

EXPOSITION OF I PETER

Message #20

I Peter 5:5-11

It has been claimed by the Catholic Church that Peter was the first pope. I love something Dr. Harry Ironside said about this, if Peter were a pope, “he never knew it” (*I Peter*, p. 56). From the start of this epistle to the end of it, he never acts popish. What we see in Peter is a very humble man of God. He was not some dominant dictator who strutted around in religious pomp; he was a humble servant, who served God’s flock. Never is that more evident than when he starts winding down this epistle.

Peter is about to bring this letter to a conclusion. There were still some final grace-reflecting truths that he needed to teach. These truths are especially important when facing troubles and trials.

He had just got done addressing the elders and their responsibility to demonstrate a non-lording leadership, and now with the adverb “likewise,” he addresses everyone else. In the same context that elders were not to lord it over the flock, the flock was to properly relate to them and to each other. What Peter says in these verses is this:

GOD’S PEOPLE NEED REFLECT GOD’S GRACE BY BEING SUBMISSIVE, HUMBLE, PRAYERFUL AND ALERT FOR THIS WILL ULTIMATELY LEAD TO THE HONOR OF GOD.

Don’t ever forget this key point when it comes to God - pride will prevent all spiritual progress. Pride will stop God’s work through you dead in its tracks. God does not want His people proud or arrogant; He wants them humble and submissive.

GRACE REFLECTING TRUTH #1 – The younger need to be subject to the elders. **5:5a**

Now the idea of being submissive or subject is not a new theme to Peter. He referred to this in regard to human government - 2:13; in regard to masters and employers - 2:18; in regard to wives to their husbands - 3:1, 5. So this principle is not new. What is new is the context of the submission. Peter aims this at the “younger men” in regard to “elders.” In ancient times you could be classified as a “younger man” until you were about 40 years old (I. Howard Marshall, *I Peter*, p. 164).

Now contextually the elders would refer to those who are mature in the faith and are leaders in the church. But Peter’s point is even broader than just the church; the younger people need to be willing to submit themselves to the older people, the gray hairs.

The reason why Peter starts this off by addressing the younger men is because the younger men sometimes are proud and think themselves to know just about everything. What young people fail to realize is that the older people have a lot of knowledge and sense they do not have. They have wisdom that you only get by years.

I have personally seen young bucks come out of college and go into a job and immediately have power over those who are older. I have known of some who arrogantly treated these older

people disgracefully. Those older people built the company for which that young man works and it is a terrible misuse of power. But don't think that just happens in the business world.

I have a pastor friend who was working on an advanced degree in a seminary who had pastored three churches. In that class were a bunch of young bucks who were studying for the ministry. He said that in one of the classes, the professor was lecturing them on how life was in the church and the young guys were chipping in their opinions. My pastor friend said, I listened for a while and then raised my hand. When the professor called on him, he said, "Let me share with you the way it really is. I have listened to you talk about how you all think church things work or ought to work, but here is the way it really is." He said I proceeded to pop some of the arrogant air right out of their balloons.

When I was in Bible college, there would be those young guys who would pursue the pastoral courses who thought they knew just about everything. They felt they were really arriving. They would go into a church and start using their pastoral power as a lord, not as a servant. Peter says to the younger men first you need to be humble and you need to submit to your elders.

Young people, if you have a godly father or mother or godly grandfather or grandmother, who are truly dedicated to carefully understanding God's Word, let me tell you something - you need to listen to them. They have a lot of years and wisdom behind them and they can help give you solid direction.

GRACE REFLECTING TRUTH #2 – We all need to be humble. 5:5b-6

Whether you are an elder or a younger, whether you are a leader or a sheep member, whether you are a younger believer with an older believer, we all need to be humble. This is not just an admonition found here, but it is also found in many texts as well - Proverbs 3:34; James 4:6. The idea behind the word "humble" is a mindset that is lowly. This does not mean you put yourself down or you live in a frame of mind that disparages yourself or you think of yourself as dirt that is worth nothing, it means you live with a willingness to assume a lowly position and serve others. This is just the opposite of proud dominance (D. Edmund Hiebert, *First Peter*, p. 292). Regardless of age, rank or authority, this is the kind of mindset we are all to have.

Many Bible interpreters have suggested that it is very possible that Peter is actually thinking about the time that Jesus clothed himself with a towel and washed his feet (John 13:15). Peter believed this was a critical mindset for every believer to have.

Now humility needs to clothe everyone in the church and here is why - three main reasons:

Reason #1 - God is opposed to the proud. **5:5b**

Reason #2 - God grants His grace to the humble. **5:5c**

Reason #3 - God will exalt the humble. **5:6**

God is against the proud, He is anti the proud, but His grace flows to and through the humble. **What God promises is this - if you will have a humble, lowly mind, I will bestow on you My unmerited favor in many, many ways.** Just like Micah said - "And what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). If you purpose to walk humbly with God, He will shower you with His grace and not only that, but He also will exalt you at the proper time.

Then Peter follows that up in **verse 6** by saying that if you will humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, at the proper time He will exalt you. You don't have to sell yourself or make the right contacts in order for God to promote you. I cannot help but think of David who was out tending sheep, when Samuel was interviewing all of his brothers to be the king. David knew nothing about the interviews. He didn't put together a resume and travel around the Israeli political circuit trying to campaign to become king. He was just faithfully and humbly doing his job when God promoted him. He had no idea he would be king, he had no idea he would write Scripture and he had no idea that Jesus Christ would come through his line. You humble yourself where you are and God will see to it you are used to the maximum.

Remember this; no matter what is going on in our world right now, it is sanctioned under the "mighty hand of God." Whether it is a fiery time or a refreshing time, whether it is a time of poverty or prosperity, it all falls under the umbrella of the mighty hand of God.

FINAL GRACE REFLECTING TRUTH #3 – We all need to be prayerful. **5:7**

We are emotional people. Peter knew that. He knew that we can become anxious about many things. We worry and fret and fear and our emotions surge and we become filled with anxiety. Peter knew that this was true especially when you are under attack. So he said, here is the key, here is the medicine - the key to anxiety is prayer.

Please get this point. Your solution as a child of God to your anxiety is not found in a prescription from your drugstore, it is found in your petition of heaven's throne. Peter says, "cast" all of your anxiety on to God. Literally hand them, throw them, cast them to God. If you have worries, take them to God. If you have fears, take them to God. If you have concerns, take them to God. Cast "all" your anxieties on God because God cares for you.

One of the great comforting truths of theology is that God cares for us. Since God cares for us, we have the wonderful privilege of casting all of our anxieties on Him. When you and I go to God and cast our cares on Him, this is not some misplaced confidence or pie in the sky hope. God personally cares for us. He cares about our situation and our needs. **Anything that creates anxiety in us is something He wants us to take to Him. He has a personal interest in us.**

FINAL GRACE REFLECTING TRUTH #4 – We all need to be alert. **5:8-9**

There is an adversary that is out to devour us. The word "adversary" usually refers to an opponent in a lawsuit. The word "devil" refers to one who slanders. When a lion is on the prowl, that is not the time to sleep, it is the time for the utmost alertness.

The goal of Satan's hunt is to find someone to devour. The word devour literally means to "drink down." The goal of Satan is to gulp up his prey. We need an alertness and an awareness.

Now there are four main defense tactics that will give us victory over the devil and keep us from ever being devoured:

(Defense Tactic #1) - Be Sober. 5:8a

The idea behind this Greek word is to have a sober, calm, circumspect mind (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, pp. 302-303). Satan's great trick is to get people to think emotionally and irrationally as if they are out of their minds. A controlled mind that is focused on God's Word is critical to victory.

(Defense Tactic #2) - Be Alert. 5:8b

This particular word has to do with being alive, awake and watchful (Smith, p. 96). This word is just the opposite of being asleep. Hiebert said it is not enough for Christians to be awake, but they need to be alert to any approaching danger.

(Defense Tactic #3) - Be Resistant. 5:9a

The idea behind this word is that you take a strong stand against the devil. The actual word means to stand yourself against something in a resistant and opposing way (Smith, p. 37). We are to dig our heels in against that which is devilish. Whether it be in doctrine or lifestyle.

(Defense Tactic #4) - Be Firm. 5:9b

The Greek word "firm" (στερεος) is the word from which we get our English word steroid. The word means to be hard, firm, solid, strong (Smith, p. 417). Now the area in which we are to stand strong is in "the faith." That is in the faith system as opposed to any works system.

Notice the key to victory over Satan is not running around casting out demons in the name of Jesus. It is a solid faith that stands firm in the truth of God.

FINAL GRACE REFLECTING TRUTH #5 – We need to be hopeful. 5:10

We are to trust in the God of all grace. Notice God is the God of "all" grace. All grace comes from God, whether people admit it or recognize it, this is the truth. He is the God who has called us to share in His eternal glory. Do you get this point? He has called us to share in His eternal glory. I do not want to hear ridiculous Arminian views about our free will. Do not degrade God in this manner. If you know Jesus Christ, God called you to faith in Him and He called you to share in His eternal glory. Please let God be God in this. We did not call ourselves to salvation, He called us to salvation. There are four specific hopes we are to have, especially when we are suffering. There are four different verbs that describe what we may expect to see when hurting:

(Hope #1) - The God of all grace will perfect us. 5:10c

This is an odd Greek word which literally means that God mends or fixes something broken and brings it to the place where it is equipped and outfitted for His use and service. God will completely furnish you and outfit you and equip you for Him and His glory (Smith, p. 238).

(Hope #2) - The God of all grace will confirm us. **5:10d**

This word “confirm” means God will make us solid, He will make us firm and stabilized.

(Hope #3) - The God of all grace will strengthen us. **5:10e**

The idea here is that God actually imparts strength that actually makes one strong even when suffering.

(Hope #4) - The God of all grace will establish us. **5:10f**

God will make our foundation firm and secure

God promises to do all of these things for the believer when going through trials. Believe this and hope for this for you will see God do this.

It was that very thought that caused Peter to say in **verse 11** - To this God belongs dominion forever and ever.

There is a God of all grace who will take you right where you are right now, and develop you into becoming a person fit for His eternal glory. The way to this relationship is by faith. Believe on Jesus Christ and all your eternal dreams will come true.