

XLVI. I Peter in Biblical Perspective

The Elect in the Exile

“Humility and Unity – Part 2”

I Peter 5:5–7

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We are in our 46th study of I Peter 5. This is God’s Word and God’s Word is the truth. I Peter 5:1–5 says *[1] So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: [2] shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; [3] not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. [4] And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. [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.

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

Here is what I think is an important question about what the Bible wants us to handle concerning this text. What do you think is the most difficult or most challenging Christian virtue to cultivate in a maturing Christian life? I’m not necessarily ready to put a stake in the ground on this but I believe this is the one is the key to all the other Christian virtues in the Christian life. In other words, when this one gets in place, the others can be addressed and if it’s not then the others will not be addressed rightly.

I believe the two greatest challenges which I believe is related to this one challenge, is to kill pride and pursue humility. To pursue humility you have to kill pride but you don’t just kill pride for you kill pride in order to pursue humility. So what is this humility Peter is talking about and how do you cultivate it? I know it’s the most difficult because every single one of us are born with a sin nature and the sin nature is a disposition that everything exists for me. In other words, as an unbeliever if you were to right a catechism question here would be one; what is the chief end of God if there is one? Answer, the chief end of God is to make me happy. That is the way we are born.

I want to make sure you know that I like our catechism which says, what’s the chief end of man and the answer is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, the more you glorify Him the more you will enjoy Him and the more you enjoy Him the more you will glorify Him. Yet I know when I’m born into this world I’m born with a sin nature that says it’s all about me. That’s the indication of life for you see it all over our magazine stands in their titles. You see titles like *Me, Us, People, Self* or listen to commercials. Some of the jingles said things like ‘you deserve a break today’ or ‘have it your way’ and we see that it’s all about you. You may be saved but you still have an old man living within you and that old man keeps wanting to get back on the throne of the heart, thinking ‘it’s all about me.’

Let me go at it another way. I want to use Calvin on this one. All of sin is merely a matter of idolatry. Sin comes from me telling God ‘You will not be sovereign.’ When He says ‘yes’ then I say ‘no’ and when He says ‘no’ I say ‘yes.’ All of sin is idolatry and idolatry comes

from self-absorption, self-reliance and self-exaltation. Therefore when we're saved we humble ourselves to surrender to Christ and then the Christian life engages in this pursuit of humility.

Peter thinks it's so important he tells us two times in the imperative in these closing verses for each one of us to humble ourselves. Peter the pastor has written a letter to Christians he has never met whom he has a concern for who are up in Turkey. He has had three thrusts to this letter. Number one he identifies them as elect exiles which is who we are in Christ because of Christ with 15 Gospel blessings that Jesus secured on the cross and affirmed for us in His resurrection. These blessings are laid out for us in I Peter 1 through 4.

Then he mixes in ten Gospel commands. The Gospel commands are what you do because you are in Christ for Christ. In this study we are on the tenth Gospel command which is the pursuit to humility. Before Peter got to this command, beginning in I Peter 3:13 through 5:11, he tells us what it means to suffer for Christ's sake. Peter had heard Jesus say 'in the world you will have tribulation' and he believed Jesus. He heard Jesus on the Sermon on Mount say 'blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you.' "If they persecuted Me they will persecute you." Because of this Peter is warning us about suffering. He is not talking about the suffering everyone engages in, in a sin cursed world. It is the suffering that comes from being identified with Christ and bearing witness of Christ. He makes it abundantly clear it is suffering for Christ's sake.

The other writers of the New Testament say similar things about suffering. Paul says in Philippians 1:29, [29] *For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake.* He also says in II Timothy 3:12, [12] *Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.* Everyone who is a true Christian will to some degree in some way at some time will suffer for Christ. It may be verbally or your livelihood. It could be as a martyr so Peter wants us to be ready for it because God is sovereign and He is using Satan in the world as they strike at Him through you. The word suffering is used more times in I Peter than it is used in the entire New Testament.

Peter wants you to know as you live in the theater of God's glory by His grace for this world, the world will not give you applause or a standing ovation. They will target you to some degree and periodically God brings blessings among nations with Gospel awakenings and there are season where that is not happening. Peter wants us to understand this suffering and expect it. Don't be surprised. It's temporary and God has a purpose in it. Be prepared and He wants you to be pastored like you're going through it. That's why when Peter gets to I Peter 5 he says to the believers who are suffering for Christ's sake he expects you to be in the church.

Now you can be a member of a church and not be a Christian, but no Christian should be attempting to live for Christ independent of his/her church. So the suffering Christian is in the church and God has designed something for you, there are elders right there to shepherd you. They will model for you as they are an example. They will mentor you. They are not there for themselves for they are there for the Chief Shepherd and for you. They are not there for gain but to be poured out. They are not there to make use of you but to be poured out for you. God has designed this office in the church for the elders to be among the flock. The elder is to be like the Chief Shepherd as the under shepherd. The elder's reward is not now but then.

Now Peter tells the rest of us who are suffering for Christ to show up and be shepherdable. What makes you shepherdable? You are in submission to your elders but you will never be in submission to your elders until you humble yourself and you are to be in submission to each other but you can't do that without humility. So Peter gives us a Gospel command to clothe (gird) yourself with humility. This phrase comes from a word that was used

a description for a piece of clothing that a servant wore. It was like an apron or a smock that was tied on. When you saw it you knew two things – one that the person wearing it was a servant and secondly it was designed to do work in. This piece of clothing was made for work itself and not for show. So Peter says the smock or apron that you put on or gird up is humility. That is what the servants of Christ have. We put humility on vertically toward our elders and we put humility on horizontally to one another.

After giving us that Peter gives us a motivation. What is the opposite of humility? Pride. Peter's motivation is a quote from the Proverbs – God is opposed to the proud. The word opposed is a military term that means in military formation for battle. God is marshal-ly militarily arrayed to do battle every time He sees pride. It was pride that sent the angelic host into rebellion. There was the boastful pride of life in the Garden. It was pride whereby Cain killed Abel. It was pride at Sodom and Gomorrah. It was pride at the tower of Babel. It is pride that is this mother sin of all other sins and the only antidote by the grace of God to the glory of God is to kill pride by dying to self and humbling oneself before the Lord. So gird up with the apron (or smock) of servanthood. Let everyone know you have a servant's heart and are ready to serve the Lord as you humble yourself before the Lord.

Peter says that God is not only opposed to the proud but He gives grace to the humble. That does not mean if I humble myself I earn God's love and grace. If I earn God's grace by humbling myself it's not grace. Humbling yourself positions you for God's grace for Him. It puts you at the table of God's grace, the feast of God's grace. Humility is the posture of those who are receiving and that's why James say that in humility 'draw near to God and He will draw near to you' (James 4:8). There is this reciprocal relationship but humility puts you in a posture to take hold of the grace of God.

This humility is so important that Peter decides to give the command again. I Peter 5:6–7 says [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.* The 'therefore' is the word that tells us this is so important to him that he is going to give it to us again. I want to walk you through these two verses with five statements.

The first statement is the command amplified. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. Humility is not a personality trait. Sometimes we see people quiet and introverted and think they are humble but sometimes people are like this because they're proud and they don't want to get exposed. Extroverts can be humble. Introverts can be humble but being an introvert doesn't mean you're humble, necessarily. Humility is a grace of God that is matured and cultivated in the heart and it makes use of whatever personality God has given to you – skills or things He has given to you. I don't see Moses as 'Mr. Wallflower' because there is an Egyptian buried in the sand somewhere over there. I don't see John the Baptist as a guy just backing up in life yet Jesus said he was the greatest among men – look at his humility when he says 'He must increase, I must decrease' (John 3:30).

Humility is not the absence of strength nor is it the absence of conviction. The Christian is a man or woman of conviction but their conviction does not come from their own wisdom. Their conviction comes from God through His Word by God's Spirit. They have humbled themselves and said 'no' to worldly wisdom and their own wisdom. They have humbled themselves to God's revealed wisdom, have embraced God's wisdom, taught by the Spirit of God by those taught by the Spirit of God and now they have embraced God's Word with conviction. A believer is someone who is strong in the Lord which comes from His strength, His

power, through His Spirit and His Word, not in their own strength because they know they can do nothing apart from Him, but they can do all things through Him who strengthens them.

So humility is seeing yourself made in the image of God but I'm not God. They didn't open up businesses to give me a job. God didn't put a government in place simply for me. Everything doesn't exist to revolve around me. I exist to tell others and show others of the One who is Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. O God, please help me cultivate in my life humility. One time I was riding in a car with a few other people and this lady was driving who would slow down to let people get in front of her constantly. I said 'Why do you drive like that?' She said 'I have a sign in my car that I read that tells me to let at least ten other people pull in front of me to remind myself that the road wasn't made just for me.' I said 'You are a saint. I would like to be humble like you. I would let two over in a day but I'm not sure I could do ten a day.' Humility is something you are cultivating everyday not to tell everyone what you know but listening to what you can hear. Your calling upon God asking Him what He wants you to do.

Statement two is humble yourself 'under the mighty hand of God' is a big phrase for it's all over the Bible. Every time this phrase shows up in the Bible one of two things is happening – either the mighty hand of God is bringing judgment on somebody or His hand is delivering someone. Sometimes it's both. David talks about the mighty hand of God that brought him low and the mighty hand of God that lifted him up. In the book of Exodus you see the mighty hand of God bringing judgment upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians. And you see the mighty hand of God delivering the Israelites out of bondage all at the same time.

When I was thinking of an illustration on this I remembered my own family immediately. When we would go on vacation many times we would be at a beach or a pool and my kids played with nerf balls. When my kids were young I kind of used them for a less than humble purpose. I would have the nerf ball in my hand and say to my kids 'watch your daddy' and I would squeeze it down and listen to them say 'daddy how did you do that?' I would say 'Because I'm real strong.' After they were about 4 years of age they realized they could do that too. But have you ever notice what happens to a nerf ball when you let it go? It goes right back to what it was as it fills itself back up with air.

God's mighty hand would get a hold of Pharaoh and he would say something like 'I repent, I repent' as God would squeeze him down. Then when God would let him go Pharaoh would puff right back up. When God delivers you under His mighty hand you don't puff back up, you stay small before Him because you have a big God and He's your life. How do you do that? Remember that nerf ball, squeeze it, don't let it go until you put it in the water for when you put it in the water, it doesn't fill up with air but it fills up with water and it's not up, it's down. When the mighty hand of God lays hold of us to deliver us get filled up with the grace and glory of God. Now you have weightiness to your life, not puffed up air.

Statement three is that the command is given an object. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, why? It is because He will exalt you at the right time. This is where we really mess up. Have you ever noticed how we get things backwards? For instance, we resist temptation and we flee Satan. What's wrong with that? What are you supposed to do with temptation? We are to flee temptation, get as far away as possible. We are to resist Satan and he will flee from us (James 4:7). We have a tendency to exalt ourselves and then pray for humility, but we are to humble ourselves and God will exalt us at the right time. When is the right time? It is when we get to heaven.

Does this sound familiar to you? This is modeled in Philippians 2 where it gives a profile of Jesus. Philippians 2:5–9 says [5] *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ*

Jesus, [6] who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. [8] And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. [9] Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name. So until Jesus comes it's humbling time. When Jesus comes it will be lifting up time. We by His grace humble ourselves in this day and when the time comes and He comes He will exalt us at the right time.

Then Peter gives us a command corollary. It is not humble yourself AND cast your anxieties on Him but we are to humble ourselves as we are casting or while we are casting or through the casting of our anxieties on Him. These are not two different commands. They are directly related to each other. Those who are humbling themselves are not only in submission to God, their elders and one another but they take their cares and cast them on Jesus.

Let's talk about what anxieties mean. The Bible interchanges this word with concerns or cares. Anxieties, concerns and cares are not necessarily sinful unless they are sinful anxieties, cares or concerns. Fear is another issue. The Bible says we're to cast out all fear except the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom. Paul says to Timothy that he is anxious for him. Paul says he has cares and concerns for all the churches.

Have you ever wondered why Paul said 'I would that you were single like me?' He said 'if you're not gifted, don't try it.' The reason he said it was so that you wouldn't have the cares of this world. If a man is going to have to die for Jesus then he's probably thinking 'what's going to happen to my wife, children, my ministry, my church..?' God has given us responsibilities in life and we have concerns and cares about them but don't let them weigh you down. Cast the weight of them, as you cast them upon the Lord. It doesn't mean you don't take the responsibility of feeding your family for you say 'Jesus I'm supposed to feed my family so I cast that care upon you so that it doesn't become a sinful anxiety and Your strength in me as I pursue the fulfillment of my responsibilities.' I will bear my responsibilities but my weight is upon Him.

Peter's mind here is the casting of a net which is what we do with our anxieties. Peter did a lot of casting of nets and all the nets had weights on them that took them down into the water until it landed on its object. So we take the weights of all of our anxieties and we cast it upon the Lord. It's interesting that the first time Peter told us to be humble in the previous paragraph he took us to God and said God was opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble and he gives us the command to be humble again and brings us again right back to God. One of the things that keeps you is that you think it's all on you but God has given you those responsibilities so that you come and cast them all on Him.

Then Peter gives the command of encouragement when he says in I Peter 5:7b, because I care for you. Do your responsibilities for God's glory. I have used this example many times but I think of how Mr. Latimer says to Mr. Ridley 'Mr. Ridley be of good courage for today by God's grace we shall light a candle for Christ that shall never be put out' as they were burning at the stake in Oxford and he said that because he heard Ridley say 'I'm about to die so tie my bonds tight' for he was anxious about something. He didn't want to leave his post at the time of trial. Latimer takes that valid anxiety of dying in a horrendous fire knowing he doesn't have the strength to stay at his post and he gets a greater Bond Tie-er who is Jesus.

That is what Peter is doing now as he is sending us with our cares not to sinfully careless but to have a sanctified carelessness for as you embrace your responsibilities you cast the weight of them upon the Lord because He cares for you. How do you know He cares for you? He went

to the cross and took from you what would have weighted you down into hell, your sins. He took it off of you. Will He not care for you? So now I want to give you the takeaway.

The takeaway is clothe yourself with humility because it positions you to eradicate pride which is the mother of all sins (plus self-absorption) and to embrace God's grace for humility is the posture to drink of God's grace, then it allows you to employ submission to God, your elders, to one another and all the institutions of life and then it allows you to eject the weight of anxieties. This is not to eject responsibilities, concerns and cares.

I have cares as a pastor, as a husband, as a father, as a grandfather, as a citizen of this country, and I'm not going to be irresponsible but God, I cannot carry this. God says 'You're right Harry, so humble yourself while casting it on Me because I care for you. I'll give you the conviction, the strength and the wisdom.' He says that to you as well.

How do you cast those cares on Him? That's why we have Philippians 4. When you cast a net you have to use your hands. So in order to cast anxieties you have to use hands of believing prayer. Philippians 4:6-7 says *[6] do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. [7] And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* Paul had concerns for people and the churches but he cast all His concerns on the Lord, not so he wouldn't do what he was called to do but now it is Christ doing it through him because He care for him.

I'm reminded of the hymn *Does Jesus Care* that says;
*When the days are weary, the long nights dreary,
I know my Savior cares, He cares.* Cast your cares upon Him.

The word cast is the same word used in the Gospel of Luke when Jesus tells His Disciples where to get the colt of the donkey and then they 'cast' their robes upon the donkey that Jesus sat on. It's the same word used in I Kings 19 when Elijah comes up to Elisha and he takes his mantel and casts it on him. When the robes were cast on the donkey they couldn't be on the Disciples for they were on the donkey and when Elijah's mantel was cast upon Elisha it was no longer on Elijah. When your anxieties concerning the responsibilities of life weigh you down and you take that weight and cast it upon the Lord, it's no longer on you for it is on Him. He can handle it because He has a mighty hand.

Now you know something else. He not only has a mighty hand but He has mighty heart for He wants to handle it. He cares for you. How do I know that? I know that because He took from you what you couldn't cast upon Him, your sins. I know He cares for you. You can't do it. He can. You don't have a mighty hand. Here is what Jesus said about anxiety in Matthew 6:25-34, *[25] "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? [26] Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? [27] And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? [28] And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, [29] yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. [30] But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? [31] Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' [32] For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. [33] But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

[34] *“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”*

In our anxiety we cannot do it, but He has called us to do it so take the weight of doing it and cast it upon Him but you have to humble yourself to do that. When you do He will exalt you at the right time. There is a great moment on this in Mark 4 when Jesus is on His way to deliver some demoniacs. He is taking His Disciples on a night voyage across the Sea of Galilee to these demoniacs and in the midst a storm of such proportion arises that these fisherman are even quaking. They are convinced they are going to die as the waves are filling the boat. They look and think ‘where’s Jesus?’ Jesus is asleep in the bow of the boat on a cushion. What do the Disciples say?

Mark 4:38b–39 says [38b] *And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”* [39] *And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.* See His mighty hand? I know He cares for you. Let Him know you have humbled yourself. See the evidence? I cast all my anxieties and cares upon You, Your mighty hand and Your mighty heart, because You care for me and the peace that passes all understanding is yours. Let’s pray.

Prayer:

Spend a few moments in silent prayer to Him. God, as we humble ourselves before You, help us cast all our anxieties upon You so that we may see Your mighty hand and Your mighty heart in our life, in Jesus’ Name I pray, Amen.

Power Point

GOSPEL COMMAND #10

- I. The Command Repeated
- II. The Command Amplified
- III. The Command Object
- IV. The Command Corollary
- V. The Command Encouraged

LIFE TAKEAWAY

GOSPEL COMMAND #10 (revised)

Clothe yourself with humility as it positions you to eradicate pride, embrace God’s grace, employ submission, and eject the weight of anxieties.