

## **Review**

Peter has been talking about how difficult it is to be a Christian, but when you suffer for being one, it is vital to entrust your soul to God and keep doing what is right.

### **5:1-3 Shepherd The Flock**

Because of this, Peter exhorted the elders in the churches to shepherd the flock of God.

You may have noticed that the Bible often refers to people as sheep (Isa 53:6; Ezek 34:31; etc.)...

**Ps. 78:52 ...He led forth His own people like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock;**

**Ps. 95:7 For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand...**

Every flock needs a shepherd. Of course, God is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11,14), the Great Shepherd (Heb. 13:20), and the Chief Shepherd (1Pet. 5:4), but He has also entrusted the job of under-shepherd to some men, who we call elders and pastors. Their job description is clear: Shepherd the flock.

### **Exercising Oversight**

How should we shepherd the flock? Peter says that the first priority of shepherding is exercising oversight.

"Exercising oversight" is "ep-ee-skop-EH-o. (It's where the Episcopalians got their name.) The preposition "ep-ee" means "upon" or "over." A "skopos" is a watchman. And so this verb means "to look over," "to observe carefully," "to watch diligently over." You'll never be a good shepherd unless you're watching over the flock.

### **Under Compulsion Or Voluntary?**

Notice also that Peter says that this watching over is supposed to be voluntary, not under compulsion. "Under compulsion" in Greek means "necessary, having to be compelled." "Voluntarily" means to be done of your own free will.

And so if a pastor or elder is saying, "Why should I have to watch

the sheep again? Why are there so many church services? I'd rather stay home and watch TV," then he's not going to be shepherding well. In that case, he's just a hireling. Remember that Jesus said,

**John 10:11-13 "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. He who is a hireling, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, beholds the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees, and the wolf snatches them, and scatters them. He flees because he is a hireling, and is not concerned about the sheep."**

A hireling doesn't care about the sheep. It's all about the paycheck. He's certainly not eager to shepherd. It's just a job to him, and certainly not worth getting hurt over. He'd rather run away than be a good shepherd.

### **Not Lording**

Another thing that shepherds often do is "lord" their position over the sheep entrusted to them. That word means "to exercise dominion over." Instead of communicating to the sheep, "I'm here to protect and serve you," their example says, "You are here to serve me."

But the Bible tells us that it is the worthless shepherd who has this attitude. Ezekiel was told,

**Ezek. 34:2-3 "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to those shepherds, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat sheep without feeding the flock."**

A good shepherd is supposed to be feeding the sheep, not feeding ON the sheep! And of course who knew this better than Peter? Jesus had told him face to face,

**John 21:15 ..."Tend My lambs."**

**John 21:16 ..."Shepherd My sheep."**

**John 21:17 ..."Tend My sheep."**

## **Examples To The Flock**

Lastly, Peter says that the shepherds are supposed to be examples to the flock. Of course, we want the pastors and elders of every church to be perfect and righteous 100% of the time... But an example to the flock means something that they can imitate. So that means when we fall short, we need to be examples in that, too. Meaning, when I mess up, that I set the example of being quick to repent. Meaning, that when I fall short of the righteous standard, that I am honest enough to admit it.

### **5:4 The Crown Of Glory**

The rewards which we receive in heaven are described as crowns. And there are a number of them - four, to be exact. The four crowns available to us as rewards in heaven are:

- The crown of exultation (1Th 2:19). This is awarded to those that lead people to salvation and disciple them.

- The crown of righteousness (2Ti 4:8). This one is given to Christians who expect that the Lord is coming back any time, and live with that in mind.

- The crown of life (James 1:12) is the reward given to those who endure to the end. Jesus told the people in the church of Smyrna,

**Rev. 2:10 ...Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.**

- And lastly, there is the crown of glory. This reward is for those who shepherd the flock of God well.

### **5:5 Younger Men**

Now Peter opens up his instruction beyond the elders. Young men, who have a tendency to be rebellious in their youth, are reminded to be subject to the elders. In reality, we were all young men once, and thought we knew everything, too. But with age and years with the Lord has come wisdom.

## **Humility**

And, Peter says, everybody is to be humble toward one another.

How many times have we seen this command in the Bible? "Humble" here literally means to keep your heart and mind low-lying, close to the ground.

Instead, most of us continue to consider ourselves the most important person in the universe. It's all about my rights, my position, my standards, my comfort... That's nothing but pride, and God is opposed to the proud, Peter reminds us as he quotes Proverbs 3:34 to us.

### **5:6-7 Casting All Your Anxiety On Him**

All of this leads us to the reminder that when we humble ourselves before God, we can trust that anything that's happening to us is exactly what is supposed to be happening. God has plans to exalt you, but it's probably not today, so quit stressing out. The anxiety you're having about not finding that job, or that situation not working out like you need it to all boils down to a lack of humility before God. It's pride.

Now, realistically, how can you rid yourself of that anxiety and cast it on Him?

**Phil. 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

That's the plan: when you recognize that you're being anxious, commit to do these three things:

The word "prayer" means a devotional and worshipful communication with God. Talk to God about what He means to you. Worship and adore Him in prayer.

The word "supplication" means to make request. Let God know what you're concerned about. Talk to Him about your needs.

Thirdly, thanksgiving is the giving of thanks. Thank God in the midst of your circumstances. Thank Him for using the situation to draw you to Him.

Praying, requesting, and giving thanks will result in freedom from anxiety as the peace of God guards your heart and your mind.