

Peter chapter 5, 1 Peter chapter 5. We continue our study of this book this morning, and we come to 1 Peter chapter 5, verses 5 through 7. Now last week, we looked at biblical elders, and we saw there at the start of 1 Peter 5 that biblical elders are called to be Christ-centered, others oriented, and eternally minded. But this week, Peter shifts from the topic of the biblical elder to the humble man. Whether you are a lay person in the church or you're an elder in the church, whether you're a young person in the church or an older person in the church, we see in our texts this morning that God calls all of his people to humility. With this in mind, let us pray and ask God to bless the reading of his holy word.

Unless the Lord builds a house, those who labor, labor in vain. Unless the watchman watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. And oh God, unless you pour out your spirit, the preacher preaches in vain. We pray, oh God, that it would not so much be the voice of a man this morning that we hear, but that you yourself would speak through this unworthy vessel to magnify Christ and make much of your gospel.

We pray this in Christ's name, amen. 1 Peter chapter five, verses five through seven, this is the word of God. 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. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him because he cares for you. This ends the reading of God's word. May he bless now the proclamation of it to our lives. Well, the church father Augustine was once asked to name the three most important virtues. And he responded by saying humility, humility, and humility. Now, why would he say such a thing? Because Fallen sinners are bent toward pride. All people as sinners are bent toward pride.

Man believes that somehow he can do something to save himself. Man wants to believe that somehow he can do something that will make him a good person in the sight of holy God. We do this in all sorts of ways, but we try to convince ourselves that we do not deserve the wrath and curse of God for our sins. The humble man, on the other hand, is a needy man. He is needy.

He recognizes that he is a sinner and that he can't do anything to save himself. He doesn't try to pretend that his sins are anything less than what they really are. He acknowledges that his sins are deserving of the eternal, infinite wrath of God. He doesn't try to chalk up his sins to white lies or simply a lustful glance. He calls it what it is. His sin is a rebellion against God. He knows that he is needy. The humble man is not only needy, he's also Godward.

This means that he is always looking to God, contrasting himself with God and delighting himself in God. He acknowledges that if he is to be saved, it must be a working of almighty God who saves him. He acknowledges that if it had not been for the Lord, he would have perished. He delights in God because he knows that God is the only one who can do for him that which he needs most. He needs salvation.

He never tires of dwelling upon the grace of God toward him because he realizes that God has done for him what he could never do for himself. He's always looking at God because he is enamored with the reality that God has saved him, the chief of sinners. But the humble man is not only needy and Godward, the humble man is also praying. He ever lives in dependence upon God, he's acknowledging throughout his day that he needs his God, not only for his physical needs, but also for his spiritual needs. That he can do nothing apart from God working in him and blessing him. And so he goes to his Heavenly Father through the Son, by the Spirit, often in prayer.

So in our text today, we see the humble man, and we see three things when we look at the humble man in our text. The humble man is needy, the humble man is Godward, and the humble man is praying. So look first at verse five, the humble man is needy. Verse five says, 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. As we come to verse five, Peter shifts from talking about the relationship of church members to those who hold the office of elder in the church. He shifts from that topic to how younger people in the church are to relate to older people in the church, and how all people in the church are to relate to one another.

And as he begins to discuss this question of how people are to relate to one another in the church, he says, no matter where you stand on the spectrum, whether older or younger, whether you have church office as an elder or deacon, or whether you're a lay person, he says this in verse five, clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another.

Now this is a command, but why should you obey this command? After all, as a fallen sinner, the human heart loves pride. The sinner loves to pretend that he's something when he is nothing. The fallen sinner loves to believe the lie that he really isn't a needy sinner who is utterly unworthy even of the crumbs underneath God's table. So why should you obey this call to clothe yourself with humility?

The text tells you in verse five, for or because God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. According to these words, God actively opposes the proud. And why does he give grace to the humble? Is it because the humble in some way actually earn his favor? Is it because by your humility, you actually merit God's grace?

No. God gives to the humble grace, not because he deserves grace, but because the humble man knows that he does not deserve grace. It is not that the humble man is so humble and has done such a good job of being humble that he can merit God's grace. It is that God comes to the man who knows he deserves it the least and gives him His grace. In his heart, the humble man can honestly say to himself, in his heart, the humble man can really say to himself, there is no one who deserves God's grace less than me. The humble man can say to himself, I am the chief of sinners.

The humble man ever lives at the cross and is amazed that God would love him and give himself up for him. You know, the humble man is not so much amazed that God could save his neighbor as he is that God could save himself. That's the person that he is most amazed that God has saved. He is astonished that God would save him.

It's been said, condemnation comes by merit. Salvation comes only by grace. Condemnation is earned by man. Salvation is given by God. So you see in verse five that the humble man knows that he is needy. He knows that apart from God's grace, he is lost and undone. But I want to ask you, do you know that to be true of yourself here this morning? Do you here this morning know that apart from God's grace, you are lost and undone, that you are needy, that you cannot save yourself?

And if you know this, how do you treat one another? Because this text says it affects how you treat one another. Do you treat one another with humility? When you have a conflict, are you quick to acknowledge your own fault and your own guilt in the conflict? When you have sinned against one another, are you quick to ask for forgiveness and to own your own transgressions?

Do you look down on other people and say to yourself, how could they ever do that? Or do you say to yourself, I am no better. I am just like that person. How desperately do I need God's grace? If you're a husband, do you say to yourself, there my wife goes doing that thing again? Or if you're a wife, do you say, there my husband goes, of course he's gonna do that thing again. Instead, we should simply live at the cross and say, I, need Christ. And my wife, or in your case, perhaps husband, needs Christ. We need Christ. My family needs Christ. My friends need Christ.

Because you see, the cross is the great equalizer. Because when you look at the cross, what it says to you, no matter how good you think you are, this is what the cross says to you. And this is why it demands humility. The cross says to you, no matter how good you think you are, it took nothing less than God himself to sacrifice himself on a cross to offer a sufficient sacrifice for your sins. How can you be prideful? God had to come down and sacrifice himself. That's how much you can't do anything. That's how desperately wide the gulf is between you and your sin. and the God who made you."

We should live towards one another with humility when we remember this. But secondly, we see that the humble man is Godward. So we've seen that he's needy, but he's also Godward. Verse six, humble yourselves, therefore, into the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time, he may exalt you. You know the words of the hymn, what can make me whole again, nothing but the blood of Jesus. As I meditated on verse six, I thought we could tweak those words a little bit and say, what can make me humble again, nothing but the God of scripture. Because that's what verse six is saying.

The humble man is Godward because he knows only God can keep him humble. Notice that the text says, humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God. One of the major reasons we are prone towards pride is because we are comparing ourselves with the wrong standard. Where does he say to humble yourself? Under the mighty hand of God.

You see, when we begin to compare ourselves with other people, we can say stuff in our minds like, well, at least I'm not as bad as so-and-so. At least I haven't done that particular transgression, even though I promise in your heart at some measure you have. I have too. You can say to yourself, well, I've been doing way more work around the house. I've been putting in way more hours to make this family work. I deserve a pat on the back. you can convince yourself you're pretty good.

But you can't do that when you compare yourself to the proper standard, which is God. This verse says, continually be humbling yourself under the mighty hand of God. In other words, contrast yourself not with others, but with God. Ask yourself when you compare yourself with God, how strong am I? How good have I been? How selfless and loving have I really been? When you contrast yourself with God, you have to come up with the answer, I have done nothing. I'm absolutely nothing compared to God. Now, what is this language under the mighty hand of God? What's with this particular language here?

Well, you probably recognize that language, don't you? the book of Exodus and other places in the Old Testament. Do you remember how God is repeatedly throughout the Old Testament describing how he delivered his people by his mighty hand from the Egyptians, the Israelites rather, in the land of Egypt. He's reminding them of that continually throughout the Old Testament with language just like what we see here in verse six. And what was God communicating to the Israelites when he used that language?

He was reminding them over and over and over again, you did not deliver yourself. I delivered you. Every time that language is used in the Old Testament, he's saying, I delivered you. I brought you up. I brought you up out of the bondage of slavery in the land of Egypt.

He's saying to them essentially, which one of you turned the Nile? to blood? Which one of you caused the frogs to swarm Egypt? Which one of you made the gnats and the flies come about? Which one of you brought about the boils and the hail? Which one of you brought forth the locust and made the night, the daytime dark for three days? Which one of you killed the firstborn? Which one of you part of the Red Sea? Which one of you brought water from the rock? Which one of you brought manna from heaven?

And God is saying, it was I, it was I, it was I. That's what this reference is doing to them in the Old Testament. And that's what this reference is supposed to do to us here this morning, to the mighty hand of God. It is to say unto us, which of you saved yourself? Which one of you redeemed yourself? Which one of you satisfied the infinite wrath of God that was against you for your sin? Oh, it was I, it was I, it was I. humble yourself under the mighty hand of God.

And then he says this, so that at the proper time, he may exalt you. Now, these words do clearly teach that God will exalt those who humble themselves in the proper time. But what is the proper time? Well, it's likely a reference to when Christ returns. Perhaps in this life, he will exalt those who humble themselves at the proper time in his timing. But certainly for all who trust in Christ, who have humbled themselves, he will exalt you when Christ returns. But how will you be exalted? Notice the text. He may exalt you. You do not humble yourself so that you could exalt yourself. You can't exalt yourself. That's the point. And as soon as you think you can exalt yourself, you cease to be humble. When a man tries to exalt himself, at that very moment, he begins to destroy himself.

And Peter knew that by experience, didn't he? Do you remember what Peter said to the Lord Jesus Christ on the night he was betrayed? Peter spoke these words to Jesus. He said, I will never fall away. Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you. He tried to exalt himself, didn't he? Above others. He thought he could do it, didn't he? And what happened? He denied Christ three times that very night. But who raised Peter back up? Christ raised Peter back up, didn't he? God raised Peter back up, didn't he? John chapter 21, after Peter has denied him, Jesus comes to Peter and commissions Peter to shepherd the flock. God comes in Christ and raises Peter back up. But don't you see this tendency to try to raise yourself up in your own life? How can this happen in our lives? How can you try to raise yourself up in your own life? You say, I will never commit that sin again. I'll never do it. I'm never gonna do it. I've had enough of that sin. I'm never gonna do it again. I'll work harder, I'll try more, and I'm never ever gonna do it again.

Then what happens? You do it again. Why do you do it again? Because you thought you could raise yourself up. Because you were relying on yourself and not upon God. When a man tries to raise himself up, he is like a man in a

very deep pit with a shovel trying to dig himself out of the pit. It gets worse and worse and worse. You need to be raised up because you cannot raise up yourself.

And doesn't this make the humble man Godward? Because he sees he is needy. He sees that God is the only one who can provide him with what he needs. And so the humble man rejoices in this reality. He rejoices because he says, though it'd be impossible for me to raise myself up, it is impossible that God could be unable to raise me up.

You see, you can never be so far into a pit of darkness that God can't stoop deeper and raise you up. But you can never be in a pit, no matter how shallow, and get yourself out of it without God. No matter how shallow the pit may be, if you try to raise yourself out of it, you can't do it. No matter how deep the pit may be, God can stoop down deep enough to raise you up out of it.

So this makes the humble man rejoice to be told that he is to be Godward because he knows unless God come and intervene, he is completely without hope to conquer that sin, to grow in grace, to improve in his walk with the Lord, to come to a right relationship with God. But thirdly, you see this morning, the humble man is praying. You see this in verse seven, casting all your anxieties on him because he, cares for you. Based on what we've seen thus far, it should be no shocker to hear that the humble man is praying. Because the humble man knows he's needy, he knows God is the only one who can help him, and so he is praying. Praying here is captured with this word casting.

And you can't cast something off while you simultaneously hold on to that thing which you cast off. So for example, the other time this word is used in the Bible, this word casting, is Luke 19.35, when the people were throwing their cloaks onto the colt. And when they threw their cloaks onto that colt, they couldn't simultaneously hold onto them, could they? They had cast them off.

And in the same way, we are to cast off our anxieties. and we are to cast them onto him, that is God, because he is the only one who can handle them. But unfortunately, our anxieties aren't like cloaks. They're not so easy to throw off. Our anxieties are a bit more like a boomerang.

You throw them off, and then they come back. And what are you supposed to do when they come back? Throw them off again. And in the same day, you might throw off the same anxiety multiple times. Keep throwing it off. God will keep holding it. Just throw it off again. We wish it were easier, don't we? But it's not. We walk by faith and not by sight. We keep casting off our anxieties onto our Heavenly Father because he cares for us. What does this look like in a Christian's life?

I read a story a while ago about these theologians, I think in the 1800s, they had gathered at this inn and they were having breakfast and they were discussing what does it mean to be praying without ceasing? These bright minds are wrestling with this and the woman who was serving their table decided she would chime in and she said, I think I know what it means to pray without ceasing. I woke up this morning and I prayed that the Lord would bless me as I went and milked the cow and that the cow would provide the milk necessary for the breakfast. And then after I did that, I went and I prayed and asked that the Lord would bless as I began to prepare the breakfast for whomever the Lord would bring to eat here this morning. And then I prayed that the Lord would give me the right words to say when I met whomever he would bring to eat breakfast here this morning.

Just constantly casting our cares, whatever they are, no matter how small or how big, onto our heavenly Father. But the question for you this morning is this, and for us this morning is this, do you functionally believe that God actually cares for you? Functionally, I mean on a daily basis, do you believe that?

Do you believe that when things don't go the way you hoped they would go, he actually cares for you? Do you believe that he actually cares for you when you pray again for repentance and faith for a friend and a loved one and they're still walking in darkness and without hope in this world? Do you still believe he cares for you when you're praying that he would deliver you from that temptation and that struggle and you're still battling that same temptation and that same struggle on a daily basis? Do you believe that he cares for you?

Well, how can you know that he does? I'll tell you how. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. That is how you can know that your Heavenly Father cares for you.

Well, we have seen today that the humble man is needy, he is Godward, and he is praying. But maybe there is someone here today who doesn't know anything of this humility about which the text has been speaking. Maybe you're here today and you don't understand what it means to actually believe that you deserve the wrath of God, that your sins are no small matter. They're not even just large. They're infinitely large. And what you need is Christ because he is the only one who can take away that anxiety. the anxiety that will carry you down, not just in this life, but carry you down, down, down, down, down forever and ever. Christ, he can lift you out of that pit.

Let us pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you and praise you that you've begun to work in our hearts something of the humility of this text. But there's not a man, woman, or child in this room who's not lacking room for improvement. God, we see our need and then we become self-confident again and we forget and so we try to go in our own strength and we fall again. God, we look to you in faith and in repentance and then we walk a step or two again in the wrong direction. because we stopped looking to the only one who can uphold us. We pray throughout the day, and then we have days where we hardly pray.

God, we are convicted. We acknowledge it. We won't lie about it. We would own it, Father, this morning. But we would say, have mercy on us. Strengthen us. Make us more and more humble. Please, Father, place our faces in the dust. but don't leave us or forsake us. Have mercy on us in Christ. Raise us up in him. For your glorious name's sake we pray, amen.