



STAND HUMBLY AND STEADFASTLY 1 PETER 5

INTRODUCTION

Believers are saved by God's grace, sustained by God's grace, and rest their hope in the future revelation of God's grace at Christ's second coming. It is our Christian privilege to be called to a living hope through Jesus Christ who suffered and died for us and was resurrected to glory by the mighty power of God. As Peter has explained in his epistle, none of this is to be taken lightly. One day Christ will return and we will share in His glory if our faith has proved to be genuine. And how do you know if your faith is genuine? You know by the way you live. A living hope demands a holy response. Believers are not to wallow in their old way of living or slide back into old comforts when trials and suffering come. Believers are to stand firm in the true grace of God.

Believers stand firm by understanding the glory of the grace which is theirs, both now and when Christ comes again (1 Peter 1:1-21 and 2:4-10). Believers stand firm through obedience (1 Peter 1:14). Believers stand firm in the word of God (1 Peter 1:22-2:3). Believers stand firm through recognizing that they are sojourners and pilgrims in this world, and as such do not live for worldly pleasures but for the will of God (1 Peter 2:11-12). Believers stand firm through submission (1 Peter 2:13-3:12). Believers stand firm by persevering and serving God in the midst of suffering (1 Peter 3:13-4:19).

Now, before closing his letter, Peter gives some final and specific counsel in standing firm in the true grace of God. Church leaders are to *shepherd the flock of God* (1 Peter 5:2). Younger people are to *submit yourselves to your elders* (5:5). All are to *be submissive to one another* (5:5), *humble yourselves* (5:6), and *resist the devil* (5:9) in the light of God's glorious calling through Jesus Christ.

OUTLINE OF 1 PETER 5

- I. Exhortation to Elders - 1 Peter 5:1-4
- II. Exhortation to All - 1 Peter 5:5-11
- III. Ending Thoughts - 1 Peter 5:12-14

I. Exhortation to Elders - 1 Peter 5:1-4

Peter first addresses elders, the appointed leaders in each congregation (Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5). Elders are variously referred to in Scripture as shepherds, pastors, overseers, and bishops.

A. From an elder in authority - 1 Peter 5:1

Peter lists his credentials.

1. A fellow elder - 5:1

As an elder himself, Peter spoke with authority and experience as one with those to whom he wrote. The implication is that he was ready to do whatever he called his readers to do. Even though he refers to himself as an elder here, remember that Peter was also *an apostle of Jesus Christ* (1 Peter 1:1).

2. A witness of Christ's sufferings - 5:1

A witness is one who is called to testify to what he has seen. Peter was an eyewitness of Christ's suffering and resurrection from the dead (Luke 24:46-48). In this letter he has borne witness to what he had seen, heard, and believed.

3. A partaker of the glory that will be revealed 5:1

In 1 Peter 4:13, Peter exhorted his readers to rejoice in partaking of Christ's sufferings in order that they might also rejoice at the revelation of His glory. Peter counts himself as one who can confidently look ahead to the revelation of Christ's glory.

B. Shepherd the flock - 1 Peter 5:2-3

In John 21:15-17, Jesus had commanded Peter to be a shepherd to His sheep. Peter now passes that command along to church leaders. The Greek word translated shepherd means to tend, and includes caring, leading, guiding, protecting, and feeding. The elders are to oversee the flock entrusted to them by God with love and attentive care.

1. Willingly, not by constraint - 5:2

Elders are to perform their service cheerfully from the desire of the heart, never feeling as though it is a burden imposed upon them. They should be devoted to the work God has entrusted to them.

2. Eagerly, not for profit - 5:2

Elders should never have mercenary motives. Matthew Henry, puts it this way in his Commentary: "they are to regard the flock more than the fleece."

3. As examples, not as lords - 5:3

"Example" is the Greek word "typoi" which means a type or a pattern. Elders should display the proper type of behavior, setting a pattern for younger men to follow. Peter had learned this from Jesus' teaching: *You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many* (Mark 10:42-45). Peter had also learned this from Jesus' example: *If I then your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you* (John 13:14-15).

C. Look for eternal reward - 1 Peter 5:4

All church leaders (shepherds of the flock) are under the authority of the *Chief Shepherd*, also called the *Good Shepherd* in John 10:11 and 14 and the *Great Shepherd* in Hebrews 13:20. All undershepherds will receive their reward from Him when He comes again. The reward is the unfading crown of glory. The word used for "crown" here does not denote a royal crown, but a crown of victory such as bestowed upon winners in athletic contests or upon courageous conquering soldiers. (See 1 Corinthians 9:24-26; 2 Timothy 2:5; 4:8 and James 1:12.) This is not a crown of ambition or earthly eminence. It is the crown reserved for those whose hearts have longed for the Chief Shepherd and whose lives have been lived to follow in His steps (see 1 Peter 2:21).

II. Exhortation to All - 1 Peter 5:5-11A. Younger people submit to your elders -
1 Peter 5:5a

All younger members of the flock are to be respectful of those who are older and in positions of authority. The writer of Hebrews says, *Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you* (Hebrews 13:17).

B. Clothe yourself in humility - 5b-7

The Greek word translated "clothed" means "to be girded about." M.R. Vincent in Word Studies in the New Testament, says it means "to put on and wrap yourself with humility, so that the covering of humility cannot possibly be stripped from you. Believers are to be humble toward one another and toward God."

1. Toward one another - 5:5b

Peter has already stressed humility and submission to government, masters, and marital partners. Now he adds that all are to be submissive to one another. The reason he gives is a quotation from Proverbs 3:34. The same Proverb is quoted by the apostle James in James 4:6. *God resists the proud* means he opposes the proud or sets Himself against the proud as an army would come out and set itself against an enemy who has declared war. *But God gives grace to the humble.* No one can be truly humble except by the grace of God, and it is through humbling ourselves that God bestows His grace upon us. Therefore, grace is both the reason for and the result of humility.

2. Under the mighty hand of God - 5:6-7

In the light of God's opposition to pride and His grace toward humility, it is best to take a lowly place of submission before Him. All that comes our way in life is sifted through the hand of God. Who are we to complain and rebel like spoiled children when troubles and difficulties come our way? It is better to follow Jesus' example of humility. *He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him* (Philippians 2:8-9).

The humble person will be able to rest in the Lord and cast all cares upon Him. The tense of the verb "cast" denotes an act done once and for all. It is a throwing of one's whole life with all its cares upon God. When you once cast all your cares upon Him, you won't need to do it again. You will be patient and humble and rest quietly in the providence of God. John Calvin said, "Casting care gives rest to faith. Has your faith come to rest under the mighty hand of the One who cares for you?"

C. Resist the devil - 1 Peter 5:8-11

Peter portrays the devil as our adversary, a roaring lion, and one who walks about... seeking whom he may devour. The word "adversary" denotes an opponent in a lawsuit, the accuser, and has the connotation of a persecutor. As a lion, the devil is a greedy pursuer of souls. Some commentators believe that the lion is a veiled reference to Nero's terrible persecutions which took place in the coliseum in Rome. Christians were dressed in animal skins and lions were let loose to brutalize and destroy them. The devil's aim is to do the same thing to Christians in a spiritual sense. However, the term "lion" may simply refer to the devil as an enemy. The lion is used to denote the enemy in Psalms 7:2 and 10:9-10. Finally, as one who walks about seeking whom he may devour, the devil's whole purpose is to ravage and destroy the souls of men.

Peter explains how to resist the devil. It is important to note that the word "resist" means "to withstand" and is not a term that denotes offensive action but rather a defensive stance. Also note what the apostle Paul writes about resisting (withstanding) the devil in Ephesians 6:10-18, as does the apostle James in James 4:7.

1. Be sober and vigilant - 5:8

Peter has given the exhortation to soberness twice already, in 1 Peter 1:13 and 4:7. To be "sober" means "to be prudent and self-restrained." To be "vigilant" means "to be watchful and to be on guard" against the wiles of the devil. Christians need to be aware and wary.

2. Be steadfast in the faith - 5:9

To be "steadfast in the faith" means "to hold your place firmly without wavering." The reminder that all Christians fight the same battles and are fellow soldiers in the war against the devil is meant as an encouragement and a reinforcement in resisting.

3. God is perfecting you - 5:10-11

These two verses constitute a prayer or a benediction as Peter's epistle draws to a close. The thought which is conveyed offers sufficient reason to resist the devil. God, who is the source of all grace and is the One who has called us to His eternal glory, is perfecting every true believer. He has a personal interest in each one of us. He has a personal interest in you, and He will perfect you so that no defect remains in you. He will establish you so that there will be nothing that can shake you. He will strengthen you so you can overcome every harmful force, and He will settle you so you are grounded securely upon your Rock.

a. He is the God of all grace - 5:10

All blessings come from Him, in and through Jesus Christ. Read Ephesians 1:1-14 to discover all the blessings which are yours in Christ.

b. He has called us to His eternal glory - 5:10

Present suffering is fleeting. Our share in the glory of God is eternal. We are *heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.....The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us* (Romans 8:17-18). *Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory* (2 Corinthians 4:16-17).

c. His is the glory and the dominion forever and ever - 5:11

This is the last of eight uses of "glory" in the epistle (1:7,11,21,24; 4:14; 5:1,10). The best explanation of the meaning of this phrase is found in 1 Timothy 6:15-16, *He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.* This is the One who called you when you were dead in your trespasses and sins (see Ephesians 2:4-5 and 1 Peter 5:10), the One who cares for you in your suffering (see 1 Peter 5:7), and the one who will *perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you* (1 Peter 5:10) to His eternal glory!

III. Ending Thoughts - 1 Peter 5:12-14

A. Stand firm - 1 Peter 5:12

Here is a summary of the purpose of the letter. Peter has written to exhort and to testify of the true grace of God so that all who read may stand firm in that grace. Each one needs to be firmly convinced in his own mind that the grace of God is true. John Calvin wrote, "A firm conviction that we are on the right path to glory is the best motive to stand firm and not drift away." When you stand firm, God's grace will shine through you to the world. Has Peter's letter helped you to rest your faith in the true grace of God? Are you standing firm so the world can see the true grace of God in you?

B. Greetings - 1 Peter 5:13

1. From she who is in Babylon - 5:13

"She" probably refers to the church in Babylon, which is either a veiled reference to Rome or to the literal city of Babylon. Some think that "she" refers to Peter's wife who often traveled with him. Tradition has it that she was a great lady and was martyred before her husband.

2. From Mark - 5:13

This is John Mark who wrote the gospel of Mark and is associated with Paul and Barnabas in the book of Acts. He worked closely with Peter also and probably received most of his information for the gospel of Mark from him. According to Colossians 4:10, Mark was in Rome around the time of the writing of Peter's letter. This would support the view that Babylon is a reference to Rome.

C. Be one in Christ - 5:14

Peter's closing words are a reminder to show love to one another. The kiss was a common sign of fellowship in the

eastern culture and became an outward sign of Christian love and unity. See Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12 and 1 Thessalonians 5:26.

Peace is Peter's closing prayer for all who are in Christ Jesus.

Applications

1. Having studied 1 Peter, are you confident and secure in the true grace of God? How has your new knowledge affected your mind and your actions?

2. Has consistent daily study developed into a habit of longing for the pure milk of the word?
3. In what ways have you become more humble and submissive in your personal relationships?
4. How have you become more humble toward God? Have you been able to turn any complaints into rejoicing?
5. How will you show God's love to other Christians?
6. How will you be a peacemaker in your church?
7. If you are a leader in your church, how will you be an example of holy living to others?