

Shepherd the Flock 1 Peter 5:1-5

Context: Last week we covered verses about the suffering of a believer and the nobility and blessedness of suffering for the sake of Christ. This week the passage of scripture has a very particular application, and that is to those who have leadership in the church, specifically to pastors. And I want to say that even though the direct audience are the pastors of the church, it is absolutely necessary for the whole church, from youngest to the oldest, from the women to the children, to visitors and members – really to all who are saved – that they know and understand the roll and authority of elders.

1 Peter 5:1-5 “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,[a] not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you;[b] 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.””

1. **V 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.”
 - a. Peter here turns his attention to the leadership of the church. He wants to address the “ELDERS.” Not everyone is familiar with this term.
 - b. An elder is a pastor and is one of the offices described in the New Testament.
 - i. The word pastor is used only once in the new testament and that is **Eph 4:11** “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds[a] and teachers,” which comes from the Old Testament and was the same word for shepherds.
 - ii. The word for elder means elder and where we get the word Presbyterian and also comes from the old testament for someone who was one of the elders of the people.
 - iii. Another word that is used interchangeably is the word overseer, which some English translations is bishop, but this is one of the reasons that we know that he isn’t talking about people who happen to be aged, but rather that this is an actual office in the church.

- c. And the word Exhort means admonish, encourage, or teach. This is an authoritative call from the Apostle Peter to the leadership of the church.
 - i. Peter here makes a decision to relate to them as what? As a fellow Elder. Also, as one who is “a witness of the sufferings of Christ.” – a very humble way of saying that he is not just an elder, but an apostle. What is one of the rolls of an apostle? To identify and ordain elders (**Titus 1:5**). In other words, not only can he relate to elders as a fellow elder with experience as a spiritual Shepard of a local flock, but he has APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY to command elders.
- d. Biblically, what constitutes leadership in the church? We know that Jesus is the head of His church and he is the Good Shepherd, but what about the local expression of the church? It is the Elders that are addressed throughout the New Testament as the leaders of the church. This is considered and actual office one is appointed too, not the age of someone, and we are taught this in **Titus 1:5-9** and **1 Timothy 3:1-7**.
- e. What does it mean to be an elder?
 - i. Elders are the leaders of the church, that is, they are the god-ordained authority in the church. They represent a group, not an individual. It is always referred to as a group of men who have been recognized as the leadership and ordained as elders by the laying on of hands.
 - ii. **What does and ELDER DO?** Everything that has to do with leadership. It includes church discipline **1 Tim 5:17**, **1 Cor 5**, appointing deacons and committing to pray for the church (**Acts 6:4**), teaching and preaching and rebuking (**Titus 1:9**), to watch over and care for the flock and protect from false teachers (**Acts 20:28-31**), the doctrinal positions of the church (**Titus 1:9**, **Acts 15:6**), to pray for the sick for healing (**James 5:14**) to name a few, namely everything that has to do with leadership, responsibility, and making decisions. They are responsible for providing this leadership will give an account for every decision made in the church. Elders are accountable to God.
- f. Elder’s among YOU. That is, those that have been recognized by that church and ordained in that church, not some other church, but in the church where you serve.
- g. CONFIRMED. In the New Testament, those that were commissioned for ministry were set before the church as candidates and they were recognized by the church and by leadership and were officially commissioned by the

laying on of hands, (**Acts 6:6** Deacons, **Acts 13:3** missionaries, **1 Timothy 4:14**, Timothy is commissioned, **5:22** says not to be hasty to lay hands on anyone)

2. **V 2-3** “2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight,[a] not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you;[b] not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.”

a. The command is to Shepherd the flock. What do you see when you think of a shepherd? Are they not kind, understanding, wise, and strong? It is such a fatherly roll. One that congers all the feeling of safety, comfort, and reliance. That’s the way sheep are with a shepherd, they follow him (**John 10:27**)

i. Shepherding, and then the description there “exercising oversight” – that word goes so well with the idea of shepherding because it has the idea of being carefully watchful.

1. **Titus 1:9** “He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound[d] doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.”

2. **Acts 20:28-31** “28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God,[a] which he obtained with his own blood.[b] 29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.”

ii. We saw what an elder does, but Peter does not talk too much about that here, other than to say shepherd the flock and exercise oversight – he wants to speak to the heart of the Elders.

1. **WILLINGLY. WHOLE HEARTED ENTHUSIASM** This doesn’t mean that an elder always just wants to be an elder. What it means is that when they are called by leadership to take on this roll, they have a posture of eager submission to that calling. For some, radical submission to God is submission to His call on your life as an elder.

2. As God would have you. Literally it says “according to God” – This is a calling from God anyway. He will give you the willingness if He has called you, but you must choose to submit to that call. There is a willingness even in the face of an accusing enemy that constantly will tell you that you are not good enough.
3. As EXAMPLES to the flock. Elders are to be the type of men that can model obedience to Christ in His most important teachings, to love God with everything that is in you and to love your neighbor as yourself, to walk in faith and humility and the fruit of the Spirit, to know how to stand up for the truth. To look like what a Christian is supposed to look like, namely, to look like Christ.

iii. How not?

1. UNWILLINGLY. The word means “by force or constrain.” There should be no pressure to take this roll. There should not be a sense of condemnation that presses someone who does not see themselves as called or qualified to serve in the capacity. In other words, there should be something of an inward call and God given desire to serve as a leader. **1 Timothy 3:1** anticipates that there would be men who desire this task.
2. For Shameful gain, some translations have “sordid gain” – or my favorite – “filthy lucre” (KJV) - this word carries with it the idea of something twisted and distorted – to be quite simple – greed. We know what that looks like – to see an emphasis on money, giving, selling things, and even the extreme, the prosperity gospel. YOU DON’T DO IT FOR THE MONEY. To draw a salary is one thing, but what motivates you in this? Money? But there are other things that can be shameful gain. Attention? Influence and power? Title?
3. NOT domineering “OVERBEARING” – the word has the idea of bringing someone under one’s own power, to subdue, or to exercise lordship over. This could mean an imperious manner that is bossy, commanding, or pushy. But this could also be someone who attempts to FORCE people to do things that they deem right. Meaning they have to be in charge and if you go against them in any way, they will find a way to punish you.

Another one that I've seen in heard is taking authority over things in the lives of those in the flock that they have no business in.

3. **V 4** “4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”
- a. THIS CROWN OF GLORY IS THE CONQUORERS CROWN
 - b. The Apostle Peter wants to encourage you who are elders that this roll comes with it the promise of reward. It is hard to go into detail on this but it appears that those that serve faithfully as elders are recognized with a crown.
 - c. **Matt 25:45-47** “ 45 “Who then is the faithful and wise servant,[c] whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? 46 Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. 47 Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions.”
 - d. It is so important, isn't it, for elder's to be encouraged. Why? Because the work that they do is challenging, and can involve such suffering and self-sacrifice, and the target of the enemy only grows as they grow as elders, as they continually sacrifice their own comfort for the good of the Sheep.
4. **V 5** “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.”
- a. This word for young can mean babies or it can simply mean those that are “new,” as in new to the church, or new to the faith.
 - b. SEEK OUT THE COUNCEL AND DISCIPLESHIP
 - c. They are to be subject to the elders, or be submissive, to the elders. This is the same word for wives submitting to husbands, as in a military term to rank one's self under the command of a leader.
 - d. Peter wants to make sure that in particular, those that are new to the faith are submissive to the elders, not to pick on them, but to make sure that they receive the shepherding they need as a young believer.
 - e. Notice the way in which we are all supposed to be relating to each other. We are all to be humble. All those that are elders, all those that are young and all those that are neither young, nor are they in the office of the elder.
 - f. Why? “God opposes the proud, but he gives grace to the humble.” – Peter is quoting from **Proverbs 3:34** here and is highlighting the fact that God is

displeased with those that are too proud to be of a humble mind set. You don't have to be a child to be out of line in this. Those who are not submissive must learn in this, but also leaders who are domineering.

Application

1. Do we properly reverence the roll of elder? Are we submissive to the elders, as a governing body? Or do we kind of downplay that roll and that authority and lightly regard it. Everyone should reverence this position for the Lord's sake and especially the elders themselves so that they walk as those that will give an account for how they shepherd the flock.
 - a. If you are an elder, are you diligent, or lazy? Are you bold, or timid and cowardly? Are you full of prayer, or not so much? Are you studying to show yourself approved, or are you doing the bare minimum? Do you love God's people, or do you love attention and authority? Do you take responsibility for the things that require leadership, or are you passive? If you are an elder, you will be held accountable for the leadership of this church – you will have to stand and give an account before God **Heb 13:17** "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you."
 - b. It should be with patience, humility, and kindness, like a gentle parent rather than pounding things at people and exasperating them.
 - c. Almost all the major failures that I have seen in churches have been failures of leadership. Failures to handle resources, failures to handle situations that require a loving heart, and wisdom, failures in sin, and failures in administration. When there is a failure in administration, there is always a failure to love in a self-sacrificial way.
2. What is your JOB as an Elder?? Shepherd is the illustration.
 - a. A Lion's strategy is to create confusion in the flock to isolate members of the flock, especially the young or sick so that they can prey on them. The job of the under shepherds is to keep the flock together and safe.
 - b. Another purpose of this passage clearly is to expose one another of the strategy of the enemy and that is to turn the sheep against the shepherd and

the shepherd against the sheep! This is why it is so essential not to be domineering and to be humble as an elder and why it is so important that those under authority are SUBMISSIVE.

- c. How is that done primarily? Lots of ways, counseling, being an example, but MOSTLY it is by Exhortation and application of the Word of God is the means by which elders shepherd the flock.
- d. What about those elders not on the teaching team? Teaching isn't just from the pulpit on Sunday – it can be seen in the way worship is lead, or small groups – and also the elders as a group are going to be held responsible for what comes from this pulpit.

3. What is your JOB as one who is not an elder? You should pray for, appreciate, listen to, honor, and respect your elders, but the Bible is calling you primarily to SUBMIT to the elders. They are put in authority over you for the purpose of shepherding your soles. **Hebrews 13:17** “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”

4. What about those that WANT to be elders?

- a. Why do you want to be an elder? Is it for the status or the authority or some other reason?
- b. I have a question for you (and me) – are you called? Are you REALLY called, by God in a way that is being recognized by leadership. It is not enough to think you are called to preach. It is not even enough to think you are called by one or more of the elders. This has to be a testimony of your gifts to the local church as evaluated by all the elders who then lay their hands on you as a testimony of the impartation of the authority of eldership. (verses for laying on of hands).
- c. Warning: never let your identity be found in your title or calling. If that is you, at the slightest provocation you will find yourself reacting in your own defense. What if you could no longer be an elder? Would that create a mid-life crisis? Would that send you into a tailspin of depression? Would that cause you to rage, and fight? Those who are truly submitted to our lead shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ are free from that threat because they are not concerned at all with roll and title, but with obedience to the call of God.

- d. Encouragement: If you aspire to the office, then you are wanting something that is GOOD **1 Tim 3:1**. You are given this encouragement by the Word of God that the task is noble and goes on to list the attributes that an elder must have.
 - e. Almost all of the qualifications are character qualifications, not task.
 - f. C4 – which is the way we organize how someone is brought into the fellowship and into leadership – Come, Connect, Covenant, Calling – if you sense a calling in your life, please approach one of the elders if you sense the Lord is calling you to something.
 - g. Right now, we have Tom and Buck in leadership essentials and Lord willing leadership will lay hands on them as elders in the Spring. Lord willing then I will enter into the same program.
5. Encouragements for Elders: V4 “and when the chief shepherd appears you will receive an unfading crown of glory.” The crown. When an athlete would win in the Olympics, they would win a crown made out of olive leaves and it would fade but imagine the crown that the Lord would give. I imagine it looking just like roman olive wreath of leaves but made out of pure gold, but the thin little leaves are made out of pure gold. But the impulse will not be to wear crowns or show off crowns but to cast our crowns and we will just be longing to cast crowns before His feet and wouldn't it be great to have something to cast, but we know the elders will have something.
- a. Lay down your life for the sheep! Just as Christ did
 - b. Preach the word! **2 Timothy 4:1-5** “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound[a] teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 5 As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”
 - c. Death comes for us all, if the Lord carries **2 Timothy 4:6-8** “6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the

Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.”