

# Humble Leadership

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Preacher: Paul Dudley

[ 0 : 0 0 ] This is the morning service at Holy Trinity On the 28th of July 2002 The preacher is Paul Dudley His sermon is entitled Humble Leadership And is based on 1 Peter 5 Verses 1-6 Your word We thank you that we can learn from it How we are to live lives that bring honour and glory to you Father we pray that you give us open ears and hearts to your word And that we may be able to apply it to our lives We ask this through your son's name Amen Please be seated Caring for sheep on a farm Is not as simple as just leaving them in the back paddock And letting them be there There is a great deal of care That needs to go into looking after sheep

You need to make sure that there is plenty of water and feed Now you need to make sure that the feed is the right type of feed for that particular time of the year Particularly in light of the fact if you want to fatten the lambs Or you want to make sure that you have the right length of wool or whatever happens to be So feeding is very important You also need to make sure that your fences are in good condition To protect them so that you don't lose them But also to ensure that animals don't come in and drag your sheep away from you It's also important that you drench your sheep Worms are a big problem you know And also it's very important that if you have very soft soil That you clip their toenails You didn't think of that did you?

No I can see that Nodding there you didn't realise that toenails needed to be clipped on sheep If you have soft soil If you've got rocky soil that's okay Because it tends to just You know like a little abrasive pad Tends to make sure that their nails are okay But you need to make sure of this because otherwise they may get foot rot It's important also that you pick the right ram for breeding If you want to get a particular grade of wool Or you want a particular size lamb for meat or whatever it happens to be All these things need to be taken into consideration A good farmer cares for his sheep He looks after them He's up on the latest animal husbandry He's got his magazines He's looking out there trying to work out how to best care for his sheep It's an important thing Particularly if a crisis should come along Can I just say We weren't particularly good farmers Our fences were atrocious They looked like that

We'd mended them that many times It looked like 50 year old socks that had been darned over and over again And yet we would still throw branches in front of holes in the fence Just to try and stop the sheep from getting away Whenever we had to get the sheep in It was such an ordeal We'd have to sort of get all the kids out And you know we'd be trying to shoo them in the right direction They'd be scattering all over the place We just didn't have the right equipment We didn't come from a long line of sheep farmers We actually had to read from books to try and learn about these things One of the things that stuck in my mind about looking after sheep Was one year when we were shearing the sheep But we did it late Just before winter But a cold snap came That we didn't expect Now we didn't have the special little jumpers That some farmers have To be able to protect their sheep And I vividly remember walking around the top paddocks In the snow Looking for sheep that were still alive

And seeing sheep that were frozen Some barely alive And picking them up And putting them into the back of the car Or the trailer And dragging them down And trying to warm them up It was a horrible sight So much death Good shepherding Of sheep is very important You need to be a good leader How much more so When the shepherd is looking after Not a flock of sheep But people in his care How important is it then To be a good leader Particularly in the midst of a crisis We've been working through this book of 1 Peter As you know The book has been talking about the fact That these young churches Are in the midst of great suffering and persecution It's been terrible And Peter is writing to encourage them To tell them not to give up We've seen in the middle of a part of the book

[ 4 : 47 ] How he gives instructions On how they are to live their lives In the midst of this persecution And in the wrapping up last week We saw how he's trying to help them Understand the suffering that they're going through Trying to understand the social pressure That has been brought upon them To understand it in the context Of who God is And in light of the glory to come So in light of that external pressure That they're facing In light of the fact that last week we looked That judgement begins with the house of God That God's people is where judgement begins Peter talks to the church itself He looks at the internal structure To make sure that he can stand up Against this pressure Because if the structure Within the internal Within the church Is weak Is doomed to crumble So that's what we're looking at today If you look there In the end of verse 1 Peter says I exhort the elders among you

To tend the flock That flock of God That is in your charge He exhorts the elders Those who are in charge Of the flock Of the churches Now From this letter And from The New Testament The picture of what the elder And his responsibilities Is not clear Particularly In the book of 1 Peter In this verse The way that the The Greek is written We see that there is A little ambiguity Whether in fact All the churches Had any leadership at all Some may have Some may not have Remember these are young churches Young struggling churches We see in 1 Timothy Paul writes to churches Who have a very structured leadership Of bishops Deacons And elders But here Peter just talks to The elders Becomes somewhat fluid Becomes somewhat of a term

Just really looking at Those who are in leadership Whether you have some leadership Or not It's important to To actually give them Some direction In the leadership That they do have Many think That the term here Is just simply Trying to talk about An age Talking about The elders The older people But I think in the context Of 1 to 4 He's talking about Leadership here Those who are In a position of leadership And so Peter Endeavours in this passage today To try and give them Some understanding Of that responsibility But before he starts Notice at the beginning Of verse 1 He starts by giving A list of his credentials He starts by talking About himself Let me read it for you Now As an elder myself And a witness Of the sufferings of Christ As well as one Who shares in the glory To be revealed Notice the three things there That he talks about himself He starts by saying That he is a fellow elder He is someone

Although he is an apostle He has a responsibility To people in his charge That of an elder He has a leadership role This would have been Greatly encouraging I imagine For those Who had this leadership position To know that Paul knew What they were going through It's like going To a leadership course I guess And going to one Which Stormer Norman ran The chief and commander Of the US forces Going into Desert Storm Operation Desert Storm To hear him talk about leadership Well that would be An impressive thing I mean he's a man With great credentials He's a person Who has had leadership skills Peter states That he is a fellow elder He also states That he is someone Who is a witness To the sufferings of Christ He is someone That bears witness That he goes around And speaks of what Christ has done The way that Christ Suffered on a cross Taking the penalty Taking the penalty

For those Who trust in him This was The witness Of Peter He stood up And declared The sufferings of Christ But this witness Is also born in his body I imagine In the fact that He bore Testament to Christ In the way that He would have Suffered himself As we saw Last week In verses 12 To 19 Of chapter 4 We see there That the followers Of Christ Are encouraged To share In the sufferings Of Christ Peter Here indicates That he is one Also That shares In the sufferings Of Christ But the third point His third credential That he makes Very clear He makes Clearly known That he is also Someone who shares In the glory To be revealed Peter has been At pains To talk about The glory That is to be revealed It is a great theme Right throughout

[ 9 : 54 ] This book Starting right At chapter 1 Verse 5 Talking about The glory Which is the Salvation Which is to be Revealed one day The forgiveness Of sins The suffering That Christ took That we may share In his glory When he is exalted Peter sets himself Up here as an example An example For the leaders To follow He states His credentials This would have been Greatly encouraging To know that Here is someone Who they can follow Who is a witness Who has a great hope But at a deeper level I imagine it would have been Greatly encouraging For them also In the fact that When we think about Peter and his life At the point where Christ suffered On the cross Peter denied him Three times Peter denied Christ And yet he is Confident now That he shares In the glory That is to be revealed

Peter sets himself As an example Of one Who has failed But is also Forgiven Someone who is Going to share And the things To come Notice also The way that His message Is Christ centred That he is a witness To the sufferings Of Christ Look at the way That Peter's example Is actually Christ We saw that In chapter 2 Peter talks about In chapter 2 That Christ Is the supreme Example The supreme Example For people To follow So Peter says Follow my example Follow my example As I tend To the sheep That are in my care So you leaders Of the churches Care for the sheep That are in your care Now this image Is a great image The image Of shepherding The sheep It's an image That is rich In the Old Testament In the Old Testament We see that God Is the great shepherd Of his people Israel

Think of Psalm 23 The Lord is my shepherd Many many psalms Picking up this shepherd theme Of God being the great shepherd Psalm 78 And Hosea 3 Pick up the idea That this shepherd imagery Of God Is sooner the way That he led Israel Out of bondage Like a shepherd Leads his sheep We see Elsewhere in the Old Testament That Israel's leaders Are also called shepherds It also picks up On the fact That after the evil shepherds The evil leadership Of Israel Have scattered The flock Have scattered God's people Referring there To exile There would be A true shepherd That would come One who would Reassemble the flock We see these In the great prophets Of Jeremiah Ezekiel And Malachi When we get To the New Testament We see Jesus Standing there Declaring He is the good shepherd He is the one To reassemble Israel

In light of this Rich imagery This rich picture Of shepherding God's people Peter tells the elders To shepherd their flock To exercise oversight As we see in verse 2 The rest of verse 2 To care for them To have authority over them Peter then starts In the rest of verse 2 And 3 To give a list Of things That were Particular Attributes Of those Who were to be leaders It's like a Little mini Leadership course I guess I was looking On the web At all the different Leadership courses That you can do There are many Many leadership courses It's a big thing In our society To go and do A leadership course For this or that To try and increase productivity Leadership courses All over the place And here's Peter's Little leadership course He gives it in the form

Of three contrasting pairs Three things that they Were to do And three things They were not to do So let me read them for you Starting at verse 2 Exercising oversight Not under compulsion But willingly As God would have you Do it Not for sordid gain But eagerly Do not lord it Over those In your charge But be examples To the flock Peter starts By looking at the Motives of those Who are in leadership There are many Motives for wanting To go into leadership I guess Many many Many compulsions Many are forced Into it By others Many are in there For selfish reasons For their own satisfaction Or enrichment Peter questions that He says Don't Don't be involved In it Not under compulsion But be involved In leadership Willingly Be involved Freely Spontaneously

[ 14 : 58 ] But not only that Do it in accordance With God's will There's the first Little instruction The second one Qualifies this A little bit It explains A wrong motive For going into leadership It says Not for sordid gain Not for dishonest gain Don't go into leadership For dishonest gain Now back then The leaders would have Been in charge Probably of The money accounts For the church It would have been Very easy To go involved To be involved In leadership And to put the hand Into the pocket Into the till Paul is saying Peter is saying Don't go into leadership For sordid gain For dishonesty For the desire To earn money Sure it's right To be paid To go into Full time ministry To be paid For your work The New Testament Picks that up But don't go in it For dishonest gain As this is a means

Of being able To earn lots of money But instead Be wholeheartedly Eager To do God's will Be eager To do what God pleases God Not for your own Selfish motives The third one there Talks about How to tend The flock By not being excessive In the way That you are forceful With them You are not to Lord it over them It says in verse 3 You are not to Use excessive force To be harsh This is no place In Christian leadership For harsh treatment For excessive force Instead They use the power Of a good example My two girls Are delightful to watch If you ever want To see The power Of an example Look at children And the way They pick up On the habits Of their parents Yesterday We were having soup

And little Georgie Hasn't had soup Very often And she got A little bread And dipped it in As I was Doing the same thing I was sort of Dipping my little bread Into it Eating my soup And it was delicious And she looked at me And then she got Her bread And dipped it in And ate it And I thought Oh isn't that cute I don't mind Picking that example Up off me But it's when They pick up All the other examples That you start Getting worried Peter is saying They need to You need to The leaders need To be a good example Just as Peter Is an example For the leaders And Peter's example Is Christ They too need To be good leaders That is the way That they are To work within The congregation Lovingly Caring Being An example Of the way They are To be To each Other Well these Two verses Give us This list They were not To have The wrong

Motives For going Into ministry For leadership They weren't To have it To be involved In dishonest Earnings of money And they were not To lord it Over others But instead They were freely And willingly There to Eager to serve God Eager to do His will To be an Example for the Flock I don't know If you're involved In leadership Within the church Within this church Or any other church But how did you Fair when you Read through that List I know personally When I read Through the list I feel a little Awkward I think of my Motives of Why I get up Here At times I think There are Wrong motives There The desire To be seen By everyone That desire To be praised Instead of Serving others How did you Fair as you Read through The list For those Who are involved In leadership Well in

Verse 4 Peter goes on To talk about The results Of such Faithful Leadership Let me read It for you And when the Chief Shepherd Appears You'll win The crown Of glory That never Fades away Here we see Another image That Peter uses The image Of a crown Now back In the Greco-Roman World The crown Was used For people Of special Honour It was given To those Who had done Something Of extraordinary Feet So for example The athlete As he is involved In the track And field If he was to Win his race They would give Him a wreath Normally of An olive branch Or something Like that But that was Their crown In glory For those Who were involved In military The Roman Generals Would give Soldiers Golden crowns For those Who fought Valiantly In a fight Of course The Old Testament Picks up And in that Time Picks up The idea That a crown Was also

[ 20 : 00 ] Worn by a king Here Peter Peter talks About the fact That those Who serve Christ Those who Are the Leaders Their reward Is not here On earth But it is When Christ Is revealed And when he Is revealed There is an Unfading Crown To be given This idea Of unfading Comes from A word That picks up The idea Of a red Flower A deep Red flower That had This particular Quality That it Wouldn't Lose Its colour That was Fade Resistant This is the Word that is Picked up Here for the Unfading It is a Crown that Will not Wither It is a Crown that Lasts Forever This is the Result Of faithfulness In leadership This is what The leaders Are to be Desiring Not to be Trying to Gain Honour In this

Life But in The life To come Notice Also The image That is Used The chief Shepherd Have you Noticed How throughout This whole Section Dealing with Leadership That Jesus Keeps on Coming up Time and Time again The chief Shepherd The one Who is The example Of the Leader Peter is Pointing out That the Church is Christ's Church He is the Chief Shepherd He is the One that Cares for His Flock He is the One that Brings Spiritual Growth There is No room For false Humility Or for Pride For being Involved In ministry Christ is The one Who is the Head of His Church He is The chief Shepherd God These are Important Words For leaders To hear They have A great Responsibility But what About the Rest of The congregation

How are They to React To this Leadership In verse 5 he Starts Talking to The younger People of The congregation In the Same way You who are Younger Must accept The authority Of the Elders In light of The fact that The leaders Have this Authority It would be Easy for the Congregation to Take it To abuse This For people To resist It To rebel Against It To take Advantage Of those Who are In leadership But Peter Points out No They were To be People Who were To submit To accept The authority Of those Who were put In charge Of them They were To do it Willingly Not blindly The rest Of 1 Peter Talks Constantly About the Times Where we To submit To others Not to do It in a Way that Causes us To sin Peter is Not calling For us To do That

He's calling Us to Submit To accept To support To care To love Our leaders We to be People That pray For our Leaders To highlight This point Of mutual Responsibility The responsibility Of the leaders And the responsibility Of the congregation Peter then goes On to talk Giving a command To both People And all of You must Clothe yourselves With humility In your dealings With one another Here is the picture Of a servant A slave Putting on An apron Or some To gown To protect Himself As he does A menial Task This is what We are to do For one another We are to serve One another Leaders Serving the congregation The congregation Serving the leaders This is an important Thing Very important They are to serve One another

They are to treat Each other With mutual Humility It would be easy For those In the congregation To look at the words That we have seen Thus far To think What responsibility Do I have I will just leave it To the leaders They can look after The church They can do everything And I will just sit there But as we see In chapter 4 Verse 10 We see that God Gives Each of us Gifts To use For the church Some of us Will have the gift Of leadership And we need to Encourage those Who have that gift But each of us Have other gifts To be able to use To serve one another The congregation Were to be people Who did that Well Peter then Goes on to give A theological grounding A theological grounding For this mutual humility This mutual respect And he quotes Proverbs 3 Verse 34 If it is hard For the righteous Oh sorry The proud

[ 25 : 02 ] God opposes the proud But gives grace To the humble Here we see God opposing Those who are Arrogant Who think of themselves More important Than others Those who trust In themselves But those who trust In God Who are humble They delight In trusting in God The proud Seek their own glory The humble Give glory to God This is the way Of God This is the way That we are to live With one another We are to be people Who are humble Humble leadership Humble people Under that leadership In verse 6 Peter draws a bit Of a conclusion Not only were people To be humble Before one another They were to be humble Before God as well They were to bow To God's wisdom Whatever may come

Whatever twists and turns Let me read it for you Humble yourselves therefore Under the mighty hand Of God So that he may exalt you In due time The people God's people Were to trust themselves Under God's mighty hand They were to humble Themselves before him Whatever came Hardship Disadvantage They were to do this Knowing that in time In God's time They would be lifted up It may not be this life But there is a guarantee That God will lift them up And exalt them Isn't it interesting That these words pick up The example of Christ The one who humbled himself Before God as well Who lived an obedient life Who took on What was given to him Who did the will of God Even to death on a cross

That was Christ's example It's the example That we are to follow as well Well We may not have the same Persecutions or sufferings That the people back then did We may not come under the same Terrible persecution But as we look back over church history We see there are many times Which the church has come under Great difficulty You only have to look at Canada At the moment Over in Canada The diocese have just passed A bill Saying that it's okay To formalise A same sex relationship Some churches stood up Against this And rightly so But because of that They've been asked To give an account for that They've been giving a hard time For that We need to be a church

That has our internal affairs Sound We need to make sure There is good leadership In the church We need to make sure That there is mutual respect For one another So that we may share In the glory to be revealed Therefore leaders Those who are involved In leadership in the church Whether it be To those Of the whole congregation Or for a part of it For Sunday school For whatever part Those who are involved In leadership We are to follow Peter's example As he follows Christ's supreme example We are to be people That care for those In our charge Not for our own satisfaction Or enrichment We are not to lord it Over those in our flock We are to remember That our reward Is not now But when Christ returns We are to remember That Christ is the chief shepherd He is the one That will bring Spiritual growth We are to be humble leaders Both before our congregation

And God For those For those For those For those who Are not in position Of leadership Remember you have A responsibility As well To accept the authority To support And care for those Who are in leadership We need mutual respect Well I have been watching The building works Happening outside Since the beginning We live right next door To it It has been fantastic Seeing the new church site Going up Seeing the foundations Being laid In fact when they had The roller in there Our paintings And our pictures Would rattle on the walls And it was very noisy Starting 7 o'clock Every morning Which really wasn't A problem Because our girls Would be up way Before then The foundations Were set We saw the The framework Go up And yesterday We saw the first

[ 30 : 07 ] Few bricks Being laid We saw the foundations Of this building That is to last A long time  
Against weather Against lots Of different crises I guess But what's more Important is Is  
that we make sure That we have our Internal structure Sound We need to make sure That  
we have good leaders Leaders willing to seek And serve God We need to be a  
congregation Of mutual respect For one another May this be a part Of our life here At Holy  
Trinity Amen Amos That we can do That we have Up before Tell us To tell us