

"The Believer's Suffering"

Part 12

1 Peter 3:13-5:14

Introduction: Tonight in our study of 1 Peter we have arrived at the final chapter. It will be in this chapter that Peter will focus upon responsibilities within the church in the midst of difficult times. The Truths taught in this chapter are extremely important for us today in light of where our world is and what is happening.

I. The Believer's Responsibilities in the Times of Suffering

A. Exhortation to the Elders

1. Peter's humble spirit.

Notice 1 Peter 5:1

To begin with in this verse we need to pay very close attention to how Peter relates to his readers. He does not identify himself as an Apostle but as an elder just like those whom he is addressing here. Peter puts himself on the same level that they are on. Peter knows how to identify with the common people whom he is writing to. Peter did not talk down to his listeners. Just because he was an Apostle, he did not see himself as superior to his readers. Through his denial of the Lord Peter discovered he was like everyone else.

Notice the words of Spurgeon:

"It will always be our wisdom, dear friends, to put ourselves as much as we can into the position of those whom we address. It is a pity for anyone ever to seem to preach down to people; it is always better to be as nearly as possible on the same level as they are."

2. Peter's life experiences.

Notice 1 Peter 5:1 again.

Peter reminds his readers that he was a witness of the suffering of Jesus Christ. Peter can teach from experience. He was with Jesus that night in the garden when our Lord struggled through the spiritual attacks. Let us notice a portion of what Peter was witness to.

Luke 22:41-46

⁴¹ *And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,*

⁴² *Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.*

⁴³ *And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.*

⁴⁴ *And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

⁴⁵ *And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,*

⁴⁶ *And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.*

Peter watched as he was arrested and went through the mock trials. Peter may have watched from a distance as Jesus hung on the cross.

Peter was also a witness of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Matthew 17:1-3

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

² *And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.*

³ *And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.*

Peter was a man who could relate to his readers because of what he had experienced in life.

Application:

Men who have lived life down in the trenches make the best leaders. They can come along side others who are weary and exhausted because there was a time when they were walking the same path. I am reminded of how God did not allow Moses to lead Isarel until he first spent 40 years in the wilderness as a shepherd. He did not take him straight from the palace into leadership. But he allowed him to experience life as a common person so that he could relate to those whom he was leading. God allowed Joesph to experience 13 years of extreme difficulty before he was made Prime Minister of Egypt.

Do not despise the trenches of life. They are classrooms in which God often prepares His leaders. They may be very difficult, and they may be painful. But they produce men who know how to relate to others who are suffering in the trenches.

3. The pastor's responsibility.

a. Feed the sheep.

Notice 1 Peter 5:2a

Peter exhorts the elders to feed the flock. Because this is mentioned first this tells us that the greatest need of the church is spiritual food. In other words the most important responsibility of the elder/pastor is to teach the church the Bible. Let us notice what happens when this is neglected.

Matthew 9:35-38

³⁵ *And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.*

³⁶ *But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.*

³⁷ *Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;*

³⁸ *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*

When the Bible is neglected in the church the sheep will be pulled in all directions because they will not know what to believe. Paul knew how important it was to teach the believers at Ephesus the Word of God.

Acts 20:27-32

²⁷ *For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*

²⁸ *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

²⁹ *For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.*

³⁰ *Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*

³¹ *Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.*

³² *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

This is what the body of Jesus Christ needs as a steady diet. But there are always those who will want something else. Just as Isarel in the wilderness.

Numbers 11:4-6

⁴ *And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?*

⁵ *We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick:*

⁶ *But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.*

The manna was a type of the Word of God and the MIXED MULTITUDE decided they did not want manna.

Application:

This is exactly what happens when the world gets in the church. People lose their appetite or have no appetite for the Word of God, and they want something else. Sometimes it is entertainment, sometimes it is worldly music, or sometimes more programs.

2 Timothy 4:1-5

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

² *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.*

³ *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;*

⁴ *And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*

⁵ *But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.*

The teaching of the Bible should never take a back seat to anything else. Peter knew that if these believers were going to remain steadfast in the battle they needed a steady diet of God's Word. Let us remember how Peter was instructed by the Lord after the resurrection.

John 21:15-17

¹⁵ *So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.*

¹⁶ *He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

¹⁷ *He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

b. Care for the sheep.

Notice 1 Peter 5:2b

The word "oversight" means "to watch over and care for." The pastor/elders have the responsibility of watching over the sheep. It is the pastor's responsibility to be sensitive to the needs of the sheep and to the feelings of the sheep. As the pastor watches over and cares for the sheep he comes to learn the dynamics of each family. As a pastor I have learned that each person and each family are different, and each must be ministered to in different ways. This is why it is very trying for a new pastor to come in after the previous pastor has been in a church for an extended period of time. The new pastor will not have the insight of the previous man and it took the previous man 15-20 years to learn the dynamics of the different families.

Notice 1 Peter 5:2 again.

The pastor is not to see his responsibility as something that he must be forced to do. When a man is called by God and when he is walking in fellowship with the Lord, he will not see his responsibility as a burden. When God calls a man to be a pastor, He places within him a different heart. He gives him a pastor's heart and when the pastor is walking where

he needs to be he will not study and teach because he HAS TO, and he will not do it because he desires the money. He will fulfill his responsibility because he desires to because God has put the shepherd's heart in him.

John 10:10-13

¹⁰ *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

¹¹ *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*

¹² *But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.*

¹³ *The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.*

Jeremiah 20:8-10

⁸ *For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily.*

⁹ *Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.*

¹⁰ *For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him.*

Notice 1 Peter 5:2 again.

The pastor is to serve with a "ready mind." This means that he is to be "eager to serve." He is to delight in fulfilling what God has called him to do.

Conclusion/Application:

I want to bring this into your lives for a moment. This text applies to the pastor but there is an application for all of God's children. There should be within you a desire to know God's Word. Just as God places in the pastor a burning desire to teach the Bible there should be a burning desire within you to learn the Scriptures. If that is not in you then something is wrong. Something has caused you to be out of fellowship.

Revelation 2:1-5

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

² I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

³ And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

⁴ Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

⁵ Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.