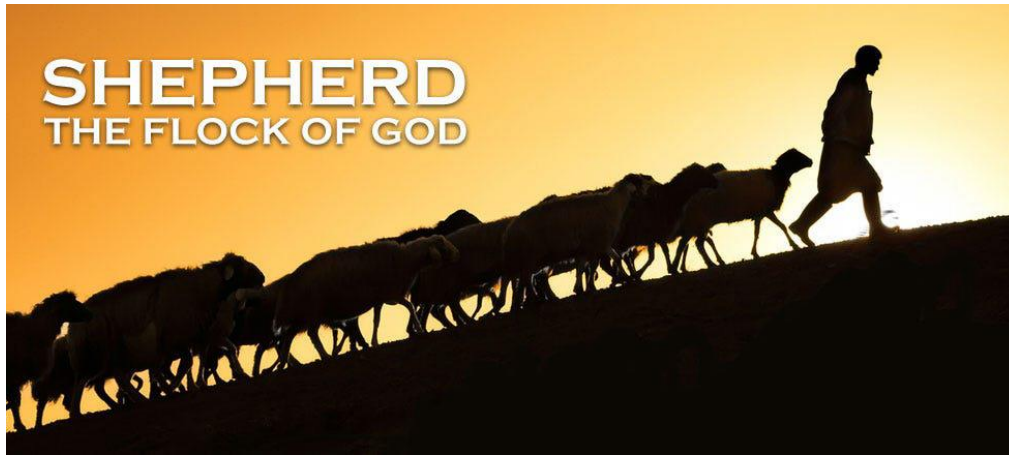


# Ministry of Grace Church

## 1 Peter 5:1-7 - Speaker Notes



### Introduction

We're currently in the book of 1 Peter, the first letter that the Apostle sent to the people living outside their native country. Here is a quick summary of what he has said so far. Throughout this letter Peter has been instructing us on how to deal with trials and persecution. He told us that we should rejoice in spite of the fact that we are experiencing trials because these trials will refine and improve our faith. In fact, he told us that we should praise God for these trials. He then went into some detail about how we should live our lives. We all should abstain from lusts of the flesh, and we should have such good behavior that even though the world around us may speak evil of us, they will nonetheless glorify God at the judgment. He instructed us to be humble and submit to all authority, including our national and local government and even our bosses at work.

He told us that we shouldn't be surprised when people with whom we used to engage in sinful activities turn on us and accuse us of wrongdoing. He instructed us that instead of focusing on our old "friends," we should focus on showing true love and hospitality to fellow Christians. We should not be surprised at the fiery trials we will go through because we are Christians, rather we should rejoice that we are partakers of Christ's suffering. And - if we suffer because of our commitment to Christ then we are truly blessed.

That brings us now to chapter 5. Peter begins this chapter with an exhortation to the pastors of the local churches. He encourages them to be like shepherds over the flocks that God has provided to them and to do so willingly and cheerfully, not because they were forced to and certainly not in order to gain wealth and power from it. Pastors are to lead by example, not as masters, but as servants. In exchange, says Peter, they will receive a reward from the Chief Shepherd in the form of a crown.

In the same manner, he commands the other members of the congregation to submit themselves to these pastors and he exhorts all members of the church to be willing to submit themselves to the

other members of the church. We are all to be humble because, as Peter says, God resists those who are proud, but He gives grace to those who are humble.

Peter tells us to be humble in the midst of trials, comforting ourselves with the knowledge that we aren't alone because these same afflictions are trying Christians all over the world.

Have you noticed how often Peter talks about the value of being humble? It seems to be an underlying theme throughout this letter.

### **1 Peter 5:1-4**

**Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion, but willingly, according to God; and not for dishonest gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.**

As I said earlier, the letter has been focusing on the blessing of suffering for Christ's sake. He now changes the emphasis of his message to give some specific instruction to the leaders of the churches to which this letter is being circulated. Notice that he does not speak about three distinct orders of overseers such as "bishops, priests, and deacons" as some churches teach. Nor does he proclaim that he has preeminence among them as the leader of all the churches. In other words, he is not claiming to be Pope. He is not even claiming supremacy over any other elder.

The word translated "elders" is *presbuteros*, which literally means "an older one, or someone who has a long history of the Christian experience." It is used by Peter and others to refer to those who have oversight responsibilities in the churches. It may appear that this portion of Peter's letter is only speaking about pastors and other official church leaders. However, it appears that he is talking to any Christian who has been saved for more than a few years. You who are older in the faith, pay particular attention to Peter's message to you.

He says of himself that he also is an elder. This is significant in that as an apostle he could have claimed this special position in the church as a reason for admonishing the elders under him. If he felt that he had a superior position in the church universal, he surely would have used that position to strengthen his message to the other church leaders. Instead, he simply describes himself as a fellow elder. He's just pastor Pete.

The only two things that Peter claims as distinctive for himself are: he was a witness of Christ's sufferings, and he shares in the glory that is going to be revealed. Clearly, he was in the garden when Christ was seized, and he was present at His trials. And although there is no direct evidence in the Scripture that Peter was at the crucifixion, we can infer it from:

**And all His acquaintances and the women who accompanied Him from Galilee were standing at a distance, watching these things. (Luke 23:49)**

There is some difference of opinion as to whether his claim to be, "a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed" refers to the fact that Peter was among the few disciples present at the transfiguration of Christ (Matthew 17:1, 2 and Mark 9:2,3) or that he was going to share in the glory of Christ when He is to be revealed at His second coming. I hold to the second interpretation since Peter refers to the glory that "is to be revealed." If he had been referring to the transfiguration, he would likely have said "that was revealed." Again, note that he is not claiming to have a higher

office, but to have been a personal witness of Christ's suffering and to have a hope of sharing His glory. Clearly, Peter did not see himself as Pope, but as a fellow elder, one who shares a common expectation, and one who had witnessed the sufferings of Christ in person.

The word translated "exhort" in the beginning of this section is from the Greek *parakalō*, which literally means "to call alongside." It is interpreted as meaning "to counsel, to give advice, and to comfort." This also is the name given to the Holy Spirit by Christ himself (comforter or advocate):

**But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, ... (John 14:26a)**

Peter now speaks directly to the elders of the churches to which this letter was written. The advice that Peter is giving these elders is to feed the flock. Although it is not specifically identified here, Peter's implication is that we who are called to be overseers of God's flock are to provide spiritual food for the flock.

Peter tells us that a church elder should not take on the responsibility of overseeing the local congregation because he is forced to do so. Neither should he take on this responsibility because he believes he will receive personal gain in the form of money or power. In other words, he should not be doing this for selfish reasons. He should, instead, take on this responsibility readily and willingly because he wants to serve God in this way. He should feel that he has been personally called by God to care for the flock, whether it consists of five or five thousand.

The elders in the church have not been given the position of "boss" or "master" of the flock. On the contrary, they have been placed there to shepherd the flock, to care for the sheep, to feed them, to pray over them, and to be an example to them of how we are to live as children of the King of Kings.

"Alloted" is a translation of the Greek word *klēros*, which originally meant "a little piece." It actually refers to a "die" or a "lot." This was a little piece of wood or stone with an individual's mark on it. It comes from the Greek custom in which a die (or lot) was taken from each person, put into a container, shaken violently, then the first one that was poured out indicated who was chosen for a particular function. From this custom we get our expression "the die is cast." This word later also came to be applied to "an inheritance" or "something assigned to a person."

The significant thing about the presence of the word *klēros* in the text is that it refers to those (people) who are allotted to a pastor by God's divine appointment: the congregation of the local church under an elder's care. As much as some pastors like to think that the growth of a church is due to great teaching, preaching, or leadership skills, everyone in a congregation is there because God has placed them there.

The message Peter is giving to pastors (elders) is that we are to oversee the local congregation (placed under our care by God) as under-shepherds of the Chief Shepherd. We are not to be rulers or dictators, but examples of how the flock is to live in relationship to Christ, the Chief Shepherd.

God recognizes that being a leader in a church is a very difficult position. The pastor has responsibility for the spiritual care of those that God has appointed to him, but he has no lordship over them. He is not the boss and only has the oversight of those in his care while they remain in his flock. He is to lead by example and teach with authority. It is easy to see why many pastors fall into one of two traps, either becoming autocratic and bossy, or succumbing to the pressures of the vocal minority and submitting to their will instead of the will of the Chief Shepherd.

It is a fine line that a pastor has to walk, one that requires dedication, perseverance, and constant communion with and submission to the Author and Finisher of our faith.

God recognizes the difficulty of this position and offers this verse of encouragement to all of those who shepherd a flock, whether it is large or small. When the Chief Shepherd appears, those who have labored in the pastoral position will receive a reward in the form of a crown, an unfading crown of glory.

Crowns are spoken of throughout the New Testament as rewards for faithful believers, not just pastors. A few of these crowns are: the Crown of Righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8), given to those who love His appearing; the Crown of Life (James 1:12 & Revelation 2:10), given to those who persevere under trial or who give their life for their faith; and the Crown of Glory, identified here as given to undershepherds.

And what will we do with these crowns? Here's what it says in Revelation 4:10-11:

the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created." (Revelation 4:10-11)

## **1 Peter 5:5-6**

**You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders. And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,**

Now Peter turns his attention to younger ones in the congregation. He tells them that, in the same manner as the pastor is to exercise his office (with humility and submission to the Chief Shepherd), they are to submit themselves to the elders of the church.

Peter is telling the congregation that it is their responsibility to voluntarily submit to the authority of the pastor, having just told the pastors how to treat those under their care. This is further corroborated by the expression, "clothe yourselves with humility toward one another." This is a beautiful picture of the Church of Christ willingly submitting to one another as situations dictate, recognizing that we are all subjects of the God of all creation.

Why are we to clothe ourselves with humility? Peter tells us, because "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble" Do you want to receive the fullness of the grace of God? Peter tells us that submission is the key! (Proverbs 3:34, James 4:6)

This next verse is a little tricky, so let's look carefully at it in order to get the full meaning. The word translated "humility" is *tapeinoō*. It refers to the act of being "brought low" or being "humiliated." It is different from the word for "be subject to" (the Greek word *hupotassō*) that was used in verse 5. The word for "humble yourselves" is expressed here in the passive voice meaning action that is done to you, rather than the middle voice meaning action that you do to yourself. So, the proper translation is "be humbled." It is also expressed in the imperative mood, meaning that we are commanded to be humbled.

Peter tells us here that we are to allow ourselves to be humbled, to be brought down a notch or two. It refers more to a state of mind than to a state of being. Humbleness, as used in today's verse, is something that we feel rather than something that we do. This is contrary to what our sin nature

and the world system want of us. The Apostle John tells us that the makeup of this world system is:

... the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, ...(1John 2:16a)

The boastful pride of life is just the opposite of humbleness. Peter has been talking about suffering for righteousness' sake and has even said that at times this is brought on by the providence of God. When God brings suffering to you, be humbled! Don't be defiant and shake your fist at God, declaring, "This isn't fair!" Be humbled!

The next phrase tells us why, "that He may exalt you at the proper time ..." In other words, God's purpose in humbling you right now in your suffering is so that He might exalt you in His time.

These are key verses in responding properly to situations in which we are caused to suffer. God does not allow these things capriciously or without a purpose. If we allow God to be in control and allow ourselves to be humbled by God, in time He will lift us up and ultimately, He will glorify himself!

### **1 Peter 5:7**

**casting all your anxiety on him, because He cares for you.**

Before we finish this section, let's dig into some of the words in this final verse. The word "casting" is translated from the Greek word *epirrhptō*, which is a compound of *epi*, meaning "on or upon" and *rhiptō*, which means "to fling or toss" (not a hard throw like a "hurl" but a gentle toss). So, this word means to "toss something on" like you would toss a small stick on a campfire. This word is expressed as an aorist participle, indicating an action done once and for all.

"All" is translated from a form of *pas*, which means "all." However, this word does not mean all as in "all of them," but all as in "all, the whole." It's a subtle but distinct difference, meaning that we are to cast all of our ability to worry on Him.

The word translated "anxiety" is the Greek word *merimna*, which means "concern or worry." It is derived from *meris*, meaning "something divided" or "a piece." The implication is that it refers to anything that divides our attention from God.

The words "cares for" are translated from the Greek verb *melei*, which means "to be of interest to" or "to take care of." The form of this verb implies current continuous action.

Now, if we tie this all together with the previous verse, we get:

Therefore, be humbled under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you in time, tossing all your worrying onto Him, because He is taking care of you.

We are often quick to ask God for help with the things that worry us. But like so many other areas of our lives, we want Him to take care of them while we continue to hold on firmly. I like the idea of "tossing" all of our anxiety on Him because it requires a release on our part. If we simply hand it to Him, we can still hold on and "help God" with it. Tossing it requires that we let go.

"But what if He doesn't do anything about it?" you may ask. That's where faith comes in. If we truly believe that nothing is impossible with God and that He loves us with an agape-type love and is truly concerned for our well being, then He will do what is ultimately best for us and what brings the most glory to Himself. That may mean that we have to suffer regarding those very things we

have been worrying about. This is the very notion of suffering for righteousness' sake that Peter has been talking about throughout this entire letter. But let it be God's choice, not ours.

The bottom line is that we must allow ourselves to be used by God in the manner that He decides is best; which takes faith ... which means allowing ourselves to be humbled ... which means a complete commitment to, and submission to God and to His will.

### **So What?**

Pastors have a responsibility to others in the body of Christ. If you're not a pastor, whether you are a church leader or a church member, it is your responsibility under God to be submitted to others in the Body of Christ. Members are to be submissive to the elders and the elders are to be examples by submitting to the Chief Shepherd.

The real question is, are you just looking out for good ol' number one right now, or are you allowing yourself to be humbled? Remember, God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. Do not resist humility, embrace it! In His time, He will lift you up, and He will receive the glory!

I knew a person who worried so much that she got worried when she realized that she didn't have anything to worry about. That's not living by faith. That's not allowing oneself to be humbled before God. Let me challenge you to go through this whole next week accepting whatever God puts in your path, humbly accepting it from Him and giving Him the Glory.

There's a song by Bobby McFerrin that says, "Don't worry, be happy." Well, he almost got it right. He should have said, "Don't worry, be humble, and toss all your worrying on Him!"

Let's pray.