

1 Peter

Week 9: Humility in God's Household

Scripture

1 Peter 5:1-7

Review

As we are coming to a close in the letter Peter wrote to these dispersed exiles, I think we need to grasp the overall POINT he is trying to make to his readers...

“Jesus is our hope in the midst of our suffering. And suffering is an opportunity to show others the surprising generosity and love of Jesus, which is fueled by the hope of his return.” – The Bible Project

Christians will suffer, as Christ suffered; however, they are not without hope – hope in His indwelling Spirit to strengthen and hope of an eternal home in heaven.

This hope should lead us to not only look forward to Christ's return for us, but also live right now in light of eternity.

Motivation

But I think it is interesting where Peter concludes his letter.

He has spent all this time pointing us toward Christ, but now Peter provides some “earthly guides” to encourage and help us during times of suffering.

Who are they? Elders.

When the Bible talks about elders, it's not talking about some board of executives who make all the decisions behind closed doors.

An elder is a spiritually mature follower of Jesus who helps shepherd God's people.

In Scripture, the words elder, pastor, and overseer all describe that same role.

Because of suffering and persecution, the need of pastoral leadership was important for the local churches.

Information

Let's dig a little deeper into elders and those under their care...

▪ **Elders are shepherds of God's people**

- ✓ Peter was also an elder

1 Peter 5:1 (ESV) So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed

- ✓ Peter understood the role of an elder (shepherd God's people)

1 Peter 5:2 (ESV) ...shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; **3** not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

*The Greek word he uses for **shepherd** is deeper than just leading. It means...*

- **To feed** – make sure their sheep have what they need to grow and stay healthy. For elders, that means feeding the church the truth of God's Word.
- **To guide** - doesn't drive sheep from behind but walks ahead of them. Spiritual leadership is about example, not control.
- **To protect** - shepherds watch for wolves, cliffs, and storms. For elders, they should have a heart for the safety of the flock.

- ✓ A word on shepherding with your leader in mind...

"It will always be our wisdom, dear friends, to put ourselves as much as we can into the position of those whom we address. It is a pity for anyone ever to seem to preach down to people; it is always better to be as nearly as possible on the same level as they are." – Charles Spurgeon

▪ **Elders can receive a reward for their work**

1 Peter 5:4 (ESV) And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

- ✓ An elder will give an account to Jesus one day

"It is important for shepherds (elders/pastors) to realize that they lead *Jesus'* sheep. *He* is the Shepherd, *He* is the Overseer. In this sense, the Christian shepherd doesn't work for the sheep, he works for the Chief Shepherd." – David Guzik

- ✓ Their reward will be the unfading crown of glory

"Here the common image is used to indicate the eternal honor or reputation that elders who serve well will receive from Christ at his return. They may be despised on earth, but they will be honored in heaven. And that is something well worth working and suffering for." - NICNT

▪ **Elders, and those under their care, should be humble**

1 Peter 5:5 (ESV) Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” **6** Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you...

✓ Younger and less mature believers should humbly place themselves under the authority of the elders

“You who are younger probably means younger members of the congregation, who are more likely to be headstrong and resistant to leadership. They are to subject themselves to the elders.” – ESV Study Bible

- ✓ Both elders and God’s people should live in humility toward one another
- We don’t view ourselves as above each other, but here to serve each other
 - We don’t insist on our own way, but look for God’s way together
 - We don’t compete for attention, but celebrate one another
- ✓ All are to humble themselves before God and He’ll exalt you
- This means God sees your faithfulness, your quiet obedience, your unseen service and He’ll lift you up when the time is right.*

And then there’s this seemingly outlying verse we use, but let’s see it in context...

1 Peter 5:7 (ESV) ...casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

Verse 7 isn’t a new thought, but it’s the application of verse 6.

Peter says, “*Humble yourselves under God’s mighty hand...*” — and then he tells you how to do that by “*...casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.*”

Humility isn’t just how you treat people; it’s how you trust God...

- Pride says, “*I’ve got this.*”
- Humility says, “*God, I can’t carry this, but You can.*”

When I humble myself under God, I’m acknowledging that His power and timing are better than mine. When I cast my anxieties on Him, I’m proving that I believe that.

Humility before God always shows up as dependence on God. That’s why the verse ends with the reminder “*...because He cares for you.*”

We can hand over our worries not because we’re strong, but because He is.