

## **Further Reading and discussion material for 1 Peter 5:1-11**

### **Being a disciple under the 'Chief Shepherd'**

#### **Introduction:**

This week the sermon and discussion material brings to a close our teaching series on the letter of 1 Peter. There are two key things to note as we explore what Peter is writing to the churches in Asia minor and indeed therefore what the Spirit of Jesus is saying to the church today.

- Peter reinforces the centrality of the theme of 'Suffering for the cause of the gospel of Jesus' and
- Peter profiles a core encouragement for the believers – that of looking after one another as they live as disciples of Jesus in a hostile environment.

#### **Digging into the text:**

Verse 1.

- 'Therefore' – this link with previous comments by Peter is somewhat 'buried' in the English text, however it is a key aspect in understanding the general thrust of Peter's letter and in appreciating his closing remarks; his pending exhortation is intimately linked to what he has said about the context of 'suffering and persecution' for the cause of the Gospel of Jesus.
- The reference then is to 4:13 and 4:19 – Re-read these verses and note what is being said and consider/discuss what Peter is emphasizing.
- 'Elders' – this phrase refers to the older, recognized and respected leaders within the community. It is a term of the context, recognized within the Jewish community regardless of cultural context and was arguably, generally recognized as a term befitting appropriate respect for the leadership provided by those who were older and more mature.
- Peter recognizes himself as being alongside 'fellow elders' who are 'among' the household of faith. What might it mean for Peter to describe the 'fellow elders' as ones who are 'among you' – remembering that he writes to the collective church?

Verse 2.

- 'Shepherd the flock of God who are among you' – In appreciating the significance of this term 'shepherd the flock', there are two significant things we ought to recognise.
  - Peter's own history with Jesus, his being established in a 'shepherding' relationship with the 'good shepherd' through the three years spent personally with Jesus, and which climaxes for Peter (and for the apostolic leadership) in him being commissioned by Jesus to 'feed my sheep' as recorded for us at the end of John's gospel account.
  - Peter's reference to the Suffering servant motif/image in Isaiah, and in particular his use of the imagery in 1 Peter 2:21-25.
- Take some time to consider the implications of these references, found in John 10, 21, and in 1 Peter 2 (with further reference to Isaiah 53). Reflect on the significance of Peter's use of the passage "For you were like sheep going astray but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls"

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#### Verse 3

- There is a key exhortation in this verse about the importance of the 'example' that the elders are to the people of God within the community. They are to model what it is to be a servant and this is in line with the model set by Jesus which involved Peter in a significant way – see John 13:1-17 in particular.
  - What does Jesus model?
  - How does Peter respond?
  - What does Jesus say to Peter?
- In particular the elders are exhorted to
  - Be willing to do what is expected of the Lord (vs 2)
  - Not seek dishonest gain (vs 2) NOTE: that there is nothing being said here about receiving payment for their service but rather what they are to receive ought to be commensurate with what is necessary for them to be looked after.
  - 'oversee' the flock of God within their midst, in such a way as to flow out of the teaching of Jesus found in Matt 20:25-27. We ought to note and reflect upon the implications of the following:
    - Be different to those who exercise oversight in a domineering, dictatorial way.
    - Be willing to be their servant as you lead
    - Be willing to sacrifice much for the benefit of those you serve as,
    - You model Christ to people
  - Be a model – that is demonstrate Jesus and his way to those that the elders lead and oversight.
- All this is to be done under the Lordship of the Chief Shepherd.

#### Verse 5a.

- The younger ones – this is reference to all those who are NOT the elders mentioned above.
- These 'ones' are to submit themselves to the oversight and shepherding of the ones who are set over them under the Chief Shepherd.
- The dynamic of this 'submission' is framed by the exhortation to the Shepherds in the previous two verses.
- What does it mean for verse 3-5 in context as applied to the church with reference to the exhortation to be models for the flock? What is being modeled and for what reason?

#### Verse 5b.

- 'All of you...' – everyone in the church is to behave in the following way – there is a clear link between the elders modeling what it is to be like Christ and this verse.
- 'Clothe yourselves' – an active process by the flock of God to wear 'humility' – to be 'Christ-like'

#### Verse 6-9

What does this look like:

- Humble yourselves. (vs 6)
  - Given this exhortation, what is the significance of Peter urging people to cast their 'anxiety on God, for he cares for you'?

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- Be clear minded. (vs 8)
- Resist the devil and Take your stand. (vs 9)

**Application:**

- Spend some time thinking about how this appropriately applies to you and your faith community, life group gospel community or ministry team.
- Pray for one another