

Live in the Way of Humility

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[0 : 00] Let's turn now to 1 Peter, chapter 5. We're coming towards the end of this letter that we've been looking through.

Last week we were looking at the first four verses of 1 Peter, chapter 5. And I'll just read from the beginning, although we looked last week at verses 1 to 4, but I'll just read from the beginning. So I 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, shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you, not for shameful gain, but eagerly, not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. And then particularly the following verses, Because likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility towards 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.

[1 : 37] Now, Peter has been, as we saw last week, talking to the elders, and he was setting out charges before them, and all of that, of course, is in light of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then Peter goes on to highlight a particular virtue, a particular quality, that should really be evident, and should be at work and manifest in the life of the believer, and that is humility.

Now, we see here that Peter calls for the younger to be subject to the older.

And Peter, throughout this epistle, that's one of his themes, is calling different groups to be in subjection one to another. For instance, he has called us to be in subjection to the powers that be. He has called upon, remember, wives, we've looked at that in chapter 3, to be subject to their husbands. And here he's calling to the younger to be subject to the elders.

[2 : 48] And while there is no doubt that would include the elders that have just been spoken about, the elders who are in office, many believe that the language includes not just those in office, but those who are older in the church.

And I think probably one of the reasons why Peter is calling upon the younger to be subject to the elder, or to the older ones, is that we've always got to remember, and I'm not being unkind or unfair, I don't think, to the young people, because I remember myself when I was young.

We tend to be when we're younger. Maybe, and this is more, I'm saying it by more a way of generalizations, not always through, but we can be very opinionated, and we can be very headstrong when we're young.

Sometimes when I get a bit older, I look back myself and I think sometimes and I say, oh man, it's natural to us, it's natural to young people, this kind of headstrong, it's part of where you're at in life. There's this sense of just going headlong into things, there's a sense of energy and dynamic surge in life, and often we have strong opinions when we're, and it's not necessarily a wrong thing, these things.

[4 : 16] But in the church, this is what Peter is saying, we've got to be prepared to be subject to the elder. Now, of course, the older people can learn an awful lot from the young, and I don't think it's a healthy thing to see a complete separation.

Of course, the young people do like to be with the young, and that's absolutely right. But I also think it's a very healthy thing to see the mingling of the older and the younger together, because the older can also learn a lot from the young.

But what the young people have always got to remember is that there's nothing like maturity and experience and a life of God's teaching being brought to bear into that experience.

And so there is reason why the Lord, and that's it's the Lord ultimately who's calling, who's saying there that the younger are to be subject to the elder.

But as I say, we learn a lot from one another, and I think it's good to have both the young and the older meeting together, mingling together, because the older people can be inspired often and enthused by the energy and by the vision often of young people.

[5 : 37] So both are essential, one for another. But then Peter goes on and he says to everybody, likewise you are younger, be subject to the elders, clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility towards one another.

And this word clothe, it's got the kind of idea of putting on a garment and tying it with a knot. It's like putting on an apron. If you're going to put on an apron and to tie it with a knot.

Humility is something that should be an essential part of our life. And when we think of humility, straight away our minds will go to the Lord Jesus Christ, because his whole life in this world was one of humility.

It was one of going down and down and down. His coming into this world was one of humbling himself. And all the way through it, he humbled himself even unto the death of the cross.

He humbled himself and even to being buried in the grave. His whole life was one of humbling, of and being humbled before God.

[6 : 51] But this is something that we should indeed, it should be part and partial of our life. And to be humble, it involves a gracious submitting of ourselves to the way of God, to the will of God, and to the rule of God.

And you know, if we were to submit ourselves in that way, to the way of God, and the will of God, and the rule of God, and were prepared to be submissive one to another, living in a way of humility. I believe that the impact of the church worldwide, if this was the way that the Christian church lived, the influence upon society, I believe, would be powerful.

But it's the one thing that goes against the grain. We are not naturally given to it. We are not naturally given to it.

And, of course, humility is something that's very hard sometimes to see in a person. Sometimes it is evident, sometimes it's not. It's not a posture. It's not something that we can just put on, as it were, for special occasions.

[8 : 07] Because a person can appear. If we, again, it all depends on what we think, or how we assess what humility is. It's not a posture. It's not a particular look.

Because a person can try and make themselves look humble, and yet be the possessor of an incredibly proud heart. But the thing at the end of the day is we can't deceive the Lord.

We might deceive ourselves a bit, and we might be able to deceive others, but we can't deceive the Lord. He knows exactly what we're really like. So there should be humility in our lives.

There should be humility in our worship before the Lord. There should be humility in our service for and to the Lord. And there should be humility in our dealings, one with another.

And so this humility, if there is, you know, if we have this humility in life, the Lord, somebody said, and I believe it to be true, humility is the best soil for the Lord to work in.

[9 : 13] In other words, if a soul is humble before the Lord, that is the best soil for the Lord to work so that that person will develop and grow. And again, when we exercise, when we are living in a humble way before the Lord, we end up living in dependence upon him.

We are so aware of his mercy and our own need. And so there's this wonderful dependence upon him all the time. And again, if we are living in humility upon the Lord, before the Lord, it will give us a sense of contentment in this world.

If we have a humble spirit before God, I guarantee we will also have a content spirit before the Lord. Humility and contentment go together.

If we are not humble before the Lord, then we won't be content in and with the Lord's dealings with us. There will be resistance and we'll be fighting against it.

And such like. So humility and contentment go together. And so it's very obvious why Peter is talking here and emphasizing. And it's not just Peter who's emphasizing.

[10 : 32] We read there in James. James is emphasizing the very same thing. But let us remember this. We cannot be humble before one another unless we are first humble before the Lord.

And we notice that the Lord will give grace to those who humble themselves. That's what we're told. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility towards one another.

For God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. That's our warning against pride. If we are filled with pride, remember, my friend, God is in opposition to that spirit.

And it's not a good way to go through life if we're living with God in opposition to us. And then in verse 6, Peter says then, after telling us to be clothed with humility, then Peter goes on and he says, Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time he may exalt you.

Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. And we have here the picture of God working upon us. It's as if God's hand is heavy upon us.

[11 : 53] God is dealing with us. I think one of the prime examples of this, if we want a biblical illustration of it, is the children of Israel, if we look at their journey.

And for 40 years they wandered in the wilderness. And God said to them, I humbled you. I was humbling you to test you and to prove you.

To see whether you would obey my commandments or not. And for many of these 40 years, they were failing and failing and failing. They weren't obeying the commandments.

These were tough times for the Israelites. They had no food. They couldn't go to a shop and buy food. They couldn't even really go hunting to get food.

They were in a place that was void of food. And they were living daily in dependence on the manna from heaven. That was humbling. Every day they were waiting for God to send food from heaven.

[12 : 54] So they were void of resources themselves. They were void of wealth themselves. They were just living in utter dependence.

They had no place to call home. We love home. But they had no place. They were wandering from place to place to place. That was humbling.

And God did that deliberately. Why? Because they weren't ready for the blessing that he had for them. He was going to give them the most wonderful blessing.

He was going to bring them into a land that was flowing with milk and honey. It was rich in all kinds of resources. They were going to go into places where there were beautiful houses where everything was ready for them.

Because they were going to inhabit what others had. And God is saying, I'm going to really make life wonderful for you. But these 40 years were years of preparation.

[14 : 03] Because if they had gone straight into the land of promise, rather than it being a blessing, it would have been a curse. That land would have swallowed them up.

Because they were still proud and self-sufficient. And they were entangled in idolatry from their time in Egypt. It's very obvious that they had sunk into idol worship back in Egypt.

And God was at work for 40 years, breaking them, breaking them, breaking them, breaking them, until there was a generation ready. Their spirits had been taught.

And they were humbled before God. And they went in and they enjoyed the blessing that God had prepared for them. See, God wants the best for us.

Maybe today you're being pushed down. Maybe today you're being pressed down. And you're wondering, what is happening? What is going on? If you could see what God has prepared for you.

[15 : 02] What God is going to do for you. What God is going to provide for you. Even in this world. Yes, we know that in glory he's making the most wonderful provision.

But even in this world. Like he did for Israel. In this world they enjoyed wonderful blessings. But there's often within our heart, in our experience, times of being pushed down and kept down and being broken.

Because God wants the best for you. And our hearts sometimes have to be broken before him.

Because the pride and the self-sufficiency have to be broken down.

And we have to come to this place and point where we're ready to be taught of the Lord. Ready to obey the Lord. Ready to walk with the Lord and live in dependence upon him.

And so in different ways God is, he allows things into our lives. That often try us and test us. And all these different uncertainties in providence. And so we find that as God is working in us, we're told then, humble yourselves.

[16 : 16] So how do we in turn humble ourselves when we are being humbled by the Lord? Well, I think there are various ways when, for instance, it's important that we examine ourselves in the light of God's word.

We must examine ourselves as to how we're doing as believers. And you know, there are times when we begin to really probe in. And particularly if we say to the Lord, Lord, show me myself. And the Lord gives a little glimpse of what you really like. You know, it can be disturbing. It can be heartbreaking.

Because we see there's something of the corruption. And something of what we're really like. And that, my friends, has a humbling impact upon us.

Because we look at ourselves and we say, Is this what I'm like? I've been a Christian 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 years. And is this what I'm like?

[17 : 27] I thought by now I would be so holy and consecrated to the Lord. But as I look into my life, I see the same sins plaguing me.

They've been plaguing me for years and years and years. What's going to become of me? And so, as we deal with these things and focus upon these things, This is all part of the humbling.

And we've said it often before. As we reflect over our lives, we often look and we see how little we've achieved. But, you know, if our spirit is, if we are humbling ourselves in the right way, And if we are viewing God's work in us in the right way, You know, one of the great things is this.

As we view God's mercy to us, as we are being humbled, This is what happens if we are laid low under God's hand.

And our spirit is becoming a right spirit. You know what we'll be thinking? We'll be saying, isn't it amazing that God didn't actually lay me lower?

[18 : 40] Isn't it amazing that God didn't even push me down further? Because that's what I deserve. When our spirit is being taught, And when we're arriving, as it were, when a maturity is developing, This is what we'll be saying.

Rather than resisting God's humbling hand upon us, We'll be saying, it's a marvel That I wasn't pushed down further because that's what I deserved.

And very often, again, as we look at our own lives in light of eternity, And we say to ourselves, what if tonight, What if tonight the Lord's going to call for me?

What if tonight I have to appear before the Lord? What if today before the day is out? Am I ready? Am I ready to appear before the Lord of glory?

And sometimes as we look at ourselves, We're saying to the Lord, Lord, you've got to work in me.

This is the way we feel. And so all this is part of the humbling that goes on.

[19 : 44] But what we've got to remember is, That the Lord isn't just humbling us for the sake of it. It's always for a purpose. It's for good. Because he says, The humbling's going to give way.

Because he says, This is what Peter's saying, So that the proper time, He may exalt you. See, there's a time for exaltation. As soon as the Lord is seeing the work is done, He will lift the rod. He will lift his heavy hand from off you. You look at it. There's many examples in Scripture. I suppose Joseph is one of the prime examples. I don't know.

We can't really see. But I tend to think when Joseph was a younger man, That there was an element of pride in him. Because he seemed to be quite happy About telling his brothers and his father About the dreams he was having.

But you know, Joseph ended up in prison in Egypt. He was sold as a slave. Then Potiphar's wife told lies about him. For years, He was in the prison in Egypt.

[20 : 46] And every moment, There seemed to be a window opening. Where there might be a chance Of getting out that window closed again. And down and down and down And down and down and down He went for years.

He was being pushed further And further and further down. And then came the day At the proper time. The proper time.

When he was exalted. And I think it's the most dramatic exaltation of all. David was exalted as well. But Joseph's exaltation Was unbelievable in many ways.

He was taken after years In his prison rags. With his bread and his water In the prison or whatever he was having. Ushered straight into the king's palace.

Stood before the king And before the day was out. He was second in command in Egypt. He was made ruler Side by side with Pharaoh. Only Pharaoh was greater in the land.

[21 : 45] What exaltation that was. My friends. That's a picture of what happens to us In Jesus Christ. You know when we die. The exaltation will be even greater.

Where we will be raised Into the palace of the king There to abide. And it won't be some earthly pharaoh. But it's going to be with King Jesus. Into his presence.

And we're going to reign with him forever and ever. Extraordinary. Amazing grace. This is what the scripture teaches us. But it shows us in this life as well.

The Lord will therefore Humble yourselves therefore Under the mighty hand of God. So at the proper time He may exalt you. Time is moving on very briefly.

It then moves on and saying Casting all your anxieties on him Because he cares for you. Our life Is often Riddled with anxieties.

[22 : 46] And you know the funny thing is that Many of the anxieties that we have Come to us Through The great temporal blessings That we enjoy.

In other words Our families Our health Our work Our homes Just The normal Day to day Running of life And all the things That make life What they are And their blessings To us from God And yet These are the very things That bring Into Our own lives Cares And worries And anxieties Maybe for you Some of you today You're worried about Members of your family It's causing you So much anxiety Putting you off Your sleep Maybe some of you Your health Is so affecting you Maybe there are things At your work There are maybe things In relationships Maybe things In financial things There might be a host Of things And it's causing you Real anxiety And although there are Times you push it away It still comes back And the Lord knows

That this is how life will be But we're told here Casting All your anxieties On him And you know This is a command That we find Over and over And over again In scripture And I always tend to think When we find something Being repeated It is because We're quite likely Not to do This very thing When God tells us To do something Over and over again I believe it is Because it's something That we're slow to do Or hesitant to do And I believe That this is one Of the areas In life One of the things That we're slow to do Is to cast Our care Upon him Because there are Two big problems Two big problems That are part and Partial of our nature One is unbelief And what does Unbelief do Unbelief Works in our heart And it says Oh I

If I hand this Over to the Lord The Lord might not Work it out Properly He might not Work it out For me The way I want Unbelief Somehow Doesn't Completely Unbelief Doesn't trust the Lord That's the bottom line And there's unbelief In our heart We're riddled by it Whether we like it or not And the other problem Is pride Where we somehow Think we can sort it Out ourselves And so unbelief And pride Often keep us back From casting Our worries Our burdens Our anxieties Upon the Lord But we're told to do it And the very word Cast is To throw upon You see It's not just Place it on It's cast it on Cast your burden

Upon the Lord We read in Psalm 37 Commit your way Literally Roll Roll it on To the Lord Roll your way On to the Lord Because if we were To place it What would we do We would put our hand On it We'd say Well Here are my Here's my anxiety Here are my anxieties But I'm going to I'm going to keep a hand On them as well Just Just in case Because I I feel I've got to have A part of this No the Lord is saying Just Throw them onto me Cast them onto me And what are we to do then When we cast them We are to keep focused Upon the Lord Because we've given them To the Lord But let us Let's not focus On the anxieties But focus upon him That's what he wants us to do He says I look after these things You look to me And that's how That's where perfect peace comes Remember how it says to us In the word

[27 : 01] You will keep him In perfect peace Whose mind is Stayed or focused Upon you Because he trusts in you And so May we May we have the Be given the grace To cast And the humble spirit Will Cast upon the Lord Because remember There is nobody more Qualified to do this Than the Lord He is mightier than you He's mightier than me He's mightier than any problem That we have in this life And so He's saying to us Cast your all upon me But he's not only mighty He's willing This is what This is the wonderful thing He's saying Please It's really This is what Because it's reiterated So often in scripture The wonderful thing About our Lord Is that he has a heart For you Why?

Because he cares for you That's why we're told To do it We're not casting Our cares upon a God That we're not too sure Whether he's interested in us Or that he's ready for us We're told how it is Casting all your anxieties on him Because he cares for you Isn't that wonderful?

Today The Lord cares for you Who's writing this letter? Peter Well you look at the life of Peter And if anybody had the authority To write this I know that he's writing As he has given Spirit-breathed words here But you know The wonderful thing is That here is Peter And he's writing And he'd be saying You know As he's writing this He says This is so true One day Jesus came to my home

Mother-in-law was really ill And I doesn't tell us That Peter's wife Was riddled with anxiety But I'm sure she was And what happened?

What happened? Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law Then again When you think of Peter Walking on the water And crying out to the Lord Lord say me Jesus stretched out his hand And saved him Why?

Because he cared for Peter He cared for Peter's mother-in-law Peter could remember Sitting on the shores of Galilee As Jesus was restoring him After his denial After the denial and fall And Peter would I'm sure this was something That was always in the heart of Peter The gentle tender care Of Jesus As he built him back up And sent him out to work Why?

[29 : 47] Because he cared for him Peter would remember the night He was chained to two prisoners In the prison And Herod was going to take him out The next day to execute him In the middle of the night A tap An angel Was in the prison Remember how the chains fell off And Peter was led out into the street Delivered Why?

Because the Lord was caring for him So as Peter writes this He You could almost See and feel The energy of him Say This is so true I've been there The Lord cares for you He cares for you today My friend Will you cast Not just all your anxieties Not all your cares But your life You're all Upon him Because there is nobody else Mightier Or greater Than the Lord Let us pray O Lord our God We give thanks again For being able to meet Around the word And we pray for the grace To cast our Our anxieties And our burdens Upon the Lord Bless us we pray And support us Bless those whose hearts Are heavy Those today Who have all these Burdens and anxieties

We thank Lord Of those who Are facing difficulties And troubles And trials Those who have experienced Loss and bereavement And sorrows And sadness Lord bless them We pray And put thine arm Around them And that they might Know the gracious Care of God Bless us then We pray And take away From us our sin In Jesus name We ask it Amen Amen