

With Hope, Pete - 14

“Ministers in the Mirror”

How often do you look in a mirror? How much time do you give to taking in your reflection? Maybe a quick glance? Or perhaps you take an occasional long and reflective gaze. Peter takes the time to hold the mirror for us who minister and then he describes what we should be seeing. He bothers to tell those in ministry what their lives should look like. He doesn't tell them in private; he shares it with everyone listening intently to the words of his letter. He reminds us all that one day we will give an accounting for how we lead. So how are you leading?

1 Peter 5:1-4 NAS

What are the issues in shepherding?

1 Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed,
2 shepherd

-“Therefore” refers back to the fact that the recipients of this letter from Peter were suffering persecution and being attacked for their faith. That fact led Peter to address shepherds in caring for their struggling sheep.

-The first and obvious point to note here is that the Holy Spirit affirms that spiritual leadership and responsibility for the church belongs to elders. This is unmistakable and consistent in the New Testament books dealing with the church. The qualifications for elders is found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

-“Exhort” means “to call alongside” and, more generally, “to encourage or compel someone in a certain direction.”

-There are three NT words that are used interchangeably to describe this role: *elder*, *bishop* (overseer), and *pastor*. *Pastor* is the word **shepherd** and expresses the priority duty of feeding or teaching the truth of God’s Word.

-Peter here includes some compelling motivation in this exhortation for leaders to shepherd.

First, he calls himself a fellow shepherd (alongside them).

Second, he reminds them that he was a witness of Christ suffering.

Third, there was a future glory coming for their faithful service.

Who must be shepherded?

the flock of God among you,

-This text clearly states that the elders have the most serious, delegated stewardship to shepherd, not their own flock, but **the flock of God**.

-The term **flock** here is a term of endearment, stressing the preciousness of the church.

How must shepherding be done?

exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

-To the key question of how elders are to shepherd, Peter provides both positive and negative answers.

-**Exercising oversight** means “to have scope over” or “to look upon.” Its clear connotation here is that shepherds must watch over the sheep to assess their condition, so as to lead, guard, and feed them.

-Elders are also to be spiritual examples to the flock.

-Then, Peter speaks of the negatives: not under compulsion, but as eager, willing, and voluntary.

-Peter says they cannot be motivated by money or material benefits. Shepherds should be properly compensated; they have a right to live by means that ministry provides (1 Cor. 9:7-14).

-**Sordid gain** goes beyond just seeking wealth and speaks to shameful acquisition of it. No

true shepherd should need personal wealth to motivate him to serve, but should serve with eagerness because of the high calling and privilege.

-Shepherds cannot dominate others. **Lording it over** connotes intensity in domineering over people and circumstances.

Why should shepherds serve?

4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

-Chief Shepherd is one of the most beautiful titles for Jesus in all of Scripture.

-Appears means “to make manifest,” “to make clear,” or “to reveal.” It’s a reference to His second coming.

-The reward of eternal glory ought to be all the reason any shepherd needs to serve faithfully.

-Shepherding the flock is a serious and sobering responsibility because elders are accountable to God for their ministry.

-So...whom are you shepherding? Who do you have the responsibility to lead?

-Do you serve/shepherd them with integrity?

Bottom Line – **Undershepherds are to love the sheep, then give an account to the Chief Shepherd for how faithfully they did that.**