

“Attitudes and Goals”

February 20, 2022

1 Peter 5:1-14

I. Introduction

Simon Peter had been chosen by Jesus Christ for the task of taking the Gospel to a world that didn't know who Jesus was or what He had done for their salvation. During the final 3 years of Jesus' life, Peter and the other eleven Apostles had undergone intense training with the Master. At the end, just before He ascended to heaven, Jesus singled Peter out in **John 21:15-19** to not only be an evangelist for the Gospel but to be a pastor-teacher to shepherd Jesus' flock of new Christians—talking to Peter Jesus said, **“Feed my lambs,” “Take care of my sheep,” “Feed my sheep.”** Speaking of Peter's death, Jesus also said, **“When you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.”** Several of the Twelve had already been killed and now Peter's time was getting close.

In his letter, Peter challenged Christians to live obediently to God—**1 Peter 1:14** says, **“As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.”** Just as Jesus chose him, Peter wrote that Christians were “chosen”—**1 Peter 2:9** says, **“You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”** Peter also reminded Christians that they are all part of one family and for that reason in **1 Peter 4:10** he wrote, **“Each should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.”** But knowing that they were going through persecution as Christians and that it would continue, Pastor Peter wrote in **1 Peter 4:12**, **“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.”** The heart of a pastor for his flock is seen in the closing words and theme of 1st Peter—we read it this morning—**1 Peter 5:12**: **“I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.”** Coming to the end of his letter, Peter reviewed some important points. Knowing that *“as goes the leadership so goes the church,”* Peter began by addressing the church leadership—the **“elders among you.”**

II. To “The Elders among You”

A. Be Shepherds As the leader of the Apostles, Peter could have commanded the church leaders, but instead, he encouraged and appealed to them as “a fellow elder” to “be shepherds of God’s flock.” At the same time, he modelled the humility that later he said an elder or leader must have. We were reminded of the duties of a shepherd as we read the 23rd Psalm this morning. The shepherd leads or guides his flock to green pastures and makes sure they have enough to eat. He protects them from evil—from wild animals, from dangerous falls, and from those who come to kill and steal. (When he was a shepherd boy, David had fought bears and lions—I Samuel 17:3-4.) If a sheep is ill, the shepherd anoints it with oil, i.e., he gives it medicine and nurses it back to health. If just one sheep is missing, the shepherd goes out and finds it. Jesus said that a good shepherd knows each of his sheep by name (John 10:3)—he understands each sheep’s special traits and problems, and, like Jesus, a good shepherd will die for his flock. Peter reminded his “fellow elders” that they must be very careful in their ministry, they are shepherding God’s flock not their own.

B. Be Overseers Peter wrote that shepherds also need to be overseers. As well as being shepherds who walk among the flock, so that they can get to know them and their needs—their joys and their sorrows—pastors and leaders need also to be overseers, i.e., they must be over the people so that they can lead them, guard them, feed them, and help them deal with issues in their lives.

C. Be Willing to Serve Peter wrote, “Not because you must, but because you are willing as God wants you to be.” A leader must be willing to serve. The motivation of a person leads to performance. If a person becomes a leader out of compulsion, i.e., everyone expects him to do it or no one else will do it, he most likely will do the minimum required—doing just enough to get by. A leader needs to be willing and needs to lead willingly; he should be willing to do God’s will from his heart, then there will be an inner drive that cannot be stopped. Turn to Ephesians 6:7-8. Peter added, “As God wants you to be,” i.e., those in leadership (and those considering leadership) need to take time to pray and converse with God and other spiritual advisors to make sure they are following God’s will and not their own.

D. Be Eager to Serve Peter added, “Not greedy for money, but eager to serve.” A leader should be eager to serve. It is perfectly proper to pay the pastor and others who devote much time to leadership. I Corinthians 9 and 1 Timothy 5:17-18 make that point and, obviously, they should be paid as fairly as possible. BUT making money should not be—must not be—the motive for service. No pastor or any other leader should seek personal wealth to motivate him, but he should be eager to serve because of the calling of God. As we read earlier in Ephesians 6:7, “Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people.”

E. Be an Example A shepherd is also to be an example. “Not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.” Jesus addressed this idea—turn to Matthew 20:25-28. If someone wants to be a leader, then he needs to be an example worth following. It is hard to drive a flock of sheep—they scatter all over. It is much easier to lead them. Similarly, people are willing to follow a leader who practices what he preaches and gives them a good example to imitate. One of the greatest characteristics of a shepherd is his selfless care and sacrificial love for the sheep. Leaders and pastors are to be “overseers” not “overlords” or “dictators;” they must be willing and eager to serve; they must be examples for others to follow.

F. Finally, there will be a “crown of glory.” The flock has been entrusted to the leaders by God. The flock (really, the church) isn’t the personal flock or fiefdom of the pastor. It isn’t the kingdom of any particular person; it is God’s flock; it is God’s church. The leadership is responsible for feeding and protecting and guiding the flock in the way that God wants it done. This is why it is important that those in leadership study God’s Word and spend time in prayer so that they know what His will is. Leaders are responsible to God. This is why James 3:1 says, “Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.” One must not enter into leadership lightly!

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who died for His sheep (John 10:11); He is the Great Shepherd who lives for His sheep (Hebrews 13:20-21); and He is the “Chief Shepherd” who is coming back. He is going to reward His under-shepherds, His faithful servants, for the job they have done with His flock. If they have been faithful, Peter wrote that they “will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.”

III. Essential Christian Attitudes

A. Submission In his closing words, Peter highlighted essential Christian attitudes. He began with submission: “**Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older.**” There is much discussion about what Peter meant with “**young men**” and “**older**” or “**elders.**” Peter may have been addressing the submission of young men to their elders. Or perhaps the “**older**” or “**elders**” represent those in leadership and “**young men**” represent everyone else. There is a similar thought in 1 Thess. **--turn to 1 Thess. 5:12-13.** Regardless of interpretation, Peter wrote earlier that submission is important for every Christian.

B. Humility The 2nd attitude is humility; it goes right along with submission. Only the truly humble can submit. Humility is not demeaning oneself or thinking poorly of oneself—*humility is not thinking of oneself at all*. It is the attitude of one who willingly serves, regardless of the job.

Peter wrote, “**clothe yourselves with humility.**” The Christian is to cover himself with humility; it’s a choice. Just like the clothes one wears, humility should be seen in what one does as well as in what he says. Peter may have been remembering that night at the Last Supper in **John 13:3-17** when Jesus demonstrated His humility by washing all the disciples’ feet—including the feet of Judas! Peter reinforced his call for humility by quoting **Prov. 3:34**, “**God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.**” Pride elevates a person into the place reserved for God; this is why God is against the prideful. Only God is to be worshipped! If one wants to find acceptance and to receive God’s grace, he needs to humble.

God has sovereign power over everything and everyone; He is omnipotent. Peter wrote that if we humble ourselves before God and others, God’s “**mighty hand**”—His omnipotent hand—will lift us up from our trials and persecutions at exactly the right time. Jesus said in **Matthew 23:12**, “**Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.**”

C. Trust Then there’s the attitude of trust. If we are submissive and humble before God, then we will be able to trust Him. We will be ready, willing, and able to throw all of our concerns onto His shoulders. God’s love and faithfulness for His children can be trusted. As **Romans 8:32** says, “**He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?**”

God is omnipotent and omniscient—nothing is too difficult for Him. We need to trust Him and commit ourselves to Him and cast all our cares on Him.

D. Self-control But having confidence or trust in God doesn't mean we just sit back and watch God work. We are His hands, His feet, His mouth—we are His ambassadors. You may be the only Christian some people will ever see. That's why Peter says another attitude we need is to be “self-controlled.” We need to let the Holy Spirit move in our lives so that we are not controlled by outside influences; like the world around us or our own sinful tendencies—as [Ephesians 5:18](#) says, “Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.”

E. Alert Christians also need to be alert or vigilant. We need to be watchful. We must not allow the world to lull us asleep. The devil is the father of lies ([John 8:44](#)) and we need to be vigilant so that we aren't fooled. The better we know God's Word, the better we will be able to detect Satan's lies.

Christians are in a battle, but it isn't against flesh and blood. [Turn to Ephesians 6:10-12](#). Satan is a dangerous enemy, and we must never underestimate him. As the serpent, Satan deceives—[1 Cor. 11:3](#) says, “I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.” And as a lion, “the devil prowls around ... looking for someone to devour.” Satan and his demons have 3 major weapons to use against Christians. Listen to [1 John 2:15-16](#) from the New Living Translation: “Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love the world, you show that you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only the lust for physical pleasure, the lust for everything we see, and pride in our possessions. These are not from the Father. They are from this evil world.” We need to be alert so that we recognize temptations for what they are—attacks from Satan, the adversary.

F. Resist Once we recognize the point of attack, Peter wrote that we need to resist Satan and evil. We need to resist without wavering or doubting—we need to stand firm. The armor of God is listed in [Eph. 6:13-18](#). These include our shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit with which we can “stand firm.” We need to resist Satan just as Christ did—with faith in God and with the Word of God. As [James 4:7](#) says, “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

If the devil can get us to feel that we are alone, that God has forgotten our tiny, insignificant life, then Satan will discourage us and defeat us. So, Peter reminded all Christians that they are not alone. We need to pray for each other and encourage each other—we understand what other Christians are going through.

G. Hope Finally, no matter how difficult the fiery ordeal; how painful trials are, a Christian always has hope. Peter gave 4 reasons for this hope. 1. We have God's grace, i.e., His favor and kindness. As David wrote in **Psalm 84:11**, “**The LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.**” As God's children we have hope, we have His grace! 2. We know that God called us to His eternal glory. God chose each Christian to be one of His children. God chose you! The road may be difficult, but it leads to victory. We know how the story will end—in glory in heaven with God who chose us. 3. The suffering will be brief—compared to eternity, suffering here on earth will only be for a little while. As **1 Peter 1:6** says, “**Now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials but it will result in an eternity of praise and glory and honor.**” The reward is going to be greatly out of proportion to the pain! 4. Finally, we have hope because our suffering will restore us and make us strong, firm, and steadfast. When God restores us, He will make us better than new—just like Adam and Eve when they were created—perfect in every way. Any suffering on earth is like all the grinding and smoothing, and polishing that goes into transforming an old, rusted car into a thing of beauty. Our suffering will make us strong—God's strength will be given to us to meet the demands of life. Then we can stand firm; we won't be moved by persecution or any false doctrine that comes our way. And we will be steadfast. Steadfast means to have a foundation. The Christian's life will be firmly built on the foundation of Jesus Christ who gave His life so that we can live.

IV. Conclusion The attitudes Peter listed in this chapter as well as in earlier chapters are goals for Christians to work toward—as Paul wrote in **Philippians 3:12**, “**Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.**” How about you, are you pressing on to grow as a Christian? What about your attitudes toward God, toward others, and towards Jesus' return? Will you be surprised and ashamed when you stand before God? Or will you hear, “*Well done, my good and faithful servant—welcome home.*”?