

"The Believer's Suffering"

Part 13

1 Peter 3:13-5:14

Introduction: Tonight in our study of 1 Peter I want to revisit what we looked at in the beginning of chapter 5 again. There are a few more thoughts here that will help us to understand what Peter is saying in this text.

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

A. Exhortation to the Elders

1. The pastor's responsibility.

a. Feed the sheep.

Notice 1 Peter 5:1-2

When we looked at this text I spoke as it applied to the pastors of the churches, and this is correct, but it also addresses all spiritual leaders within the church. The leaders are to all contribute to feeding the flock of God. This is making sure the Word of God is taught to the body of Jesus Christ.

The leaders are to do this willingly. It is not to be a burden to fulfill this responsibility. I want to just say that if studying the Bible and teaching the Bible become a burden to the spiritual leaders then something is wrong in the person's life. To study and to teach when called by God is a joy and it is very rewarding. If it becomes a burden, then you can be sure that something needs to be closely considered in the life of the teacher.

Notice 1 Peter 5:3 again.

The leaders are not to lord over the flock which means they are not to be domineering. I want to look at another text to see what Peter is saying in all of this.

Mark 10:33-45

³³ Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles:

³⁴ And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.

³⁵ And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire.

³⁶ *And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?*

³⁷ *They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.*

³⁸ *But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?*

³⁹ *And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:*

⁴⁰ *But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.*

⁴¹ *And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John.*

⁴² *But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.*

⁴³ *But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:*

⁴⁴ *And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.*

⁴⁵ *For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

James and John as well as the other disciples did not understand that Jesus would be crucified, buried and resurrected. They thought He was going to over through the Roman government and set up His kingdom. Their thoughts then went directly to a position of power. They each wanted to sit on either side of Jesus in the Kingdom, and these would be seats of power. They are thinking that they needed to ask before Peter did because Peter was outspoken and if he was in a position of power, he would be difficult to deal with. When the other ten disciples heard their request, they were very displeased. You see they were all power hungry. Jesus then taught them that to be a leader was to serve those whom you were entrusted with. The greatest among them would be the one with who had the heart of a servant.

This teaching stayed in the heart of Peter and here in 1 Peter 5 he is teaching exactly what Jesus taught His disciples. Peter is telling the leaders of the church that they needed to be sure to have the heart of a servant.

Philippians 2:5-8

⁵ *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

⁶ *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*

⁷ *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

⁸ *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

The Apostle Paul understood the importance of being a servant.

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

¹⁹ *For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.*

²⁰ *And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;*

²¹ *To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.*

²² *To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*

²³ *And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.*

Getting back to 1 Peter we can now understand what Peter was teaching.

Notice 1 Peter 5:3 again.

The leaders in the church are to have the heart of a servant in order to be examples to the flock.

The faithful leader will be rewarded with a crown when Jesus returns. There are four crowns that will be given to believers.

- **The Victor's Crown.** This crown will be for those who discipline their minds through the study of God's Word and prayer.

1 Corinthians 9:25-27

²⁵ *And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.*

²⁶ *I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:*

²⁷ *But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*

- **The Crown of Righteousness,** which will be given to those who have a longing for the Lord Jesus and love His appearing.

2 Timothy 4:8

⁸ *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

- **The Crown of Life.** This is for those who have endured and triumphed over trial and temptation and persecution, even to the point of martyrdom.

James 1:12

¹² *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

Revelation 2:10

¹⁰ *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

- **The Crown of Glory** This is awarded to the faithful shepherds of the people of God and to Christian leaders (1 Peter 5:4).

Notice 1 Peter 5:4 again.

The crowns that the believer's are given will never fade. For all eternity they will be as new and spectacular. Let us notice something very interesting in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 5:8-9

⁸ And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and **four and twenty elders** fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

⁹ And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and **hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;**

There is a group here in heaven that John speaks of. They are called the "Four and twenty elders." We see here that they have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation. So these are believers. Now let us back up a chapter.

Revelation 4:4, 10-11

⁴ And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I **saw four and twenty elders** sitting, clothed in white raiment; and **they had on their heads crowns of gold.**

¹⁰ The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and **cast their crowns before the throne,** saying,

¹¹ Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

When we are given the crowns, we will cast them back at the feet of our Lord because they belong to Him. He is the source of any spiritual fruit that is manifest in our lives.

B. Exhortation to all the Church.

Notice 1 Peter 5:5

In the same way that the elders are to have the heart of a servant so are those under the leaders to also have a servant's heart and they too are to submit and serve the body of Jesus Christ.

The phrase "***be clothed with humility***" is very important to understand. Notice the meaning.

"This was the white scarf or apron of slaves, which was fastened to the belt of the vest and distinguished slaves from freemen. Therefore, 1 Pet 5:5 ("gird yourselves with humility as your servile garb") encourages Christians to show their subjection one to another by putting on humility. This could also refer to the overalls which slaves wore to keep clean while working—an exceedingly humble garment."

All of us are to be clothed in humility. We are not to think of ourselves as better than others.

Philippians 2:2-4

² *Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

³ *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*

⁴ *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

The exhortation to be "**clothed with humility**" means that just as we put on nice clothing to look nice and be presentable, in the same way our heart attitude of serving should be on display for all the world to see. Pride has no place in the body of Jesus Christ. Let us notice what happens when pride gets in the church.

1 Corinthians 3:2-4

² *I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.*

³ *For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*

⁴ *For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?*

Notice 1 Peter 5:5 again.

God resists the proud, but He gives grace unto the humble. These people were under persecution, and they needed grace.

Notice the words of Barclay on pride:

"It literally means one who shows himself above other people. Even the Greeks hated this pride. Theophrastus described it as "a certain contempt for all other people." Theophylact, the Christian writer, called it "the citadel and summit of all evils." The real terror of this pride is that it is a thing of the heart. It certainly means haughtiness, but the man who suffers from it might well appear to be walking in downcast humility, while all the time there was in his heart a vast contempt for all his fellow-men. This pride shuts itself off from God for three reasons. (i) It does not know its own need. ... It walks in proud self-sufficiency. (ii) It cherishes its own independence. It will be beholden to no man; it will not

even be beholden to God. ... (iii) It does not recognize its own sin. ... A pride like that cannot receive help, because it does not know that it needs help, and, therefore, it cannot ask. It loves, not God, but itself."

Conclusion/application:

When we go through times of suffering, we desperately need God and His grace. Let us be sure that pride has not part in us for if it does, we are then operating in our own wisdom and power. It is in this state that people block God and His help out. This is a frightening place for a believer to be.

The word "resisteth" pictures God as one who places Himself in battle array against such individuals.