

“4 Life Lessons!”

I. **INTRO:**

A. **Prayer:** we desire bullet proof character.

B. Before Peter closes, he leaves us w/great *life lessons* that he has learned & for us to learn:

1. **Life lessons** to learn from The Chief Shepherd! **Life lessons** to learn from an Apron!
Life lessons to learn from a Lion! **Life lessons** to learn from True Grace!

C. What's **ministry** supposed to look like?

1. It's rewarding; It's dirty! - It's high-highs; It's low-low's!

D. **Unrealistic Expectations:**

1. Often **the pastor** can have a boatload of unrealistic expectations of the flock;
Also, **the church** can have an array of expectations, that *nobody* can live up to.

E. **Clear thinking realism:**

1. Not every church will experience phenomenal growth.
2. Both pastor & congregation need to banish from their minds the expectations of grandeur & popularity.

F. **2-way Tolerance:**

1. **A pastor** needs to be tolerant of the people he is serving;
The flock is to be tolerant of the pastor(s) who serves as their under-shepherd.
2. **We need to have attitudes of grace; & provide a lot of wiggle room.**
3. We need to give each other the freedom to try & fail, to be imperfect, to be oneself.
4. **Grace, mercy, forgiveness, & unwavering love are key ingredients to the acceptance, patience, & tolerance needed to thrive in ministry.**

G. **Long Term & Effective Ministry:**

1. Is never w/o disappointing dips & unexpected turns.
2. I've been accused of wrong motives, criticized, my sincerity questioned; **And**, I've made my share of mistakes, misunderstood people, judged people wrongly, & jumped to conclusions only knowing one side.
3. *That's ministry in the raw!*
4. **“Imperfect shepherds, leading imperfect sheep, in the service of a perfect God, who has a perfect plan!”** (Chuck Swindoll, Insights on 1 Pet., pg.234)

- II. **LIFE LESSONS TO LEARN FROM THE CHIEF SHEPHERD!** (1-4)
- A. **Shepherds do what?** – They **lead**, **protect**, & they **feed** sheep.
1. To love to preach is one thing, to love those to whom we preach, quite another
 2. Russian proverb: “Without a shepherd, sheep are not a flock.”
- B. **Shepherd** - *to tend a flock*. It is the basis for our English word **Pastor!**
1. We are under-shepherds looking to the Chief Shepherd as our inspiration & model.
- C. 2 other words help describe what the shepherd does:
1. **Overseer** (*episkopeo*) - or traditionally “*bishop*”.
 2. **Elder** (*presbyteros*) - used synonymously with overseer.
 - a) See all 3 used in **Acts 20:17,28**.
 - (1) Also note, they’re **His sheep!** (He purchased them; w/His own blood)
- D. Turn your eyes away from **self-interest** *to* the model of the Great Shepherd Himself, Jesus
1. He will indeed reward their diligent care of His people with the **unfading crown of glory**.
- E. **Let me speak to all in leadership positions:** (tips from Chuck Swindoll)
1. **Remain a good student; stay teachable.** Read, listen, learn, observe others.
 2. **Admitting when you’re wrong is just as important as** standing firm when you’re right
 3. **Leading well includes delegating well.** Others will never do things exactly as you would (& that’s good). Learn to let things go.
 4. **Don’t take yourself too seriously.** Laugh often...especially at yourself. Make yourself the brunt of your humor. Point out your own foibles & fumbles. People love when you’re human.
 5. **Get rest. Back off. Loosen up.** Recharge your batteries. Refresh your personal life. Keep yourself from running full throttle day after day.
 - a) Stop repeating statements like, “*I’d rather burn out than rust out!*” How dumb, either way, you’re **out!!!** Don’t go there.
 6. **The Good Shepherd** - who **dies**.
 - a) Jn.10:11 **The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.**
 7. **The Great Shepherd** - who is **raised**.
 - a) Heb.13:20 **Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep.**
 8. **The Chief Shepherd** - who will **come again**.
 - a) 1Pet 5:4 **when the Chief Shepherd appears.**

III. **LIFE LESSONS TO LEARN FROM AN APRON! (5-7)**

- A. (5) He dealt with the **elder** believers & now with the **younger** believers.
- B. **Be clothed with humility** - *tie yourself up in humility*. [used of a slave who tied on an apron]
1. Ellicott says it originally referred to “*a peculiar kind of cape worn by slaves.*”
 2. Thus it was “a badge of servitude.”
 3. Peter was prob referring back to when he witnessed Christ doing this, **Jesus rose from supper & laid aside His garments, took a towel & girded Himself.**
- C. (7) Rather than wait for God to take the initiative & remove those anxieties troubling our hearts, **we are to take responsibility** of casting our anxiety upon Him.
1. Throw yourself on the mercy & care of God.
 2. This is a **decisive action** on our part. It is neither **passive** or **partial**.
 3. Ps.55:22 **Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.**
 4. (Spurgeon) There was a man who was walking along the road w/a **pack on his back**. He was growing weary & was therefore glad when a gentleman came along in a carriage & asked him to take a seat w/him. The gentleman noticed that he kept his pack strapped to his shoulders, & so he said, “**why do you not put your pack down?**” “**why sir**”, said the traveler, “**I did not venture to impose, it was very kind of you to take me up, & I could not expect you to carry my pack as well.**” – “**Why**,” said his friend, “**do you not see that whether your pack is on your back or off your back, I have to carry it!**”
 - a) **Isn't it so w/our troubles also? Whether you worry or don't worry, it is the Lord who must care for you!**
- D. *Submission to others*(5) + *Humility before God* (6) - *Worry of the world* (7) = *Genuine Relief*
- E. **George Mueller** (1805–1898) built many orphanages at Ashley Down, England. Without a personal salary, he relied only on God to supply the money and food needed to support the hundreds of homeless children he befriended in the name of Christ. A man of radiant faith, he kept **a motto on his desk** for many years that brought comfort, strength, and uplifting confidence to his heart. It read, “***It matters to Him about you.***” Mueller believed that those words captured the meaning of 1 Peter 5:7, and he rested his claim for divine help on that truth. He testified at the end of his life that the Lord had never failed to supply all his needs.
1. This is **the heart of the gospel**, He cares for you! God with us. God sees us.
 - a) **He saw them toiling in rowing**(Mrk6:48); **He saw** the children of Israel **making bricks**(Ex.3:7,8); **He saw** the pregnant Hagar by a spring in the desert & she called Him **El Roy**, the God who sees!
 - b) **He sees, & It matters to Him about you!**
 2. “**Jesus is willing to be fully responsible for the things we are anxious about.**”

IV. **LIFE LESSONS TO LEARN FROM A LION! (8-11)**

A. (8) Peter sounds the alarm for battle!

B. **The devil** is an **adversary**, not a **friend**; he is a **roaring lion** not a **playful pet**.

1. He wants to devour you, & you had better be on guard.
2. Peter thought he was able to defeat the enemy, so he did not heed the Lord's warning (Lk.22:31-34) [The results...failure & shame]

C. The **devil**(term refers to *slander* of Gods people); **Satan**(*adversary*); **Abbadon**/(Heb. term means *destruction*); **Apollyon**(gk. term means *destroyer*).

1. Put these labels together & it describes him as a dangerous, destructive deceiver who slanders & accuses us at every opportunity.

2. Here's what I think the **balance** of how we should respond to him:

3. **Some underestimate his power!**

- a) **We need to take him *very seriously*.**
- b) We don't need to be intimidated by him, but we can't underestimate his power to inflict great harm on people through temptation, deception, & destruction.
- c) **Satan is the source of all kinds of pain & suffering in this world, even in the lives of believers.**
- d) His activities can be subtle in the forms of temptation & discouragement; or he may unleash fury, tragedy, & destruction.
- e) We can't ignore the potential damage he can do to our physical & spiritual lives.

4. **Some overestimate his power!**

- a) **However, there is no reason to *overestimate* Satan's power! By...**
- b) Believing that anything bad that happens to you comes directly from the devil or his demons. [this just biblically isn't so. (i.e.) **Examples of God bringing drought, calamity, disease, etc.**]
- c) Satan **isn't** the immediate cause of all suffering & sin.
- d) ***Fallen, depraved human beings*** can do enough damage to themselves & others w/o the devil's prodding.
- e) Also, ***the world system*** we are told is our other enemy. **We don't have just 1 enemy!**

5. **Attributing *too much power* or *too little power* to Satan...leads to either **overreaction** or a **lack of preparation!****

- a) We must be aware of his tactics...(see vs.9)

- D. So, **picture yourself** in the *wild Savannah's of Africa*, someone is hunting you. The lion lurks in the tall grass, stalking your every step, waiting for a moment to catch us wandering, or off guard. If we stray, put down our weapon, or doze in the sun, he'll pounce. He knows your **strengths**, he knows your **weaknesses**.
1. **Never forget you are his prey.** That is why we **MUST** remain **alert & sober**.
 2. **His one purpose is to destroy us:** our testimony, our hope, our holiness, & if possible our lives. **Be aware of his tactics & have respect for his power.**
- E. **What are we to do when standing nose to nose w/the adversary?** *Panic? Run? Surrender?*
1. **Nope!** Resist him, stand firm in your faith. (not in your own ability, but w/the unshakeable faith in our all-powerful God!)
 2. James 4:7,8 **Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.**
- F. (10) **Here is God's heavenly version of the Purple Heart!**
1. He will **perfect** us; He will **establish/confirm** us; He will **strengthen** us; He will **settle/establish** us.
 2. The well-grounded seasoned warrior comes through the battle with maturity & stability.

V. **LIFE LESSONS TO LEARN FROM TRUE GRACE! (12-14)**

- A. Big hand writing change in vs.12-14 now. From Silas the cultured composer to the rugged fisherman Peters pen.
- B. (13) **A few cryptic statements: *the lady, the city, & the sun.***
1. **The lady (she)** - possibly the church in Rome. (Could be to his own wife)
 2. **The city (Babylon)** - modern day Iraq (Peters ministry never extended here); **or** figure of speech, referring symbolically to Rome (his later ministry centered in Rome).
 - a) This name was code language for Rome in both Jewish & Christian circles in the 1st & 2nd cent's AD.
 3. **The son (Mark my son)** - most likely *John Mark*, a son in the faith.