the word of God, praise, the help of fellow believers, verbal rebuke of the enemy, renewed holiness of life in short 'the whole armor of God'.

Let's remember the truth Peter wrote to the church, regarding LIFE IN A DIFFERENT KINGDOM

- **We stand firm** knowing that while the world may take everything away from us, it cannot take our glorious identity or our imperishable future, because we are elect exiles, set apart by the Holy Spirit for the salvation accomplished by Christ, and now on our way home (1:1–2).
- **We stand firm** knowing that even though the world may kill us, we have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ to an imperishable inheritance (1:3–5).
- **We stand firm** knowing that God does not waste our suffering; he intends for it to purify our faith

in order that we may obtain our future salvation when Christ is revealed (1:6–9).

- *We stand firm* knowing that our Lord Jesus Christ traveled the road marked with righteous suffering and blazed the path for us to follow (2:21–25).
- *We stand firm* knowing that if we suffer for doing good we will be blessed (3:8–17) and will be exalted to glory as Christ was (3:18–22).
- *We stand firm* knowing that as we share in Christ’s sufferings, we are proven to be Christians (4:12–19).
- ***We stand firm by humbling ourselves under God’s mighty hand, knowing that he will exalt us (5:6–11).***

Illustration ideas/Application ideas – In humility, wait for God to exalt you in His time and strength.

Brock Purdy – making the most of the few reps he got in practice, embracing the “Mr. Irrelevant” title, taking time with Christian McCaffery to get him caught up on the playbook after a mid-season trade. He’s an example of doing the next right thing, not knowing if anyone will notice or when it will pay off.

There is a 3rd thing that Peter wants us **NOT TO FORGET**, so that we can stand firm, not letting our sufferings distract from God’s plans. **DON’T FORGET.**

Look at the long-game. (vv.10-11)

(V10) In the light of the eternal glory, a lifetime in this body is but a little while.

- The sense of this verse is that the suffering and the attacks of the devil which accompany the suffering—and are the cause of some of it—may seem difficult *but* they will not last long. Indeed, *after you have suffered a little while*—an expression intentionally vague, allowing for restoration either in this present life or later—the *God of all grace* will restore them.
- Although Peter acknowledges the inevitability of Christian suffering according to God’s will, he also affirms the relative brevity of it: “after you have suffered a little” (5:10). Therefore, Peter is more likely saying here that in the light of the eternal glory, which believers have in Christ, a lifetime in this body is but a little while.

Illustration – Imagine a point right here at the tip of my finger, on a string that stretches for an infinity in both directions. The trials we experience for Jesus here in this life, are like that.

- Peter uses **four nearly synonymous verbs** to describe what God himself will do for the benefit of the faithful Christians after that little while has passed: God “will himself put things right, strengthen, empower, and secure you.” Peter probably uses these four verbs as a rhetorical crescendo, raising our eyes to look toward the complete act of God at the consummation of all things.

(V11) A key question – What gives us confidence in God during suffering?

- A concluding brief doxology appropriately looks to God’s power and rule over a world where so much evil is present, a world so badly in need of God’s just reign: *To him be the dominion for ever and ever, Amen.*
- This is the second occurrence of dominion, previously used in Peter’s doxology of 4:11, where God’s eternal glory and dominion are identified with Jesus Christ. His demonstrations of power in history that deliver his people from the oppression of persecution (5:6). In the Baker Commentary on the NT it is stated like this, **“To call Christ Lord and proclaim God to be King is to be humbled under God’s mighty display of eternal power rather than to cower before the pale might of any earthly ruler.”**

Illustration ideas/Application ideas – We have many small examples of delayed gratification here in

this life. They are echoes of the truth that God can be trusted when He asks us to trust that He cares and will prevail through suffering. Knee surgery, flossing your teeth, taking your meds, eating vegetables, saving money, etc.

There is a 4th thing that Peter wants us NOT TO FORGET, so that we can stand firm, not letting our sufferings distract from God's plans. DON'T FORGET.

You have others in your corner. (vv.12-14)

12a.

- *Paul had Silvanus (aka Silas) closely connected with his ministry. In fact, Acts 15:22 names Silas as a messenger carrying the apostolic letter from Jerusalem. Paul is not alone. There are others with him in Christ. Others who have experienced the true grace of God.*
- *The major theological statement of the closing is Peter's apostolic affirmation that what he has written is the true grace of God, in which his readers are to take their stand (5:12). Peter's readers have been given new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. By definition that living hope puts them at odds, to some extent, with the society in which they must live. And yet in the midst of whatever they might suffer because of their faith in Christ, they also have great joy and peace that come only from being right with God, the Creator and Judge of all.*

13.

- *And Peter and Silas are not alone. She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, must mean the church at Rome—for no one individual would be so well known to all the churches of Peter's readers as to be identifiable from such an anonymous reference. The whole church at Rome sends you greetings. And so does my son Mark indicates the presence of Mark with Peter and shows a close association with the author of the second Gospel.*

14a.

- *These are genuine and deep friendships in Christ. The gospel brings strangers together like family. V. 14 says, Greet one another with the kiss of love. Although we may dismiss this as simply a custom belonging to first-century culture, this genuine expression of love in Christ highlights the close friendships that form this LIFE IN A DIFFERENT KINGDOM.*

14b.

- *FINALLY, one more thought from Peter. Peace to all of you that are in Christ is what these believers needed, peace within for troubled minds and hearts, and peace without when God grants them rest from their sufferings (cf. 'peace' in 1:2b). 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.*
 - Life – Together
 - On mission together – Connecting people to life-defining relationships in Christ.
 - “The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.” – Tim Keller

Illustration ideas/Application ideas – Who are you on mission with? Who are you fishing with?

Stand Firm

"To be worth anything, character must be capable of standing firm upon its feet in the world of daily work, temptation and trial; and able to bear the wear and tear of actual life. Cloistered virtues do not count for much."

