

# 1 Peter 5 / COB / 09.08.13

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## Introduction

- † **[Slide 1: title]:** At the end of this letter, Peter says, “Greet one another with a loving kiss”! [be playful with it...]
- Sometimes it is hard to know what to make of commands such as these. We want to take the Bible literally, but we understand that literalness includes recognizing that there are idioms, imagery, and culturally contextualized ideas. When we get to the end today, we will ask whether we need to start doing at least the kiss-kiss double-cheek thing.
  - But let’s start at the beginning of the chapter, so turn in your Bibles to 1 Peter 5. We will finish this letter today, and it finishes with some amazing concepts, so get ready!
  - But first, let’s pray...

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**[Slide 2: vv.1-4]: 1 Peter 5.1-4 NET: So as your fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings and as one who shares in the glory that will be revealed, I urge the elders among you: <sup>2</sup> Give a shepherd's care to God's flock among you, exercising oversight not merely as a duty but willingly under God's direction, not for shameful profit but eagerly. <sup>3</sup> And do not lord it over those entrusted to you, but be examples to the flock. <sup>4</sup> Then when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that never fades away.**

- † **[Slide 3: v.1]:** Peter calls himself a “fellow elder,” so we have to ask, had the new house churches already set themselves up with an elder over each one, as they would have experienced when they were still in Rome? or was Peter addressing the older men in the congregation, knowing they would naturally have become the leaders of any Christian movement in this culture? We cannot be sure. In either case, Peter was addressing himself to those he thought were leading the churches.
- Peter wanted them to know that he was one of them, leading by example, serving as a leader in the church even though it would bring him suffering and martyrdom.
  - Peter also surely wanted them to remember that their ministry as elders was an extension of the ministry of the apostles. These local elders were under Peter’s apostolic authority.
  - Jim, Mark, and I are under apostolic authority: Jesus is the head of the church, and the apostles he chose, through their New Testament writings, have set the agenda and guidelines for church governance, and it is under their authority that Jim, Mark, and I operate as your local elders.
- † **[Slide 4: Christ’s sufferings]:** Peter also calls himself a witness of Christ’s sufferings. Was Peter name dropping here, to convince them of his apostolicity and authority? Maybe. One of the seventh century’s great minds, Bede the Venerable, thought so.
- On the other hand, since Peter said he was a fellow elder and a fellow partaker in the glory to come, perhaps he meant us to understand that he was a *fellow-witness* as well.
  - The Greek word for witness here, μάρτυς, can mean someone who sees something or it can mean someone who testifies to something, so perhaps what Peter was saying was that he and the elders of the local church were joined in testifying to the truth of the message about Christ, which he had just shared with them in this letter.
- † When Peter calls himself one who shares in the glory that will be revealed, he is anticipating Christ returning and resurrecting the dead.

- † **[Slide 5: v.2]:** Peter urges the elders in Turkey to shepherd God’s flock.
- What does this mean? Jesus told Peter to shepherd his sheep in John 21.16.
  - In Acts 20.28, Paul told the elders of Ephesus [NET], “Watch out for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son.”
  - And in this letter, Peter called Jesus the shepherd and guardian of our souls [2.25].
- † These examples provide some insight into what it means to be a shepherd in this sense. Jesus sacrificed himself to protect and help us. Elders in the church must have that attitude: they must be willing to sacrificially serve to protect and help the members of the church, while we all wait for the chief shepherd to return. Among other things, this includes praying extensively for the people in the church and empowering the care ministries of the church.
- The word used to describe Jesus as a “guardian” back in v. 2.25 literally means “overseer” – the same as Paul called the elders in Ephesus – and here Peter uses the verb form of the word to tell the elders they should be overseeing the flock. One aspect of overseeing is to administrate – or exercise oversight – over the church and its ministries.
  - A second aspect of overseeing is to protect the church’s doctrine and teaching. Thus the elders teach, and they supervise and train the other teachers in the church, even correcting anyone who is speaking false doctrine.
  - A third aspect of overseeing the flock is to ensure that each member of the flock is growing and healthy spiritually. The goal of the elders is to equip the flock to be mature in faith, Christ-like in character, and ready to carry out the ministry of the church.
- † The first word in v.1 in the Greek text means “therefore” or “so,” which ties this passage to the one that is previous. As we discussed last week, God is sifting the church to see who is faithful, therefore the elders should willingly engage in shepherding the flock, even if by doing so they draw persecution to themselves. The elders are to protect the flock spiritually and thereby prove their own faith by following Christ in suffering for righteousness. You have three elders in this church, and we take this role seriously.
- † **[Slide 6: willingly/eagerly]:** Taking it seriously is good, but Peter says the elders must approach their work, not merely as a duty, but ready to engage willingly.
- When we moved to the Dallas campus, the seminary enrolled LeeAnn and me in a two year spiritual formation small group program. They asked if I would lead our small group, but I declined because I knew I would be studying Greek and Hebrew together, and I didn’t want to get distracted. They asked again, and again once they realized I had trained small group leaders in multiple churches, but I kept saying no. When I went to the organizational meeting, to find out which group we were in, I found out we were in... my group. So I said I would pray about it. The next day, I called my ministry coach and told him, ok, I would do it. But he replied, “You know what, Will? never mind.” They didn’t want someone with so little enthusiasm. So they made me beg for a task I hadn’t wanted.
- † Elders must seek God’s direction and do this work for God. This is similar to what we said before about doing something in Jesus’ name: we do it by his authority, by his will, by his guidelines, and for his glory.

- † Elders must be servant leaders. This in part means they must not lead not out of some sense of greed but out of eagerness to serve others. This is a ministry for the benefit of the flock, not the elder.
  - When I was teaching in the Salvation Army’s drug rehab program, one fellow complained about religious leaders getting rich off the flock. Scripture says that is shameful. I told my students that if they found that the pastor or elders were living in beachfront houses and driving expensive cars then they should go to another church. I was pleased to tell them I was teaching them for free.
  - If you had the wrong kind of elders, I would be telling you how the church is paying for the three of us to go on this sailboat cruise to Turkey and Greece, to see the places Paul and John visited. Deluxe accommodations, two weeks in the Mediterranean, just \$36,000 or so for the three of us and our spouses... you want educated elders, don’t you?
  - Mark and Jim are not paid for their work here as elders. I am paid as the lead elder or senior pastor only because you thought it worthwhile to have someone work full time in that role. I hope you know that I am not doing this for the money.
  
- † **[Slide 7: vv.3-4]:** Another aspect of servant leadership is that elders serve the flock, rather than make the flock serve them. This is similar to what we said about Christian husbands and fathers: the goal of the elder is to bless the flock, not to get the flock to bless them. This means the youth do not have to wash my truck, no matter what I say when we get to v.5!
  - Yet another aspect of servant leadership is to lead by example. Elders do not hypocritically act as authoritarian rulers. Instead, they show the way of following Christ through sacrificial service for the gospel mission, and instruct and exhort the flock to follow them as they follow Christ.
  - **[Slide 8: chief shepherd]:** Spiritual leaders must remember that the flock does not belong to them. God entrusted the church to Christ, Christ ordained the apostles and other disciples, these went out and planted churches, ordaining an elder or team of elders over each. That commission has been passed down though the centuries, so that the elders in our church today have authority over this church, but in submission still to the chief shepherd, Christ. And Christ will come back, and expect an accounting from us.
  - If we serve well as elders, Peter says we will receive an unfading crown of glory. In Greco-Roman society, leafy crowns were given for victory in athletic competitions. Peter could assure ethical elders of victory through perseverance in the faith and ministry, because victory depended on Christ, not on their own human abilities.
  - It’s a tough job being an elder! I am not sure I would want to do it, if I didn’t believe God had called me to it.

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**[Slide 9: v.5]: 1 Peter 5.5: In the same way, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.**

- † If by “elders” Peter was referring to those leading the church, then by “those who are younger” he must be referring to everyone else in the church, those who are considered younger in the faith. This might be because they are younger in age or because they are newer to the faith or because they have not grown to the elder level.
  
- † This verse begins with “in the same way.” In what same way? None of the commentaries I consulted thought this phrase was worth commentary. It has to connect to what Peter just taught to the elders, so looking at what we just read, I would say “in the same way” means willingly, for God, with eagerness to contribute or serve, to prove worthy of reward.

- † So, in that sense, those who are younger in the faith – those who are not elders – should submit to the authority of the elders in the church. What do you think this looks like in our church today?
  - If the elders are responsible for teaching you, then you should seek to learn and understand that teaching, and not be spouting contrary theology.
  - If the elders are responsible for protecting you and nurturing your growth, then you should accept their counsel and correction when it is necessary.
  - If the elders are responsible for equipping you for ministry, then you should participate in their training and serve in the church’s ministries.
  - If the elders are responsible for administrating over the ministry, then you should accept their decisions on such things as procedures and organization.
  - Essentially, if you have chosen qualified elders who are working for Christ to bless you, then you should enjoy the blessing of their work and cooperate for church unity and effectiveness.
  
- † **[Slide 10: humility]:** Just like when Peter gave instructions to specific groups before, he finishes with some teaching for everyone. All of us are to “clothe ourselves with humility.”
  - Everyone is to act humbly, not arrogantly. This means we put the needs of others before our own desires, we extend courtesy to everyone, we forgive their transgressions against us.
  - An elder must be servant-hearted, not domineering, and a member of the church must be submissive, not contemptuous toward leadership.
  - We all realize that everything we do here is about Christ, not ourselves. The first line of Rick Warren’s *Purpose Driven Life* is beautiful: it says, “It’s not about you.”
  
- † In case we need some motivation to take this command about humility seriously, Peter gives us some: Alluding to Proverbs 3.34, he says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.
  - If we get arrogant and proud, we are asking for God to smack us back into line. God wants us to develop the character of Christ. Christ – though fully divine as the Son of God – humbly took on human flesh, was born as a baby, gave up all comfort and possessions for the ministry, and then suffered and died to complete his part in the gospel mission. If we are proud and arrogant, then we are behaving the opposite of Christ, and we invite God to give us a spanking to correct our behavior. Believe me, I can tell you, that God can humble you if you ask for it.
  - Those who stay humble during the ups and the downs of life are walking in submission to God and therefore can count on God’s favor. As we have noted in this study, this does not mean we will not have struggles and suffering in life, but it does mean we will enjoy benefits from a closer relationship with God, not the least of which is to experience accelerated transformation of our character to be like Christ.

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**[Slide 11: vv.6-7]: 1 Peter 5.6-7: And God will exalt you in due time, if you humble yourselves under his mighty hand <sup>7</sup> by casting all your cares on him because he cares for you.**

- † As we have noted before, Peter uses terms like “in due time” to indicate this blessing comes after this life. Fourth century theologian and pastor of the church in Constantinople, John Chrysostom, wrote, “Peter says that this will happen in due time, because he is teaching them that they will have to wait until the next life for this exaltation.”

- Sixth century Bible commentator Oecumenius wrote, “Peter puts exaltation off until the world to come, because the only true exaltation is the one which is immutable and eternal.”
- † You would not know it from this translation, but v.6 in the Greek text begins with “therefore.”
- Therefore – since God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble – and so that God might exalt you at the appointed time, allow yourselves to be humbled under the control of the mighty hand of God.
  - In the Greek, the verb for humbling is a passive imperative: allow yourselves to be humbled. The English translations almost always treat it as a middle imperative: humble yourselves. It probably doesn’t make a lot of difference. The real question is, how do we humble ourselves or how do we allow ourselves to be humbled under God’s mighty hand?
- † **[Slide 12: casting cares]:** The answer is in v.7. What does this humility look like? It looks like casting your cares on God!
- In most English translations, it can be hard to see this connection. In the NIV and NLT, for example, they started a new sentence, thus separating the two thoughts completely.
  - **[Slide 13: NASB]:** In many other translations, they keep it one sentence, but the connection is vague. For example, the NASB reads, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.” This makes it sound like casting your anxiety on God is related to his exalting you, rather than being related to humbling yourself.
  - It also does not explain how casting relates. Do we humble ourselves *while* casting our cares on God? or humble ourselves *and* cast our cares on God? or humble ourselves *for the purpose of* casting our cares on God? or humble ourselves *by* casting our cares on God? The translators chose to leave it vague, so the reader could decide.
- † The NET, which was translated by Dallas Seminary scholars, chooses to see this as a participle of means: we humble ourselves *by* casting our cares on God.
- Our natural inclination when times get tough is to get more determined to succeed in our own strength. That’s our pride’s influence along with our survival instinct. We humble ourselves by actively turning to God for help in our present suffering, instead of relying on ourselves, trusting in his deliverance to endure through these trials, and trusting in his ultimate deliverance out of the suffering of this world and into our glorious inheritance in Heaven and resurrection when Christ returns. Seeing the verse this way connects it with all that Peter has taught us before.
  - In an article posted on bible.org, Dallas Seminary professor Daniel Wallace notes, “biblical humility is not self-deprecation or a dispensing of our self-esteem. Just the opposite. It is recognition that our worth is to be found in our Maker, the command is positive: we have a loving Father who desires us to come to him with all our shattered dreams, disillusionment, dashed hopes, and fears.”
- † Why can we cast all our cares on God, why can we depend on God at all? Because he cares for you. The Greek literally says “because anything concerning you is a concern to him.” That’s a beautiful thought, however we express it.
- † Beyond our exaltation, is there a reason why we must humble ourselves and depend on God? The answer is in vv.8-9...

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**[Slide 14: vv.8-9]: 1 Peter 5.8-9 Be sober and alert. Your enemy the devil, like a roaring lion, is on the prowl looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, strong in your faith, because you know that your brothers and sisters throughout the world are enduring the same kinds of suffering.**

- † We are to be sober and alert, self controlled and watchful. Why? Because we are in danger!
- † The Greek word ἀντίδικος means enemy or accuser. The Greek word διάβολος means one who slanders; when used as a proper name, we translate it as “the devil.” In about a month, we are going to have a sermon all about this fellow.
- † For now, let us note that we have a real spiritual adversary and his threat to us also is real: the devil [like a lion] is looking for believers [sheep] to destroy or devour.
  - It is not just coincidence that Christians face persecution or that secular culture advocates sinful attitudes and actions. In addition to the influence of corrupted human natures, there also is the influence of the Devil and his demonic helpers, who somehow manage to construct organized resistance against the followers of Christ, even if it appears uncoordinated on a human plane.
  - As a roaring lion, the Devil’s hope is to demoralize believers and the church, to rob them of their hope and joy, so they will be vulnerable to temptation, deception, and distraction.
  - We have already learned that God will use our suffering for good if we depend on him, but here we see that the immediate cause of our suffering often is our evil adversary, and his goals are not for our good.
- † **[Slide 15: resist]:** What do we do? We resist. How? By standing strong in faith! or, better, by remaining steadfast in faith!
  - The context of this passage in this part of the letter is about depending on God in faith. So Peter commands believers to resist Satan, by remaining firm in our faith... not just believing, but believing enough to depend on God instead of on our own strength.
  - Whatever suffering is happening to us, we must continue to put all our hope and trust in God’s deliverance through Christ! We must continue to trust God to see us through our present suffering and ultimately to deliver us out of the suffering of this life and into our inheritance in Heaven and resurrection when Christ returns!
  - We also must continue walking with God in the way he designed us to live, taking proper care of ourselves, being obedient, adopting his priorities and values, and being willing to face our pain with his help, rather than hide from it.
  - If we can do this, then we can maintain our hope and joy and resist Satan’s work to demoralize us, distract us from our purposes, tempt us into conformity to the world, and deceive us regarding God’s love and other important doctrines.
- † To accomplish this, we have to have our minds under control so we can be alert to the attack. These commands are similar to those Peter gave us earlier in the letter with regard to keeping our hope in God’s deliverance through Christ [1.13] and remaining in prayer [4.7]. I’m sure that’s no coincidence.
  - We also need to draw encouragement from knowing that we are not alone in our suffering. Our suffering is not unique, it is a universal part of Christian life, so it does not indicate God has abandoned us, rather it indicates we are following Christ sufficiently to stir up our spiritual antagonists and the disbelieving pagans in our culture.

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**[Slide 16: vv.10-11]: 1 Peter 5.10-11: And, after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. <sup>11</sup> To him belongs the power forever. Amen.**

- † The word translated as “and” here is the Greek word *δέ*. It signals a new thought that is connected to the previous one. We will suffer from the Devil’s attacks, but we will remain steadfast in faith, and when God is ready, he will end our suffering and take us to Heaven, where we will experience glorification, the completion of our transformation in character to be like Christ, and we will be with God in Heaven, waiting for the redemption and resurrection of our bodies when Christ returns.
- † Peter here reminds us that God is the sole source of grace, of deliverance, and that he already has called believers to himself, so there is no need to fear just because we are suffering. And God’s plan is to restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish us, first in Heaven and then on the New Earth.
- † “To God belongs the power” or “in him is sovereignty forever.” Amen means so be it. God is the all powerful one forever – greater than the mightiest adversaries or nations – so we can trust in his promises, and that should give us courage to carry on in faith.

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**[Slide 17: v.12]: 1 Peter 5.12: Through Silvanus, whom I know to be a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, in order to encourage you and testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.**

- † The usage of the Greek suggests Silvanus – or Silas, depending on your translation – was the courier of the letter to these scattered believers. Silvanus might have done the actual writing to Peter’s dictation too. He was a faithful leader in the early church as we know from many passages in Acts and Paul’s letters. [Acts 15.22; 16.19-37; 17.4-15; 18.5; 2 Corinthians 1.19; 1 Thessalonians 1.1; 2 Thessalonians 1.1].
- † When studying a letter in the New Testament, it is always useful to look for passages that explain why the author is writing. Why did Peter write?
  - **[Slide 18: stand fast]:** First we must note that most English translations make a new sentence out of “Stand fast in it” even though there is not a new sentence in the Greek. The NKJV makes it all one sentence, but changes the verb from a command to a normal indicative verb. The way it reads in Greek is “I have written to you briefly, in order to encourage you and testify that this is the true grace of God in which you must stand firm!”
  - So Peter wrote to encourage them in their faith and to attest to certain truths about the grace of God in which you must stand firm!
  - As we discussed at the beginning of the letter, if we can truly understand the depth and assurance of our salvation, then we can stand fast by trusting in God’s promise of deliverance and continuing to walk with God in faith and obedience. We can *hope* for peace in this life, but we can be *assured* of our peace with God. In that truth, we must stand firm, and if we do stand firm in it, we will be successful in resisting the attacks of the devil.

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**[Slide 19: vv.13-14]: <sup>13</sup> The church in Babylon, chosen together with you, greets you, and so does Mark, my son. <sup>14</sup> Greet one another with a loving kiss. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.**

- † In the Greek, v.13 begins with “She in Babylon,” which the NET interprets to be a church. We note that whatever she is, she is chosen by God, so it must be a person or people who are Christian.

- Historically, we believe Peter was writing from Rome, from which place the exiles had been deported. It seems most likely this statement means that Peter sends greetings from the church which remains in Rome. Fourth century church historian, Eusebius of Caesarea confirms that this was the view held by the early church.
  - It is unclear why Peter referred to Rome as Babylon; perhaps he merely referred to the capital of the empire into which the readers had been exiled by the name of the capital of the empire which had exiled the Judeans centuries before. Perhaps Bede is correct that Peter was making a statement about the sinfulness and idolatry of the empire with the allusion to the similar ancient empire.
- † Peter calls Mark his son. This is the gospel writer John-Mark, apparently now a disciple [or spiritual son] of Peter's, and with Peter and Silvanus as they wrote the letter. It was an early church tradition that Mark's gospel reflects Peter's teachings.
- † **[Slide 20: greet]:** Peter commands his readers to greet one another with a loving kiss! How would you feel if Tom and I greeted you at the door with a loving kiss?! How many of you are in favor of establishing this as a new church tradition?
- While kissing could be romantic in this culture, it also was known for men to kiss as part of emotionally embracing close family and friends. In the church, it indicated a shared intimacy through Christ and his grace.
  - Bede wrote, "The holy kiss is the exact opposite of the kiss with which Judas betrayed the Savior. That is the sort of kiss used by those who speak peace to their neighbors, but their hearts are full of wickedness. The holy kiss, in sharp contrast to this, is one which is given not in word only but in deed and truth as well."
  - When we gather to celebrate God's truth and worship God with praise and thanks, we should greet each other affectionately. My Italian relatives all do kissy cheek, but maybe that's not normal here in a more German, a more Deutsch, culture. We still can greet each other with affection. So please, whatever it looks like for you, greet each other with affection, as though with a loving kiss.
- † Peace to all of you who are in Christ... What a fitting and glorious way to end the letter!
- † **[Slide 21: title]:** Let's pray...