

STANDING FIRM IN THE STORMS: Shepherding God's People thru the Storm

Peter's letter shifts and his heart is to encourage those in persecution. He turns to the leaders of those hurting and uses a metaphor of shepherding. He reminds them of what Jesus told him back in John 21. Spiritual leaders are to care for and lead God's people (flock) like a faithful shepherd watches over and cares for his sheep.

Peter mainly aims at the heart of a shepherd and the attitudes and overall picture rather than specific duties. Since the shepherd idea was well known there, he knows they will get the idea. God is our ultimate shepherd and He has given us "undershepherds" to care for the flock under His authority till He returns. Faithful shepherding brings a reward from Christ himself.

STUDY QUESTIONS:**I Peter 5:1-2**

Having an elder structure of leadership was becoming a standard practice in the early church. Peter personally identified himself as "a fellow elder" who shared in a deep sense of concern for the body. He was also an eyewitness of what Christ had suffered and knew the importance of standing firm in the faith. Peter knew that if the early believer was going to stand firm in the midst of "fiery trials" they were going to need their leader's support.

- ✓ According to Acts 20:28 who selects the elder to serve? What is the elder's primary responsibility?
- ✓ Why is it important for the believer and church leader to remember that the church/flock belongs to God? How should this impact the way we approach ministry?
- ✓ The shepherd and sheep is a figure of speech often used by Jesus (John 10:6) to illustrate the relationship between Him and His followers. How can this better help us understand Jesus' role in our life (John 10:15)?
- ✓ The pastor/elder is to shepherd/oversee the flock of Christ. How is the elder structure of leadership helpful to the body today?

Key Passages: Jesus the Good Shepherd John 10:1-6; Jesus charges Peter to shepherd His sheep - John 21:15-17

Word Study: the terms shepherding and overseeing are closely associated because they are similar in concept. In this passage overseeing is equivalent to shepherding. Shepherding is the figurative expression for governance, while overseeing is the literal term.ⁱ

I Peter 5:2-4

In the following verses Peter carefully described how the elders are to serve. His emphasis is on the proper motivation and attitude for the shepherd elders. He gives three comparisons which indicate the wrong and right ways to shepherd God's flock.

- ✓ **What does it mean to lead out of compulsion compared to leading from a willing and voluntary heart?**
- ✓ **Peter contrasts leading out of "shameful gain" to leading with "eagerness." What is Peter trying to convey?**
- ✓ **What are ways the elder can be "examples to the flock?" How have you been personally encouraged by a pastor/elder?**

Quote: "One volunteer is worth two pressed men... On the highest planes of spiritual service not number of pressed men can the place of a volunteer." -J.H. Jewett

Word Study: "eagerness" means readily or zealously and enthusiastically. It is a strong motivation to take care for the people of God.

APPLICATION QUESTION:

- ✓ **What rewards are there in shepherding God's people?**

PRAYER

Take time this week to pray for the pastors and elders at SCC. Specifically pray God will strengthen them in the areas your group discussed today. Consider as a group a way you can encourage our pastors/elders in the coming weeks!

ⁱ *Biblical Eldership*, Alexander Strauch