

“Humble Service in Christ’s Church”– 1 Peter 5:1-5

- **Author:** Peter the apostle (v1). Written via Silvanus as amanuensis/secretary (1 Pet 5:12).
- **Time:** Peter wrote this epistle near end of his life in the early/mid 60s AD while persecution under Nero is present (1 Pet 2:20, 4:12) but will later intensify. Eventually, Peter himself will be martyred.
- **Theme:** Believers are “elect exiles” -- though they are in this world, it is not their home (1 Pet 4:1-11). Being chosen and set apart by God as holy, we are to live w/ our neighbors confidently (Jer 29:7, Jn 17:5, Jn 18:36, Phil 3:20, Heb 13:14, Rev 18:4) even as we suffer (Mt 5:11-12, Acts 7:52, 1 Pet 1:6).
 - 1 – Peter refers to himself as an *elder* here. Yes, he is an apostle as well – after all, he was an eyewitness of “the sufferings of Christ” as well as His glorious resurrection and ascension (Lk 24:34, Jn 20:2-8, 1 Cor 15:5, Acts 1:9-11). Yet he chooses to highlight his authority as an *elder* since that is what others in the churches receiving his letter possess along with him. *All churches* ought to have a plurality of elders (Titus 1:5) and give “double honor” to those who rule as an elder but are especially called to public and private ministry of the word (Acts 20:20, 1 Tim 5:17). Note, Peter does *not* seek to be honored as the great king or head of the church!
 - App: We should give thanksgiving to God for biblical church government (Prov 11:14, 27:17) yet also acknowledge that this is *less* clear than other truths in Scripture...
 - 2 – Peter says “Shepherd the flock” to other elders just as Jesus told him 3x as he restored him after his faithless denial (“Feed my lambs”/”Tend my sheep”/”Feed my sheep” in Jn 21:15-17).
 - App: There are implications for church membership and elder shepherding here. Shepherds are called to serve a *particular flock* (Jer 33:12-13, Jn 10:14-15, Heb 13:17).
 - 3 – As with fathers being told not to “exasperate their children” elsewhere (Eph 6:4), Peter knows that we *need* this verse to be said because of human nature. Leaders must not to lead in a “domineering” way (cf. Mk 10:42-25) but instead live *in bondage* to Christ and serving others (1 Cor 6:19-20, 7:22, Gal 5:13, Eph 6:5-7, Phil 2:3-6, 1 Pet 2:16). Hence, Peter’s emphasis on *humility* in this text (see v5-7, Num 12:3, Prov 3:5-6, 16:18, Micah 6:8).
 - 4 – Leaders not only share in the cross of Christ (1 Pet 4:13) but also share in his glorious crown (1 Pet 5:1, 2 Cor 4:17). App: What is the nature of this reward (Mt 25:21, 2 Tim 4:7-8)?
 - 5 – Humility is a key trait that Christian leaders must possess. Our work is fundamentally serving Christ and serving others, not serving self (Jer 23, Ezek 34, Jn 10:12-13, Acts 8:18-21).
 - App: We have our blueprint for biblical ministry from Christ Himself as the Great King and Head of the Church (Mt 28:18-20). Recommended: “Marching Orders” by Kim Riddlebarger @ <https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/marching-orders>
 - App: The role of the shepherd is not fault-finder (Mt 7:1-2, Jas 3:1, 4:11 cf. w/ 1 Cor 5:12, 6:3, 1 Tim 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9) but one who faithfully speaks the word of God with Christ’s authority (in public and in private, Acts 6:2-4, 20:20, Titus 1:9) and – like Jesus – lays down his life for his sheep (Jn 10:11-18). Those who are under such shepherding *benefit* greatly from being spiritually fed by Christ Himself! Thus, those “who are younger” ought to be subject to them in the Lord indeed (Heb 13:17). And the elders leading by serving? Their work ought to be done with eagerness and joy, just as Christ Himself led as an example to us all (Jn 13:1-17, Heb 12:2, 13:17)!
 - App: Word and prayer = biblical church growth. *Pray* for those God has called to lead as elders/deacons and *pray* for the whole congregation as we seek to grow in Christ’s word together (Acts 6:1-7, Eph 6:18-19, Phil 1:27-30, 2 Thess 3:1-3, 2 Tim 2:1-2, Titus 2:1-10).