

1 Peter

Week 10: Humility, Shepherding, and Steadfast Faith -- 1 Peter 5:1–14

Letters, like sermons, are often most revealing at the end. When a writer has said everything else and comes to the final lines, you see what mattered most to him. Peter has carried his readers through suffering and hope, holiness and witness, the cross and the empty tomb. Now, as he draws to a close, he gathers it all up into a few last appeals, and the first word he reaches for is one we might not expect from a man writing to people under fire. The word is humility.

Peter speaks first to the elders, the shepherds of God's flock, and he speaks as "a fellow elder" and "a witness of the sufferings of Christ." He tells them to shepherd the flock "not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock." Here is a portrait of godly leadership that has nothing to do with status or control and everything to do with humble, self-giving care. And the promise is that when "the chief Shepherd appears," faithful shepherds will receive "the unfading crown of glory."

Then Peter turns to everyone. The younger are to be subject to the elders. And all of us, he says, are to "clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." He pictures humility as a garment we deliberately put on each day. And he gives us one of the most tender invitations in all of Scripture, the natural overflow of humbling ourselves under God's mighty hand: "casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you." Humility and trust turn out to be the same motion of the soul, the letting go of our grip so that we can rest in His.

Peter is not naive about the danger. "Be sober-minded; be watchful," he warns. "Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith." The Christian life is humble and trusting, but it is not passive; there is a real enemy and a real fight. Yet Peter does not leave us braced for battle and nothing more. He leaves us with God, "the God of all grace," who will Himself "restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish" His people after they have suffered a little while. So read this final chapter slowly. It is Peter's parting gift to a suffering church: be humble, stay alert, stand firm, and rest in the God of all grace who is holding you.

Group Discussion: Peter tells all believers to "clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (v. 5). Why is humility so central to the Christian life, and what does a genuinely humble person look like in the everyday life of a church family?

Personal Reflection: Peter says to cast "all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you" (v. 7). What is the anxiety you are carrying most heavily right now? What would it actually look like to cast it on God this week rather than keep holding it yourself?

Read 1 Peter 5:1–14

Study Questions

1. Peter charges the elders to “shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight... not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock” (vv. 1–3). What does this teach about the God-given role of elders and the kind of leadership Christ wants in His church?
2. Peter calls elders to lead “not domineering... but being examples” (v. 3), and calls the younger to be subject to the elders (v. 5). Wherever you fall, how do you respond to spiritual leadership and authority in the church? Where might pride, in leading or in following, need to give way to humility?
3. Peter says faithful elders will receive “the unfading crown of glory” when “the chief Shepherd appears” (v. 4). What does it mean that Jesus is the chief Shepherd, and how does His coming shape the way both leaders and members serve in the church now?
4. Peter commands every believer to “clothe yourselves... with humility toward one another” (v. 5), picturing humility as a garment we put on. Where is pride most visible in your life right now, in your reactions, your need to be right, your comparisons with others? What would it look like to put on humility this week?
5. Peter says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you” (vv. 5–6). What does it mean that God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble, and how do we humble ourselves under His mighty hand?
6. Peter ties casting our anxieties on God directly to humbling ourselves under His hand, “because he cares for you” (vv. 6–7). What anxiety are you holding onto as if everything depends on you? How is refusing to cast it on God actually a form of pride, and what would trusting Him look like?
7. Peter warns, “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith” (vv. 8–9). What does this teach about the reality of the devil, the nature of spiritual warfare, and how a Christian is to resist?
8. Peter says to resist the devil “firm in your faith,” knowing that fellow believers throughout the world are facing the same sufferings (vv. 8–9). Where is the enemy most actively working to discourage, isolate, or trip you up right now? What does standing firm look like in that specific battle?
9. Peter ends, “And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you” (v. 10). What does this teach about the purpose of suffering, the certainty of God’s keeping work, and the call to remain faithful to the end, and how does it hold together God’s power and our perseverance?
10. Look back over the whole chapter, and over the whole letter. Peter calls us to humble service, humble submission, humble trust, watchful resistance, and steadfast faith in the

God of all grace. Name one specific way you sense Jesus forming you through 1 Peter 5, and through this study of 1 Peter. What is the truth from this letter you most need to carry forward?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Ezekiel 34:1–16, God’s judgment on false shepherds and His promise to shepherd His flock; John 10:11–16, Jesus the Good Shepherd who lays down His life; Acts 20:28–32, Paul charging the elders to guard the flock; Philippians 4:6–7, casting anxiety on God in prayer; James 4:6–10, God giving grace to the humble and the call to draw near to God