

His Church, His People

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[0:00] We're getting close to finishing this little epistle from Peter, and then we'll obviously, we're just going to jump right into 2 Peter while we're here. But hopefully it's been a help to you, and Peter's writing to believers that just need practical help for everyday life, and that's where we are.

May not be facing the same trial, the same persecution, but we face difficulties in our life, and hopefully this truth that we found here has been a help. And so we get to chapter 5, though, Peter's going to kind of turn a lot more practical and not really necessarily focus on the suffering, but how we're going to function within the church, how we function within our own Christian life.

So we're going to read the first five verses tonight, and we'll cover that here in the message. The Bible says this, 1 Peter 5, verse 1, 1 Peter 5, verse 1, So we come to this passage tonight, and Peter has a direct, really, exhortation for leadership within the church, and really pastors in general. We see that here, but we're going to, you think, well, I'm not a preacher, so this doesn't apply to me. We're going to get there in verse number 5. This is going to apply to all of us, but there are some things that Peter says, Hey, this is what a pastor should be, and it's been an encouragement to me to study.

It's been a reminder. It's been heavy, just to be honest. This is a weird kind of message to preach, because it's kind of about the position that I hold here. But we're going to see exactly what the Lord has for us, because ultimately it's His church, and it's His people.

[2:03] And so that's what we're going to see here. So let's ask the Lord to help us this evening. Father, thank You for this time together. Thank You that we can open up Your Word. We're thankful that You have instruction for us in every area of life, not just within our families and relationships and different things, but how the church should operate.

And Lord, we desire here at Central to be a healthy, authentic New Testament church, and I pray that You would help us to take these things seriously as we read it here in the Word of God. And Lord, I pray that You would be with me, that You would just guide my thoughts and my words. Lord, You would help it to be relayed exactly how You would. Lord, I pray that You would just be with us now, and we ask all this in Christ's name. Amen. Thank you so much for standing. You may be seated.

Thank you. I'm sure you've noticed it's pretty easy to do somebody else's job from a distance. You maybe watch a football game.

This is just hypothetically speaking. And you're sitting there watching it last night, and you're thinking, what is this coach doing? You know, because from my recliner, it's a lot easier with no coaching experience to identify something that one man is being paid millions of dollars to identify that somehow he's missing it.

[3:13] I'm like, this quarterback stinks. Put him on the bench, hypothetically speaking. I mean, that's all this is. But it is. We're Monday morning quarterbacks. I mean, we're coming in on some of the Cowboy games going on right now, and, you know, maybe you're trying to watch it.

Pay attention to the sermon real quick. They'll lose afterwards just as well as they'll lose right now. But we have a lot of things to say. I mean, we do it at restaurants. You go to a restaurant, and you're like, well, if I was running this place, you know, my food would already be here.

They need somebody who knows what they're doing. And we have all these opinions. Obviously, we do it in driving. We think we know how everybody else should drive. It's just kind of how we live our life, you know.

When it comes to us, we don't want a lot of opinions directed towards us, but we're going to kind of give it the other way. And if we're being honest, we can even do that here at church. And maybe somebody here is thinking, man, pastor needs to preach shorter.

I'm trying. Listen, I'm trying the best that I can. Maybe some of you are thinking, pastor needs to preach longer. Said nobody ever. I guess some of you are about to get up and walk out. I mean, some people within a church family, a church body would think, hey, we need to do more activities. [4:17] And other people think, hey, we're doing too much. And there's just going to be opinions. And that's okay. Because when you're part of a family, when you're part of a church body, you're going to have those things and how things should be done.

I remember when I was a youth pastor and the pastor that I was working under, he would do something. I'd do it like a teenager does. Hey, when I'm a parent, when I'm a pastor, I'm definitely not going to do that. Nobody's ever had that thought when you're growing up. And then you get older and you realize exactly why your parents said that. And I've called the pastor I worked under, Brother Roy, Brother Johnson. I'm like, hey, I just want to apologize for what? Don't worry about it. I just need to get that off my chest because I understand why you made certain decisions.

When we come here to the fifth chapter of this little letter, Peter is reminding us that God has a plan for the leadership of the church. That we're not just up here just kind of willy-nilly trying to figure out how to do things.

No, that he has a guide in what it is supposed to look like for a healthy church. And that's what makes this sermon just a little interesting for me personally, is as the pastor of the church, I'm preaching a message on what the pastor of the church should do.

[5:26] And so I think you kind of see the rub there. But here in our text, Peter is basically saying, pastors, this is how you're supposed to do your job. So I've felt the weight of this and tried to figure a way to really relay it that it is beneficial to the entire church.

And what Peter is going to do is he's going to talk about how a spiritual leader should lead. Why they lead and how they should treat the people of God that he has entrusted to their care.

And ultimately, it doesn't matter if you're the pastor or you're sitting here in the pew, that we all answer to the chief shepherd. And that's really the idea and the thought that he's driving. And so what Peter is showing us is what life in a healthy church ought to look like.

Now I'm so thankful for Central Baptist Church and I feel like we're healthy, but we can never get comfortable as well. We need to be reminded of this. It's, you know, sometimes, don't you love yearly checkups? I think we were talking a little bit earlier before church.

I am getting to the age where they say, you have to come all the time now. And at your age now, you have to come to this checkup. I'm like, I'm only 40, but I guess this is when it starts. I mean, it's all downhill from here.

[6:33] But we want to be healthy. And that's why there's passages like this here in the New Testament especially, so we can understand exactly what it looks like. Because there are responsibilities for those who lead.

And there are responsibilities for those who God has placed in the church, that God has given ministries, that God allows to follow the direction that he is setting. But eventually, Peter is going to bring us all to the same place.

We saw it there in verse 5. And when we get into our next sermon, the next time we're together in the book of Peter, he's going to really remind us that we should all humbly be under the chief shepherd. That is who we are following.

That is who we are ultimately serving. And I think that's really the heart of this text, especially in these first five verses, because this church does not belong to me. This church does not belong to you.

This church belongs to Jesus Christ. We didn't die for this church. We didn't shed our blood for this church. Jesus Christ did that. And when we remember that, whether we have the opportunity to stand behind this pulpit and preach, or whether we come and we give and we serve and we do the things God has called us to, we follow where he is leading, it really changes the way that we do all those things.

[7:43] It changes the way that we treat one another within the church body. And really the big idea this evening is this, is that a healthy church, it follows Christ through humble leadership and humble submission on both sides.

And so the question we'll answer, as we just look at these five short verses, is what does a healthy church look like under the chief shepherd's leadership? And Peter begins with those who have

been entrusted with the responsibility of leading.

We see that a healthy church has leaders who shepherd God's people. That is what they are called to do. Notice how Peter begins in verse number one. He says, The elders which are among you, I exhort who am also an elder.

Now I love Peter's humbleness here. Because if we go back into the gospels, Peter was not maybe always the most humble. Peter was real quick to speak.

Peter was real proud of his leadership. I mean there was times where Jesus said, I'm going to go to the cross. And Peter said, No you're not. He's like, I'm going to protect you. And Peter basically said, Over my dead body.

[8:48] And Peter's heart was in the right place. But sometimes his confidence was in the wrong place. His confidence was in Peter. Peter. And I would imagine just kind of from the conversations we see within the disciples, that sometimes they probably get a little frustrated at Peter.

Peter would probably try to pull rank. Hey, remember I'm the leader of this. Remember I'm the one that walked on water. We don't know that for sure. But Peter has that tendency to kind of be that way. But Peter just says this.

I mean, he says, I'm an elder just like you. I have the same type of leadership. He didn't say, I'm an apostle. Which he was. He wasn't the one saying to these people reading this letter, Hey, I was there.

I was there in the garden. You know, I messed up a little bit. But I was there in the upper room when Jesus showed himself after the resurrection. And Jesus came and found me when I was fishing. And he made a meal for me.

And we're going to talk about that here in a second. He didn't do that. I mean, this is the man that walked with Jesus. He had a tremendous authority in the early church. But he just simply says, Hey, I'm an elder just like you.

[9:52] I'm one of you. And really, I think that's the growth that we see in Peter's life. The further we walk with Christ in our relationship, it doesn't make us feel better.

No, it really humbles us. And it reminds us daily as we grow, the more we see Christ, the better we see ourselves. And Peter is realizing that. And Peter has just been talking, coming at the end of chapter four, about fiery trials and the suffering that these believers would have been going through and had experienced over the past few years, especially that is really trying their faith.

And immediately after that, he tells them there at the end of chapter number four, that they need to commit themselves to their faithful creator. That God is in control.

That God is the one that is guiding them and he's leading them. But then he immediately turns here in verse number one of our chapter five, to the elders. Why the shift right there?

Why is it placed so precisely there? Because the idea is suffering sheep need faithful shepherds. That they're walking through this life and they need somebody to guide them.

[10:59] Because the reality is when the sheep, when we think of just shepherds and sheep in the field, listen, when life is good, it's good. But when a wolf comes, when a lion comes, we see David in his life.

David had to protect the sheep. And the reality is, is we are in a war. There is spiritual warfare still going on today. And many times, Satan tries to get within the church and Peter's reminding them, sometimes there's persecutions without, but sometimes it comes within the church.

And the church needs a shepherd that is willing to be a shepherd. We don't have time to go back into it, but you can go and read Ezekiel chapter 34. But really what God is doing is he is calling out Israel.

He's calling out the spiritual leaders because here's what they were supposed to be. They were supposed to be shepherds to the people, but they were hirelings. A hireling doesn't care anything about the sheep. When trouble came, when a wolf came, they said, I don't get paid enough for this. And they jetted. You read John chapter 10. I mean, that's what Jesus is doing. I mean, Jesus is going after the Pharisees. And he's saying, I am the good shepherd. I'm not going to run.

[12:06] I'm here to protect the sheep. And I'm not like these religious leaders. And he's bringing it to that point. And here's what he tells the elders to do. He reminds them in verse number two, feed the flock of God, which is among you.

See, that word, to feed the flock, it carries this idea to care for, to lead, to protect, to feed. I mean, we kind of get the picture, maybe when you read Psalm 23, how the shepherd is always guiding the

sheep.

He leads them beside still waters. He carries them to green pastures. When difficulty comes, he's there, even in the valley of the shadow of death. And, and Peter's saying, Hey, as an elder, as somebody that has leadership, it'd be the same idea as a pastor, a bishop.

These are all interchangeable words here in the New Testament, but here's the job description. You're a shepherd. That is what you are called to do in a position of leadership. And that's important to, as a pastor to remember, because sometimes the job can get to the situation where, okay, I'm managing an organization, planning events and solving problems, problems and just maybe just trying to keep everything moving the right direction.

And there, there's a time and place for that, that that's part of the job requirement, so to speak. And, and there are times when pastoral ministry involves all of those things. But Peter wants to remind those in a position of leadership that sometimes you just got to, you got to remember what you really are called to do.

[13:38] We have to simplify it. And he's, here's what he's saying. You are to shepherd God's people. That is the calling. That is what you have been placed here for. And notice those three little words there in verse number two that are so important.

Feed the flock of God. See, the sheep do not belong to the shepherd. That is not how it is. They belong to God.

I mean, I love this church with all my heart. I really do. I can stand up here behind this pulpit and unequivocally say that. And this is where I know this is where God has placed me to be. And I'm so thankful for the friendships.

And I'm so thankful for the relationships and all the things God has placed in my life. And, you know, sometimes I just drive up here for no reason because I just want to be at the church. My kids are like, what are we doing? I'm like, I don't know. We're just making sure everything looks good. I love this place. I want to be a part of this place. But this place is not my place. This is not my church. We mentioned it already. But God has entrusted me as your pastor to shepherd you, to help you, to guide you, to lead you.

[14:42] And listen, I want to make sure that we're very, very clear. God has not placed you here to accomplish my vision. God didn't call me here to, what do I want to do with the church?

That's not what I answer the call for. People within a local church body are not used to build my ministry. That's not what God has called me to do. He's not called me to build my own kingdom. That's not what a church is to be. I've said it before, and I'll just say it while we're in this passage. It's obviously a little bit different message. I do not view Central Baptist Church as a stepping stone church. I mean, that's just the, that is the reality.

Some people say, well, I'll take a little smaller church, and then I'll get my feet wet, and then I'll go to bigger and better things. If the Lord lets me, I'll just stay here the rest of my life. I mean, that's just kind of, that's, I'm just kind of putting my heart out there for you, but what we're reminded here when he says, feed the flock of God, is that we are all people.

Even the pastor, even the shepherd. Here's what I know. Jesus loves me, just like he loves you. Jesus died for me, just like he died for you, and we all belong to him.

[15:49] That is a reminder that we all need, no matter what position you might have, and Peter understood that personally. Because Peter had leadership. He had authority. He had people willing to follow, and Peter came to a moment in his life where they said, hey, don't you know that man?

He said, I don't know him. I know nothing about him, and he rejected Christ. But one of my favorite passages, one of my favorite chapters in all the Bible is John chapter 21.

And Peter says, I'm going fishing. And many of the disciples went with him. They said, yeah, me too. He wasn't going fishing for leisure. He was basically saying, well, I tried to be a disciple. I tried to be a leader, and I failed.

So I'm going to just go back to something that I'm really good at. But you read John 21. He's out there all night, catches absolutely nothing. That's about the skill of a fisherman that I am as well. I'm much better at ordering it at a restaurant, and then it comes out to me.

But he's out there, catches nothing. And then Jesus is on the shore. They don't know it's Jesus. You know the story. And he says, hey, y'all catch anything out there? And I'm sure Peter is just irritated.

[16:56] Like, who's this joker on the shore? We've been here all night. We've caught nothing. And he said, why don't you cast it on the right side? Maybe Peter's yelling back at him. John said, why don't you just do it? We'll just let this guy move on.

Throws it over the right side. Guess what? The nets fill up. Peter knows exactly who it is. He says, it's the Lord. Jumps in the water, swims to the shore. Jesus already had the food ready, by the way. He's there cooking some breakfast. And he asked Peter three times, Peter, do you love me? And Peter said, Lord, you know I love you. You remember what he told him?

Feed my sheep. Three different times. He said, feed my lambs, feed my sheep. Here's what he's saying. Do what I've called you to do. Peter, these aren't your people.

These aren't your disciples. I've just entrusted you to be a pillar. I've entrusted you to help them. To guide them. To teach them what I have taught you. And we see by the time we come to 1 Peter 5, Peter learned that.

[17:55] And all these years later, he didn't say, hey, Jesus told me to go build my kingdom. He said, no, here's what Jesus told me, and I'm going to tell you the same thing. Feed the flock of God. Just do what you've been called to do.

So Peter tells these elders here what they're supposed to do. Shepherd them. But then he shows them how they're supposed to do it. That's what we see here in verses 2 and 3. That really, in these verses right here, Peter gives three simple contrasts.

Because God isn't just concerned that his people are shepherded. What he's really concerned about is the heart behind the shepherding. Because we've said it multiple times in this lesson. We see it all throughout the scripture. We can do the right things with the wrong motives. We can do the right things outwardly, but inwardly, we can be doing it for our own personal gain and our own personal advantage.

And so here's what Peter tells us in verse number 2. He said, feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking oversight, and this is what I've called you to do. Here's how. Not by constraint, but willingly.

[19:01] This is really what Peter is saying right here. Don't shepherd God's people just because somebody has to do it. You've all worked with somebody that's only there because they have to be there.

Those are generally not the best employees. I mean, you're like, you're like, hey, you know, I'm just here so I don't get fine type of situation. That's Peter saying, that's not how a shepherd should be. That's not what God has called you to do.

That doesn't mean ministry is always easy. I mean, there's difficult days. It doesn't matter if you're up here, you're in the chair. It's difficult. Sometimes it's hard.

What God has called you to do, there are going to be burdens. There's going to be hard conversations. But Peter's reminding us underneath all of that, underneath the difficulties, underneath the situations that might be at hand, that there ought to be a heart that can still say, I want to serve God's people.

And that's really every Christian's job. That's what we looked at in chapter four. That every member is to be a minister. That the heart behind it is, yes, sometimes you're going to be frustrated.

Sometimes you're going to think, what's the point of this anymore?

[20:08] Here's the point. We're serving the chief shepherd. That he is the one guiding. He is the one that is leading. And Peter's reminding these elders and really reminding all of us that yes, you can be tired, but you should still be willing.

That you can be burdened, but you can still be willing. He's going to tell us in just a few short verses in the next chapter that we're to cast all our cares upon him because he cares for us. It's not my job to bear everybody's burden.

It's not your job to bear everybody's burden. We have a burden bearer. Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. So Peter's reminding us, and especially those that are called into a leadership position, hey, don't just do it because you have to do it.

Be willing to do it. Have the heart to continue to press forward. Here's also what he says. Not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.

Peter says a shepherd should be leading the sheep not for what he can get, but eagerly because that's what God has called him to do. Here's what Peter's saying.

[21:13] Don't use God's people for what you can get from them. And this goes beyond money. Yes, it has that implication there as well, but a shepherd is not supposed to use the sheep for recognition, for influence, for attention, for status.

Peter says, that's not why anybody should shepherd. That's not healthy for the shepherd, and it's definitely not healthy for the sheep. The question should never be, what can I get from these people?

That goes for a church. That goes for friendships. That goes for a workplace. That shouldn't be our mindset, but honestly, that's how our world operates. Hey, what can I get from this person?

Our world likes to do this. Use people up, spit them out, chew them out, and get rid of them. Hey, I got what I needed. I squeezed every last drop out of them. That's not what God has called us to do. The mindset is this. How can I serve these people?

That's what Peter's saying. As an elder, and he's writing, I'm one of you. This is what you should be doing. Where did he learn that? Well, from the chief shepherd. Because he was there.

[22:19] Peter was probably one of the ones saying, Lord, send them away. I'm tired. But you know what Jesus constantly was doing? Ministering. He was serving. That's who Jesus is.

That he took on the form of a servant. And he was obedient to it. The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. And if we're going to follow Christ, whether we're in a position of leadership, or whether we're just a church member, we all have the same job.

Just to serve one another. I mean, you go through the New Testament. Peter talks about it. John talks about it. Paul talks about it. We are here to serve one another. That we are to minister grace to the hearers.

We're to edify the body. So he reminds us that, especially those within the leadership position, the pastor shouldn't be what you can get out of the people, but rather how you can serve the people. He also tells us this, verse 3. Neither is being lords over God's heritage, but being an ensample to the flock.

[23:23] See, the idea here in verse number 3 is that biblical authority, the position of the pastor, is never an excuse for domination.

That is not what God has called the pastor to do. A shepherd is not called to bully the sheep. To get what he wants out of them. He's not called to manipulate the people.

He doesn't use his position to get his own way. Well, what's he supposed to do? Peter says, but being an ensample to the flock. That the pastor should be setting the priority and the direction that God is leading the church.

If I want our church to be a praying church, here's what I need to do. Be a praying pastor. If I want our church to serve, here's what I need to do. Serve. If I want our church to take the word of God seriously, then I should take the word of God seriously.

And that is what I try to do, and that is the goal, because that's what God is showing me in my life. This is what we need. Every single person in here, we need to take the word of God seriously, because it is going to direct our life.

[24:30] See, a pastor, somebody in leadership, a Sunday school teacher, shouldn't ask the class or the congregation to follow Jesus somewhere they're not willing to go.

If God is calling this church here, then guess who should be leading them? The pastor. The shepherd. And when you put those three contrasts together, you begin to see the heart of biblical leadership.

God says, this is what biblical leadership looks like. It's God uses humble leaders, not using people, but leaders that are willing to serve other people. And there's a reason a pastor should serve that way, because ultimately, he's not serving for the approval of the congregation.

Now, I don't want the church to not like me. I don't know about you. I like to be liked. You know, I hope my approval rating is a little higher than presidential approval ratings.

It's usually what I'm aiming for, just a little above average on that. But here's the reason. My goal every week is not, well, I hope they love this.

[25:39] Just being fully transparent, I answer to one person, the chief shepherd. And that's what Peter reminds us. Number two, he reminds us that we must remember the chief shepherd.

Yes, the pastor must, but so should the members. And I love that he uses that term. He says, and when the chief shepherd shall appear.

That's so humbling to me. It really is. And really, on the other side of it as well, it's so incredibly freeing. Because there are times as your pastor that I am overwhelmed.

I don't know what to do. So I asked Brother Garrett, and he just says, I don't know. Let's Google it. No, I'm just kidding. I just remember even as a young pastor, I knew I didn't know anything.

Now, nine years later, I'm just confirmed that I don't know anything. But the beautiful thing is, is I don't have to know everything. Jesus knows everything. God didn't place me here in this church to fix everything.

[26:50] I can't. Jesus can. I cannot meet every need. And sometimes that does bother me, just to be honest. I like to do things.

I think by nature, I'm just, I want to help as much as possible. But the wonderful thing is, the church grows. God gives people, and places them in here, and gives opportunities for others to serve because I'm not able to meet every need.

Sometimes I don't know the need. But you can, and Jesus gives you that ability. We've already talked about spiritual gifts. That's what we talked about in chapter four, that God is placing a family. He's building a body here, and I cannot be everywhere at every time.

Jesus can. Jesus can. I cannot carry every burden, but I'm so thankful we have a burden-bearing God. And when you think about that, He knows every person in this flock.

I try my very best to know everybody that comes in here. I try to connect with you. I try to understand where you are. If there's something I can pray with you about, I try to do that. I try to be faithful to it.

[27:56] I'm not as good as I should be. But I'm so thankful, and you should be as well, that there is a chief shepherd. There is somebody that loves you more than I could ever love you.

That He gave His life for you. He knows every hurt that you have, every fear that you deal with, the struggles in your life. He knows what you need, and He loves this church. I mean, I feel like I love this church as much as anybody, if not more, but I don't love it as much as Jesus does.

And that is a wonderful thing to remember, that we are answering to this chief shepherd. And a pastor's responsibility, these elders that Peter's addressing, he's saying, listen, your responsibility isn't to be the chief shepherd.

I don't want that job. I can't do that job. But my job as your pastor is to be faithful to the chief shepherd. We're talking in Brother Caleb's Sunday school class about stewarding.

That's what God has called me to do, to steward this church, what God has entrusted in to guide it. And Peter says, hey, there is a reward when the chief shepherd shall appear.

[29:06] And I love this reminder that he is bringing up over and over again in 1 Peter, that life is hard, that it's difficult, that suffering is real. But I just want to remind you, Jesus is coming again. And that is a wonderful thing.

And I'm like the Apostle John at the end of the book of Revelation. Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus. But that's why we must make sure that we are leading and we are serving and we are loving in a way that is pleasing to God.

And I'll just say this. I'm so thankful for you praying for me as your pastor. Because there are things, decisions that maybe the Lord has led me to make or will lead me to make.

And maybe not everybody understands it or appreciates it. But here's what I know from studying the Word of God. One day, I will answer for everything that goes on within this church.

That's why we're serious about who teaches and what we teach and why we do it and everything that takes place because we're not just here kind of doing our own thing. This isn't our church. This isn't my church.

[30:14] So one day, I'm going to have to stand before the Lord and say, this is why we did this. This is why we did it. And here's what our answer should be. Because God led us to do it. Because the Word of God led that direction. And when Jesus does appear, every earthly measurement of success is going to look really small.

God didn't call me to build the biggest church in Gainesville, Texas. If God grows it to be the biggest, so be it. But here's what God called all of us to do, just to be faithful. Because when the chief shepherd shows up, he's not going to say, hey, tell me how impressive your ministry was. He's not going to say, how many people in your church and in your community knew your name? How much recognition did you have amongst the community? Now here's what we all should desire to hear from the Lord.

Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Because ultimately, that's what we all are. We're all servants. We're all trying to serve the Lord how he calls us.

Did we faithfully care for what Christ has entrusted us? And just by a point of application, that goes for every area of your life. As parents, you're going to stand before the Lord and you're going to give

an account of how you shepherded your children.

[31 : 26] How you shepherded your family, your relationships, those are things, it's required of a steward that we be found faithful. Because ultimately, the reward for faithful ministry doesn't come from people.

I'm thankful for how you do love me and my family and take care of us. But really, what really matters is what the Lord thinks. Because the applause of people is going to fade.

The recognition fades. The positions are going to fade. Even our time of service eventually comes to an end. I mean, I'd like to just die right here in the pulpit. Not tonight. Just to make that clear. Don't start praying right now. But even if that's times where I have to step down and the Lord carries his coming. You have another pastor one day.

These are things that you should look for. These are things that a pastor should strive for. You're not going to find a perfect pastor. They don't exist because they're people. But ultimately, we have to make sure that we're following the Lord.

[32 : 29] Because the reward that I would love to receive is from the chief shepherd that fadeeth not away. Because when it comes to the rewards that Christ gives, I'm not wanting it for myself. You know why you should want a reward when you study the rewards?

We're going to lay it back at his feet. That's what it's all about. I want to have something to give back to the Lord. I want to tell him, hey, I just did what you asked me to do.

I tried my very best to live for you. And once again, Peter is doing what he's done throughout this whole letter. He's reminding us, he's reminding the shepherds of the church that the future glory should shape our present faithfulness.

How we live today should be affected by what we know is coming. We should live for the Lord whatever God has placed us for because we're going to stand before him one day. And we're going to give an answer for it one day.

And that brings the whole thing back into perspective. That the church belongs to him. The flock belongs to him. The shepherd serves Jesus. Jesus. And one day, we'll all answer to him.

[33 : 26] And it'll be a wonderful day. It'll be a glorious day. And that should always be on our mind. That should be something we pray about when we pray about things within the church and within your family.

Lord, is this what you want me to do? Because sometimes, even within the life of this church and the nine years I've been here, there's been things that I've just done. They're not bad things. But the Lord says, hey, did you, is that what you think you should do right there?

I'm like, well, I mean, that's just where it is. Now, Peter stopped right here. We think, well, this is a good one. I'm glad, I'm glad preacher finally preached the message to himself.

Don't worry, he's already worked me over on this one. But he wanted, Peter wanted to include everybody in here in verse number five. He said, likewise, you younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another and be clothed with humility for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.

See, Peter has talked to the shepherds. He's reminded all of us, but especially the shepherds, that the chief shepherd is the one we answer to. But now he turns to the flock. And this verse brings us to the, all of us to the very same place.

[34 : 38] Here's what he said we should all have in our life. We should clothe ourselves with humility. That should be a defining characteristic. We see this lovely word that everybody loves and I don't think it was, everybody loved it in the first century as well as they do today, submission.

Everybody loves that word. And I've been to weddings where they give the vows and they say, will you submit to them? Everybody, you can't say that, it's 2026. We give this word a really bad rap. We hear it and we immediately think, so I'm just supposed to do what somebody tells me to do? I'm just supposed to kind of follow blindly? That's not what Peter's teaching right here.

I mean, when you place it in the context of these verses, he just spent three verses placing limits on how spiritual authority is supposed to be exercised. He's reminded pastors, you're not supposed to dominate or manipulate or use people, you're supposed to shepherd them and love them and guide them and feed them and just care for them.

That you were to pour your life out for them, you're willing to lay your life down, that's what a shepherd would do. He's given that context, so we see that biblical submission, when he talks about it here in verse five, is not blind obedience to a controlling leader.

[35:53] That's nowhere in this passage. And that's why there is ways and God protects the church and he allows the church to have a voice within it. But here's what it is, here's biblical submission, it's willing recognition of the spiritual leadership that God has placed within the church and within your life.

For teenagers it will be your parents. For the church it will be the pastors and the elders, the leaders of the church. And we see how beautifully this works together. In our world we think, man, that's just going to butt heads.

But Jesus says when the shepherd leads humbly and the flock follows humbly, then nobody's fighting to be the most important person in the room. That's not the goal here.

That's not the aim. When we take this approach, when we clothe ourselves with humility, nobody's trying to get their own way. It's not a group of people that come together to find out who's in charge. We're not trying to all be the chief Indian. No, no, we're just trying to serve the Lord because everybody remembers Jesus is the one we're serving. Jesus is the chief shepherd.

[37:05] And that brings us to the phrase that kind of really opens this passage and we're going to see later as we move into the ending of this letter. He says this, yea, all of you be subject one to another and be clothed with humility.

Why? For God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble. I mean, that brings everybody into this sermon.

Yeah, he started with elders. He started with leadership. But you can be the pastor, a Sunday school teacher, an older believer, a younger believer, a long time member. You could be just here just a few months or whatever it may be.

Everybody is commanded to live this way. to clothe yourself in humility. And I love that picture. It's easy for us to understand. Because when you got up this morning, you got dressed.

Some of you made bad fashion decisions, Jamie Baldwin. But we love you anyways. We're just glad you put the shirt on, but I wish you would change colors, but it's another sermon for another day.

[38:06] But here's what Peter's saying. When he talks about being clothed, we understand how simple that is. We just get up, we put our shirt on, we put our pants on, put our socks on.

And he says, as Christians, no matter what position you hold, you ought to clothe yourself with this every single day, humility. We not think highly of ourselves.

We're all just sinners saved by grace. That God has placed us within this body. Yes, God is a God of order. But just because somebody stands up here doesn't mean they're better than anybody else in this church.

I'm thankful that I'm just a growing member of Central Baptist Church. Now, the office of a pastor, there is certain requirements and he lays them out very clearly and there's certain things that are expected of me and I'm thankful for that and we should that God is a God that does things decently and in order.

But when it comes to just being a Christian, humility ought to be something that people can see in us. They can see that this is not about us. This church, they shouldn't come in and see, man, there's some sort of power struggle going on.

[39:10] No, I'm thankful. It's just, we just feel like we love each other and there's that buzz. Just next Sunday morning when you come here, just listen to it. It's life. It's people that are doing life together that are talking about it and say, hey, how's that going?

I prayed for you about that and just kind of doing all these things and just having a good time and laughing and fellowshiping together. Listen, humility, when we live this way and when the leaders lead this way, we are simply saying, hey, everything here is not about me.

I don't always have to get my way. I don't always have to get the last word. I don't have to be recognized. I don't have to always prove that I'm right. No, instead, Peter says, here's what you should do. You can serve. You can listen. You can love.

You can put somebody else before yourself. And when you look back over this passage in these first five verses, especially, you realize humility has really been underneath this whole thing.

That a pastor should shepherd willingly because ministry is not about him. A pastor should shepherd willingly because it's not about personal gain.

[40:15] Ministry isn't, what can I get out of this? It disgusts me, some of these people that you see on TV in these so-called ministries. I mean, you're profiting off the gospel.

Now, yes, we take offerings and people get, you know, the world has all kinds of opinions, but we're just trying to keep the lights on and we're trying to move forward and do the things that God has called us to do. A shepherd doesn't have to lord over the people because it's not about power. We're not trying to gain all the control here. Listen, the longer I pastor, I want less control. I just want God to do it. I want God to move this church forward because I've tried to do things in my own power and the Lord said, why don't you let me do that?

That's a great idea. He's a lot better at it. And when that happens, the church can follow godly leadership because the church isn't about getting everything our own way.

We're all under the same shepherd, Jesus Christ. And we're all here for his glory. That's the picture Peter's painting.

[41:19] Yes, there's different responsibilities. There's different roles. But it's the same posture no matter what position you're in. Humility. It's what God has called us to.

I mean, John told us, John the Baptist said, he must increase and I must decrease. When a congregation does that, when the leadership does that, that creates a healthy church.

That it's not, hey, I'm going to take charge of this. No, God, would you lead this? God, would you grow this Sunday school? God, would you be in the children's ministry? God, would you help this? Would you do this? Lord, would you do that?

That's what makes the difference. Because when we become proud, here's what the Bible says, and it doesn't sound good at all, God, resist us. We don't want to find ourselves there.

I mean, God, it's like he's got his arm out and as much as we're trying, he said, no, I don't want anything to do with you right now. If that's how you're going to be, that's not what I'm calling you to do. It's strong language Peter uses, but pride, it puts us in opposition to God.

[42:18] No matter where you sit, that's not a great place to be. And see, when you step back and look at these five verses, Peter really gives us this idea of what a healthy church should look like.

He tells these elders, listen, I know where you are, I'm one of you. And I just want to remind you that you have a wonderful job to do. You have a great calling. God takes it very seriously and you need to shepherd God's people like they're his people.

You need to remember that one day you're going to answer to him for how you shepherded his flock. And then Peter turns to all of us and reminds us that we are to walk in humility, that we are to follow godly leadership, that we are to serve one another, that we're to put others before ourselves. Because whether you're standing behind a pulpit, sitting in your chair, teaching a class, serving behind the scenes, whatever God has placed you to do, opening the door, being a greeter, all of these things, the ground is level under the chief shepherd.

So here's the take home thought. It's pretty simple. The church belongs to Jesus. It's his church and it's his people. So let's serve one another like it does.

[43:39] That's what God has called you to do. That's why he has placed you here. And that's really the serpent. That I'm not the chief shepherd. You're not the chief shepherd.

Whether you're inside these four walls or you're living your life, we should be under submission to Jesus Christ. That he is the one guiding. He is the one leading. So let's faithfully serve him. Let's humbly serve one another until he appears again. What do we stand with our heads?