

For Shepherds & Sheep

1 Peter 5:1-7

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We're going to wrap up the book of First Peter today. Peter concludes his first epistle with exhortations to both church leaders and members of the church.

- An exhortation is a message emphatically urging his audience to do something.
- The church leaders are referred to here as shepherds and, sticking with that analogy, the members are the sheep. So, this is effectively a message for everyone in the church...
- And even the sheep serve as shepherds in their role as parents and sheep are also shepherds whenever they obey the Great Commission to disciple others.
 - The message to the sheep also applies to shepherds who are in fact sheep themselves relative to the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 5:1-4 – *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; ⁴ and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*

The concept of *elders* came into church life from Jewish culture (Exodus 3:16, 12:21, and 19:7).

- The word “*elder*” simply speaks of the maturity and wisdom that an older person should have, making them qualified for leadership.
- In its application, being an elder is more about wisdom and maturity than a specific age.
- The office of pastor was essentially a teaching elder (1 Tim 5:17).

Peter was qualified to speak to the elders because he was an elder himself. Though Peter was clearly the most prominent disciple among the twelve, he claimed no special privilege or position, such as being the pope of the early church. Instead, Peter saw himself only as just one fellow elder among all the elders in the church.

It is wise to put ourselves in the position of those whom we address... Paul spoke of this in:

1 Corinthians 9:19-22 – *For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; ²⁰ and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; ... to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*

While the 1 Corinthians passage is focused on evangelism, the principle applies to discipleship as well.

- No one should ever seem to preach down to people; it is always better to have a connection with them and be on the same level as they are.

Peter was qualified to speak as an elder because he was a **witness** of Jesus' sufferings when he saw Jesus' torture and crucifixion.

- And Peter was a **partaker** of Jesus' glory, probably referring to when he saw the transfiguration of Jesus.

v2 – Peter's exhortation to his fellow elders was to *Shepherd the flock of God*: A spiritual shepherd's first job is to *feed* the sheep. Jesus emphasized this when the Lord encouraged Peter after he denied knowing Him before His crucifixion in John 21:15-17.

- Shepherds also *tend* the sheep, which means protecting, guiding, nurturing, and caring for them.

The most important attribute to shepherd the flock of God is having a heart like that of Jesus, who genuinely cares about His sheep even giving His life for them...

John 10:11-13 – *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. ¹² But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. ¹³ The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.*

1 Peter 5:2 also tells us that shepherds serve as overseers. The concept of an overseer comes to the church from Greek culture, and refers to someone who watches over others as a manager or supervisor.

It is important for shepherds to realize that they lead *Jesus'* sheep. Ultimately, Jesus is the Shepherd; *He* is the Overseer.

- The Christian shepherd doesn't work for the sheep; he works for the **Chief Shepherd**.

Shepherds should not serve by **compulsion**, as if they were being forced into a task that they really hated.

- Instead, they should serve God and His people **willingly**, from a heart that loves God's people as a shepherd loves sheep and wants to serve them.

None of God's soldiers are mercenaries or men pressed into service: they are all volunteers.

- We must have a shepherd's heart if we would do a shepherd's work.

Spiritual shepherds should also not do their work for **dishonest gain**. The gain is **dishonest** because it is their motive for serving as shepherds.

- Instead, they should serve **eagerly**, willing to serve apart from any financial compensation.

v3 – Shepherds are not to act as **lords**, because the sheep do not belong to them. The sheep belong to the Chief Shepherd and are only **entrusted** to the under-shepherds. So, shepherds should serve as **examples**, not dictators.

- Peter had to give this warning about elders lording over the church because the role of a shepherd was in fact to rule and lead.

Being a leader makes shepherds **examples to the flock**, whether they intend to be or not.

- A congregation takes on the personality of its leaders in both good and bad ways.
- So, leaders should recognize this and make sure they set a godly example.

v4 – Encourages shepherds to look forward to the appearing of the Great Shepherd and their reward for being a good steward of what God has entrusted them.

This appearing of the Chief Shepherd will happen at the rapture of the church...

Titus 2:12-13 – we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ

Way too many of the church's shepherds don't seem to be looking forward to the appearing of the Chief Shepherd because they never talk about it.

- The reason for that is the end of the church Age is characterized by scoffing about Jesus returning any time soon as Peter addresses in his next epistle. But by neglecting what the Lord had to say about His return misses a great opportunity to help people make sense of the craziness of our world today.

Faithful shepherds are promised a **Crown of Glory**, but unlike the crown of leaves given to ancient Olympic champions, this crown will not fade away.

- Besides the Crown of Glory for faithful shepherds, Scripture reveals four other heavenly crowns that will be awarded to believers...

The **Imperishable Crown** is given for faithfulness in exercising self-control in order to serve the Lord and finish the race...

1 Cor. 9:25 – everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

The **Crown of Rejoicing** is a reward given for witnessing, follow-up, and ministry to others...

1 Thessalonians 2:19 – For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?

The **Crown of Life** is given for enduring trials and temptation...

James 1:12 – Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

And the **Crown of Righteousness** is a reward given for loving the appearing of Jesus when He comes for the church...

2 Timothy 4:8 – there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

To love the Lord's appearing is to look forward to His return and live in the recognition that He could come for us at any time. Living in the expectation that the rapture of the church is imminent is a powerful motive for holy living.

1 John 3:3 – everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

1 Peter 5:5-7

⁵ Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” ⁶ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, ⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

v5 – Peter’s exhortation to the sheep is directed to quote-unquote, “*younger people*.” This is in contrast to the shepherds who were generally regarded as being older. But shepherds are also sheep relative to the Lord.

- So, this admonition is to everyone: *be submissive to one another and be clothed with humility*.

Humility is demonstrated by submission. It is the ability to cheerfully put away our own agenda for God’s. And God’s agenda is often expressed through other people.

- The phrase “*be clothed*” translates a rare word that referred to a slave putting on an apron before serving, even as Jesus did before washing the disciple’s feet (John 13:4).

Humility is...

- The willingness to perform the lowest service for Jesus’ sake.
- It is consciousness of our own inability to do anything apart from God.
- It is seeking to please God apart from the praise of men.
- And it is being truly others-centered instead of self-centered.

All children God should resist our natural tendency to be prideful, for *God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble*: Peter quoted Proverbs 3:34 to show that humility is essential in our relationship with God.

- If we want to live in God’s grace then we must lay aside our pride and be humble — not only to Him but also to one another.

The polar opposite of pride is grace...

- Pride demands that God bless me in light of what I think I deserve.
- Grace deals with me on the basis what is in God, not on the basis of anything in me.

We often attempt to hide our pride by giving it a more positive spin such as calling it independence, or self-reliance. Indeed, we can even be proud of our humility.

- This sort of reminds me of the song by Mac Davis with the line: “*It is hard to be humble when you’re perfect in every way...*”

Does anyone remember that song?

v6 – We should also be humble, *that He may exalt you in due time*: If God has us in a humble place at the present time, we must submit to God’s plan.

- He knows the right time to exalt us, though we usually prefer it would be sooner rather than later.

v7 – True humility is shown by our ability to cast our cares upon God. It is pure pride to worry about things that God has promised to take care of such as food and clothing as He did in Matt 6:31-34.

- If we truly cast all our cares on God, we would find we have far fewer cares needing His help.

Casting our cares is a rather energetic word. This is the reason it doesn’t say we should lay our cares on God.

- The idea is, “*throw it away from you*.”
- It takes effort to do that.
- The pressures and the burdens of life can be so heavy that it may appear easier to just bear them ourselves.

We should expect God to help us when we cast our cares on Him because *He cares for you*: This was counter-cultural concept for the religions of the time. The ancient Greek culture could hardly imagine a God who was good and cared about them.

- Recognizing that our God cares is another unique distinction of biblical Christianity from all other religions even today!

Remembering God’s care for us glorifies Him... We often judge the parents by the children. So, when a child of God is full of worry and fear, the world has reason to believe that their Father in heaven doesn’t really care for them.

- Our worry and fear reflects poorly, and unfairly, on who God is.

1 Peter 5:8-11 reminds us about our spiritual battle:

⁸ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. ⁹ Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. ¹⁰ But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. ¹¹ To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

v8 – Peter exhorts us to be *sober and vigilant*, that is to be clear-headed and watchful; because the devil roams about looking for prey. During the Church Age, the devil has not yet been bound and restrained as Revelation 20:1-2 says he will be during the Millennial reign of Jesus on the earth.

Another term for the devil is Satan and he is our enemy because He is God's adversary. The very name of Satan means "adversary."

- Isaiah 14:12–14 and Ezekiel 28:12–18 describe the rebellion of the angel known as the devil and Satan
- Other angels joined the rebellion, leading to their exile from God's presence.
- Having no power against God, the devil turns his attention to humanity, God's cherished creation.

The term devil originates from the Greek word *diabolos*, which means "slanderer" or "accuser."

- This notion is conveyed in Revelation 12:10, which portrays the devil accusing us as guilty before the Ultimate Judge, like he did to Job.

Scripture reveals a lot about the devil...

- Psalm 91:3 tells us that Satan may come against us like a *fowler*, one who captures birds. The fowler is quiet and secretive, never revealing his presence.
- 2 Corinthians 11:14 tells us that Satan can come as an *angel of light*, appearing glorious, good, and attractive.
- The devil is also known as the "*father of lies*" (John 8:44) and he is responsible for leading the world astray (Revelation 12:9).
- Satan deceived Eve into rebelling against God (Genesis 3:1–7), and he continues to feed the world lies.
- The devil even tried to deceive Jesus (Matt 4:1–11).

The devil prowls around in that he has access to us everywhere; he knows our feelings and our tendencies, our circumstances; and he uses this knowledge to tempt us away from God.

- The devil is a finite, created being that can only be in one place at one time, yet his following of fellow fallen angels enable him to be an influence everywhere and in every arena of life.

The devil is like a *roaring lion* in that the roar of his deceptive lies are potent. He has the power to devour the souls of unbelievers and rob Christians of their effectiveness.

- He roars through persecution, through strong temptations, and through blasphemies against God.

The devil is seeking for someone to devour in that he wants to destroy us. Satan isn't just out to make us miserable; he wants us dead. It is only by the grace of God and the limitations He puts on the Evil One that we are alive today.

We need to know about the devil and his ways because the best way to resist our enemy is to know him enough to anticipate how he operates to be prepared.

- we are engaged in a life-and-death spiritual battle, and it is crucial not to misjudge Satan's power or be ignorant of his schemes.

Another reason the devil is described as a lion is due to the strength and courage of this predator. However, in stark contrast to the noble image of lions, this is a warning of the devil's destructive nature.

- First-century believers were familiar with the bloody spectacle of death in the Roman colosseums and thus would understand the deadly threat of lions.
- They would also be aware of the many depictions in Psalms of enemies crouching in cover and lying in wait to "*tear me apart like a lion*" (Psalm 7:2; see also Psalm 10:9–10; 17:12; 22:13–21; 35:17; 58:6).

We should recognize and respect the devil as a dangerous and formidable adversary who is also:

- Sly as a serpent (Genesis 3:1–5),
- And he deceives us when we least expect it (2 Cor 11:3; Revelation 12:9; 20:2–3)
- He is cunning (2 Cor 4:4; 11:14; Ephesians 6:11),
- He is intelligent, and powerful (1 John 5:19; 2 Thessalonians 2:9–10; Revelation 13:13–14).

Ephesians 2:2 describes Satan as "*the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.*"

- Jesus refers to him as, "*the prince of this world*" (John 12:31; see also John 14:30; 16:11).
- In this fallen world, believers reside in enemy-occupied territory.
- So, we must be vigilant, knowing an attack could occur at any moment.

With everything Scripture reveals about the devil... Should we be afraid of him or not?

- God has not left us defenseless. He has given us spiritual armor—the whole armor of God—to wear as believers.
- This armor is God's powerful protection, shielding us against the devil's schemes and enabling us to stand our ground when the devil comes at us like a lion (see Ephesians 6:10–24).
- We can take up the shield of faith and trust God to extinguish the flaming darts of the evil one (Eph 6:16).
James 4:7 – Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you

v9 – Resist him (by being) steadfast in the faith: The secret of spiritual warfare is simple... *steadfast resistance*. As we are *steadfast in the faith*, we *resist* the devil's lies, threats and intimidation.

Scripture urges believers to flee from various evils (1 Cor 6:18; 10:14; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22), but nowhere are we advised to flee from the devil. That would be futile.

- Instead, we are to resist him.
- **Resist** comes from two ancient Greek words: *stand* and *against*. Peter tells us to *stand against* the devil.

We resist the devil by standing firm in the faith. When the devil sees that we are well grounded in our relationship with the Lord, he will flee to find easier conquests.

It helps us to stand firm in the faith, *knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world*: It is comforting to know that we are not alone in our spiritual warfare. Our fellow brothers and sisters are fighting the same battles.

v10-11 – Knowing the suffering and danger Christians face, Peter can only conclude with *prayer*. He asks God to do His work of perfecting, establishing, strengthening, and settling us.

These things are God's work in us. Peter personally knew the futility of trying to face suffering and danger in one's own strength.

- His own failure taught him the need for constant reliance on God's work in our lives, so he prays that for his dear Christian friends.

Also, our suffering is only for a *little while* in the context of eternity... Remembering that helps us to endure it.

We are all *called us to God's eternal glory*; which includes:

- the glory of complete victory over death.
- the glory of having a purified character... our resurrected souls will not have a selfish nature
- the glory of being honored by a King blessing us with rewards.
- And the glory of enjoying God Himself... since we'll have His immediate, constant presence

v11 – Peter praised God because He promised to do this great work in our lives...

- that is certainly worthy of our praise!

1 Peter 5:12-14 – ¹²By *Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.* ¹³*She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son.* ¹⁴*Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

v12 – These last couple of verses were probably written by Peter's own hand after he had dictated the letter to Silvanus, which was the custom of the day.

- This man **Silvanus** was probably the same one known as *Silas* in Paul's letters.

Peter summed up his message as an exhortation to understand *the true grace of God in which we stand*.

- We must understand that it is by God's unmerited favor that we're able to stand before Him.

v13 – The term *she who is in Babylon* probably refers to the church. Peter apparently wrote from **Babylon**. This may be the literal city of Babylon (which still existed in Peter's day), or it may be a symbolic way of referring to either Rome or Jerusalem.

- In Peter's Day, these two cities were famous for their wickedness and spiritual rebellion, just like ancient Babylon.
- In any regard, this was one church greeting another.

This verse also connects Mark with Peter, apparently the same Mark of Acts 12:12, 12:25, and 15:37-39.

- The style and perspective of the Gospel of Mark leads many to believe that Peter was Mark's primary source for his gospel.

v14 – Peter encourages us to *greet one another with a kiss of love*: We should display God's love to one another. He also concluded here by pronouncing a blessing of **peace**.

- These two things — **love** for each other and **peace** — are especially necessary for those who suffer and live in dangerous times.
- The apostles did not originate these greetings; the custom already existed. They sanctioned its use as a sincere expression of Christian love.

What applications come to mind from this passage?

- Elders should be as shepherds having responsibilities to feed and protect the flock.
- Humility is important before both God and men.
- There are 5 crowns representing rewards that believers should aspire to attain.
- God cares for us so we should cast all our cares on Him.
- Satan seeks to destroy us, resist!
- The full armor of God helps us to stand against the enemy
- The hope of eternal glory helps us cope with the sufferings of this current Age.