

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 23RD - 24TH, 2022 // BOOK OF 1 PETER

TO THE ELDERS (1 PETER 5:1-4) TO THE LEADERSHIP OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

As Peter ends this letter, he encourages the leaders of the local churches because they wouldn't only receive the harshest treatment (witnesses to the sufferings of Christ), but would have to help others during their struggles.

- **Elders are overseers of the integrity of the church.** They pray, counsel, oversee the spiritual health of the church, and teach.

THIS WAS MORE SPECIFICALLY TO PASTORS

A pastor is also an elder, but usually has a more intimate shepherding role. V2 tells pastors to lead "not out of compulsion," "greed for money," or "lording over those entrusted" to them.

- **In a time when we seem to have so few examples of authenticity, honesty, and humility, the Word tells pastors to be "examples to the flock."**

FROM THE TOP DOWN

Leadership matters. Because we've valued personalities over substance, ease over truth, and entertainment over discipleship, **we now have motivational speakers rather than pastors, and it is destroying us.**

- **Both pastors and congregants should have a desire for a deeper and more biblical relationship with God.**

WE ARE ALL SHEPHERDING IN SOME WAY

V4 is an encouragement to pastors that if they are faithful in leading others, the Great Shepherd will reward them with an "unfading crown of glory."

- **Dedication to serving and leading with integrity is not just a call for pastors, but for all Christians because we all lead on some level and will be rewarded for it.**

HUMILITY (1 PETER 5:5-7)

BEING HUMBLE ENOUGH TO LISTEN

All throughout the Bible, we are called to humble ourselves to leadership that God has placed above us. We're not only told to "clothe [our]selves with humility" towards elders in the church, but why we should do this.

- The **why** behind humility and submission to leaders is that **God resists arrogant people and will not grant them true leadership.**

A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION

If we are humble and cooperate with the God-given authority in our lives, God will honor that and "exalt [us] at the proper time."

- It is not that we cannot ask pastoral leadership questions or even disagree, but **we must be cautious of the spirit we have when asking questions or disagreeing.** We should be a team.

HUMILITY IS AT THE CORE OF THIS

Humility is to have **a proper estimation of ourselves.** This means we can acknowledge our strengths, but also understand we have deficiencies. If we're humble, we will learn from older, wiser, or more experienced people.

- **If we'll "not despise the days of small things" (Zechariah 4:10) and listen, God will shape us into great people and leaders.**

"QUICK TO LISTEN, SLOW TO SPEAK" (JAMES 1:19)

We not only live in a culture that expects instant gratification, influence, and reward, but we are also quick to speak when we should be listening.

- **If we're humble and confident in who we are in God, the Spirit in us will give us the wisdom to learn from others and the patience for our time to influence.**

"CASTING ALL YOUR CARES ON HIM..."

Cast means to *throw upon something else.* We're to trust Jesus and "cast" our cares, fears, and struggles on Him because He wants to help. **God's concern and love is constant.**

- **He's not indifferent to our suffering or struggles, but desires our active trust and humility. We must be humble and accept that we need Him.**

FIRM (1 PETER 5:8-14)

YOU HAVE A REAL AND DANGEROUS ENEMY

V8 is extremely important. We either forget or haven't been taught that we are in a spiritual battle with a real adversary, Satan.

- **The command to be "sober-minded" and "alert" is extremely relevant in a society that promotes intoxication from every corner. Without sobriety, we're incapable of recognizing Satan's advancement.**

A SPIRIT OF "SOUND JUDGMENT" (1 TIMOTHY 1:7)

Not only does intoxication of any kind dull our ability to recognize evil, it also easily becomes an idol of escapism in our lives.

- As Christians, **we are to acknowledge that Jesus is our source of stability, peace, and strength. When we rely on anything else, it is idolatry, and idolatry is a sin.**

HOW DO WE DEFEAT THE "ROARING LION"?

In order to overcome the Devil that wants to "devour" anything good in your life, you must **"Resist him, firm in the faith," knowing other Christians are with you in the battle.**

- **To resist and stand up against Satan, we must live in Christ and draw our power from Him.** This means we must have an obedient relationship with Jesus.

WE MUST ALSO WALK IN COMMUNITY

The church is vital in our walk with God because we are not designed to live isolated or to fight our spiritual battles alone.

- To live in **Christian community** means we must make it **a priority, be vulnerable to biblical teaching, trusting of godly leadership, and willing to be held accountable by others.**

GOD IS FAITHFUL TO REWARD

Not only has God called us to "His eternal glory in Christ (heaven)," but He is faithful to strengthen and support us through our hard times until we enter into eternity.

- We will all suffer "a little while" if we are devoted to Jesus. But **the reward of a permanent heaven will far outweigh the cost of temporary suffering for Christ.**

"IN BABYLON"

Peter closes out this letter by honoring Silas (Silvanus) and Mark (Gospel of Mark), who both traveled with him and Paul. Peter also sent greetings from "Babylon," a code word for Rome.

- The Babylonian Empire was also hostile towards the people of God and became a consistent representation of evil throughout the Bible and even today.

YOU HAVE A LEGITIMATE ENEMY

- Though Jesus has ultimately won the war through the cross, we are in a spiritual fight every day.
- **The reason we must live alert, sober-minded, and intentional lives is because Satan wants to "steal, kill, and destroy."** Through any door we leave open, evil will seize the opportunity to come in.

WE MUST LEAD WITH INTEGRITY

- Christians should desire honest, genuine, humble, and challenging pastors/elders.
- Christians who lead in any capacity **should lead by example and not be greedy, power-hungry, or abusive with their influence.**
- We must also protect the truth at all costs. Without the truth of the Word, there is no freedom or possibility of salvation.

WE MUST BE HUMBLE

- Do we have **a spirit of cooperation?**
- We must learn to be **"slow to speak and quick to listen,"** knowing that whatever stage we're in, we still have much to learn.
- True humility is a proper estimation of ourselves. **As Christians, we must present ourselves honestly without the extremes of self-deprecation or arrogance.**
- We must also "not despise the days of small things," knowing that **if we are humble and submitted to authority now, God will trust us with authority and knowledge as we mature and grow.**
- We must be humble and know that we cannot make it without God. So, "we cast our cares on Him because He cares for us."

WE MUST STAND FIRM AND RESIST

- It is impossible to stand firm when we are not thinking clearly. **We must be of a sound and pure mind if we're to resist evil.**
- We must draw power from the Holy Spirit through prayer and seek the gift of wisdom.
- **It is impossible to stand firm if we are not anchored to the Word.** We must know the truth and hold onto it every day.
- We must also have community. We are not designed to be isolated, but to walk with other believers for encouragement.
- **If we will love God and others and stand firm in our faith as aliens and strangers in our present "Babylon," we will be rewarded and given residency in a perfect, holy city for eternity.**