

I PETER 5:1-14
MINISTER IN SUFFERING!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to I Peter chapter 5 as we continue our in-depth study of this letter, and we will finish up our study of this letter this morning.

As we have seen in our study Peter is writing to persecuted Christian's living in Asia Minor or modern-day Turkey.

And the reason that he wrote this letter to them was that Peter was trying to encourage them to continue on, to have a steadfast faith in the midst of this persecution and to live exemplary lives in spite of the persecution they were facing.

It is as Paul wrote in I Corinthians 15:58, "**Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**"

As important as this letter was to believers back then, it is just as important to us today.

As Christians, in the midst of dark times, troublesome times, difficult times, we should shine even brighter! And yes, it may not look like anything is happening, but God is working and all that we do for Him is not in vain, it is not empty, it will accomplish what He desires!

That is what Peter reminded them in I Peter 1:6-9, "**In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith - the salvation of your souls.**"

I feel that this is such an important topic for us to cover, this suffering in the days we are living in and how we are to respond. And specifically, in this portion of Scripture we will be looking at this morning, Peter is going to show us how the shepherd and the sheep are to minister during these difficult times. And I think I am safe to say we are living in difficult times, and I think they are going to even get worse!

I have called our study this morning – ***MINISTER IN SUFFERING!***

In saying that, I have broken down the verses we will be looking at this morning into the following main points.

They are,

SHEPERD THE FLOCK – I PETER 5:1-4

HUMBLE YOURSELF – I PETER 5:5-7

STEADFAST IN THE FAITH – I PETER 5:8-9

CLOSING BENEDICTION – I PETER 5:10-14

So with that as our introduction, let's begin reading in I Peter chapter 5, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us this morning as we study through His Word and look at this topic - ***MINISTER IN SUFFERING!***

I PETER 5

VERSES 1-4

As Peter opens up this section, I want you to notice something that is important because some have elevated Peter to a position which he does not speak of.

Some have claimed that Peter is the first Pope, the "***Pontif Maximus***" or "***High Priest.***"

That is not what Peter is saying here. Notice, **“The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder.”**

Did you see that?

Peter is not the Pope but a **“fellow elder.”**

What is an elder?

An elder or ***PRESBUTEROS*** in the Greek, spoke of someone who was mature in the Lord and had the wisdom needed for a leadership position.

The position of an elder in the church focused on the spiritual matters or issues of the church.

You can read of the qualifications of Bishop and elder in I Timothy 3:1-7. And we will deal with this more in a few minutes because they are not the same, at least for one of them.

There are also deacons, and they deal with the physical matters or issues of the church. You can read of the qualifications of deacons in I Timothy 3:8-13.

Here at Calvary Chapel, we believe there is a Scriptural order for church government, and it is as follows:

- **PASTOR:** The Greek word for pastor is ***POIMEN***, or for Bishop is ***EPISKOPOS*** and this is the shepherd or leader of the church. He is the one who guides the church. All Bishops are elders.
- **ELDER:** Again, it is the Greek word ***PRESBUTEROS*** and they dealt with the spiritual matters of the church, as I have said.

Now here is the thing. Every bishop or senior pastor is an elder but not all elders are bishops.

In the local churches there is one senior pastor or shepherd. The church is not lead by elder rule, each having a vote in the decisions of the church, but by the shepherd.

And there are not multiple shepherds in the church. Think about that one for a minute. You don't have several shepherds watching over sheep, you only have one in the physical realm.

There is one shepherd, and the sheep know his voice and they follow him.

And that plays out in the spiritual realm as well. It just makes sense.

The elders, the deacons are there to support the work that is being done; to take some of the responsibilities so the pastor can focus on the study of God's Word and prayer.

In the Old Testament we see the pattern.

Moses was accountable before God for the whole nation and thus, he was the shepherd or senior pastor you might say. There was only one Moses, and when others tried to usurp that role from Moses, it didn't go over very well. God dealt with them!

Then came the priests who dealt with the spiritual matters of the nation or the elders you might say.

Then there were the judges who dealt with the civil matters or the deacons, you might say.

And then came the children of Israel and we might say that they were the sheep.

Now hear me out on this, it is important. It wasn't that one group was more important or better than the other, it was just the pattern that God laid out for the church.

Listen to what Warren Wiersbe had to say regarding these elders. He wrote,

Times of persecution demand that God's people have adequate spiritual leadership. If judgment is to begin at God's house (1 Peter 4:17), then that house had better be in order, or it will fall apart!

This explains why Peter wrote this special message to the leaders of the church, to encourage them to do their work faithfully. Leaders who run away in times of difficulty are only proving that they are hirelings and not true shepherds (John 10:12-14).

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT, p. 923

And Peter is truly qualified to speak of these things because he not only witnessed the sufferings of Christ but also was a witness of His glory.

In I Peter 4:12-13 Peter wrote of this to encourage those persecuted believers. He said, **“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.”**

You see, before glory there is suffering and because Peter witnessed these truths, he can speak with authority!

How important that is for us to remember. Once we exalt ourselves, we will be brought down. We stand by the grace of God just like everyone else and we need to take heed, less we fall!

Now you may be wondering who Peter is speaking of here, since he does not mention pastors or shepherds. And thus, is he speaking of just elders or is he speaking of pastor’s and how do we know?

I think verse 2 gives us the answer for Peter speaks of them shepherding over the flock that God has given to them, which tells me they were senior pastors in the churches in Asia Minor who were also elders, just as I am.

Also, keep in mind that the word “**witness**” in the Greek is *MARTUS* (mar’-toos) and it is a word from which we get our English word Martyr from.

What is my point?

My point is this. A witness is someone who sees an event take place and then testifies to others of what they saw, often in a courtroom setting.

In New Testament times, when a Christian gave testimony to having seen the risen Christ as well as those who believe or put their faith in Jesus Christ, they were often put to death.

Because of that this word eventually came to mean a Christian who was put to death for their faith, a martyr!

Again, this is who Peter is writing to, believers who were being persecuted for their faith and here, he is encouraging these pastors to stand strong in spite of the persecution they are facing!

Now, here in I Peter 5:2 we see this word “**shepherd**” and it comes from a Greek word that we get the word pastor from, and that is who Peter is speaking to, the pastors of these churches!

Remember when Paul spoke to the Ephesians elders or pastors in Acts 20:28 and he told them, “**Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.**”

Being a pastor is not a job, it is your life, it is a calling! And if you are not called by God to do it, then don’t!

Why?

Because the people God has entrusted to you cost Him His life, thus, watch over them, feed them, care for them, lead them, guide them, protect them.

There are those who have become pastors because they are great Bible teachers, but that doesn't make them a pastor.

A pastor is totally immersed with his sheep and as one person said, it is ***“Bent knees, wet eyes and a broken heart.”***

And the flock that Peter is speaking of are the sheep that God has entrusted to these men, these pastors. They were to watch over them.

Why was that important?

As Phillip Keller wrote, ***“It is no accident that God has chosen to call us sheep. The behavior of sheep and human beings is similar in many ways . . . Sheep do not ‘just take care of themselves’ as some might suppose. They require, more than any other class of livestock, endless attention and meticulous care.”***

- Phillip Keller, A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23, pp. 20-21

Now think about this for a minute. Most animals have an amazing instinct to find their way home, that is how God created them.

But sheep are different. If they stray into unfamiliar territory, they become disoriented and they cannot find their way home.

Not only do they get lost but if they are lost, because of all the confusion, they are helpless to find food and water!

And if they do find some food to eat, they don't know what is good for them and what is poisonous!

In other words, sheep need someone to guide them, protect them, watch over them, care for them! Thus, sheep need a – ***SHEPHERD!***

And there is so much more that sheep need because they are truly helpless.

Remember what the Lord said in Isaiah 53:6, “**All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way . . .**”

And in I Peter 2:25 Peter wrote, “**For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.**”

We need a shepherd to watch over us, care for us, guide us, feed us and the list goes on. And it is the Lord who is our shepherd as we are told in Psalm 23, “**The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.**”

Yes, Jesus is the Chief Shepherd of our souls, but God has placed pastors to shepherd His people as well.

Because of that, the pattern for pastors to follow is having the heart of Jesus.

What is that like?

Jesus tells us in John 10:11-14, **“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.”**

That is to be the heart of a pastor. And if a person is not willing to do that, then get out because you will only hurt the sheep.

We have talked about what a pastor is supposed to do, and now Peter focuses on what a pastor is not supposed to do, what he is not to be manifesting in his life. What he is doing is contrasting what a true shepherd or pastor is like compared to a false one, a heirling!

Let me also add this to make this more applicable to all of you.

You are leaders in your home, at work, maybe at school, as a coach or whatever. Thus, apply these principles to your life as you are watching over the welfare of others!

Look at the comparison that Peter gives to us.

First of all, he is not to serve the people ***BY COMPULSION / BUT WILLINGLY!***

There are all kinds of reasons why people get into the ministry, maybe pressure from their parents or friends, or whatever. It is a calling and once you are in the ministry you should not serve as if you are being forced to do it. A pastor or leader should serve willingly, and it truly is an honor to serve!

Also, he is not to serve ***FOR DISHONEST GAIN / BUT EAGERLY!***

If you are doing something because of the pay you will receive, to make the big bucks, if you are marketing the church, that is dishonest gain or filthy lucre. Your motives are wrong. In fact, if that is the reason you serve, you are nothing more than a hireling and when things get tough, when they are difficult, you will be gone!

You serve because you love the people and you love the Lord and whatever the pay is, praise the Lord.

That is not to say that a pastor is not to be paid, for Paul tells us in I Timothy 5:17-18, **“Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,’ and, ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages.’”**

Sadly, many times pastors move from church to church to better themselves, to make more money, to be over a bigger flock and that is not the heart of a shepherd!

Also, he is ***NOT TO BE LORDING OVER THEM / BUT HE IS TO BE AN EXAMPLE TO THEM!***

Folks, the sheep don’t belong to the pastor, they are entrusted to them by the Lord and thus, we don’t drive the sheep, we lead them and that is done by example.

I pray that as you look at my life you see a positive example, that I get down in the trenches with you doing the work. I pray that you have a hunger to know God through His word and a passion to serve Him.

One pastor had this to say in regard to this, *“The obvious point is that the shepherd must be diligent rather than lazy, heart motivated rather than forced to be faithful, and passionate about his privileged duty rather than indifferent. When the heart is fully Christ’s and driven by love for Him and for souls, there is much internal compulsion that precludes any need for external motivational pressure.”*

Like back then, we are living in the days of false shepherds, hirelings that are not interested in the sheep that have been entrusted to them, but to make a name for themselves, to make money or whatever.

And folks, this is not new for the Lord tells us regarding false shepherds in Ezekiel 34:1-10, **“And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, “Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: ‘Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them. Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: “As I live,” says the Lord GOD, “surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food for every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for My flock, but the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock” -**

therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD! Thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require My flock at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep, and the shepherds shall feed themselves no more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them.””

Now, in comparison, Ezekiel goes on to speak of the True Shepherd and what His passion is.

And yes, this is speaking of Jesus but again, as pastors; we are to have the heart of Jesus as we serve. That should be the heart of every pastor who loves the Lord and loves the people the Lord has entrusted to them.

In Ezekiel 34:11-16 we are told, **“For thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down,’ says the Lord GOD. ‘I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment.’”**

We are to care for the sheep, love them, teach them, warn them, protect them and the list goes on. That is what a shepherd does, and it is what a pastor or under shepherd should be doing!

And Peter sums this up for us in I Peter 5:4 as he says, “**and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.**”

Here is the reality that we need to keep in mind! One day we will have to answer to the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

You see, what did we do with the flock that He entrusted to us, how did we lead them?

Or what did we do with the family that God has entrusted to us?

Or what did we do with the workers He has entrusted to us?

How did we lead them?

That is very humbling when you put it in that perspective!

You see, in a sense we don't work for the sheep, we work for the Chief Shepherd, and we care for His sheep!

In the games they played, the Olympic games that took place in Greece and the Isthmus games that took place in Corinth, the winners would receive a laurel wreath to put on their head, which may have looked great for a time, but they quickly faded away.

But for us, there is a crown of glory awaiting us for our faithful service to God, not only to pastors, but to all who faithfully serve Him.

Paul, in I Corinthians 9:25 tells us, “**And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.**”

You see, these crowns will never fade away!

Paul goes on to say in II Timothy 4:6-8, **“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”**

And James tells us, **“Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”** James 1:12.

Now, when we get to heaven, we are not going to boast about all the crowns we have or who has more crowns.

“Then what are we going to do with them?”

John tells us in Revelation 4:9-11, **“Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: ‘You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.’”**

You see, we cast them at the feet of Jesus for He not only enabled us to do these things, but He also equipped us to do these things and thus, all glory and honor and praise go to Him!

As we have seen, Peter is telling them to – ***SHEPHERD THE FLOCK!***

As we move on Peter is going to tell them to – ***HUMBLE THEMSELVES!***

VERSES 5-7

Peter just spoke of the shepherds or pastors and now Peter is speaking to the sheep, and he starts out by speaking to the younger people as opposed to the elders and then quickly moves to all of God's people being submissive and clothed with humility.

The Greek word for to "**be clothed with**" is *EGKOMBOOMAI*, (eng-kom-bo'-om-ahē) and it speaks of putting something on like an apron worn by slaves and I think Peter is flashing back to the night of the last supper as Jesus girded Himself with an apron and washed the feet of the disciples. (John 13)

Thus, as we are clothed in humility, we submit to God's will and put ours aside and we submit to all in the fear of God.

That is what Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:21, "**submitting to one another in the fear of God.**"

It is after that we see Paul speak of how wives are to submit to their own husbands, how husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church and died for it, how children are to obey their parents, and how slaves are to work hard and how slave owners are to treat their slaves or workers are to work hard and bosses are to treat them well.

You see, you can't do that part unless you submit to the Lord first, obeying His will for our lives and then we can live accordingly!

In saying that, some Christian's wonder why they aren't growing, maturing in the Lord and the answer may be very simple.

Do you have an attitude of submission; do you clothe yourself in humility?

If you don't, you need to, especially those who are overseeing your spiritual well-being.

Paul, in Hebrews 13:17 put it this way, **“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.”**

Folks, I have said this before, but I think it bears repeating. If you refuse to submit to God’s Word, if you won’t submit to Him, then you will never freely submit to those who are in authority over you, you won’t submit to anyone!

In our society we have an attitude that it is our right to have this, we deserve that, but that is just pride, and it doesn’t work in God’s economy!

If you are prideful, God will resist you or oppose you.

But, when you realize you only deserve death and all that you have is a result of God’s grace, His unmerited favor towards you, God can work and will work in you lifting you up and not the other way around!

Make no mistake about it, pride is something that God hates, and it is what brought Lucifer down.

Meyer tells us this in regard to pride. He wrote,

Pride is one of the most detestable of sins; yet does it find lodgment in earnest souls, though we often speak of it by some lighter name. We call it – independence, self-reliance. We do not always discern it in the hurt feeling, which retires into itself, and nurses its sorrows in a sulk . . . We are proud of our humility, vain of our meekness; and, putting on the saintliest look, we wonder whether all around are not admiring us for our lowliness.

- F. B. Meyer

That is not humility, that is pride, and God will bring it down so He can lift you up. But far too often we fight and fight for our right and refuse to submit to the will of God and we bear the consequences of our actions!

If you want to walk in God's grace, then lay aside your pride and be humble before God and others!

Grace and pride are eternal enemies.

Pride demands that God bless me in light of what I think I deserve.

Grace deals with me on the basis of what God has done, on His graciousness, not on the basis of anything in me.

Spurgeon put it like this, ***"If you are willing to be nothing God will make something of you. The way to the top of the ladder is to begin at the lowest round. In fact, in the church of God, the way up is to go down; but he that is ambitious to be at the top will find himself before long at the bottom."***

Remember what James wrote, it is what Peter is saying here as well, **"But He gives more grace. Therefore He says, "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble . . . Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."** James 4:6, 10.

Keep in mind that we have just been speaking of humility and pride and now Peter tells us something that just doesn't seem to fit. He says here in I Peter 5:7, **"casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."**

What does this have to do with what he has been talking about, casting all our cares upon the Lord?

What does that have to do with humility?

It has everything to do with humility!

You see, pride says that we can take care of it on our own and humility says that I can't do it on my own.

And there is the battle.

Remember what Paul said in Philippians 4:13, "**I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**"

I can't do this apart from Christ, that is true humility, recognizing that fact and then giving these things to the Lord so you can move forward!

The song may go, "*Don't worry, be happy*" but that is not what the Lord is saying.

He is telling us "*Don't worry, give it to the Lord!*"

I think that works much better!

And not only will God take care of us, but He cares for us. I am sure there are times that you may feel that God doesn't care for you because of what you may be going through, but guess what, He does!

God cares for you, and He does love you, and He is faithful, you don't have to worry, just give it to Him!

And we see this over and over again in the Scriptures, not to fear, don't worry, don't be anxious and-so-on.

And I think Paul nails it for us as he tells us in Philippians 4:6-7, "**Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**"

Do you see that?

Give it to God, give it to Him with thanksgiving, let Him know what is on your heart and weighing you down and He will give you His peace, He will guard your heart or emotions, and He will guard your mind or your thoughts.

May we learn that lesson and give it to Him, for the weight will break us if we try to carry it on our own, but it is nothing for Him to carry all our concerns, all the problems we face!

Spurgeon used the illustration of a man who came to move some furniture, but he carried a huge and heavy backpack of his own.

Then he complains that he finds it difficult to do the job of moving your furniture.

What would you tell this man?

You would tell him that he would find it easier if he laid his own burden aside so that he could carry yours?

In the same way, we cannot do God's work when we are weighed down by our own burdens and worries. Cast them upon Him, and then take up the Lord's burden – which is a light burden, and a yoke that fits us perfectly.

Lord, help us to surrender our lives completely to you!

If you are still struggling with giving your cares, your concerns to the Lord, let me help you out here. If you do this, it will help. You need to remember to *“Always turn your cares over to God before you go to bed, He's going to be up all night anyway.”*

Where do I get that from?

Psalm 121:3 tells us, **“He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.”**

In other words – ***HUMBLE YOURSELF!***

As we read on, we will see Peter tell these persecuted Christians to be – ***STEADFAST IN THE FAITH!***

VERSES 8-9

This is where we fail many times. We don't recognize Satan as a roaring lion and his desire is to destroy our faith, to destroy our lives, to destroy our witness.

And they must have had the same problem as we do because Peter tells them to "**Be sober.**"

And the idea here is not to be taken in by intoxicating influences that the world is giving to you. Balance your life with the things of God.

Not only that, but they were to be "**be vigilant.**"

And the idea here is that we need to be watchful, we need to stay awake, we need to pay attention.

But why do we need to do these things?

Because the Devil is stalking us as a lion would stalk his prey. He is going to and fro seeking whom he may devour!

One writer put it like this. He wrote,

It reminds of the female lion tamer. She was a beautiful woman who had a wonderful way with lions. With a flick of the whip she could make them lay their head in her lap - gently nuzzle and cuddle up with her.

When her show was over a heckler shouted, "***Ah, that's nothing! I can do that!***"

The ringmaster charged him, "***Ok, if you can do that just step into the ring.***"

The man replied, "***Sure, just get the lion out of there first!***"

Here's the problem with many Christians - we cuddle up with the lion! We accommodate the devil and his influence. We need to resist the devil in Jesus' name.

Exactly! This is not a game, this is war! And we need to understand that. The Devil comes to destroy lives, and he is a deceiver. He does not love you or care for you, but he will give you what you want until he does not need you any longer. Don't draw close to him, draw close to God because He does love you!

In Ephesians chapter 6 Paul speaks of the armor of God and in that portion of Scripture Paul tells us to be strong, to put on the whole armor of God, stand against the wiles of the devil, take up the whole armor of God, withstand, having done all to stand.

A soldier is to be prepared for battle at all times and we are to be prepared for battle as well.

Let me also say this. There are some who believe that we are living in the Kingdom Age right now and Satan is bound.

Sorry, but that is just plain foolishness, and it goes contrary to what the Scriptures teach.

First of all, if Satan is bound, then why is Peter telling us that the Devil is walking about seeking whom he can devour?

Secondly, look at the evil that is permeating this land.

Folks, in the Kingdom Age Jesus is on the throne and righteousness will fill this land for 1,000 years and then God will create a new Heavens and new Earth where we will dwell.

This has not happened yet!

Notice also that Peter does not tell these believers to cast out the Devil, why?

First of all, because Christians can't be demon possessed and thus, he tells them to resist the Devil by being steadfast or solid in the faith.

Lions don't go after the healthy, strong, wise animals, but those that are not as healthy, those that are not as strong, those that are not as wise as the other animals because it is easier for them to catch their meal.

The same is true with us as Christians and thus, the secret to spiritual warfare is standing strong in the faith and the Devil will flee!

Some try to do battle by speaking to Satan. Again, that is foolishness and not Scriptural.

What are we to do?

We resist him in the faith, not in our words to him!

Also, we need to understand that Satan is the father of lies, it is his natural language, he is a deceiver, and thus, like I said, the only way to withstand him is in the faith, by the power of God's Word, the truth!

Paul, in II Corinthians 10:3-5 tells us, "**For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.**"

You see, it is not a physical battle but a spiritual battle we face, and Satan brings forth his anti-biblical ideas that are mixed with some truth, but they still are deadly, they are there to destroy us!

Thus, put on the mind of Christ; know the Word of God and you won't fall prey to the garbage that he is putting forth!

Warren Wiersbe gives us this perspective. He wrote,

Since I have no mechanical ability, I admire people who can build and repair things.

During a church building program, I was watching an electrician install a complex control panel.

I said to the man, ***“It just amazes me how you fellows can calmly work on those lines with all of that power there. How do you do it?”***

The electrician smiled and said, ***“Well, the first thing you have to do is respect it. Then you can handle it.”***

Satan is a dangerous enemy. He is a serpent who can bite us when we least expect it. He is a destroyer (Rev 12:11; Abaddon and Apollyon both mean “destruction”) and an accuser (Zech 3:1-5; Rev 12:9-11).

He has great power and intelligence, and a host of demons who assist him in his attacks against God’s people (Eph 6:10 ff). He is a formidable enemy; we must never joke about him, ignore him, or underestimate his ability. We must ***“be sober”*** and have our minds under control when it comes to our conflict with Satan.

A part of this soberness includes not blaming everything on the devil. Some people see a demon behind every bush and blame Satan for their headaches, flat tires, and high rent. While it is true that Satan can inflict physical sickness and pain (Luke 13:16; and the Book of Job), we have no biblical authority for casting out ***“demons of headache”*** or ***“demons of backache.”***

One lady phoned me long distance to inform me that Satan had caused her to shrink seven and a half inches. While I have great respect for the wiles and powers of the devil, I still feel we must get our information about him from the Bible and not from our own interpretation of experiences.

Absolutely. Now, one last point before we move on and that is this.

Peter wants them to know that the persecution they are now facing and will face are being endured by others in Christ throughout the world.

In other words, don't be surprised by it, but be prepared!

We have tornado watches and warnings to prepare us, and I guess this is a persecution warning to prepare us for what might be coming down the road in this country and is happening to our brothers and sisters in the Lord throughout the world today.

Remember what Paul said in II Timothy 3:12, **“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”**

But don't forget what the Psalmist said, **“Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all.”** Psalm 34:19.

God is in control, and He will not let anything happen to us that He is not aware of, and He knows all things and He will use these to build us up and draw others to Himself!

Thus, may we be – ***STEADFAST IN THE FAITH!***

As we finish up, we will see Peter's – ***CLOSING BENEDICTION!***

VERSES 10-14

In these closing words of Peter, we see the benediction or really the blessing!

And he is speaking of going home to glory!

Here's the thing. We want to be called to glory without the suffering, but that is not how it is done!

Yes, we are called to eternal glory, not because we deserve it but because of the grace of God that we have received by faith in Jesus Christ!

Yes, we are called to eternal glory but not before we have suffered.

But why?

Because God is working, He is perfecting our faith, He is establishing our faith, He is strengthening our faith, He is settling our faith, and then, when He is done, we will be taken home to glory!

Thus, the conclusion of this is, **“To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”** I Peter 5:11.

You see, our God who can do this for us is worthy of our praise because we truly don't deserve it!

Again, Peter is saying in this life we will suffer a while. How long is that?

It is up to God, and it truly ends when we go to be with Him.

Paul picked up on this in Romans 8:16-18 as he said, **“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs - heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”**

And again, in II Corinthians 4:16-18 we are told, **“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, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”**

You see, having the correct perspective is important, we will be taken to glory one day so don't be disheartened, discouraged, disillusioned by the sufferings, for they will come, at least for a while!

In other words, **"To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."**

From this point we see Peter speak of Silvanus or Silas who accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey according to Acts 15:40.

You remember the story that took place. As Paul was preparing for this journey, Barnabas wanted to take his cousin Mark with them. But Paul rejected that idea because Mark ran home on the last journey, not completing it and Paul was all business and didn't want to take that risk again.

Thus, there was a split between these men of God.

Barnabas and Mark went to Cyprus to minister, and Paul and Silas went through Syria, Cilicia, and on to Macedonia and Achaia before returning home to Caesarea.

And we see Peter tell us that he wrote a brief letter exhorting them of the true grace of God, what it is all about so that they can stand strong in the midst of this persecution.

Notice that Peter did not say, ". . . *exhorting and testifying that this is the true Law of God in which you stand.*"

Some would like to have you believe that we are saved by grace and the Law, the keeping of the Law, but that would eliminate grace. You see, grace is unmerited favor, we don't deserve it and if you add good works, the keeping of the Law to it, then it is not something we don't deserve any longer. Now we deserve salvation, God owes us heaven.

It is hard for me to even put it that way because it is so untrue! Paul put it like this in Romans 11:6, **“And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace otherwise work is no longer work.”**

Also, to put this into perspective for us, Paul wrote in Galatians 2:21, **“I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”**

I hope that makes sense. If we could be saved by keeping the Law, then why did God become flesh, dwell among us to die for our sins on the cross of Calvary? It would make no sense and that is Paul’s point – ***IT IS ALL GRACE!***

We are saved by grace; we stand by grace; and one day we will be taken to glory by the grace of God!

In other words, as Peter wrote, **“. . . exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.”**

In I Peter 5:13 Peter speaks of Babylon. The question is, ***“What or where is this Babylon that Peter is speaking of?”***

Some believe it is literal Babylon, but I don’t think that is correct.

There was also a place known as Babylon in Egypt, and it was a Roman military fortress near the present city of Cairo. But I also don’t think Peter is writing to this Babylon in Egypt.

But, as I said when we began this letter of Peter’s, I believe it was probably a title for Rome with all its idolatry and immorality.

And notice that the church in Rome is greeting the church in Asia Minor.

There is no competition, no jockeying for position, just brethren loving each other in the Lord, encouraging each other and desiring to see the kingdom of God grow not by the work of man’s hands, or his ingenuity, but by the power of God’s Spirit working through them.

Folks, that should be our hearts desire!

Also, Peter calls Mark his son and it could be that Peter built Mark up in the faith. In fact, it seems that Mark's gospel was written out of the information that Peter shared with Mark.

And in regard to the division between Paul and Mark, that was healed. How do I know that for sure?

Because we are told in II Timothy 4:11b, "**... Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.**"

The Bible never tells us who was right and who was wrong in this dispute because that is not the main issue. The main issue is forgiveness and restoration and that is what we see. That is a good example for us to learn from.

As Peter closes this letter, he does so with a command to greet and display God's love to one another, and by pronouncing a blessing of peace.

These two things – love for each other and peace – are especially necessary for those who suffer and are living in dangerous times.

Hiebert tells us of this practice, "*It should be noted that the apostles did not originate that form of greeting; the custom already prevailed. They sanctioned its use as a sincere expression of Christian love.*"

And let me also say this in regard to Peter ending this letter with love and peace. Folks, I don't care what you are going through, the love of God and the peace of God in the midst of suffering will help you extend the love of God and the peace of God to others in the midst of these tough times.

May we learn the lessons and have a steadfast endurance during these times and live exemplary lives in the mist of the persecution!

Remember when we started this letter and we said, *WHERE CHRIST IS, THERE IS HOPE!*

May we never forget that!

And so, as Peter said, **“To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever.**

Amen.”