

Humility in Suffering

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[0 : 00] 1 Peter 5, we are going to backtrack just a smidge to get back into verse 5, which we dealt with just a little bit last week, because it really does bridge the gap between verse 5 and 6 and 7.

So we'll read verses 5, 6, and 7, and then we'll pray, and then we'll jump right in. So let's hear the word of the Lord. Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time He may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you. Father, we thank You for Your Word, and we pray that You would use it in our lives today. Help us to understand it. Help us to live it out by the power of the Spirit, that You would get all the praise, and we pray this in Your name. Amen.

If you were to do a study of the Old Testament, you would find that King Saul and King David are a classic example of God opposing the proud but giving grace to the humble. You had Saul, who was the classic king. He was head and shoulders above everyone else, and everyone thought that he would be a great king. But Saul had a problem. He could not admit when he was wrong.

He was told to wipe out all of this particular nation, and he was told to wait for Samuel before they made a sacrifice. And in both instances, he didn't listen. And when he was confronted, he didn't say, you're right, I've done wrong. He just held on to his course. David, obviously, did some sinful things in his life.

[2 : 09] And when confronted, he humbled himself before the Lord, and he received grace. The Christian life is not about a life of perfection. We cannot live perfectly here and now in this world.

It's never going to happen. We can live in a direction, because perfection is what happens when we go on to be with the Lord. But we can live in that direction. But the only way to do so is to live truly humble lives. And humility is not an easy thing to talk about. It's not easy to line it out for ourselves. And so Peter gives us three things that will help us to live humbly by understanding these truths about humility. And they basically, you got the need for humility, the results of humility, and the means of humility, taking up verse 5, 6, and 7, just like that. So let's just dive in and let the Lord use this for our good today. Verse 5 gives us the need of humility. When you get past the part that speaks to the younger people of the congregation, the less mature, he says, clothe yourselves, all of you. So he's speaking to the whole congregation, pastor and people alike, that everybody in the congregation is to clothe themselves with humility. And we see then that need for humility by understanding that it's supposed to characterize all of our lives. If you clothe yourself with humility, you are wrapping your entire life with humility. It's the cloak that you wear. It's the garments that you wear. It's how your life is wrapped up. Just as Jesus wrapped his own waist with a towel to wash the feet of his disciples, we need humility because we're supposed to wrap our whole lives with it in order to serve others.

But the second reason that we have a need for humility is because he says right there that God opposes those who have no humility. God opposes those who have no humility. He opposes those who are proud.

proud. He opposes those who are proud. Now, we need to take a detour and talk about pride and being proud for a second because there are some things that might get into the mix of this in our thinking that shouldn't be. Let me give you a couple of examples. If you have a grandchild performs well in a sporting event or a school event or some sort of extracurricular activity, they do very, very well.

Our hearts swell with pride. We are proud of them. And the reason we are proud of them is because it brings us joy and delight to see them succeed. And when we share that with others, we're boasting in the endeavors of our grandchildren in order to share that which brings us good joy. That

is not what Peter's talking about here. That is a good and healthy and right thing to do, to be proud of your children and grandchildren, to take joy and delight in the things that they do because ultimately their ability to do anything is given by the Lord. And so to take joy in the good gifts of God in what our children and grandchildren do is a good and right thing. So that is not the kind of pride that he's talking about here. There's another kind of pride that I don't think he's talking about, and that's if you have a job and you're the kind of person who takes pride in your work, which generally means that you want it to be excellent. You want it to be above and beyond. You want it to have such attention to detail, and you don't really care if somebody notices it. You're not doing it so that somebody pats you on the back because you had attention to detail. You just do it because there's something inside of you that says if it's worth doing, it's worth doing right. That is a good thing to have.

[6 : 23] It's a good thing to have a pride in your work so that you do it as unto the Lord. You do it heartily so that he gets all the praise and all of the glory. I don't think Peter is talking about these kinds of issues. Instead, I think he's talking about something else, and I think we can get at it because when he says God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble, he is actually quoting or kind of quoting from the Proverbs. In Proverbs chapter 3 verse 34, this is what the Proverbs says.

Toward the scorers, he is scornful, but to the humble, he gives favor. Peter is using this passage that deals with the scorner or the scoffer, and I think it helps us to define what pride, proud, and arrogant is. If you read through the Proverbs, there's this word scorner or scoffer is there several times, and when you begin to read all of those and kind of collate sort of what kinds of things can we understand about the scoffer, the scoffer, they delight in their scoffing of others.

They delight in the scoffing even of knowledge. Scoffers abuse those who correct them. They don't like to be corrected. They don't like to take advice. They don't like to listen to someone else, and when you go to correct them, they scoff you. They scorn you. Scoffers refuse to learn even from their past mistakes, and they think nothing about having any kind of guilt of their sin. They always bring strife and quarreling. To sum it up, basically then a proud person or a scoffer is someone who thinks that they know better than everyone else. They do better than everyone else. They refuse any kind of correction, advice, or conviction, and they willingly trust in themselves and themselves alone.

They know better than everybody else. They do better than everyone else. They refuse correction, advice, and conviction, and they willingly trust in themselves and themselves alone. And this is why God opposes them. This is why God opposes them. He fights against those who scoff because they refuse to humble their hearts and admit that he knows better than them, and that he does better than them, and that he has a reason to correct them and a right to correct them. And he is the only one who could be truly, truly, truly trusted. And the scoffer refuses to see that. And so we have a need for humility because God opposes such a person. God refuses to deal with such a person, but instead fights against them.

And this is the state of someone who is not a Christian. The state of someone who is not a Christian is the state in which they refuse to humble themselves and admit that they have sin. They refuse to humble themselves and refuse to admit that God has a right to call them to account. And so they stay in their sin, and staying in their sin, they are then under the just judgment of God. But Christians, we are supposed to be humble, and even though we're saved, even though there was a time in your life you humbled yourself because you saw your sin and you trusted the Lord, you and I still struggle with pride.

[9 : 58] We still have areas in our lives where we think we know better than God. We have areas in our lives where we think that we've done better than God has done towards us. There's still times in our lives that we don't like to take that advice or that correction. And there's many times when suffering comes that we trust ourselves more than we trust God. And so there are times you and I as Christians, blood-bought, headed to heaven, still struggle with pride and scoffing against God.

And so we need to grow in our humility. And the only way to really recognize and have that growth in humility is to recognize that humility is both a mind shift and a gift from God. It's a mind shift because we've got to believe what God's Word has already stated about us. Without believing what He says about us, then we believe other things about ourselves. Like He's told us that we are sinners and that we're born God-haters. He's told us that we don't do what we ought to do, but instead the very things we don't want to do are the things that we do. He's told us that we don't

know the future, that we can't even know our own hearts, and that we don't even know how to pray as we ought to pray.

These things are true about us. And to grow in humility, you have to shift your mind from thinking about yourself the way you want to think about yourself to thinking about yourself the way God would have you to think about yourself. But it's also a gift. It's also a gift. Humility is a gift because anything that God wants in our lives that is a good thing always comes from Him. That's what Philippians 2.13 says. For it is God who works in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure. God wants you to grow in humility. Therefore, He is going to be the one who gives you the will and the work in order to grow in humility. But we have that need. We need humility. The second thing we need to understand about humility is the result of humility. That's what verse 6 tells us. Verse 6 tells us to humble ourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time, He may exalt you. The result of a humble life is some glory. Right? It tells us that the humble will be exalted. The humble will be exalted. Jesus said the same thing in Matthew 23.12, right? That whoever humbles himself will be exalted. The Father has done this very thing for the Son. The Son left His throne in glory. Left His rights as the Son of God and took on the form of a servant. Took on the form, the human form. Humbled Himself even to the point of death. And God exalted Him. Right? That's what we're talking about here. That when we humble ourselves before God, when we admit our sin, when we admit we don't have all the answers, when we admit our life isn't buttoned up the way it appears to be, when we admit that we don't know any better than God, that God knows better than us, when we humble ourselves, that is when we will be exalted. But the second thing we've got to say about that is that we'll be exalted by God. This exaltation is not an exaltation from the people out there in the world. Just because you humble yourself doesn't mean that the people in your life are automatically going to say, oh, we're so proud of you for humbling yourself. You act lowly before family, friends, or co-workers. You can't expect that they're going to be the ones to exalt you. That's not what this passage is about. This passage is about God exalting you. God being the one to raise you up.

God being the one to raise you to a place of joy and delight because of the humility that he sees. As a matter of fact, let's talk a little bit about how that works. This is how I kind of picture it in my head. There's a great illustration of this very thing in Ephesians chapter 5 where Paul's talking about marriage of husbands and wives and Christ and the church.

[14:20] And he says in Ephesians 5, 25, he says, Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of the water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing that she might be holy and without blemish. Now, just don't worry about marriage here at the moment. Just think about Christ and his church because think of what he's doing to his church.

He loves his church. He gives himself up for his church. He seeks to sanctify his church. And he seeks to sanctify her by cleansing her, washing her with water from the word of God.

And why? In order to present her to himself in all of her splendor. God is going to take the church, his people, and so sanctify them that he can then take his people and bring them to himself as a beautiful, radiant, resplendent bride that is reflecting the very work of God in their lives. This is what it is to be lifted up. This is what it is to be exalted.

Because the very next part of it is that the humble will be exalted by God at the right time, at the proper time. So often we would say to ourselves, well, I'd be glad to, you know, humble myself before God so long as he makes sure that all these people out here who are the jerks, I get vindicated before them. But this exaltation is not about an individual experience for you.

This is about what he does for us as his church, as his people. That we humble ourselves and in time, when Christ comes back, in the twinkling of an eye, we are exalted because the work of God in us comes to perfection. The vindication that we have chosen well, that we have trusted rightly, that we have waited patiently, that we were treated graciously comes at the proper time when Christ comes back as he takes his people who've humbled themselves before him and he exalts them, transforming them into his likeness. Christians, you've got to believe that we are going to be exalted one day when Christ comes back. That's what makes humility the path that we need to walk.

[17:01] The humility, the lowliness, the weakness according to the world will be worth it all. It will be paid off. And you need to encourage your hearts with this because it's easy when you look at the world and you think to yourself, I'm supposed to like humble myself in front of all these people.

They're just going to rip me to shreds. They're just going to take advantage of me. It's easy for us to have excuses as to why we're not being humble in that moment.

But let me encourage you, don't grow weary in doing good. But in due season, you will reap if you do not grow weary.

Because the opposite is for us to become prideful and think that we've earned the right to be grumpy and unpleasant because we don't like the situation.

We need to keep believing in what he has said about us. And this goes for the person who's lost.

[18:03] The result of humility is not something you'll ever experience, but instead you'll experience the opposition of God as he fights against the scoffer. Because the only way to be with God is to have law-perfect righteousness.

And the only way to have law-perfect righteousness is to be covered in the righteousness of Christ.

And the only way to have the righteousness of Christ is to admit your sinner and trust in Christ.

So then that brings us to verse 7. The means of humility. In other words, how do we get this humility? humility. Verse 7 says, casting all your anxieties on him because he cares for you.

And the connection with the last passage is something like this. If I tell you, I want you to go to town and shop for clothes. There's a command.

And then there's details and description about how to carry out that command. Because if I just told you to go to town, there's 101 things you could go do in town. But if I want you specifically to go shop for clothes, then I need to say that.

[19:13] This passage is like that. Humble yourselves, casting your anxieties. So this is the way we humble ourselves. And particularly, remember, what's the context of this passage?

Persecution and suffering at the hands of others. So as you're under that suffering, as you're under that difficulty, the command is to cast all your cares upon him because he cares for you.

How do you humble yourself but to cast your cares upon the Lord? To cast here means to throw upon, to lay it upon, like you stack lumber in your truck, not on your shoulder, because the truck bears the weight of the lumber, not your body.

The command is to be humble, and you are humble because you take your cares and anxieties, and you put them on the Lord. Now, in order to tie this together, we've got to talk about what are these cares and anxieties, because it's an interesting word.

It's used just a few times throughout Scripture. Jesus used it in the parable of the soils, right? There was one soil that the seed took root and then was choked out by the cares of the world, the anxieties of the world.

[20:33] Jesus used it as a warning against people who were weighed down with drunkenness and the cares of this world. It's kind of interesting.

Paul uses it in a positive way because he speaks about the daily anxieties he has for all the churches. Like he was concerned for them. He had cares for them.

He was worried about where they were going, and this was a good thing. He had this anxiety for them, so he was praying for them. The idea is that the cares or the anxieties of this world, it's the stuff of life.

It's what are you going to eat? Where are you going to live? What clothes are you going to wear? What about all that legal paperwork you've got to do and turn in? What time is bedtime? How are you going to get your lawn mowed?

The cares of life, the things of life, the stuff of this world. When a loved one passes away, you've got to deal with banks and deeds and clothes and titles and keepsakes and schedules.

[21:34] It's the cares of the world. It's the anxieties of the world. It's the stuff of the world. Humility takes and casts those cares upon the Lord, but in what kind of way? What are we saying? Are we saying that we can just take these things that we've got to do?

I'm going to take food and just throw that upon the Lord and it's just going to work out? I think a great illustration is the story of Jesus and Mary and Martha.

I love that story. That's a great story. Jesus comes to the house of Mary and Martha, right? And he comes with his disciples and Mary is sitting at Jesus' feet listening to him teach and Martha's in the kitchen cooking.

And she comes in and she kind of snaps at Jesus saying, tell my sister to get up and help me. Does anyone care? Jesus says, Martha, Martha, Martha.

He doesn't say it like that, but you get the idea. He's like, you're worried or you're caring about so many things. And only one thing really matters. And Mary has chosen the good part and won't be taken from her.

[22 : 41] But in that moment, it's interesting because Martha is upset because she's doing all of this stuff herself. Now, here's the thing. Jesus did not say to Martha, Martha, Martha, Martha, nobody needs you to cook.

You know what I'm saying? Like he didn't say, don't worry about it. Let's go to the pizza place. It'll be all right. We'll get some falafel.

You know, it'll be fine. He doesn't tell her, Martha, stop cooking. He doesn't tell her that. As far as we know, she's gone back to the kitchen, a little chastised, but gone back to the kitchen and cooked.

And it's not just Jesus and Mary that she's cooking for. It's all these disciples that are with them, right? The food was necessary for all of them to eat.

They had to eat. But Martha had succumbed to the belief that just because a task was necessary, it justified irritation.

[23 : 52] That just because a task was necessary, it justified anxiety. And in anxious fears that cause us to blame and lash out at others, that's not humble.

Imagine if the little red hen got angry and started screaming and started screaming because no one was helping her. The point is, is that the suffering's going to come and the stuff of life has got to be done.

We've got to deal with our family. We've got to deal with our home. We've got to deal with our work and our livelihood. We have things that have to be taken care of. We've got to eat. And as we think about the things of life and the stuff of life, it's good and right for us to plan and to plot and to make provisions for all of the necessary things in life.

The only problem is, is that we cannot let our hearts get captured by the necessity of the task and turn it into an irritation and an anxiety. Martha's lashing out and complaining because she's not letting her heart be at peace in the task she has to do.

Humility takes that to the Lord. Humility pauses and takes it to the Lord.

[25 : 25] It takes it to the Lord because it recognizes that God is trustworthy. And when you have the cares of this life pressing on you, when you feel your heart starting to be stirred up and frustrated and irritated and anxious, if you don't immediately pause and turn to the Lord in prayer and asking Him to help you, then that is a sign of pride and arrogance.

Because you're not believing that the Lord is trustworthy enough to help you deal with the cares of life in that moment. You're not believing that He's good and that He wants to help you in that moment.

And part of the reason for that is that we tend to think that when we have a care of this world that we have to deal with, that our prayers ought to take away the care of the world.

We have a tendency to think that if there's food to prep for all these people and it's got to be done right here, right now, like Martha, that prayer ought to be a thing that just magically makes food show up.

But that is not what casting your care upon the Lord is about. It's not for you to get miracles to happen so that you don't have to do the stuff of life. It's about calming your heart.

[26 : 41] The point is that we cast our anxieties upon the Lord. You have a huge task to do for your job and failure on that task might mean being fired.

There's reason to plot and plan. But there is no reason to be anxious. You pray to the Lord, Lord, keep my heart in perfect peace as I do the task.

Because you may very well fail the task and lose the job but have delighted the Lord because you've trusted and your heart was at peace. You see, we are really wanting to be sure that the job is secure and not really worry about our hearts as much.

And when you stand before God at judgment, He's not going to say, you know, I'm really proud of you for getting your heart all stirred up so that you can get that task done so that you can keep your job.

He's going to say, why didn't you pray to me and ask me to help you get your heart peaceful and calm? Humility not only recognizes that God is trustworthy in that, but humility also recognizes that we're incapable of doing this the right way.

[28 : 18] I can't tell you the number of times that I have bitten off somebody's head because I had a task that was necessary to do. My heart gets stirred up and I get frustrated and someone gets in my way and off with your head.

I feel like the queen of hearts sometimes. Humility recognizes I don't have that kind of spiritual power in me to keep my heart in perfect peace for the glory of Christ and so I need, I need God to help me.

You and I both know there's so many logistics that you're going to have to do in your life and so many things that you're going to have to weigh through even in the next month. And it's going to be easy for your heart to be stirred up and panicked.

And the necessity and the difficulty of that is going to try to justify in your mind and heart that it's okay for you to feel anxious and snap and bite at somebody but the truth of the matter is that is not being humble in suffering.

And so we need to grow in our humility. We need to grow in our humility so that as we face the sufferings and persecutions that are to come we can do so in a way that pleases God and submits to Christ.

[29 : 47] So let me give you here in closing just a few things that I think will help you. Number one believe the things that I've said.

I think they're from God's word. I think I can verify them. If they're true you need to believe them. You don't need to just excuse it and say well that might work for the preacher because you know after all Randy what?

It's only like 30 minutes a week that I work. Right? So what does he know? You know? I'm just going to pick on you until I leave buddy.

I'm just saying. But you need to believe these things are true. Without that nothing else matters.

Right? If we don't believe these things. Second you need to pray and ask the Lord to expose those places in your life that you are tempted to be like Martha.

you need those exposed. You need to have moments that you run into an important necessary task a thing of life that causes your heart to go boo crazy because when you get that exposed then you can have it dealt with.

[31 : 01] Then you can take it to the Lord and ask him for forgiveness. You can see it covered in the blood and then you can see him on the cross purchasing the promise of the Holy Spirit to live in you so that you can stop doing it that way in that moment.

It's good to get exposed and you need to pray and ask the Lord to do that. And then you need to ask the Lord in prayer to help you see his trustworthiness.

To help you see that he cares for you. Why cast your anxieties upon the Lord? Because he cares for you. He doesn't want your heart all wrought up with anger and frustration because the task is too difficult.

It doesn't mean he's going to help you with the task and get that better, but he's going to help you have a heart that fully relies upon him and is at perfect peace in him through that task. Now he might also help you with the task, but that's not the point.

The point is the heart. So you need to ask him to help you to see these truths and then you need to remind yourself of what Jesus did on the cross and how that moment that you have failed is already paid in the blood of Christ.

[32 : 22] And then finally, you need Christian brothers and sisters to hold you accountable to living out a humble life. You know, that's the sad thing about our culture now is we we don't get to spend just a whole lot of time with each other doing things so that you're doing a necessary task and your heart gets all wrought up so I can see it.

We have everything perfect so that there's nothing to worry with and worry about. But I need to see that moment of anxiety.

Why? Because so in love I can come to you and say listen, I know how hard that is. I've been there. Let's pray together. Let's work together and ask the Lord to help your heart.

I need you to see mine. I need you to see each other's. Those moments, those anxieties because God uses one another to help bear the burdens of these things.

It's fascinating fascinating to me how Peter ends this section because he cares for you. Sometimes I think that because God doesn't magically make appear the task that we need done, we feel like God doesn't love us.

[33 : 55] But the truth of the matter is that he loves you more than you will ever know. I just think about this. The triune God of the universe loves you, cares long for you, longs for you to turn it over.

He's not waiting in some angry stupor and going like the first moment you pray and ask for help, I'm going to thump you down. No, you will find him perfectly ready to bear your load. I pray you will come to him. Let's pray. Thank you.