

• *Concluding words*

**1. The ministry of the church requires teamwork**

• *The bearer of the letter - Silvanus*

• *Also known as Silus*

• *Possibly called on to explain the letter further*

**2. The ministry of the church is a ministry of grace**

• *We Christians need encouragement*

• *Grace will sustain them in the trials that are coming*

• *Stand firm*

**3. The ministry of the church involves gracious friendliness**

Now Peter comes to his concluding words. We see in them some of the characteristics that are needed in the work of God's kingdom.

1. **The ministry of the church requires teamwork.** This is something one constantly notices in the New Testament. Peter explains how he expects to have the help of Silvanus in sending the letter to Pontus, the first of the towns of 1 Peter 1:1. *'Through Silvanus, the faithful brother as I regard him, I have written to you a few words...'* It has been debated whether this means that Silvanus was the bearer of the letter, or whether it means that he was the secretary who helped Peter write his letter. A study of the use of the word 'through' in sentences like these tends to support the view that Silvanus was the bearer of the letter and no more (see 'through the hand of' in Acts 15:22,23 where Silas is the same as the Silvanus of 1 Peter 5:12). It is quite possible that Peter used a secretary, but it is not likely that the secretary was Silvanus.

Peter commends Silvanus because he was a valued co-worker. He is the same person as 'Silas' mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament<sup>1</sup>. Possibly Silvanus would have to expound Peter's letter and Peter wants to assure the Christians in Roman Asia Minor that he is a trustworthy fellow worker. It is part of Christian fellowship to commend other Christian workers when we can. Peter and Silvanus and others are part of a team. Silvanus was willing to take Peter's letter from Rome to Pontus. When he arrived he might well have to represent Peter and explain the letter further.

2. **The ministry of the church is a ministry of grace.** Peter underlines the theme of his letter. *'I have written to you a few words' he says, 'exhorting and witnessing that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it'*<sup>1</sup>.

His letter has been a letter of exhortation and encouragement. God's people can easily get discouraged and fainthearted. They need words of encouragement and exhortation – as we Christians of today do also.

Peter has testified of God's grace. He has spoken of God's gift of new birth and Jesus' saving death upon the cross. He has assured us of God's concern for us. It is grace that people need. There is not much motivation in heavy threat or imposing a multiplicity of regulations. Jesus' burden is easy; His yoke is light. These Christians, who are about to face greater persecution than they have ever known, need to hear about God's grace. It is grace that will sustain them in the trials and troubles that are coming upon them.

The graciousness of God in our lives requires confident faith. 'Stand firm in it!' Peter says. Despite what troubles and trials, what doubts and difficulties may come, stand firm in confident expectation that God's grace will give you all the help you need.

3. **The ministry of the church involves gracious friendliness.** Peter gives greetings from the Christians at Rome (*'She [the church] who is in Babylon, who is chosen like you, greets you'*). And he gives greetings from Mark who is with him. He says: *'And so does Mark my son'*<sup>1</sup>. 'Babylon' is a way of speaking of Rome. Peter says 'Babylon' to speak of the paganism and worldliness of the city.

<sup>1</sup> see Acts 15:22-40; 16:19-29; 17:10-15; 18:5; 2 Corinthians 1:19; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1

<sup>1</sup> 5:12

<sup>1</sup> 5:13

• Greetings from God's people in Rome

• Little greetings are important in maintaining friendships

• Love must be expressed!

• Cultural differences

**Peter 'signs-off'**

• Final words of blessing

• The peace of God

Mark is with Peter, acting as his 'son', his friend and assistant. It might be thought that these greetings are simply formal courtesies and do not require much attention from us. Yet greetings are more important than one might think. When little courtesies are omitted a lot of ill-will and suspicion are created. Little courtesies such as these – a 'hello', a 'good morning' or 'farewell' or a 'Praise God' are little points-of-contact in friendship. They do not seem very important and yet when they are lacking, their absence is noticed. Any person wishing to maintain friendship will take care of the little greetings. Peter does so at the beginning<sup>☞1</sup> and now at the end of his letter. Greetings such as these make 'connections' with people. We soon get 'disconnected' if there are no 'hellos' and 'goodbyes', no 'Good mornings' or 'Goodnights'. Such things seem small but if omitted through a kind of superior spirit or sheer sleepiness in such matters, there will soon be trouble and the people concerned become disconnected. Little courtesies such as these make or mar a friendship, a marriage, or a church. Peter is careful to include them in his letter. And he tells them to pay attention to such matters also: 'Greet one another with the kiss of love'. Love must be **expressed!** It is no good claiming love for another person if the love is somehow secret or only hinted at! Pride tends to hinder the expression of love even when affection is present, but such pride must be overcome. 'Greet one another with the kiss of love', says Peter. Of course such concerns are partly a matter of culture. Different cultures might express affection differently, but however it might be done, it should be done! Love must be expressed in elementary salutations and greetings.

☞1 1:2

Finally comes Peter's own last word – one might call it a final friendly 'disconnecting' until one meets again. 'Peace be to you all, you people in Christ'<sup>☞1</sup>. He wished peace for them at the beginning of his letter<sup>☞2</sup>; in the middle of his letter he told them to pursue it<sup>☞3</sup>. Now he gives his last greeting; and his final wish for them is for peace. There could be no greater blessing in a time of persecution, and Peter is confident that it is possible to be at peace despite the conflicts and pressure that will come when a fiery trial comes upon them. 'Peace' follows on naturally from the references to grace<sup>☞4</sup> and love<sup>☞5</sup>. Anyone who lives in dependence on God's grace and shows love to God's people is likely to experience God's peace.

☞1 5:14  
☞2 1:2  
☞3 3:11

☞4 5:12  
☞5 5:14a



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