1 Peter 5:1-4 "Leading in Light of the End of All Things"

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Date: 16 June 2024

Preacher: Rev. George Sinclair

[0:00] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah. It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Bow your heads in prayer. Father, there's a child crying. We ask that you comfort that child. Father, thank you for the gift of children in our church. And Father, we come before your Word. And Father, it's easy for us to look at a part of your Word and think, oh, it doesn't have anything to do with me speaking about other people. And it's easy for us, Father, to dismiss your Word. And so Father, we ask that you help us to hear your Word deeply this morning and see how it speaks to us in different ways. Not how it speaks to other people or how other people should hear this, but how your Word speaks to us. We ask that your Holy Spirit would bring Jesus, the life and work and death and resurrection of Jesus home to us in a new way and bring your Word home to us in a new way. And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated.

Amen. So before I came to this church, I looked after four little congregations up the Ottawa Valley. How many people here have had a beaver tail? If you've had a beaver tail, these were originally developed at the Killaloo Fair. And Killaloo was one of the areas that I was the pastor of. I looked after a little tiny church in Killaloo, also in Eganville and in two places, which at one point in time had a bit of a training post or something. Now they're just a bend in the road, Clontarf and Traymore. There's also cemeteries there. Anyway, I was there for seven years and change. And I got to know this couple who lived on a farm just outside of Eganville. And I got to know them because the woman's mother had moved to Eganville to die. I'm not making that up. She moved from Toronto to be with her only daughter. During, she had inoperable cancer and she was going to have whatever it was, four or six months to live, and she came to die. And she was an Anglican. The daughter, we'll call her

[3:22] Sue, the daughter Sue. Her and her husband were very devout Christians who attended the Roman Catholic Church. So I'd never met them. But they called me up and I ended up going regularly to bring the woman communion and to chat with the whole family. And eventually, God gave me the great honor of doing the funeral for this woman. But here's the point of me mentioning this story. As I got to know this really, really wonderful couple, very kind, lovely, very devout, prayerful couple, I discovered that one of the great sorrows of their life was that they had believed a whole pile of stuff when they were young and could have children, and that they hadn't been Christians. You see, they grew up as hippies, as activists, political activists. And so for some of you, this is ancient, ancient history, like ancient, ancient history. But if you grew up in the 60s and in the early 70s, there were, well, there was lots of different things which were very common in the culture. There were books that talked about how the population explosion was happening, and it was going to cause massive problems and famines throughout the entire world. There were books that talked about how resources were being depleted. They predicted that by the early 80s, we'd run out of

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copper. There's a whole pile of things that we would run out of, and that would lead to wars and famines. There were ecological crises with pollution that was, again, going to lead to war and famine. And I'm probably missing one or two other types. Oh, and then there's, of course, that there was the whole threat of nuclear holocaust, mutually assured destruction. And so it was a dark, dark, for many people, it was a dark time. You know, our resources are running out. Pollution is overwhelming things. There's too many babies being born. The whole world is going to hell in a handbasket. And they were activists in this, and they believed this. And as a result, they felt guilty when they had one child. And then they decided to have a second child, and they felt guilty as well to have two children. They thought they were, I mean, they thought several things. How can we contribute to this population explosion, which is going to be so destructive to the human race? And the other thing, of course, they felt was that how on earth could they bring a baby into the world that's on the edge of nuclear destruction, on the eve of destruction, all those other things. Like, if you think about it, in many ways, what they were thinking and going through is very similar to what many people in our culture today believe. And so they believed that, felt guilty about having two kids. After they were too old to have any more children, they became Christians. And they started to see this whole thing in a very, very, very different way. And that's separate from the fact that, just in case you didn't know, we didn't run out of copper and all that other stuff, by the way. That didn't happen. We didn't run out of gas and all those other things. They were all wrong. But that's a whole other separate thing. Their sorrow wasn't that the predictions were wrong. It was that they started to have a very different way of understanding the world when they gave their life to Christ. Now, I mention that because the text that we're looking at today really focuses very heavily on the life of Jesus and the return of Jesus. And in other words, it's going to talk about the future and how that guides something, which on the surface just looks like it's a bit of a boring thing or something you can make, you know, talk about about me afterwards, because it's actually talking about elders, which is me. Anyway, let's look. It's that whole thing is very important for how we live our lives and how our churches are ordered and how we relate to our neighbors. So let's turn in our Bibles to 1 Peter.

1 Peter chapter 5. We're almost finished. Next week is our last Sunday. And then we'll begin a series on the Psalms with a sort of a little mini-series by Steve Griffin in the middle while I'm on holidays. So 1 Peter chapter 5. We read five verses. I'm just going to look at four verses.
And we're going to read all of them. I'm going to make a couple of brief comments. I'm going to circle back because I want you to see how the four verses go together first before we sort of talk about what it means for us. And here's... Oh, and by the way, for those nerdish ones amongst us, this is a sandwich text, okay? There's two pieces of bread. And then I guess if you're a vegan, there's... And you're not allergic to peanuts, there's peanut butter and jam in the middle. Or if you're a meat eater, there's some nice roast chicken or roast beef or something in the middle between some bread. And so here's how it goes. Verse 5, chapter 5, verse 1.
So I, that's Peter, exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed. So just pause very briefly. That word elder, it's not just talking about all people. It's actually an office. And you might say, well, George, there's no elders in this church. It doesn't apply to us at all.
[8:22] Actually, in terms of this text, I'm an elder. Well, that fits, George. You really look old and you have really, really gray hair. And I don't know, you got ordained just after writing was invented. But I was an elder at 28 as well when I got ordained.

And the underlying word in Greek is the word that we get presbyter from. And in the English Reformation, in the book of, the old book of common prayer, what they meant when they said priest was presbyter. It had just gotten changed the way English can get sort of slurred into a bit of a different word. And so it's talking about a particular office, presbyter, as in a sense talking about, about me, Daniel Avitan, Colton, Steve Griffin. We're all elders.
We're all presbyters. So Peter is saying, I'm a presbyter as well. And I exhort you as a fellow elder. And then he reminds them that he's also a witness of the sufferings of Christ. He actually saw what Jesus lived and went through in his life. And then this other phrase, which is very interesting, as well as a partaker. The word partaker is the same word that you get communion or fellowship. It's all, it's actually koinonia. So the word fellowship or communion, partaker, they're all the same word in the original language. He is a, he's going to have fellowship or partake in the glory that is going to be revealed. And he's referring to the second coming of Christ. So that's in a sense, the first piece

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of the, that's the bread. Now he gets into the, in a sense, the meat, so to speak. And he's going to talk to elders about what their task is and three sort of caveats about how they do their task. And here's how it goes. Look, verse two. So he's speaking to the elders, shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight. Or it can also be translated, yeah, anyway, exercising oversight. Now just sort of pause there for a second. This is really, I'm sorry, I think it's interesting. Maybe I'm putting all of you to sleep. I don't know. But the word shepherd, the original word, the language in the original word for shepherd is where we get the word pastor from. So it's saying, you know, presbyter, pastor, or shepherd, the flock. And then the word exercising oversight or showing oversight, that's the word that we get bishop from. I think it's sort of cool. So he's saying to the presbyters, be pastors and bishops, or exercise oversight.
Okay, that's the basic thing. The basic job description that I have is I'm to be a shepherd of God's flock and I'm to exercise oversight. And then it gives you these two little caveats, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you. First one. Second one, not for shameful gain, but eagerly. And then verse three, the third one. Not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And now the second piece of bread to make the sandwich.
And that goes like this. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. So it's referring to the second coming of Jesus. Now, why did I bring up those people in Eganville?
[11:50] Their belief that the world was going to hell in a handbasket meant that they felt guilty about even having one child. And they felt even more guilty about having two children. How could you bring a child into the world? Well, the world is going to hell in a handbasket. How's that responsible? How can you possibly do that? How can you make those commitments? It just felt completely and utterly wrong.

Many of us know that there is in fact a type of meaning crisis in our culture today. Whether people recognize it consciously or not, there is a meaning crisis. And we live in a time when there are a significant number of people who think that the climate is changing and it's going to make life unlivable. And that in fact, that's going to happen within 10 or 20 years or maybe a little bit longer, but that it seems to be inevitable. People see all the wars that are going on and they see the way society in many ways seems to be breaking down. And they feel like it's harder to make commitments.
How can you make commitments in life? How can you marry? Like, why would you marry? Why would you have children in a world like this where the end is going to be something which is so terrible? And on another hand, different types of understanding of what the end of the world means by people who aren't thinking that it's all going to come to an end, but they actually think they know what the world is going to like. And they're convinced that the world is going to go and look like that. And that ends up often justifying the most horrendous things. The Soviet Union, Stalin killed 50 million people, give or take. I mean, give or take a couple of million, right? You know, Stalin famously said, one death is a tragedy, a million deaths is a statistic. It's a very, very cynical thing to say, but it's actually very profound. For most of it's just a statistic. The death of one, that's a tragedy, a million, I don't know, it's a statistic. All because they thought they were bringing in a worker's paradise. The same thing with communist China, the same thing with Pol Pot.
Often people who believe they have, know what the future is going to be and how to make it glorious. They can actually create a lot of damage. It's the same thing even in our own day, the main millennial type of movement in our own culture is connected to the whole diversity, equity, and inclusion movement, which believes there is a way by which we will deal with racism and sexism and bring in some type of a more perfect, more equitable type of society. And when you believe those things, you often feel empowered and justified to do very horrible things.
Not everybody is like that. But even secular Canadians, average Canadians, who don't necessarily worry so much about that climate change and all of that other stuff, there's still a problem with meaning in our culture, and it's all centered about the fact that at the end of the day, we die.
[14:51] When my kids were a lot younger, sometimes in a road trip or whatever, maybe we'd been at a beach and they'd found some little plastic toys or we'd gone to a, you know, some type of dollar store, thrift store, and they used their couple of pennies to buy some little type of thing. And then, you know, maybe one of them broke or the other person broke it. And so they wanted the other person's and they'd get into great fights about this or who found it or who should play with it or what the order is to play with it. And, you know, just the normal type of thing that kids do that I

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probably did when I was a kid, by the way, my kids were no worse or probably actually, my kids were probably way better than me, but that's a whole other story. But, you know, they fight over these things because for a moment, for that car trip, they're unbelievably meaningful and important to them, worthy of having a fight over. And then, you know, Louise and I would know that 10 minutes after we arrive in our destination, it would be left in the car and then thrown out and they never remember it. And, you know, for many people in our culture, they have the same thing. On one hand, we have a deep hunger to have meaning in our life. And so we're always finding new things to have meaning over that, you know, that our marriage will give us meaning or a relationship will give us meaning or money will give us meaning or power will give us meaning or fame will give us meaning. The eight o'clock service,

I just, you know, I said about fame or, you know, that's something that many people have. I'm sure there's a couple of us, there's enough people here in the congregation, but I can tell you right now, I could not tell you the name of every Canadian prime minister. Now, it might be one or two of you who could probably tell us the name of every Canadian prime minister, but most of us can't.
I mean, that isn't even a fame that lasts. That isn't even a fame that lasts. See, that's the problem. Fame goes. I, you know, and even things like family. I know, I think I mentioned this a couple of weeks ago, and I know I was talking to somebody afterwards. I can't tell you the names of any of my great grandparents. I'm not boasting. I'm not, like, I can't tell you a single one of their names. Like, if you get, if you're, if family is that which is really going to give you meaning in your life, and if you're going to live on in the memory of your children and your grandchildren, well, actually, that doesn't work in Canada, because you won't be remembered.
I know there are some cultures that are very good at remembering the names of their ancestors, but this, ours isn't one of them. You know, in every case, there's always death. And so what we, and even now in this life, it's just like the kids, like for many of us, even as adults, unconsciously, we don't realize that we're very, just exactly like my kids in the van, where we're doing a bit of a longer drive. In the sense that you, you put important meaning to this, and then as that starts to fade, you put important meaning on this, and then after, as that starts to fade, you put important meaning on this, and then on this, and on this, and on this, it's an ending, ever-ending thing. But then at the end of the day, it just, it just dies.
[17:54] You keep trying to get the next meeting. The future is still death. See, this is, now to go back, why am I saying this? What I'm saying about this is, why I'm saying all of this is, is you think about what Peter said. If you go back to look at verse 1 and verse 4.

So I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and a witness to the, of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker of the, in the glory that is going to be revealed. And then in verse 4, what Peter does is he keeps all throughout the whole book, and the Bible keeps doing this, he turns our eyes to the fact that history isn't just a cycle that keeps going around, and you keep going back and back to the same type of thing.
That in fact, it's not just that we make up little stories that help us to get through the day, and then as that story comes to an end, like Santa Claus doesn't exist, you have some other thing, or some other thing, or some other thing, or some other thing.
It's not just that whatever happens, it's just going to, it's, there's a complete despair, because your life is just one meaningless thing after another, and then you die. Jesus really rose from the dead. He lived a very particular life, he really rose from the dead. And Peter is so completely convinced about this, that within a year or two of writing this, and he's writing it about 30 years after the resurrection of Jesus, that he's willing to die a martyr's death, because he's going to say, no, Jesus really did die on the cross. Yes, I know that's shameful, I know that's an embarrassment, I know that's a slave's death, and I know that's a completely dishonorable thing, but the fact of the matter is, is that God used that which was dishonorable, and shameful, and humiliating, and painful, and Jesus did it for us, and he really did die on the cross under the hand of the Romans, and he really did be put in a tomb, he really was embalmed, and on the third day, the grave really was empty, the grave clothes were there, but the body was gone, and we really did see him alive, he really did rise from the dead, and because he rose from the dead, we now understand and believe and trust the words that he said, they're vindicated, and that means that God created the universe, and it means not the gods in those times, and in our day, the naturalistic explanation, and there's some scientific merit to parts of it, obviously, but the fundamental premise that it's just a matter of things happening over time that created all of life, that that's wrong, there is a creator, and there really is,

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[20:42] Jesus will come again at the end of time in history, and so that's why life is not just one meaningless thing after another, and then you die, and it's not just an endless cycle of things happening, and then re-happening, and then re-happening, it's not like Groundhog Day with theology, it's where you learn stuff, because you don't learn anything in most myths, you just completely are as ignorant in the cycle as you were before, and that's, there really is a story, there really is a creator who created all things, and he made all things good, there really was evil coming into the, and death comes into his created order as a result of human beings at the end of the day saying to God, not your will, but my will be done, and God seeing how we've made a complete and utter mess of things, he started to make promises that he would send a mighty deliverer that would crush the serpent's head, that would do for human beings what human beings couldn't do for themselves, and Peter is saying, good grief, God kept his promise, we were eyewitnesses to how he kept his promise, his promise was the person of Jesus, and he really did live a sinless life, and he really did die a death on the cross, and he really did rise again, and he really ascended into heaven, and he's going to come again, he's going to come again, it's guaranteed, we're in a story, life has meaning.

You know, one of the things I'd say to my conservative friends, my Jordan Peterson fans, and my conservative friends, and you might hold your nose up at climate change, and you might hold your nose up at a lot of other things, and you might maintain that there is honorable things, there are things of, there is dignity, there is beauty, there is duty, there's honor, there's nobility, there's things that are worthwhile, like family, and nation-state, and all of those types of things, and I think that's wonderful that you believe all of those things, but the fact of the matter is, is that you are suspended in the middle of the air, with nothing to support you, and nothing to hold you up, because at the end of the day, my conservative friends, if you're listening, you still believe that everything came into existence as a result of just, well, chance, and all of that, and I can tell you this right now, if you think about it, you cannot derive, honor your father and your mother, or love one another, from a system of thought that says the strong eat the weak, and the strong survive, and everything else is chance, you can't in a billion years, get everything as a result of chance, and the strong eat the weak, therefore honor your father and mother, and honor the state, and love each other, no, that doesn't, like, we're going to do Messiah Reads, to my conservative friends and to all, this is a brilliant book, it's a simple book, but very profound, and very brilliant, and what he's done is he's looked from people who are agnostics and atheists who've done research, and he just wants to show you that things like equality, compassion, consent, enlightenment, science, freedom, process, progress, all of these fundamental things that we believe, they all ultimately come from the Christian faith, not from anywhere else, and so what I'm just telling you is, to my conservative friends, don't just believe this stuff, you don't have to just have it hanging in thin air, the only way to stand on these things is to give your life to Christ, that's the base, that's why they're true, because he's true. See, there is this big overarching story, and you and I are living in that story, whether we recognize it or not, and part of our task is to tell people the true story of the universe, and not only tell people the true story of the universe, but to tell you the true story of the universe and give you this wonderful news, well, there's that Christ wants to save you, and that because you are in a big story, your life, not only can it have profound meaning, but there's a consequence to it, because at the end of the day, we will appear before the true and living God, and we will be judged on whether in the center of our soul, we basically said, I want to do it my way, or whether we are willing to bow our head and bow our soul and bow our spirit and say, I will do it your way.

And you can't do it his way without coming to Christ. It's not just abstractions, it's him. And that, you know, that means that whether it's, that, so some of them may say, George, doesn't that mean that you're just going to have a different Christian version of it, George? Like, you know, you said about how, you know, like, the Soviet Union and other people have this utopian future, and it just enables them to do horrible types of things, and you're saying there's some type of future like that when Jesus returns, and aren't, it doesn't that just kind of mean that you're going to do horrible type of things, and, and, and know that it's completely different.

Luther was once asked, he was one of the English reformers, he was a, the first reformer, I guess, and he was asked a question, and I think he gave a profoundly Christian answer.

[26:23] He was asked, what would you do, Luther, if you woke up one morning, and you were certain that Jesus was going to return that evening? Luther thought for a second, he said, I'd plant a garden, and pay my taxes.

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That's a very profoundly Christian answer. You see, the difference between things like ideologically utopian things, whether of the left or the right, because they're on both sides, it's not just a left-wing problem, it can be on the right as well. The problem at this, at the end of all those things, is they're still sort of based on this whole idea of evolution, and the inherent meaningless of our origins, and they're going to have to try to create or rest these types of things, and, and wrestle creation, and all of those types of things into some type of order, but that's not how God views it. Remember that we're in a big story. It's God's creation. There isn't a single, there isn't a single square millimeter of the universe that God doesn't say is his. God loves this earth, and, and our, our belief is that when Jesus comes again, and there will be a judging of the living and the dead, but on the far side of that, he brings in a new heaven and a new earth, where his redeemed people will live with him forever. That's the end, and that's why first
Peter talks about how husbands and wives should relate, and how you should be honoring your, your, the government, and how you honor other people in authority, and how you deal with insults, and how you deal with ostracism, and, and, and, and, and, and how you think, and all of these types of things, is because it's trying to get you to understand that you live in a world with, that's meaningful, and that has moral type of order, and so therefore live within those moral parameters, and, and start local churches, and so in a sense, what would I say? If I'd say, if somebody said, George, I, we know for certain that God is, that Jesus is going to return in a month, like, what would we do? I'd say, well, I don't know, like, let's plant a garden. Let's honor the government. Let's plant a church.
Let's tell people about Jesus. Let's hug babies, and care for the poor. And, and, and, and, and call powers, whether in government, or in, in, in, in industry, that are doing injustice, to call them to justice. Why wouldn't we do those types of things? And in all things, tell people about Jesus, because Jesus loves them, and he died that they might be made right with him. And then you could say, well, George, how does that all fit in? You know, you said there's a meaning crisis, and I don't, I don't, I don't see how, oh, listen, here, look, look again, look again at verses one and four. So I exhort the elders among you, like, in an eight, I'm going to do all the other stuff just very briefly. Let, let, let, verse eight, verse one again. So I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a part, what, what, what, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed. Look at verse four.
And when the chief shepherd appears, that's Jesus, when he returns, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. What is the meaning of life? Well, we cut ourselves off from the source of meaning when we rebelled against God, and it is God's heart that we would hear of Jesus and incline our heart to him and trust him. And in him, the end of your life is glory. The end of your life is to participate in God's eternal glory. Maybe some of you are watching it and your bodies are breaking down and old, and that's why you can't come, or you're just very, very sick. That's not the final word about you.
[30:23] Death is not the final word about you. When you are in Christ, the final word about you is glory. That's one of the reasons we don't want to kill handicapped babies or deformed babies.

You don't want to take innocent human life because the final word about them in Christ is glory. The final word about you and me and him is glory. Not failure, not loser, but glory. We were made to share God's glory in Christ. And glory is its beauty, its honour, its ennobling, its physical, its spiritual, its intellectual, its emotional, and that's the final word. That's what God made us for. Very, very different thing than seeing yourself as a piece of just a very evolved ape. Let's just go very quickly now through the rest of the text. If you could put up the first point.
I don't know, you get the points you did, yes. So here's the thing. Jesus lived a particular life. He suffered a shameful but saving death, and he will come again in glory. How is it that an elder is to, you know, in verse 2, and it says, shepherd the flock of God that is among you exercising oversight the way, in a sense, all leaders, in a sense, me as an elder, as a, in a sense, the leader of the leaders in the congregation, that what we do is we keep having people that there's, there's no way of growing or developing or doing anything apart from who Jesus was and what he was like. And, and people can't just say to me, well, that's not like the Jesus that I know or worship. You go, no, no, no, no, no, time out. Like, let's look in the Bible. Just, you know, that just, you know, like, really? That's what you think Jesus is like? No, that's not what Jesus is like.
Like, there's this whole movement going on right now in the States called Christian nationalism. From what I gather, it's completely horrendous. It's racist. No, that's not what Jesus was like.

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[32:37] You know, and if you go on the other end, and, you know, very pro-LGBTQ play, and they make all these statements about what Jesus, no, no, no, no, no, you don't, you don't have to make this stuff up. It's a very particular story. Like, you look at Jesus. You look at his word. You look and see the apostolic testimony. You look and see what it says, and that's, that's, we have to keep going back to it, because he lived a very particular life, and in that life, he suffered a shameful but saving death, and he will come again in glory, and that's the story. That's what we need to be reminded by him. Second point, this is a development of something that Leighton Ford said. He had a very brilliant definition of how anybody should be a leader if they're a leader in the Christian church, and he said, in his words, where a Christian leader is one who is being led by Jesus, leads like Jesus, and leads to Jesus. Isn't that brilliant and simple? Be led by him, lead like him, lead people to him. That's simple. I've just put it in a slightly different way.

You know what, you know, an elder, and then, you know, council members, and Sunday school superintendents, and worship leaders, be led by him. Learn to lead like him, lead people to him till he returns or calls you home, and then what Peter's just talking about here, you give the sweep of the book of Acts, and all the other epistles, is that Jesus leads his people into the fellowship of an enduring local church. That's, that's what Jesus does. You know, he sends us out to tell people about Jesus, and people give their life to Christ, and if they've given their life to Christ, he's going to lead them into the fellowship of an enduring local church, and I say enduring, it's not something you've got to endure, but I mean that it's, it's not just here, it's not like a pop-up business.
It's, it's to endure. It's to be a place that until Jesus comes back, that if God leads you into marriage, you can be married, you can have kids, the kids can be raised in it, and, and it's to endure.
It's not just like a pop-up or something like that, and then the local church, the next point, the local church is to be led by an elder or elders discerned to be called by God. That's what Peter is assuming. That's what all the New Testament is teaching, and whether it's one or multiple, and there's different ways that churches put all that and mix and match, but the fundamental idea is local churches are to be led by an elder, a presbyter, and that is a person that's to be discerned by the congregation to have been called by God. And then the next point, if you could put it up, and just here, this is, this is, this is verse two. The elder presbyter is to shepherd the Lord's people and exercise oversight. Whatever that's going to look like in our context, that's what you can pray that I can do, and Daniel, and Colton, and, and, and Steve. And then we get into the three particular things, very briefly, number, the, the next point, the elder, to the elder presbyter, there's a message. So here you can see how you need to pray for me. And by the way, it's not just once again, in a sense, if, if I'm called to be a leader in the congregation under God, once again, you know, moms and dads lead their kids. Sunday school superintendents lead the Sunday school. You know, the sound people lead the sound people. The worship people lead the other people in the worship. It's not just a message just to me, but to all of us. And here's the first one. Don't think got to, think get to. And there's sort of pause here. Um, I have a daughter-in-law who's, um, she can be very outspoken. And, uh, there was one time she was very outspoken to me. This is like 10, 15 years ago, 15 years ago or something. And, um, I, we had a lot of people over and, um, I was in a really grumpy mood. I was in a really, really, really grumpy mood. And, um, I think they, they all wanted to go out for a walk and I was grumpy. The day hadn't gone the way I want. I was also probably hangry. I probably needed to eat something because I, if I get hungry, I can get a bit grumpy as well. Anyway, I didn't want to go. I wanted to do something else. And she got right in my face. And she said, dad, don't think got to think get to. You don't gotta go with your family.
[36:51] You get to go with your family. And that's like a really, that that's what Peter's saying here when he talks about how, uh, don't not under compulsion, but willingly. It's a very different attitude of your heart. Like I get to lead you folks. Like it's a privilege. I get to do these things. It's a privilege.

You know, if you're doing the sound, you get to do it. If you're doing the Sunday school, you get to do it. You know, if you're organizing things that, you know, if you're a treasurer, you get to do this. It's a very different attitude of the heart of gratitude that you've been called to do something for God's people. The next point, if you could, to the elder presbyter, don't think dollars, lots of them. Think, live to hear Jesus say, well done. That's, that's what he's talking about when he says, um, as God would have you not for shameful gain, but eagerly. Now the implication there, by the way, is that the elders are being paid, but it's not that they're being, it's not that they do everything to make more money. What should drive and motivate you in leadership is the fact that, well, the fact that life has meaning. Jesus rose from the dead. He's coming again.

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And what should really matter is that in a sense, he smiles at you and he says, well done. The last one, almost finished. To the elder presbyter, don't think the boss. Think, live as an example. This, this is really important. It's very easy for a minister to think of it as his church. It can also be very simple. Any type of ministry, a small group, this is my small group. It has to be my group. It has to be my way, or it can be any ministry. It can be the men's ministry. It can be the women's ministry. It can be Sunday school. It can be the music ministry, that this is my thing. I'm the boss. It's all about me. And the scripture text says, no, it's not about that. Don't be domineering over those in your church, but, but be an example. Model how you want, how people are going to live in a way that's godly and Christ-honoring and freeing and, and builds people up.

[38:54] So, include conclusion. If you haven't given your life to Christ, there's no better time than right now to give your life to Christ. There's no better time. Won't be better next week or next month.

And for any of you who are worried about trying to take on some tasks or whether you should marry or anything like that, if assuming you can, don't think the world is in such a bad place that we can't have children and, and we can't start businesses and we can't write novels and we can't, that we can't do those things. Like, live by the story here in this, in the scriptures. Live a life that honors God. Yeah, yeah, obviously there's going to be bad things, but we walk together, we walk through them with Christ and we walk through them with each other and we walk through them with prayer and we're fed by God's word. And we point people to the fact that there really is meaning and that meaning is only truly ultimately found when you give your life to Christ. And pray for our church to have godly elders and pray for our church to have godly leaders. And for all of us, seek to be led by Jesus.

Seek to lead like Jesus and seek to lead people to Jesus. I invite you to stand. Bow our heads in prayer.

Father, we give you thanks and praise that Jesus died on the cross for us as our savior. And, and we thank you that he tasted everything there is to taste of death. And we thank you that he rose on the third day. And Father, we ask that that, those truths would be deeply formed in us. And we also ask, Father, that you deeply form within us the belief that Jesus will come again. Father, make us skeptical of all depressing descriptions of the future as if we human beings have the power to bring everything to an end. Father, we acknowledge before you from your word that's just not true. You bring things to an end, not we human beings. And Father, make the truth of Jesus returning so true to our hearts that we are skeptical and disbelieving of all utopias, no matter how many people and how many PhDs they have, or how compelling or brilliant they are. There will be no utopia, Father. The end comes when Jesus returns and only he will bring in the new heaven and the new earth. And we ask, Father, that you bring these truths home to us in a very, very deep way. Help us to live, Father, not only mindful of what

Christ has done for us on the cross, but looking forward to the day that we will see him face to face, whether it is when he comes again or when he calls us home through death. Help us, Father, to have that forward-looking hope that will characterize each of our lives in our church. And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

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