1 Peter 5:1-13

Key Verse 5:2a

*Be shepherd for God’s flock that is under you care*

In this concluding passage of 1Peter, Peter called elders to be shepherds for God’s flock and those that are younger to submit to their leadership in the Lord. As leaders within the church, shepherds are called to suffer more to serve the flock of God, setting an example for them. In this way, they are witnesses of Christ’s sufferings to reveal Christ to the world. All believers should clothe themselves in humility toward one another because God opposes the proud but shows grace to the humble. They should humble themselves so that God would lift them up and they should cast all of their anxieties of God who cares for them. They should resist the devil and stand firm in the faith. The believers were all going through the same sufferings, whether it was the outward sufferings of persecutions, or the inner sufferings of the devils attacks. They should view sufferings as God’s true grace and love for them to be tested and strengthened in their faith. They should love one another and share in the sufferings of others. The world is now going through a pandemic, along with economic and social upheaval. The situation is increasingly volatile, uncertain, ambiguous, and complex. During these times, believers ought trust in God to test and strengthen their faith. They should be witnesses of Christ’s sufferings to the world and grow to be shepherds of God’s flock who can set an example in serving and leading many out of darkness into the light of God.

1. Read verses 1-4. On what basis did Peter make his appeal to the elders? (1) What was Peter’s appeal to elders? What is the job of an elder or shepherd? (2-3) How are shepherds to be different from typical worldly leaders? Whom does a shepherd work for? (3-4) How will their work be rewarded?

*To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ’s sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed:* ***2*** *Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve;* ***3*** *not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.* ***4*** *And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.*

1. Peter made his appeal to elders as a fellow elder and as a witness of Christ’s sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed.
   1. First, Peter made his appeal as a fellow elder. Peter could have made his appeal to the elders based on his position as a pillar in the church and apostle to the Jews (Gal 2:8-9). He was Jesus’ top disciple and the leader of the Jerusalem church. He could have exercised his authority over the elders--the authority he received from God. But, instead, he made his appeal to the elders based on their shared position. He humbled himself to serve and inspire them in order to build up unity among them.
   2. Second, Peter made his appeal to them as a witness of Christ’s sufferings. In Acts 1:8, Jesus called Peter and the other believers, saying, *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”* God called them to be witnesses of Jesus Christ. To be His witnesses means to reveal Jesus Christ to the world. However, in 1 Peter 5:1, Peter not only called himself a witness, but he called himself a witness of Christ’s sufferings. What is a witness of Christ’s sufferings. A witness of Christ’s sufferings is one who reveals Christ’s sufferings to the world through participating in sufferings of Christ. This is why 1 Peter 4:13 says, *“But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.”* When believers participate in the sufferings of Christ, they bear witness to Christ's sufferings in a practical sense--in their bodies, and reveal His suffering to the world. To suffer for Christ is already great, but according to both 4:13 and here in 5:1, these sufferings also result in glory when Jesus Chirst comes again. When Peter participated in the sufferings of Christ; as a witness of Christ’s sufferings, he was assured that he would also participate in His glory when Jesus was revealed. In this way, sufferings are the pathway to glory. This is why, not only Peter, but also the apostle Paul encouraged believers to suffer for Christ. Paul said to Timothy, *“So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.“* and *“Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus”* (2Tim 1:8, 2:3). And, in Roman’s he said, *“Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us”* (Rom 8:17-18). Here, Peter made his appeal to fellow elders as a witness of Christ’s sufferings who would also share in his glory, because they were also called to the same purpose.
2. Peter’s appeal to elders was to “Be shepherds of God’s flock …” Here, the calling to be shepherds is also in the context of suffering for Christ. A shepherd is one who is called to suffer for the sake of God’s flock. This is the example of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Chirst, as Jesus said in John 10:11, *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.* And, as 1 John 3:16 adds, *“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.*“ The elders should not just be content to live as elders, but they should strive to be shepherds. As elders in the church, they might have been tempted to just enjoy the benefits of their high position. In doing so, they could avoid sufferings and adopt a comfortable and easygoing lifestyle. But, this was not the pathway to glory that God called them to, but just a way of using their freedom as a cover-up for evil. God called them as shepherds. As shepherds, they should suffer more, so that they could rejoice more and share in God’s glory more.
3. The job of a shepherd is to care for and watch over God’s flock. A shepherd is called to provide, protect and serve God’s flock just as a father does for their own children. Especially, a shepherd should lead the flock of God through prayerfully feeding them with God’s word; helping them to repent and obey the word of God (Mat 28:19-20, John 21:15-17, 2Tim 4:2). In the time of trials, such as persecutions or pandemics, a shepherd should help God’s flock to humble themselves and obey God, so that they would not be tempted by sin and their faith would grow strong.
4. Shepherds are to be different from worldly leaders who seek dishonest gain and lord it over those under them. Instead, they should be willing and eager to serve and be examples to God’s flock. In order to be a shepherd, one must repent of selfish and worldly desires, and must live as a serving servant; serving the flock of God under their care. In this way, they can set a good example for God’s flock, and God’s flock can grow in the Lord. Instead of the elders using their authority to demand the obedience of God’s flocks, they should first obey and then set an example through serving God’s flock in the love of God. Shepherds must keep in mind that the flock of God does not belong to them, but to God. God has merely entrusted the flock of God under their care, so they should be trustworthy servants.
5. Shepherds work for the Chief Shepherd. In order to be Shepherds for God’s flock, the elders should submit to the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Then the Chief Shepherd would work together with them; to guild and direct them in their work. They don’t work for themselves but for the Chief Shepherd, and he
6. Shepherds will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. Notice that shepherds do not receive their glory in this life, but in the life to come. They will receive it when the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ comes again. At that time Jesus will judge their work and they will be rewarded for their sufferings. In order for the elders to live as shepherds, their faith and hope must be in God. Without faith and hope in God, no one can live as a shepherd willingly.
7. Read verses 5-7. Why should those who are younger submit to their elders? (5a, 3-4) What are all members of the church called to do? (5b) Why? What will God do for the one that humbles themselves before God? (6) How can they manage their anxiety? (7)

***5*** *In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”* ***6*** *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.* ***7*** *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

1. Those who are younger should submit themselves to their elders, because the Chief Shepherd, Jesus placed them under their care. God entrusted them to their shepherds, so they ought to trust their shepherds. Their shepherds should not lord it over them and should set an example for them, and they should submit to their shepherds. As in the example of husbands and wives, it is not a matter of elders or those who are younger, but a matter of elders and those who are younger. They are to work together with each doing their part so that each one can repent and turn to God. Elders should not abuse their authority and those who are younger should not rebel against their authority. Elders should be trustworthy and set an example, so that those who are younger can trust them and follow their example. In the same way, those who are younger should trust and submit to follow the example of their elders.
2. All members of the church are called to clothe themselves with humility toward one another. Elders or shepherds should humble themselves to serve those who are younger or sheep. Those who are younger or sheep should humble themselves to submit to elders or shepherds. Ultimately, both elders and those who are younger are called to submit to God. Elders or shepherds should submit more, humble themselves more, repent more and serve more because they are leaders, called to be examples to God’s flock. Those who are younger or sheep should submit to their elders or shepherds.
3. All members of the church are called to clothe themselves in humility toward one another because God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble. Humility is kind of the ultimate leveler or equalizer before God. Since we all need God’s mercy the most, we need to humble ourselves the most. God hates to see any hint of pride standing between members of the church community. Pride breaks the relationship with God and with others, so that God has no choice but to oppose the proud. However, God shows favor and gives grace to the humble.
4. God will lift up the one who humbles themselves. A humble person shows that they are ready to learn from God and from others. They are able to be used by God, so in God’s time, he will certainly lift them up and use them. However, God can never use a proud person, no matter how much knowledge or how many talents they have, God will oppose them. He will continue to bring them down until they humble themselves before God and others. Only then, when they have sufficiently humbled themselves before God and others will God lift them. However, the time to be lifted up is up to God, because after being lifted up, they could easily become proud again.
5. All members of the church should cast their anxiety on God because God cares for them. Whether one is an elder or shepherd or younger or sheep, they all have their own anxiety or fears. They need to know how to deal with their anxiety in a productive and healthy way. Whether they are brought down and are suffering from the fear of failure or are life lifted up and are suffering from the fear of success, it all boils down to the fear of suffering. The fear of suffering is kind of the mother of all anxiety. All members of the church need to remember that God loves them and God cares for them, and they need to bring all their anxieties and cast them all on Him.
6. Read verses 8-11. Why should the believers be alert and of sober mind? (8) How could they resist their enemy, the devil? (9a) How did Peter view the attacks of the enemy? (9b) How would the God of grace help them in their suffering to resist? (10-11)

***8*** *Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.* ***9*** *Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.* ***10*** *And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.* ***11*** *To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

1. The believers should be alert and sober of mind because their enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. The devil is a dealer in sin. His methods are temptation and accusation and planting fear and doubt. He is especially out to target believers in order to compromise their faith in God. When times of trials come, he uses suffering in order to plant doubt in God's love. He plants pride that they can be self-sufficient and avoid sufferings. His message is “why suffer?” “You can enjoy freedom and pleasure without real consequence!” “Look at what other people are doing!” “You need to take care of yourself and get yours!” This is all a lie to block believers from the glory Jesus Christ. The gospel clearly teaches that sufferings are the path to glory. Believers need to be alert and sober of mind in order to pray and hold on to the truth of God, so that they can protect their faith.
2. The believers could resist the devil by standing firm in the faith and by remembering that all believers are going through the same kind of sufferings.
   1. First, they could resist the devil by standing firm in the faith. Faith in God is the only way to stand against all the temptations, accusations, and lies of the devil. Faith is to trust in God as the only true God who is perfect in love and power. He is greater than anyone or anything—greater than the devil and greater than ourselves. When we suffer, we could be in danger of losing our faith in God. We can remember what the apostle Paul said in Romans 8:38-39, “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The believers should trust and rely on the love of God, and even more so as they were called to suffer
   2. Second, the believers could resist the devil, remembering that all believers are going through the same kind of sufferings. The believers should not be surprised when they go through trials (4:12). Trials are a make or break test of their face. Through passing the test of faith their faith could be proved genuine (1:7). Moreover, to know that all believers are going through the same sufferings, helps them to go through these suffering together, and so to be unified all the more.
3. Peter may have also viewed attacks of the devil as sufferings in themselves. Not only did the believers have to suffer outward trials, but also inward attacks waging war on their souls, through the devil’s temptations and accusations. However the apostle Paul said in 1Corinthians 10:13, “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”
4. God would help them in their sufferings and temptations by restoring them in God’s time, and making them strong, firm and steadfast. They just needed to patiently endure and wait on God— trusting in His deliverance to come. God was using their sufferings and temptations to test and make them strong in faith. So they should not lose their faith and end up sinning.

1. Read verses 12-14. What can be learned about the purpose of Peter’s letter? (12b) Which other servants were with Peter in this endeavor? (12a, 13) How did Peter ask the believers to greet one another? (14a) What was his closing blessing for them? (14b)

***12*** *With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.* ***13*** *She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark.*

1. The purpose of Peter’s letter was to encourage the believers that the sufferings they were enduring were the true grace of God. They should stand fast in God’s grace, because it was God’s grace that strengthened them through faith and through the trials. They should be encouraged by God’s good purpose for them even in sufferings. As we go through sufferings of a pandemic and time of social and economic instability, and even threats to religious freedom, believers should not lose heart. We should believe that God is testing our faith to make us faithful like Silas, stronger, and that he wants to use us as witnesses of Christ’s sufferings in order to reveal Jesus Christ to an unbelieving world. This is the true grace of God to participate in the sufferings of Christ by being shepherds for the flock of God continually rather than being anxious and fearful.
2. Peter asked the believers to greet one another with a kiss of love. Not all cultures kiss one another as a form of greeting, but the point here is to greet one another with love. We need to express our love for our co-workers, because we are all going through the same kind of sufferings together as the body of believers.
3. Peter’s closing blessing for the believers was “Peace to all of you who are in Christ. No matter what sufferings we are going through, we need to have peace in Christ. We need to overcome fear, anxiety and every hit of doubt about God’s love. We can have peace, because no matter what we are facing, God’s love is greater and God’s love prevails.

One word: Be shepherds of God’s flock