

Looking Forward to Future Glory 1 Peter 5

1 Peter 5 Introduction

- Throughout this letter Peter has been reminding us of the necessity of suffering and its importance in the Christian life.
- But suffering simply cannot be enjoyed for its own sake.
- In this final chapter of his first letter to those ancient churches, Peter draws our attention to the glory that awaits us as God's people in the presence of our Lord.

Looking forward to future glory, together as the church, we can endure whatever difficulties we may have to face for now.

1 Peter 5 Outline

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| I. | Elders, shepherd God's flock. | 5:1-5 |
| II. | Humble yourselves. | 5:6-7 |
| III. | Resist your adversary. | 5:8-9 |
| IV. | You are called to God's glory. | 5:10-11 |
| V. | Stand in God's grace. | 5:12-14 |

Elders, shepherd God's flock. 5:1-5

- 5:1 We all know Peter was an apostle, but here he identifies himself with the local elders he is trying to encourage, rather than take an exalted position.
- Fascinatingly, he labels himself "a witness of the sufferings of Christ."
- We remember what kind of witness Peter was of those sufferings – one who denied Christ repeatedly at the time.

- 5:1 As a "partaker of the glory that will be revealed," Peter clarifies just how thoroughly he has been restored.
- All these years later, he is confident that his terrible sin, which no doubt caused him incredible shame at the time, has been completely washed away by the blood of Christ.

- 5:2 Shepherd the flock The word for "shepherd" is one of the words Jesus used after His resurrection to motivate Peter.
 - We find it in John 21:16.
- In other words, Peter is encouraging the elders of the churches in the same way Christ encouraged him so many years before.
- Peter says the sheep belong to God – and yet Jesus said the sheep belong to Him.

- 5:2 Our word pastor comes from the Latin for "shepherd." Our word bishop comes from the Greek word for "overseer."

- In this passage Peter links the titles of elder and overseer with the work of “pastoring” or “shepherding” the flock.
 - The three terms are all in fact swappable.
 - The idea of a single bishop over a city with many pastors under him came along later.
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- 5:2 Dishonest gain This word doesn’t simply apply to dishonesty, but to all gain that is “shameful, selfish or dishonorable.”
 - Zodiates adds, *“It may also refer to gaining popularity by adulterating the gospel to attract more people to the congregation, and showing special favors and consideration to the rich and the influential in order to gain personal advantage and profit.”*
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- 5:2 The right attitude toward congregational leadership says this:
 - “I am in the ministry because I am needed and have a God-given desire to do the work of feeding and leading His people.
I plan to continue to serve as I am able regardless of the compensation I receive, whether financial or in personal recognition.”
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- 5:3 Peter is leading by example even as he writes this passage.
 - Rather than exalting his apostleship or focusing on his personal friendship with Christ, he identifies with others who serve.
 - They also should illustrate their leadership by example rather than simply barking orders and bossing people around.
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- 5:4 Christ the Chief Shepherd will one day appear and will personally reward those shepherds who serve faithfully under Him.
 - He will give them a crown of glory – a reward that will last forever.
 - This should serve as a sufficient motivator in doing the work of the ministry, even if earthly compensation is consistently lacking.
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- 5:5a The younger members are to submit themselves to the elders.
 - The words as they stand could mean “to your seniors in age.”
 - That would, however, require a change in meaning from the previous verses, so it is better to see the continuity and take the “elders” to be the leaders in the churches.
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- 5:5a Peter envisions an ideal situation:
 - The elders lead and feed the flock of God without “being lords over them.” (5:3)
 - The younger people, who might be most inclined to ignore the elders’ authority, willingly submit themselves to those same elders.
 - Further, everyone willingly submits themselves to one another – an absolute celebration of humility and submissiveness.

- 5:5b The tense shows an ongoing process:
- “God is continually opposing the proud but continually giving grace to the humble.”
- In the Greco-Roman world, humility was not highly valued – it was the mark of a slave.
- Carson comments that *“the instruction would have seemed positively countercultural to Peter’s readers.”*
- 5:5b It can seem just as counter-cultural to us today in a society where self-promotion is the way the game is usually played.

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Humble yourselves. 5:6-7

- These two verses form one sentence in the original. If we separate them we may miss the important connection that Peter is making.
- Humbling ourselves before God means that we trust Him with our life, our future and our circumstances, whatever they may be.
- Humbling ourselves before God means that we don’t have to put ourselves first.
- Casting all your care upon Him
- We should see worry as a type of pride.
- We may imagine that if we can’t do anything about our troubles, then God can’t either.
- The only other place this verb is used in the New Testament is in Luke 19:35, where the disciples “cast their clothes” upon the colt that Jesus was about to ride into Jerusalem.
- The clothes were now on the colt, so the disciples were no longer carrying them.
- When we properly cast our cares upon the Lord, we no longer carry them, He does.
- This verse (5:7) resonates with Psalm 55:22.
- Wayne Grudem explains well our need to entrust all our cares to the Lord:
 - *“Peter recognizes that a great barrier to putting others first and thinking of them as more important is the legitimate human concern ‘But who will then care for me?’ The answer is that God himself will care for our needs. He is able to do so far better than we are ... and he wants to do so, for he continually cares for his children. Therefore casting all your anxieties on him is the path to humility, freeing a person from constant concern for himself and enabling him or her truly to be concerned for the needs of others.”*

Resist your adversary. 5:8-9

- 5:8 Worrying is pointless, but watchfulness is required.
- The word adversary signifies an opponent in a lawsuit; the name devil refers to an accuser or a slanderer.
- The devil hates us and wants to see us fall.
- Our opponent is constantly walking around on the watch for a possible victim.

- 5:8 Jesus calls the devil a murderer and the father of all lies. (John 8:44)
- Paul reminds us that he often disguises himself as an angel of light. (2 Cor 11:14)
- But Jesus tells us that his end will be in the everlasting fire, which was prepared specifically for him. (Matthew 25:41)
- In Revelation 20:10, John saw the lake of fire and the devil being thrown into it.

- 5:9 One of the obvious ways the devil attempts to devour us is by getting us to give up in the midst of our sufferings.
- Peter reminds us that the difficulties we endure, even at the hands of others, are the common experience of believers all over the world.
- This section we've been reading is very similar to James 4:6-10.

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You are called to God's glory. 5:10-11

- Peter gives us, his readers, a closing blessing.
- He's looking forward to future glory and that is what gives him the strength to endure whatever comes his way right now.
- We will share in that glory as well.
- Clowney reminds us:
 - *"Peter's hope of glory was not an indefinable nimbus cloud: it was as definite as the scarred hand of Jesus that passed the breakfast fish."*

Stand in God's grace. 5:12-14

- 5:12 Silvanus is the Latin name "Woody."
- "Woody" most likely delivered this letter for "Rocky" to the churches across Asia Minor.
- He may have also helped him in writing it.
- Paul also refers to Silvanus in his letters.
- He is called "Silas" in Acts; he accompanied Paul on his journeys and, like Paul, was both a Jew and a Roman citizen.

- 5:13 Mark must be the same as John Mark from the book of Acts.
- He was from Jerusalem where the church gathered in his mother’s house and Peter was a friend of the family.
- Early church tradition tells us that Mark’s Gospel is essentially the Gospel of Peter.
- Mark put it together largely from the stories that Peter used to tell.

- 5:13 She who is in Babylon probably refers to the church in Rome.
- “Church” is a feminine noun in Greek, so personifying the church with the feminine pronoun “she” is an easy transfer.
- As for Babylon, the actual Babylon on the Euphrates was a small town by this time and no longer had a Jewish community.

- 5:13 Further, there is no evidence that Peter, Mark or Silvanus ever had a ministry there, while there is plenty of evidence – and good reason to think – that they all had a ministry in Rome.
- For example, Mark’s Gospel contains several Latin terms not used in the other gospels.
- And Peter, like Paul, was executed in Rome under Nero.

- 5:13 Finally, other early Christian sources (such as Revelation), as well as some Jewish sources from the same general time and later, all link Rome with the name Babylon.
- They build on Old Testament similarities.
- Peter may have seen Rome in the same light that the columnist Lucius Beebe once saw New York:
 - *“Babylon-on-the-Hudson ... sinful, extravagant, full of the nervous hilarity of the doomed.”*

- 5:13 Babylon was the place of exile and the seat of earthly power – a reminder that we, the people of God, are living in a world where we don’t belong.
- We look forward to future glory.
- We can remain content, though grieved that this world doesn’t acknowledge the authority or appreciate the majesty of our Lord.

- 5:14 Finally, Peter reminds his readers to share a kiss of love, still common in some societies, and leaves us with Christ’s peace.
 - *‘The roar of the lion or the flames of persecution cannot overthrow the shalom of Christ’s salvation.’* Edmund P. Clowney, *The Message of 1 Peter: The Way of the Cross.*

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1 Peter 5 Conclusions

- You probably agree with Peter that life can be difficult and that it may not get any easier any time soon.
- Don't let that disappoint you, for you were not made to find lasting peace and joy in this world.
- Our peace, our joy and our hope are all connected with Christ's future glory.

- Placing our hope in the present can give us a totally skewed perspective, because we will be searching for something that lasts in a temporary world.
- Christ did not die to give us a temporary joy, hope or peace.
- He died and rose again to give us eternal life.
- Put your focus on Him, looking forward to His future glory – a glory that we will share in.

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