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The Christian's Best Friend 1 Peter 5:5-7

Thank you for being here this morning as we continue our study of 1 Peter. We have two more weeks in 1 Peter. We have this week and next week and then we will be off on Easter. Then on Sunday April 16 we will begin a 6 week study on the power of the resurrection from 1 Corinthians 15. The title for our lesson this morning is the Christian's best friend. No, I am not going to be talking about your favorite pet this morning. The best friend that I have in mind is humility. Pursuing humility is always important, especially during seasons of adversity.

Years ago a pastor named John Stott wrote something that we all need to hear, "At every stage of our Christian development and in every sphere of our Christian discipleship, pride is the greatest enemy and humility our greatest friend." That's what we want to consider this morning from 1 Peter 5:5-7. Let's start by reading 1 Peter 5:5-7 together and then we will talk about humility in action and humility in anxieties.

1 Peter 5:5-7

- 5 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,
- 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

How many of you have ever met a man who wasn't the CEO in the detail department of life? Some men are not super gifted at details. Peter should encourage such men. The new birth transformed Peter into a pastor who was

very detailed. In these three verses we see Peter addressing everyone in there church. Everyone has a specific role to play in the body of Christ, especially during seasons of suffering.

Throughout this letter we see Peter providing detailed instructions to various people in the church who were going through various challenges in the Christian life. In chapter 2 he addresses believers living under a hostile government and tells them how to respond. He addresses household slaves who had crooked masters and tells them how to specifically respond. He always brings believers back to the gospel as he motives their obedience. He addresses Christian wives married to men who are disobedient to the Word in chapter 3 and then he addresses Christian men. Peter provides specific instructions to specific people in the church throughout this letter.

In this section of Scripture, particularly verse 5, Peter is providing specific instruction to believers in the church. Peter cares about how Christians conduct themselves in the church. Peter knows how important the local church is to God's purposes in this world to put His glory on display and so he provides specific instructions to one specific group in the church and then he provides specific instructions to every group in the church.

What you might find interesting in these three verses is that the key ingredient to glorifying God when you do His will and suffer for it is...humility.

I'd like to divide 1 Peter 5:5-7 into three sections:

Humility in attitude, in action and in anxieties. Let's start with:

1. Humility in Attitude - 1 Peter 5:5

1 Peter 5:5

Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders.

Last week Scott taught on the role of elders in the church from 1 Peter 5:1-4. Peter reminds elders who are suffering in 1 Peter 5:1-4 what their role is and how they will be rewarded by Christ when he returns. Next, Peter turns his attention in verse 5 to younger people. For younger people to glorify God in the church they must have a submissive heart toward their God appointed elders.

What does likewise mean? The New American Standard begins with, "You younger men, likewise." The NIV - the nearly Inspired Version (I'm just kidding) begins with, "In the same way." Likewise means that just as God has a role for undershepherds in the church in the first four verses, and He also has a role for younger people in the church. Peter is moving from leaders in verses 1-4 to those who are younger in verse 5. "You who are younger."

The role of young people in the church is just as serious as the role of shepherds. It may not seem that way but it's true. Young people play a vital role in the local church. Young people are mentioned throughout the New Testament, especially in the pastoral letters (1-2 Timothy and Titus):

1 Timothy 5:1-2

- 5:1** Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers,
2 older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.

Titus 2:4-6

- 4** and so train the young women to love their husbands and children,
5 to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.
6 Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled.

Younger probably has to do with more than just age. **It also has to do with those who are younger in the faith and in their own Christian experience.**

Young people need wisdom to grow. They need men and women with grey hair or no hair who have gone through some trials and learned a few things to take them under their wing and help them grow up in Christ.

What attitude does Peter call the younger people in the church to display to their God appointed under-shepherds? 1 Peter 5:5, "Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders." That is a present imperative command for all younger people in the church.

It is an attitude of voluntary submission. God commands young people to intentionally place themselves under their God appointed leadership and to learn from them. **To be subject indicates a spirit of cooperation as opposed to dissatisfaction with the leadership.** It describes a willingness to support the pastors' directions, as long as pastor's are not leading them into something God's Word clearly forbids.

I think each age group the Bible also has their own unique temptations. I think that's why Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:22 to flee youthful lusts. There are specific temptations for young people. What is a specific temptation for a younger person? **A temptation for young people is to think they know more than they do and to not be teachable.** A temptation for young people is to do more talking than listening.

I think Peter tees up this command to younger people because Peter remembered times when his younger self got in the way. Throughout the gospels Peter is an example of a young man who was arrogant and at times unteachable. It's been close to 30 years since Peter had been physically with his Savior. Peter could remember times when his younger self was prone to talk to Jesus or tell Jesus what to do more than he was to listen to Jesus and do what Jesus says.

Peter's younger self was prone to draw up his own plan when it conflicted with what Jesus said was going to happen.

Right after Peter gets Jesus right as the Messiah, we read in Matthew 16:21-23

- 21** From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.
- 22** And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you."
- 23** But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

What was Peter like at this time? Peter was saved by faith in Christ, but Peter was unwilling too listen and follow the plan of Christ. Peter thought he knew better than the Messiah. That's no bueno. Later on when Jesus told Peter he would deny him the night before the cross Peter, what did Peter say? Instead of taking Jesus at His word and asking Jesus to help him stay faithful, proud young buck Peter said in Matthew 26:35, "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!" As a young man Peter consistently said and did the wrong things because he was not submissive to Christ. Peter learned the hard way that doing your own thing as a young believer leads to spiritual pain.

Peter could look back on his younger self and he could see evidences of pride and not humility. Peter had a submission problem and it eventually caught up to Him and God broke him. As an older man he writes to younger people in the church and says, "Learn from my mistakes." He is telling younger people in the church to willingly put themselves under the leadership of people put in leadership by Christ. Learn from them.

Throughout this letter I think Peter tells various groups to submit in order to protect them. God's spiritual protection plan for younger people in the church - Younger meaning age or Christian experience is to submit to their God appointed

shepherds and learn from their teaching and their example. You do not follow such men when they do not teach sound doctrine or lead you into sin. But if they are teaching you the truth and following the character traits Peter lays out in 1 Peter 5:14-, you submit to their God given authority for the good of your soul.

Godly young people submit to their shepherds because they want to make sure they are serving Christ the right way for the right reasons. They assume they have some areas where they still need to grow in. We all do, right? **Young people who glorify God in the church are cooperative and not contentious.** In the beginning of verse 5 Peter provides clear and detailed instructions for younger people in the church.

The next group Peter addresses in verse 5 leaves no one out. Peter starts with humility in attitude for the younger people in the church and then he moves to humility in action to everyone in the church. If we want to make a God glorifying contribution to the local church, which most people who come to a class like this want for their lives, the end of verse 5 is a command that is indispensable. Without this attitude we cannot honor Christ in the church.

The next thing we see from the end of verse 5 through verse 7 is:

2. Humility in Action - 1 Peter 5:5b

1 Peter 5:5-7

- 5 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.”

Peter moves in these verses from the specific attitude of younger people in the church to the specific attitude for everyone in the church. I sort of picture Peter like a coach here. He calls all of these local churches together and he calls a

play. Alright, I've addressed the younger people. You must be submissive to your God appointed shepherds. Now, all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another. Why Peter? Because God continually opposes the proud but continually gives grace to the humble. Okay ready, break! Let's go do it!

Peter wants every Christian to be a benefit to the body of Christ. A blessing and not a burden. A delight and not a destructive force. How do we pursue being a blessing to the body of Christ? Take the form of a servant. Christians who benefit the body of Christ understand the connection between salvation and service. We are saved to serve one another (Galatians 5:13).

To clothe yourself means to adorn yourself. The picture is of putting on a beautiful garment. The original audience would have pictured a household slave tying on an apron to serve. **The wearing of an apron set the person apart as a servant.**

True greatness in Scripture is an expression of true humility. Where did Peter learn humility? Peter learned humility from the Master Himself. Peter learned humility from Christ. He watched Christ serve all the way to death. Mark 10:45, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for all." What sets Christ and Christianity apart from all the other religions is that our God came to serve us and to die for our sins. To become more like Christ means changing your mindset from selfish to sacrificial.

Peter saw the ultimate service and the ultimate sacrifice lived out in the Lord Jesus Christ. Look with me in your Bible at John 13. John 13:1-5 is a beautiful portrait of humility at work as God in human flesh assumes the role of a servant the night before the cross.

John 13:1-5

- 13:1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.
- 2 During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,
 - 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God,
 - 4 rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist.
 - 5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

What freed Jesus to serve others? Jesus knew where He came from and where He was going. Do we know who we are as the people of God and do we know His plan for our lives? Yes we do! Peter reminds us in 1 Peter that God set His love on us in eternity past and that God has a plan for us to be with Christ for all eternity. Knowing that plan and the security of God's plan should free us to serve one another.

Jesus' security in who He was and why He came is what led to His service. Because Jesus knew who He was and where He was going He took the role of a servant and washed the disciples feet. **I don't think Peter ever got over that.** The night before Jesus shed His blood on the cross He wasn't thinking about Himself - Jesus was taking the role of a slave and serving others. Some images stick in our minds forever and I think this image stuck in Peter's mind.

This is really important. Really practical I think. When life is hard, our temptation is to withdraw. It's to distance ourselves from one another and only think about ourselves. Peter is telling us that during stressful seasons, when doing the will of God leads to challenges in life, those are the times to double down on serving God's people. This is what we see Jesus doing the night before the cross - He wasn't only focusing on Himself - He was focusing on serving the disciples. If you want to maintain joy when you suffer for doing God's will try and think less about yourself and more about serving others.

I think every time we walk up to the church building, from whatever it is we park, we should be telling ourselves - I am saved to serve. I am not saved to be served. Galatians 5:13 shows us how to use our freedom in Christ the right way, "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." You know you are making spiritual progress when you are thinking about yourself less and thinking about other people more.

Why do we need so many reminders about humility? Because God is actively opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble. Isn't this what we see all through the Bible? Throughout the Bible we see God punishing proud people and exalting humble people. This is one reason I am thankful for the Old Testament. There are many reasons we should be thankful for the Old Testament. One of those reasons is that we get to learn through precept what other people learned through pain so that we do not follow in their footsteps.

Remember King Uzziah. 2 Chronicles 26 describes King Uzziah. He was 16 years old when he became King in Judah. How did Uzziah start his reign? As solid as a Jersey Mike's Sub Sandwich. I had my first jersey mike's sub sandwich last week. Man, those things are dangerously good. Anyway, listen to how King Uzziah started out:

2 Chronicles 26:1-5

- 26:1 And all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah.
- 2 He built Eloth and restored it to Judah, after the king slept with his fathers.
 - 3 Uzziah was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecoliah of Jerusalem.

- 4 And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah had done.
- 5 He set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God, and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper.

That's a solid start right there. Uzziah's reign started out well. He sought the Lord (1-5) and the Lord gave him success (6-15). Uzziah defeated armies, built up cities, cultivated the land, and outfitted the army. "He was marvelously helped, Scripture tells us, until He was strong." That's how the King James Version puts it in 2 Chronicles 26:15. "But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction." Uzziah's downfall came through a wrong view of where strength comes from. Uzziah learned the hard way that pride is our greatest enemy and humility our best friend. **His pride led to disobedience and his disobedience led to leprosy.**

Listen to how 2 Chronicles 26:16-23 describes the end of his life:

- 16 But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was unfaithful to the Lord his God and entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense.
- 17 But Azariah the priest went in after him, with eighty priests of the Lord who were men of valor,
- 18 and they withstood King Uzziah and said to him, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the sanctuary, for you have done wrong, and it will bring you no honor from the Lord God."
- 19 Then Uzziah was angry. Now he had a censer in his hand to burn incense, and when he became angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead in the presence of the priests in the house of the Lord, by the altar of incense.
- 20 And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was leprous in his forehead! And they rushed him out quickly, and he himself hurried to go out, because the Lord had struck him.
- 21 And King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death, and being a leper lived in a separate house, for he was excluded from the house of the Lord. And Jotham his son was over the king's household, governing the people of the land.

- 22** Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, from first to last, Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz wrote.
- 23** And Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the burial field that belonged to the kings, for they said, "He is a leper." And Jotham his son reigned in his place.

Friends, Uzziah appears to have pursued humility for 36 years and then the PRIDE virus took over his heart and he disobeyed God's Word, rejected the reproof of the priests and God struck him with leprosy. There was a pattern to the peril of pride. A wrong view of where strength comes from led to a disregard for God's Word led to a rebuttal of wise counsel and then his life was destroyed.

Uzziah pursued humility for a long long time, but not the whole time. We must be a people that pursue humility the whole time. All the way until the trumpet sounds and our Savior returns we have to be pursuing this attitude. I am saved to serve others for there glory of God! Why I here! We know that God's attitude is different toward the humble. God gives grace to the humble. God is actively working for humble people. He is on the side of this who deals with the perils of pride through putting on the garments of humility.

In verse 5 Peter describes humility in attitude and in action. In verses 6-7 Peter describes:

2. Humility in Anxieties - 1 Peter 5:6-7

1 Peter 5:6-7

- 6** Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,
- 7** casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

Verse 6 starts a new section. Peter is going to end his letter with a number of exhortations. He is addressing practical areas of the Christian life. He begins helping Christians handle the anxieties that come our way in the service of Christ. In verses 6-7 Peter provides us with God's antidote for the anxieties of life.

The word anxious is the idea of being deeply concerned, worried, completely occupied with, or showing obsessive interest in that which is weighing heavily on our hearts. This word is both plural and in the present tense. Meaning their cares were many and they were ongoing.

What does God tell us to do before He tells us what to do with our anxieties? The first thing God tells us to do is to humble ourselves. That's the first step. Before Peter addresses our approach to anxieties he addresses our attitude toward the Lord. This is a command. If we are commanded to humble ourselves, what does that mean? It's not natural. If we are commanded to do something it means we are not this way naturally. The natural thing to do when hard things enter our lives is to trust ourselves. I got this. No, we don't got this. We need a new approach.

What's the new approach? Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. If you know that God actively opposes proud people, but actively gives grace to the humble then you should obey this command at once. **In the context of 1 Peter it means in their distress they are not to shake their fist at the heavens but accept their sufferings as God's will.** Wow!

Mark Dubis, "They are to regard these circumstances as God's sovereign will for them. As a result, in their distress they are not to shake their fist at the heavens but are to humbly accept their suffering as God's will, at least for the time being. When Christ returns, God will lift them from this humbled state to a position of honored exaltation."

If we see suffering as outside the will of God then we will murmur and complain. If we see suffering the way Jesus saw it we will rejoice in the Lord because we know He is in control and He will exalt us at the proper time, wherever it happens in this life or when Christ returns.

Okay, do how does God sustain us when we suffer in His service? What do we do with the inevitable anxieties that come our way in the service of Christ? Verse 7, "casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you." Peter points us to who God is in verse 6 and how we humble ourselves in verse 7. We humble ourselves under God's mighty hand **by** casting all of our anxieties on the Lord. He can handle whatever He sovereignly sends your way and He cares for you. That's personal language right there. He cares about **you**. You should write your name in there for you.

Picture a large stone. The large stone represents whatever is causing you anxiety this morning. Does it ever feel like the pressures of life are so heavy that they will crush you? Peter says to take all of the weight of those pressures and cast them back on the Lord. He is all powerful and He cares for you. He can handle what you cannot handle.

What is really at the root of anxiety is pride. C.J. Manahey writes, "I've discovered how true that is about myself and my soul. Where there's worry, where there's anxiousness, pride is at the root of it. When I am experiencing anxiety, the root issue is that I'm trying to be self-sufficient. I am acting independent of God. What's the solution? Humble yourself. How? Acknowledge your need for God. Cast your cares upon him and He will transform you. He will give you grace when you humble yourself. He will make you care free – not responsibility free, but carefree. You'll be free from care. You'll instead be characterized by joy and peace."

I'd like to close our time providing some directions for pursuing humility on a daily basis:

1. Reflect daily on the wonder of the cross

Martyn Lloyd Jones writes about how doing this daily weakens pride and cultivates humility:

"There is only one thing I know about that crushes me to the ground and humiliates me to the dust, and that is to look at the Son of God, and especially contemplate the cross. When I survey the wondrous Cross on which the prince of glory died, my richest gain I count but loss in pour contempt on all my pride. Nothing else can do it. When I see that I am a sinner... That nothing but the Son of God on the cross can save me, I'm humbled to the dust... Nothing but the cross can you give us the spirit of humility."

A man named Carl Henry was used mightily by God for His glory. He once addressed the truth that kept him from getting a big head, "How can anyone be arrogant when he stands beside the cross?" It's harder to be proud when you live in the shadow of the cross and you remember that your only contribution to the plan of salvation is the sin that made it necessary for God to send and sacrifice His Son for you.

To grow in humility reflect daily on the wonder of the cross:

2. Begin your day acknowledging your need for God and dependence on God

How we begin our morning sets the tone for the rest of the day. Purpose every morning when your eyes open to turn your first thoughts toward the Lord. When you wake up sin is active. Sin is waiting. Begin by telling yourself the truth. Maybe it's a few verses in a Psalm that you memorize. Like Psalm 73:25-26, "Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

I love what Charles Bridges writes about trusting in the Lord with all our hearts. "God loves to be consulted. Therefore take all thy difficulties to be resolved by Him. Be in the habit of going to Him in the first place - before self will, self pleasing, self wisdom. Human friends, convenience, expediency. Before any of these have been consulted go to God at once. **Consider no circumstance too clear to need His direction.**"

Isn't that good? It reminds me of the wisdom provided by God through James to people enduring trials. James 1:5, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." Knowing that we need God's wisdom so that our trials will not be wasted, how then do we receive this needed virtue? Quite simply, 'Let him ask from God.' It's a present tense imperative. It could be understood as 'let him keep on asking.' With encouraging and pointed simplicity, he says, 'ask for it and God will give it.'

To weaken pride and cultivate humility spend time every day contemplating the cross and begin your day acknowledging your need for God and your dependence on Him.

3. Spend time in the car pouring out your heart to the Lord

Spend time in the car in prayer. It's okay to pray with your eyes open. Psalm 62:8 has become a helpful verse to me in this regard, "Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. *Selah*". *We demonstrate our trust in the Lord by pouring our hearts out to the Lord. We are honest with people we trust, with those we know have our best interest in mind. Remember His steadfast love is better than life so end your supplication with praise. Always end with praise.*

In 1 Peter 5:5-7 we see how to glorify God in the church. Our best friend is humility. Never lose your best friend. In these verses we see humility in attitude,

in action and in our inevitable anxieties. Friends, we have to leave this room this morning with hope. God has provided specific details on how to glorify Him in the church through a right attitude toward one another and a right approach to handle whatever anxieties come our way.