

Work Hard Stay Humble

HVFC

August 3, 2025

1 Peter 5:1-11

Good morning.

Today is a great day because God is in our hearts and in our presence.

This year we have been journeying through the Book of Hebrews. And in a matter of 7 months we have covered 9 chapters.

The first, which I thought were hard, looking back were pleasant compared to chapters 7, 8, 9. In these chapters we covered Melchizedek, the High Priest service, the new covenant, the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries, and why blood is required.

And when I got done last week, I was exhausted, physically, mentally, emotionally. I asked myself if I should take a break.

Then as I was looking at it, noticing that in chapter 10 we have some very well known passages that most of us would know and connect with deeply. And I wanted them to be a part of our small group discussions. Faith Centered Conversations.

What is that, well it is our version of a mid-week service.

Starting in September we will have 7 groups meeting in different homes all over the city to take time to fellowship, pray, and develop our faith in smaller communities. It is a place to discuss and talk about the sermon on Sunday morning. And particularly with Hebrews it has been a great tool to help bring out and apply the truths taught on Sunday morning. If you were in a group last year, that will be your group again, if you were not and would like to be, sign up in the back or online, (ministries tab under Faith Center Conversations, or an even easier way is on the church app, under events at Faith Center Conversations).

With that in mind, I am going to take this month to leave Hebrews and pick it up again next month for groups.

I don't have a plan to have a series, but I do have some areas I want to share on.

This past week I was remembering the end of our study in the Book of John about Peter.

I then began to look at Peter's books. And I may just touch on several passages from those this month, but the only promise I will make is to go where God leads. Please turn with me to 1 Peter 5 and we are going to start reading in verse 1.

1 Peter 5:1-3

1 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:

2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;

3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

NKJV

Let's pray.

I just love Peter. His ability to not filter what he says, to stick his foot in his mouth, to have all the bravado and ego, with a temper and shallow understanding of the situation. Yet, from the moment on the beach where Jesus restores him after the denials, Peter is seen as a different man in the book of Acts. And the maturing continues and is seen in his two books first and second Peter.

And this first epistle he writes to the believers in Asia Minor, not long before his death.

He writes to comfort and strengthen them for the trials they are enduring, to remain obedient to the faith, and to understand that God would see them through.

He closes the letter speaking to the church as a whole.

He writes to the leadership, to the church, and then gives a warning about our enemy.

The chapter opens with Peter mentioning the elders.

1 Peter 5:1

The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:

NKJV

This passage uses two different words for elders. The first is used to identify the leaders as a whole. The word is translated to a leader among a group of leaders like the Sanhedrin in Israel, or our congress if you will. A group of leaders tasked with overseeing the flock, or the church. Peter identifies himself as one of those elders saying he was a co-elder, an equal among the elders. Remember Jesus telling the disciples that they would not lord leadership over one another, but that they should become servants to each other, co-ministers with each other.

As a person I see two problems here.

1. Nobody likes being a servant.
2. Everybody likes having a leader, so there is someone to blame, as long as it isn't us.

Typically people with authority have issues with power and responsibility not going to their head, and inflating their sense of worth well beyond what it should be.

God really spoke about this to my heart from a sermon I gave on the first Sunday of 2023.

This passage has remained in my thoughts often over the past 2 ½ years.

Moses is installing Joshua as the new leader of Israel. And he is giving orders to the people and to Joshua and reminding them of God's promises if they will be obedient. Here is what he said to Joshua.

Deuteronomy 31:7

Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it.

NKJV

He was called to be the leader, but to go with them, a co-sojourner, fellow follower with the nation.

As a church, we only have one leader who stands out above and in front of the rest. His name is Jesus. And as leaders we are called to follow him, just as you are called to follow him.

Peter, who many would say was the greatest apostle and outspoken leader, says here that he was a co-leader, one among many, of the church elders.

He then goes on to lay out several markers that leaders of the church should have. They are to shepherd the flock as overseers.

Not by compulsion but willingly.

Not for dishonest gain, but eagerly.

Not to be Lords, rather as examples.

This is the part where we work hard, we will get to the stay humble next week. I want to break these down.

1 Peter 5:2

Shepherd the flock of God, which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;
NKJV

This gives the leader his duties.

For ease, I am going to refer to a leader's duties from a first person point of view, saying me and I, but if you are a leader anywhere in the church or in your family it applies to you.

I am told to Shepherd and oversee.

Some might read into those duties, to butcher and mead out judgement.

I own sheep as many of you know. And even though I don't spend days on end with my sheep like shepherds of old, thank you fences.

I began to take an accounting of what I do as a shepherd. Do you know what 90% of my work entails?

Feeding them.

5% of my work is lambing, and the other 5% is sick needs, butchering, and transporting.

A shepherds main duty is to Feed God's flock.

These are the words Jesus spoke to Peter on the beach with the fish.

Do you love me? Feed my sheep.

What am I to feed God's flock with?

Matthew 4:4

But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

NKJV

Our spirits require life that comes from the word of God. Remember the writer of Hebrews in chapter 5. If only you could eat spiritual meat, but rather you can only take the milk.

As the shepherd, one of my goals is to bring spiritual food from the word of God for us to partake of and grow into mature Christians.

How many of us remember trying to give our babies those first bites of real food. (((((Make the face of spitting it out.))))))

We always try to give them blended kale with peaches or some other kind of gross mush. One of my favorite memories with all my kids was giving them a baby back pork rib bone that was expertly picked clean by me, and watching them go to town gumming that bone for all it was worth.

My goal is to bring a Holy Spirit inspired sermon feast each week that will bring about maturity in our faith.

The second duty is to oversee.

This word means to make aware, to provide spiritual oversight, guard against false teachings.

In the Greek an overseer is one who is mature in the Faith and is given responsibility over an area to help people grow.

That is a lot of “power” or “influence” that can be used for good or bad.

And because of this Peter gives us three admonitions as shepherds and overseers.

Because, we are human, subject to human tendencies, and imperfect.

1 Peter 5:2

Shepherd the flock of God, which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;

NKJV

Not by compulsion but willingly.

Another way to say it is not by force, but by choice. Jesus did not go to the cross by compulsion but willingly laid his life down for me.

As an overseer and shepherd, we can not come to this position and succeed at shepherding God's flock if we come to it being forced.

James 4:8 "Draw near to God and he will draw near to you."

God is not a taskmaster, seeking slave labor. I wasn't called to pastor as a punishment. Well I heard Will Parsons pray when he was young that he did not want to be a pastor, so to show that guy who the boss is I am going to make him pastor. God doesn't run a hard labor camp, where the worst guys are assigned the hardest roles.

Rather, God calls us, and when we say, here am I Lord, send me, He gives us the strengthen to accomplish the calling on our life.

I will be the first to tell you I do not feel qualified to pastor a church, and I would be willing to offer up several names of those who could do it way better in my opinion.

But what I will say about myself is that I was not forced to become an overseer, but when God called, I willingly said I here am I Lord, use me as you see fit.

I was willing to allow God to use my life for His pleasure.

Are you willing to allow God to do that with your life?

The next admonition is:

Not for dishonest gain, but eagerly.

We have all heard of the con-artist type leader that is a smooth talker and only there to fleece the flock. The goal is to get all he can, and take the rest for himself.

It is easy to attach money to this and is a part of it. Yet in some way seems foolish because if you are looking to amass riches, ministry is a walk in the opposite direction.

But dishonest gain is not only talking about money.

There are plenty of people who do it to have a soap box and get paid to spout off. At the same time there are plenty of overseers who do it simply for the power and authority it gives them over other people.

The meaning of a shepherd operating from dishonest gain is one who does something to make some gain at the expense of someone else, it is usually unethical, morally wrong, and dishonorable.

Not for dishonest gain, but they do it eagerly.

Barnes' commentary speaks of "eagerly" this way.

We are to labor in this work, not under the influence of the desire of gain, but from the promptings of love. There is all the difference conceivable between one who does a thing because he is paid for it, and one who does it from love - between, for example, the manner in which one attends on us when we are sick who loves us, and one who is merely hired to do it.

Jesus spoke to how we are to shepherd in John 10.

He says I am the good shepherd.

John 10:13

The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.

NKJV

If you are here for the money and the fame, when the first sign of trouble comes, you are going to disappear.

Shepherds and overseers should be there because they love the sheep, and the work God has given them to do.

Last admonition this morning from our scripture that we will finish up next week.

1 Peter 5:3

nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;
NKJV

This one is simple. An overseer is not to be a sheep with superior power ruling over inferior sheep.

Leaders are not to rule the church and flock with tyranny and abusive power. To see themselves as having arrived, and perfect. Those come with a haughty spirit that will not allow you to question anything they do, for you are not their equal. God did not set me as the pastor to be Lord and dictator.

Rather I am to be an example to the God's flock, to lead, and to foster growth and maturity.

Paul understood this when he said, "I am the chief of sinners, and my list of sins is long, including persecution of the church." Yet God would visit him and change him and bring him to the place to say this.

1 Corinthians 11:1

Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

NKJV

Stand with me as we close this morning.

We will continue this next week.

God is the owner of the flock. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, and we are each a part of his flock.

And God has appointed under shepherds to the church. But they are not there to rule and reign.

My purpose is to feed the flock, tend to the needs of those who call this church home, and do my best with the power of the Holy Spirit to cause us to inherit the promises of God.

If you find yourself in any kind of leadership this is for you. It is too easy to fall to the temptation to abuse power over those we have influence over.

We must have a willingness to care for and lead those God has given us. Are you willing to stand in the gap, to pray for them, to encourage them, to call out when they fall, (in love of course). Are we willing to say, Lord here am I, send me?

Are we eager to help our fellow believers to stay strong in the Faith. To come along side them with the love of Jesus, not because we may get something from it, but because we genuinely love and care for them. Even if it will cause us loss in some way, whether of time, energy, resources, or emotions.

Lastly are you willing to be an example for others to follow?

This is hard because we must take a good hard look at our life, and ask Jesus to reveal anything within us that needs to change. Father search my heart and show me my sin I try to conceal. Because if we want to be a leader, we must lead by example, people will always see and mimic what you do more than what you say.

Let's pray.