

I Peter 5:1-5 - Living Together as the God's Sheep

Thursday, January 31, 2013

7:14 AM

Introduction

- 1. Our passage this morning is once again dealing with how we relate to each other in the church**
 - A. Peter viewed the living life in the fellowship of the church as a strict necessity for the Christian, and we can see that in how many times how we act in the church comes up in I Peter
 - B. I Peter 1:22-2:1 - How we act towards one another sets our hope on salvation
 - i. We love one another because we have been born again
 - ii. Therefore, we get rid of malice, deceit, slander, hypocrisy and envy
 - C. I Peter 3:8 - How we act towards one another is a proclamation of the excellencies of Christ
 - i. We have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, tender hearts and humble minds
 - ii. These testify to both those inside the church and those outside the church to what Christ has done for and to us
 - D. I Peter 4:8-11 - How we act towards one another is a means of discipline in the fight against sin
 - i. We love one another to cover and defeat sin
 - ii. We show hospitality to encourage each other in our fight against sin
 - iii. We use our gifts to build each other up in our fight against sin
 - E. I Peter 5:1-5 - How we act towards one another is important in persevering through God's refining judgment
 - i. Elders serve the body, the congregation submits to the elders, we all have humility toward one another

- 2. Read I Peter 5:1-5**

- 3. Our passage this morning is intimately connected to what has gone before**
 - A. Our passage starts out with a 'therefore' or a 'so'
 - i. Peter is connecting this passage back to the rest of the letter
 - ii. The Greek word means something like: this is how you connect the dots
 - iii. So, if we consider and integrate everything that Peter has said so far in I Peter we should come up with the commands of I Peter 5
 - B. So what has Peter said so far?
 - i. You are facing and will face various trials, but your salvation is much greater than any trial.
 - ii. The purpose of your salvation is to proclaim the excellencies of Christ, so use your trials to proclaim Christ.
 - iii. The purpose of your salvation is to make you righteous, so use your trials to fight for righteousness.
 - iv. You should not be surprised at trials now because God is judging and refining His church through them toward the end of Christ glory and your glorification.
 - C. So what does 'so' mean?
 - i. If the church is being judged by God in order to refine her, then how her shepherds act is of utmost importance. Why? Because:
 - ii. The judgment of God will start with God's undershepherds - if God is judging His church then the elders especially need to consider their responsibilities because those who teach will be subject to greater judgment
 - iii. God's undershepherds prepare God's people to stand under God's judgment - when the elders lead God's people rightly they will bear up under suffering and use it to fight against sin and glorify God
 - iv. So, even though this passage may seem disconnected from the rest of I Peter, Peter actually sees it as intimately connected - how is the church going to withstand God's judgment here on earth?

4. Our passage this morning is written by someone who understands

- A. Peter stresses all three of his relationships to the church in order to strengthen his point. He is:
- B. A fellow elder - when he gives instructions to elders he is not asking them to do something he is not willing to do himself. He understands the challenges and responsibilities of being an elder.
- C. A witness of the sufferings of Christ (an apostle) - when he gives instructions to the elders, the congregation and the church He is speaking as one who spoke with Christ and witnessed what Christ did. Not only are his words commiserate with them, they are also authoritative.
- D. A partaker of the glory that is going to be revealed (a Christian) - when he gives instructions to the church He is speaking as one who is sharing in the common hope of the church. He is a member of the church and is, again, not asking them to do more than he himself does.
- E. Because he is an elder, an apostle and a Christian he is worthy of being listened to and followed in his commands to the church
- F. Also, the order he puts them in is, I think, important. He lists a fellow elder first, emphasizing his common lot with the elders. He lists a fellow participant in Christ last in the position of prominence showing that this is the supreme fact about Peter. Peter is not primarily an apostle or elder, he is primarily a Christian. In time he may hold different offices in the church, but the greatest thing about Peter is that he is a partaker of the glory that is going to be revealed. Peter is a Christian.

5. Proposition and Outline

- A. Proposition: If we are going to persevere through suffering in order to proclaim the excellencies of Christ, pursue righteousness and participate in Christ's glory, we must organize the church according to God's plan.
- B. Outline: There are three commands that Peter gives in organizing the church in order to persevere:
 - i. Elders: Shepherd the Flock
 - ii. Congregation: Submit to the Elders
 - iii. Everyone: Humble Yourselves

I. Elders - Shepherd the Flock

- **Why do we take time to preach on the responsibilities of elders in front of the entire congregation? Is this a waste of time? Should you all fall asleep this morning?**
 - A. We preach on this because it is in Scripture and all Scripture is useful for building up God's people
 - B. We preach on this because elders and prospective elders need to hear, learn and practice these things (obvious)
 - C. We preach on this because the congregation needs to hear these things (why?)
 - i. To encourage their elders and hold them accountable
 - ii. To relate to their elders in correct ways -we'll consider this in our second point this morning

1. What should elders do?

- A. Shepherd the flock of God that is among you
 - i. What does it mean for an elder to Shepherd the flock of God?
 - 1) If we look through Scripture, we can learn clearly what it means to Shepherd
 - 2) I spent a large portion of my study this week looking for, reading and meditating on the different passages of Scripture related to Shepherds
 - ii. Peter is passing on the direct command of Christ
 - 1) John 21:15-17 - *He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "**Tend** my sheep."*
 - iii. Peter is using a term that has a rich Biblical history both in referring to God and those who rule over God's people

• Psalm 23	◆ Jeremiah 31:10	➤ Matthew 25:32
	◆ Ezekiel 34	➤ John 10:1-18
◆ Isaiah 40:11	◆ Ezekiel 37:24	➤ John 21:15-17
◆ Isaiah 56:9-12	◆ Micah 5:1-4	➤ Acts 20:26-35
◆ Jeremiah 2:8	◆ Zechariah 11	➤ Ephesians 4:11-14
◆ Jeremiah 3:15		➤ Hebrews 13:20
◆ Jeremiah 10:21	➤ Matthew 2:6	➤ Revelation 7:17
◆ Jeremiah 23:1-8	➤ Matthew 9:36	
- B. Based on these passages, we can start to paint a picture of what it means to be a shepherd according to Scripture
 - i. To shepherd means:
 - 1) To care for the needs of the sheep by pointing them to food and water
 - 2) To lead the sheep by the right paths and teach the sheep
 - 3) To pay attention to the sheep in order to strengthen them and comfort them
 - 4) To watch out for potential dangers to the sheep and combat them
 - 5) To prevent sheep from straying and to seek lost sheep out
 - 6) To call all the sheep to join the flock
 - 7) To lay down one's life for the sheep and be willing to lay down one's life for the sheep
 - 8) To do all these things in utter dependence on God
 - ii. The elder does this in the spiritual realm for God's sheep
 - 1) He cares for the needs of the sheep by pointing them to Christ who is true food and true drink
 - 2) He leads the sheep by paths of righteousness, encouraging them in the fight against sin and teaches the sheep from the Word of God to this end
 - 3) He pays careful attention to all of the sheep, ensuring that they are progressing on their way to Christ's kingdom
 - 4) He watches out for dangers to the sheep, in sins that have crept in or false doctrines that may deceive, and he combats them with the Word of God
 - 5) He prevents the sheep from straying from Christ and His law and if they do, he pursues them in order to bring them back
 - 6) He calls those who are not sheep to be sheep by proclaiming the Word of God to the world
 - 7) He lays down his life for the sheep by dedicating his life, not to his own pleasures, but to the building up of the sheep, and he is willing to actually lay down his life for the sheep
 - 8) He serves God's sheep only in God's power, depending on God for everything

2. How should the elders do these things?

- A. Willingly (not under compulsion)
 - i. Peter here recognizes that being an elder is not always an easy task and elders may at times be tempted to despair and give up, sometimes an elder may feel that the only reason to keep shepherding is because he has to
 - ii. Peter says, no! you can't do that
 - iii. An elder must serve willingly, having joy in his work under Christ because that is God's will for His elders and God's example to those He has called as elders
- B. Eagerly (not for shameful gain)
 - i. Peter also recognizes that with the authority that an elder has would come the temptation to use the position to benefit one's self
 - ii. Peter again says, no! you can't do that
 - iii. Elders should never be marked by greed or desire for gain from their ministries - in fact this is one of the requirements of being an elder
 - ◆ Titus 1:7 - *For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain*
 - iv. An elder must serve eagerly - desiring to serve the body of Christ for the good of the body and the glory of Christ, not his own benefit
- C. Being examples to the flock (not domineering over those in your charge)
 - i. In this command, I'm going to split the negative and positive aspects because they don't clearly go together here until we consider them for a minute
 - ii. The negative - not domineering over those in your charge
 - 1) This is something that Christ Himself told Peter
 - a. Matthew 20:25-28 - *But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*
 - 2) So, what does 'not domineering over those in your charge' mean?
 - a. First, it doesn't mean that elders should not exercise authority in the church
 - (1) Elders don't need to be merely passive examples simply hoping someone notices - there is some truth in that statement, but it is easily taken too far
 - (2) We see this in the word shepherd - the word shepherd is a powerful word not a passive word - the shepherd tells the sheep what to do, the shepherd authoritatively guides the sheep - in fact, the word translated here as shepherd is sometimes translated rule
 - 1- Revelation 19:15 - *From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron.*
 - (3) We see this in other passages relating to elders
 - 1- Elders are supposed to rule in the church, I Timothy 5:17 - *Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.*
 - 2- Elders are supposed to have oversight over the church, I Timothy 3:1 - *The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.*
 - (4) So, we should see this command as a pacification of elders - those who can exercise no authority
 - b. Instead, we should see this command as how an elder should exercise authority
 - (1) An elder does not exercise authority by domineering over those in his charge
 - (2) An elder doesn't domineer when he does three things, which we see surrounding this command
 - 1- He doesn't put a burden on his congregation that he would not bear himself - when he gives a command it is something he himself is willing to do, he is an example of living out that command - this is why these two things are contrasted, living as an example prevents elders from being domineering

- 2- He doesn't seek his own good with his authority but his congregations - this was what we considered in the last subpoint - when he seeks the congregation's good, not his own, it prevents him from being domineering
- 3- He uses his authority according to what the Chief Shepherd has commanded - we see this in vs. 4 - when an elder bases his authority solely and squarely on Scripture it prevents him from being domineering
- (3) When an elder uses his authority in these ways then he is not domineering over those in his charge
- iii. So, the elder should be an example (*typoi* - type)
 - 1) A visual representation of the truth that helps the truth be understood
 - a. Hebrews 8:5 - *They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain."*
 - b. Elders ought to represent with their lives the truths of Christ
 - 2) A demonstration of correct behavior that is to be imitated
 - a. I Timothy 4:12 - *Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.*
 - b. Elders must demonstrate with their lives how a Christian ought to live
- iv. An elder must live what he teaches - he can't command things that he won't do and he should be careful to make sure his whole life is a representation of Christ and a pattern for the believer

3. Why should elders do these things?

- A. Because Christ is the chief shepherd
 - i. Elders are not the ultimate authority - Christ is - Christ is the one who ultimately shepherds His sheep
 - 1) Hebrews 13:20 - *Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep.*
 - 2) I Peter 2:25 - *For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*
 - ii. Elders are serving as undershepherds of Christ and will give an account to Him of their actions as elders. Therefore, elders should shepherd the flock of God in these ways because it is what Christ, the Chief Shepherd, did and what Christ, the Chief Shepherd, has commanded
 - iii. This gives both great authority and great solemnity to the task of elders
 - 1) There is great authority because elders are exercising the authority of Christ in their duties - they are representing the Chief Shepherd
 - 2) There is great solemnity because elders will give account of how they exercised their authority to Christ - they are representing the Chief Shepherd
 - iv. It also means that elders should devote themselves to studying and meditating on how Christ relates to us because they are called to imitate Christ in His Shepherdship
- B. Because in persevering in their task they will share in Christ's glory
 - i. There is not only a solemn charge extended to elders to motivate them to their service but also a great joy
 - ii. When elders exercise their authority rightly in honor and representation of Christ, they can look forward to sharing in Christ glory regardless of how hard the task is at present
 - iii. The question comes up - is this a special reward that elders have or something that is common to all the people of God. I'm not going to answer that questions for two reason:
 - 1) First, it doesn't affect the point of the passage at all - regardless of whether it is a special glory that elders receive from Christ for their service or if the elders in serving well receive the same glory that all Christians receive for serving well, the emphasis is that in being faithful to the charge the elder can look forward to glory
 - 2) Second, I really don't know - I've consider the passage and I can't see anything in it that would require us to take it one way or the other, nor is there anything in Scripture that would force us to take it one way or the other
 - 3) What I know is that for the elder that is faithful to their task, there is a rich reward awaiting
 - iv. Therefore, elders should do these things with great joy because they see participation in the glory of Christ (the phrase Peter started with) as the end of their service to Christ

II. Congregation - Submit Yourself

1. Who? The younger = the congregation - those who are not elders

- A. Younger as contrasted with elders (*neOteroi* is the opposite of *presbuterois*)
- B. John Gill - Not in office, as if inferior officers to bishops were here intended, who ought to be subject to them; for elders and pastors are the same with them, nor is there any other office but that of deacons; nor younger pastors and overseers, such an one as Timothy was; not but that a deference is to be paid, and proper respect had to such who are of greater age, and longer standing and experience, by younger brethren in the ministry; nor such as are only younger in years, who ought to rise up unto, and honor hoary hairs, which may be done where subjection is not required, as here; nor such as are young in grace and experience, since there are little children, young men, and fathers in the church; but all the members of churches in common are here intended, as distinguished from their officers; for as pastors and overseers were, for the most part, chosen from among those that were senior in age, so the members generally consisted of the younger sort; and besides, as it was usual to call chief men and rulers, whether in church or state, fathers, so those that were subjects, the younger; see
- C. John Calvin - it is necessary, when a contrast is made between [the elders] and the younger, that the two clauses should correspond [he actually chooses the other option, that Peter is talking about older and younger people, but he does agree that the two words have to be in agreement with each other as contrasts]

2. What? Be subject to the elders

- There is only one very short command to the congregation - be subject to the elders
 - i. Why does Peter say so little to the congregation here compared to the elders?
 - ii. I think it's because Peter has already instructed the congregation as he instructed the elders
 - iii. By defining how the elders should act he has also defined how the congregation should act
 - iv. So, we're going to consider what being subject to the elders means
- A. Be shepherded by your elders
 - i. If the purpose of elders is to shepherd the flock of God, then the flock of God must be willing to be shepherded
 - 1) If the shepherds point you toward Christ, run after the things the shepherd is pointing to
 - 2) If the shepherds guide you in righteousness, follow those guidelines
 - 3) If the shepherds seek to pay attention to you, be glad to share your life with them
 - 4) If the shepherds alert you to dangers from false doctrine or practice, flee from them
 - 5) If the shepherds call you to repent from sin, listen to them
 - ii. Sheep that utterly refuse to do what the shepherd directs them to do are bad sheep
 - 1) Good sheep hear their shepherds voice and follow
 - a. John 10:27 - *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*
 - 2) Less good sheep require their shepherd to continually prod them with his staff to lead them in the right way
 - 3) Bad sheep won't follow their shepherd even when he is prodding them with their staff, they're more like a mule
 - 4) Don't be muley sheep - be shepherded
- B. Encourage your elders in their task
 - i. If elders should shepherd willingly and not under compulsion, then the congregation should strive to allow their elders to shepherd willingly
 - 1) 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.*
 - ii. I've talked at some length about this verse before, so I won't belabor the point. The congregation ought to seek to agree with their elders and obey their directives so that the elders can do their task with joy. Elders can take no joy in sheep that refuse to be shepherded.
 - iii. Encourage your elders in their shepherding responsibilities. Be fast to be shepherded. Don't be continually resistant to how the elders are leading the church.

- C. Take care of your elders
- i. If elders should not seek their own gain through their ministry as elders then the congregation should seek to take care of their elders
 - 1) I Corinthians 9:13-14 - *Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.*
 - 2) I Timothy 5:17-18 - *Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages."*
 - 3) Luke 10:7 - *And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house.*
 - 4) Deuteronomy 25:4 - *"You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.*
 - ii. A congregation ought to seek to bless their elders and make sure that their elders are taken care of, especially those who have walked away from worldly employment in order to serve the gospel. A congregation should seek to bless and take care of its elders. Elders should not seek their own worldly gain through their position, so the congregation ought to seek to bless their elders. It is no testimony to the gospel if those who serve the gospel are destitute and uncared for when the church has the resources to care for her elders.
- D. Follow your elders' examples
- i. If the elders are to be examples to the flock, the congregation should seek to imitate them
 - 1) Hebrews 13:7 - *Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.*
 - ii. Note that Hebrews 13 emphasizes that this is an intentional imitation. If elders are examples, then the congregation should consider their way of life. Meditate on what they are doing. Hopefully your elders are carefully considering each of their actions to try to make the gospel clearer. If they are, then their actions are worthy of being contemplated and then imitated
- E. These things are summed up by the command to be subject to the elders
- i. If the elders follow their commands to shepherd willingly, eagerly and by example then the congregation is free to simply submit
 - ii. The congregation submits to the shepherding of the elders because they know the elders are seeking their good and Christ's glory

III. Everyone - Be Humble

1. Who is this command directed to?

- A. All of you
 - i. First, Peter addressed the elders of the church
 - ii. Then he addressed the congregation - those who were not elders
 - iii. Peter is now turning his attention to the whole church
- B. I don't think this is really a new thought, but it serves to answer several questions
 - i. How can the elders serve the congregation without domineering over them?
 - ii. How can the congregation subject themselves to the elders?
 - iii. How can elders not seek their own gain through their position?
- C. Peter answers these questions by describing the attitude that ought to permeate the entire church, regardless of the different roles in the church

2. What is the command?

- A. Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another
 - i. I've talked about humility a couple of times before already in I Peter, so I'm not going to belabor the point here - I'll just focus on how it fits into the passage
- B. Philippians 2:3-8 - *Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*
- C. When we are humble like Christ was humble, the stumbling blocks to these commands disappear
 - i. Elders don't need to domineer over those in their charge because they consider the sheep more important than themselves
 - ii. The congregation can submit themselves to the elders because they have no need to puff themselves up
 - iii. Elders can lead without seeking their own gain because their benefit is not their goal
- D. So, both leadership and membership in the church should be marked by humility

3. Why should we follow the command?

- A. "God opposes the proud but give grace to the humble."
 - i. Proverbs 3:34 - *Toward the scorners he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor.*
 - ii. James 4:6 - *But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."*
 - iii. Matthew 23:12 - *Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*
- B. Our humility is a referent for God's judgment
 - i. Peter finished up chapter 4 by telling the church that they were being judged and refined by God
 - 1) Do they want God's judgment to fall in condemnation and opposition to them?
 - 2) Or do they want God's judgment to grow grace in their lives?
 - ii. God will not abide anyone striving to compete with His glory
 - 1) Anytime we puff ourselves up with pride or act haughtily towards anyone we are stating that we are, in some way, like God and deserve the same authority and respect He does
 - 2) God is jealous for His own glory will not share it with those who try to take it
 - 3) Therefore, God will judge those who refuse humility and oppose them
 - iii. But, God's story is about raising up those who don't deserve it
 - 1) Those who recognize that they deserve nothing good from God or from their fellow man understand the situation correctly
 - 2) God, in His great grace and mercy, has decided to show favor to those who recognize this fact and live according to it
 - 3) Therefore, God will bless those who clothe themselves with humility and give them grace
- C. Why do we humble ourselves? Because we want God's glory and grace more than we want our own glory and destruction.

Conclusion

1. To conclude this morning, I want to return to why Peter wrote this section
 - A. This section is really the conclusion of his book - when we consider everything Peter has written, this ought to be the only possible outcome
 - B. The reason the church must be organized under shepherds who shepherd the flock willingly, eagerly and by example is so we can, in trials, proclaim Christ's excellencies, grow in righteousness and set our hope on glory.
 - C. The reason the church should submit to her elders is so that she will proclaim Christ's excellencies, grow in righteousness, and set her hope on glory.
 - D. The reason everyone in the church should clothe themselves with humility in whatever station they hold is so that we can, working together, proclaim Christ's excellencies, grow in righteousness, and set our hopes on glory.

2. So, elders shepherd the flock of God
 - A. They take the metaphor of shepherd, caring for God's people like shepherds care for sheep
 - B. They perform their calling with godly attitudes, being willing, eager and an example
 - C. They remember that they are not the Chief Shepherd and subject their shepherding to Christ
 - D. They look forward to the hope of glory through their faithful work as shepherds
 - E. When shepherds do this, the people of God will be built up
 - i. They will be encouraged to endure persecution
 - ii. They will be taught and empowered to use persecution to proclaim Christ's excellencies
 - iii. They will be encouraged to pursue righteousness through persecution

3. The people of God submit to elders
 - A. They also take the metaphor of a shepherd, responding to their elders like good sheep do to a shepherd
 - B. So, they strive to let their elders serve willingly, free from worldly concerns and follow their examples
 - C. Again, when the people of God do this, they will be built up
 - i. They
 - ii. will be encouraged to endure persecution
 - iii. They will be taught and empowered to use persecution to proclaim Christ's excellencies
 - iv. They will be encouraged to pursue righteousness through persecution

4. All of us, both leadership and membership, must clothe ourselves with humility
 - A. We set aside any desire for our own glory which denies the glory of God and exalts us over our fellow believers
 - B. Instead, we desire to make much of, first, Christ, and then other believers
 - C. When we clothe ourselves with this attitude elders will be able to shepherd well and the congregation will be able to submit well
 - i. Elders will not be consumed with their authority, using it to advance themselves, instead they will be able to use their authority humbly in order to glorify Christ and build up His people.
 - ii. The congregation will not be consumed with their rights or worrying about whether the elders are respecting them properly, instead they will be able to submit themselves humbly to their elders, trusting that God is in control and trusting that their elders are seeking to serve Christ and serve them.

5. So, we have organized our church in this way according to the commands of Scripture.
 - A. But mere organization is not enough.
 - B. Since we are organized this way, we must also live this way.
 - C. Elders, shepherd the church according to the command and pattern of Christ and congregation, hold us accountable for these things
 - D. Members, submit yourselves to the elders, being shepherded according to the things of Christ.
 - E. Let's, all of us, clothe ourselves with humility, because apart from humility, these commands will never work.