

First Peter

Chapter Five

Study Guide



Pray's Mill Baptist Church

First Peter Chapter Five Supplemental Study Guide¹

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¹ Prepared by David Crowe for Pray's Mill Baptist Church Adult Sunday School
ALL Scripture Quotations are from the ESV Bible unless the Scripture reference is in a quote from another author – their original translation was kept.

Psalm 23, A Primer for the Elders' Enduring Call to Shepherd Christ's Church²

Throughout the Scriptures we have accounts of God personally calling and setting apart men for the leading and care of his people. Usually these direct calls are for unique seasons or works within God's larger redemptive plan. This was certainly the case for Jesus' core group of disciples that would go on to constitute the Apostles of the early Church and have the unique roles of serving as witnesses to Jesus' public/incarnate ministry (from the baptism of John to his ascension). These men, the Apostles, would also go on to form the foundational leadership to the Church. Among the personal callings of the Apostles of which we have a record is Simon Peter. We actually have six accounts of his initial calling by Jesus.³ However, we also have a most unique account of a second calling for Peter too, a restorative calling. It is true that the shepherd was struck and the sheep scattered,⁴ but two were particularly pronounced in the hours of Jesus' betrayal and suffering: Judas, who showed himself to be of the enemy and betrayed Jesus, and Peter, who showed himself as having more heart than courage in the apex of struggle, thereby denying his Lord and friend. There would be no restoration for Judas and his demise soon followed. However, for Peter there would be a personal restoration and profound calling by the Good Shepherd.

Peter knew the beautiful language of shepherding expressed throughout the Scriptures and that The LORD himself promised to shepherd his people, Israel. Peter knew of the beloved Psalm composed by the Shepherd King, David. Peter had also personally heard the incarnate Son of God unambiguously articulate that *he* is the Good Shepherd. So, undoubtedly a flood of thoughts and emotions raced through the heart and mind of Peter when his Lord, whom he loved with a true passion, chose to restore him with the call to shepherd his people – effectively stating that if you genuinely love me, Peter, then you will shepherd my people.

Hear again those words to Peter: "When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' He said to him, '**Feed my lambs.**' He said to him a second time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' He said to him, '**Tend my sheep.**' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' and he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, "**Feed my sheep.**" John 21:15-17 ^{ESV}

Peter went on to faithfully execute this high calling and personal charge and then with the authority of an Apostle of Christ's Church, he passes this high calling and charge to every man who has been set apart to lead local manifestations of Christ's Church. "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

² Following this introduction the Psalm 23 Study Guide was originally prepared by David Crowe for Pray's Mill Baptist Church Adult Sunday School when working through several Psalms in Sunday School (circa 2015-16). The lesson has continued to be used on the foreign mission field when instructing indigenous pastors on God's high calling to shepherd the flock. ALL Scripture Quotations are from the ESV Bible unless the Scripture reference is in a quote from another author – their original translation was kept.

³ Matthew 4:18-20, Mark 1:16-18, 3:14-16, Luke 5:10-11, 6:13-14, John 1:42

⁴ "Then Jesus said to them, 'You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'"" Matthew 26:31 ^{ESV}

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.” 1 Peter 5:1-4 ^{ESV}

Now, having heard Peter’s calls to shepherd Christ’s Church, take time to revisit a well-worn path and old friend, Psalm 23. Also, take time to examine the role of shepherds in God’s redemptive story and in particular how The LORD himself identifies himself as the Shepherd of his people.

Psalm 23

Psalm 23 appears to be one of the most well-known and often quoted texts of Scripture by both those who love the Scriptures and those who have never given them any respectable attention. It is among the selective class of Scriptures whose membership consist of the Ten Commandments and The Lord’s Prayer – disproportionately cited and referenced with little to no functional understanding by most.

So it is a reasonable question as to how this particular Psalm has taken such a preeminent role in terms of popular culture - sacred and secular. It has, in terms of popular reference and citation, taken the place of preeminence over well-known psalms, such as Psalm 1, 2, 15, 19, 22, 51, 119, 139, 150, etc.

I am persuaded that there are two reasons for this:

1) The universal desire to be comforted in the reality of death which all men know will visit them at some time, this is likely the broader appeal, particularly among the secular community. Placing their greatest emphasis on 23:4 people universally find comfort with being shepherded through the darkest dark or death. The problem is that for most such persons this is a stolen comfort which will ultimately provide them no real satisfaction as they do not know the Good Shepherd and he does not know them, they neither know his voice or follow, and they are taking in a comfort that is not theirs to enjoy. This is both most unfortunate and opportunistic. Unfortunate because people are perishing with a hope that is rooted in a relationship they do not have, but opportunistic because we can direct them to the joys of this hope. Now, I may be saying “we” with more charity than I should. Perhaps this is an opportunity for you to examine your own comfort in the face of the inevitable reality of death. Is it rooted in faith and repentance? Do you truthfully know the Good Shepherd and long for his presence not only in a euphoric later, but now and with every breath the Lord affords you? David, who penned this magnificent Psalm certainly did.

2) The comforting grace of The LORD being a shepherd and caring for his own, this having more influence over those who know and love the Lord and in its own right is a wonderful reason to esteem this Psalm. As I will try to make plain throughout this guide I am persuaded that 23:1 is the thesis or core message of this Psalm. There is a natural, pure, and satisfying attraction to embracing the truth that The LORD is my shepherd and I shall not want, lack, or need as I am wholly satisfied in him and will forever enjoy his care, abundance, and presence all the days of my life... and beyond.

“The psalm expresses confidence in God’s goodness – in this life and in the life to come. The personal way in which the psalmist speaks of God, the imagery of God’s soothing guidance, and the ensuing confidence in God have all been factors in making this one of the most charming and beloved of the psalms. The universal appeal of this psalm lies in the comfort it gives to those who have confronted the most difficult periods of life. It is a psalm of God’s strength and grace for all ages.”⁵

Structure

From my work in the text I have concluded that 23:1 is the Thesis/Core of the Psalm and its truth is developed throughout the following five verses. In 23:2-4 the Shepherding metaphor is most poignant and then 23:5-6 the truths articulated in the preceding verses are poetically fleshed out in a more natural context.

23:1 Thesis/Core of the Psalm: The LORD is my shepherd therefore I shall not want/lack/need, but will have provision and care in abundance and its chief application is his presence.

23:2 Natural illustration of shepherding care – providing good provision.
Green pastures.
Still waters.

23:3-4 Supernatural/Spiritual correlation of the shepherding care – providing good provision, care, and comfort. It also provides a critical insight into the shepherding care (for the Shepherd’s name’s sake).
Restoring of soul.
Paths of righteousness.
Comforting amidst great darkness.

23:5 Super abundances in comfort and care.

23:6 The chief application of the Good Shepherd being his Shepherd – not wanting as goodness and mercy/love will pursue him for life and the unparalleled privilege of being in The LORD’s presence is realized and enjoyed.

James Boice wholeheartedly concurs with my conclusion that 23:1 captures the very essence of the entirety of the psalm. “The psalm is a masterpiece throughout. But if ever a psalm could stand almost on a single line, it is this one, and the line it can stand on is the first. In fact, it can stand on only part of a line, the part which says, ‘The LORD is my shepherd.’”⁶

⁵ The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Psalms, Volume 5. Willem A. VanGemeren. Zondervan, 2008 (Hereafter: VanGemeren), Pg.252

⁶ An Expositional Commentary: Psalms, Volume 1. James Montgomery Boice. Baker Books, 1994 (Hereafter: Boice), Pg.207

Boice does not provide an overt structuring of the Psalm, but he does argue for its shepherding continuity. Part of this is his addressing some insightful shepherding elements such as an anointing of sorts for the sheep (an oil with various ingredients that was both medicinal in care and a repellant of insects) and referencing “tablelands” where summer grazing would occur after its thorough preparation by the shepherd. However, he does not directly address the presence of enemies beyond ridding the area of varmints and he does not give direct treatment to how one’s cup overflowing would fit into this more overt shepherding image so his continuity is welcomed, but feels a little forced.⁷

John MacArthur states that David “...progressively unveils his personal relationship with the Lord in 3 stages.”⁸

- I. David’s Exclamation: The Lord Is My Shepherd” (23:1a)
- II. David’s Expectations (23:1b-5b)
 - A. “I Shall Not Want” (23:1b-3)
 - B. “I Will Fear No Evil” (23:4,5b)
- III. David’s Exultation: “My Cup Runs Over” (23:5c-6)

The English Standard Version Study Bible sees two primary divisions in the Psalm:⁹

23:1-4 The Lord as Shepherd who cares for the sheep.

23:5-6 The Lord as Host who cares for his guest.

Note that the ESV SB recognizes that some persons, myself included, do not see as firm a break in the psalm as they do. So they provide the following explanation: “Some have argued that the image of shepherd and sheep is still present here; but the mention of a table, of putting oil on the head, the cup, and the Lord’s ‘house,’ all show that the psalm now describe the faithful person as God’s guest at a meal (‘prepare a table’).”¹⁰

I understand and appreciate their conclusion, but as have articulated, I am persuaded that these last verses are an unpacking of the opening Shepherd/Sheep metaphor, using more illustrative/poetic language to articulate the core thesis/opening verse and all that it wonderfully contains.

⁷ Boice, Pgs.211-212

⁸ The MacArthur Study Bible, NKJV. Word Bibles, 1997. (Hereafter: MacArthur), Pg.762 (citation is intended to include both the quote and structure)

⁹ English Standard Version Study Bible. Crossway Bibles, 2008. (Hereafter: ESV SB) Pg.966

¹⁰ ESV SB, Pg.966

Willem VanGemeren in his commentary on the Psalms also divides Psalm 23 into two separate metaphors, referencing the structure as both simple and complex.¹¹

A The Lord Is My Shepherd (vv.1-4)

B The Lord Is My Host (vv.5-6)

Derek Kidner also holds to the psalm having two distinct metaphors. “The shepherd imagery has served its purpose, to be replaced by one of greater intimacy. (The attempt to sustain the first metaphor, which is sometimes made, would turn it through a full circle, picturing men as sheep which are pictured as men—with their table, cup and house – which is hardly a profitable exercise.)”¹²

I am still inclined toward a singular metaphor that yields to a wonderful picture that is rooted in this single metaphor and not a separate metaphor altogether. However, even if there are two metaphors in the psalm I do not believe that Kidner’s language is best when he states that “the shepherd imagery has served its purpose” and that the second metaphor achieves a greater intimacy. This to me appears to diminish the magnificence of the Shepherding metaphor. Finally, I still do not understand the necessity of the transition to a second metaphor and if there is not an articulable necessity then why would it be present?

23:1

The LORD is my shepherd.

In terms of authorship we know that David was not the exclusive contributor to the canonized Book of Psalms and that the entirety of Scripture, Old and New Testaments alike, are wholly inspired by the Holy Spirit. So there is a precious kindness and insightful beauty to David, a former shepherd and himself being referred to as the Shepherd-King (2 Samuel 5:2), stating that The LORD (Yahweh) is his shepherd. For any other man of God to make this statement would be no less true, but it would lack some of the poignancy that David provides it. Further, it is most fitting that the Shepherd-King would have an heir sit on his throne, The Son of David, who himself would be The Good Shepherd, David’s Shepherd.

But was this relationship restricted to David? Was The LORD’s David’s Shepherd alone? Why is the psalm articulated with such an apparently limited scope?

The psalm was not restricted to David, The LORD was not exclusively David’s Shepherd, and the intimacy expressed here does not restrict the scope of its application, but draws out the personal nature of the relationship that the Shepherd has with his people both corporately and individually.

¹¹ VanGemeren, Pg.252

¹² Derek Kidner; Kidner Classic Commentaries: Psalms 1-72. IVP Academic (Digital Copy), 1973. (Hereafter: Kidner), Pg.129

When addressing the very personal nature of this Psalm commentator VanGemeran states that the propensity of Israel was to view their relationship with The LORD in a very corporate manner and here it is seen that the relationship is both corporate and individual. "It permits individual believers to take its words on their lips and express in gratitude and confidence that all the demonstration of God's covenantal love can be claimed not only corporately by the group but also personally by each of its members."¹³

Arnold Rhodes addresses this too, stating, "God is often referred to directly or indirectly as the shepherd of Israel... but infrequently as the shepherd of an individual. This Psalm is, therefore, all the more remarkable for its emphasis upon God's care of an individual sheep."¹⁴

So what is entailed in the image/reality of The LORD being one's shepherd? "In the word shepherd, David uses the most comprehensive and intimate metaphor yet encountered in the Psalms, preferring usually the more distant 'king' or 'deliverer', or the impersonal 'rock', 'shield', etc.; whereas the shepherd lives with his flock and is everything to it: guide, physician and protector."¹⁵

Now while Psalm 23 will further develop this core statement, it is important to see what the commentary of Scripture states for itself regarding this role that was loathed by societies throughout history and yet uniquely esteemed by The LORD of Glory. Consequential persons in Redemptive History were occupational shepherds, Israel's leaders were referred to as shepherds, and The LORD himself is both referred to and refers to himself as a Shepherd.

Shepherds

Occupational Shepherds

There is a robust history of shepherding among The LORD's people, but particularly among his leadership and distinguished servants, the following are some examples:

Genesis 4:2	Abel was a keeper/shepherd of sheep.
Genesis 29:9	Rachel was a shepherdess.
Genesis 29/30	Jacob shepherded.
Genesis 37:2	Joseph shepherded the flock along with his brothers.
Exodus 3:1	Moses shepherded.
1 Samuel 16,17	David was a faithful shepherd.

¹³ VanGemeran. Pg.253

¹⁴ The Layman's Bible Commentary: Psalms, Volume 9. Arnold B. Rhodes. John Knox Press, 1966 (Hereafter: Rhodes), Pg.52

¹⁵ Kidner, Pg.127

Leaders of Israel as Shepherds

Numbers 27:17	Moses, at the end of his life requests that The LORD would not leave Israel without a shepherd lead them.
2 Samuel 5:2 & 1 Chronicles 11:2	At David's coronation over the full Kingdom of Israel it stated that The LORD had stated to David, "You shall be <i>shepherd</i> of my people Israel...."
2 Samuel 7:7 & 1 Chronicles 17:6	The LORD had commanded the judges of Israel to shepherd his people.
1 Kings 22:17 & 2 Chronicles 18:16	Under fallen leadership Israel was like scattered sheep with no shepherd.
Psalms 78:70-72	"He chose David his servant and took him from the sheepfolds; from following the nursing ewes he brought him to shepherd Jacob his people, Israel his inheritance. With upright heart he shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hand."
	David was chosen by The Chief Shepherd of Israel, to shepherd the people of Israel, called from among the sheep to shepherd the people.
Jeremiah 3:15	In a context of restorative hope it is stated that The LORD will give his people shepherds after his own heart, shepherds like David, the Shepherd King, and they will care for them by feeding them with knowledge and understanding.
Jeremiah 10:21	Even failed leadership is framed in the context of shepherding, "For the shepherds are stupid and do not inquire of the LORD; therefore they have not prospered, and all their flock is scattered."
Jeremiah 17:16	Jeremiah recognizes that among his roles he had been called to be a shepherd.
Ezekiel 37:24	In a context of restoration hope it is stated that the Kingdom of Israel and Judah will be reunited and that "David" (<u>pointing to the Greater David</u>) will be king over them... and they will have one shepherd.

The LORD as Shepherd

"The Lord's self-revelation as 'shepherd' of his people is not merely a metaphor with which his people could clearly relate, but it is one that describes the comprehensive care that he provides for his people."¹⁶

"Sheep, on the other hand, are *always* completely dependent on their shepherd. They never outgrow their need for the shepherd to care for them, feed them, lead them, and protect them. The shepherd cares for the newborn lambs and is still there when the sheep grow old and weak. Therefore, the imagery of shepherd-sheep captures the comprehensive sovereignty of the shepherd over the sheep and the need of the sheep to yield completely to his care. The good news is that the Lord uses his sovereign power for the well-being of his flock."¹⁷

- Genesis 48:15 The first reference to The LORD being a shepherd came from Jacob/Israel who when blessing Joseph's sons stated, "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who as been my *shepherd* all my life long to this day...."
(Shepherd: Personal, Jacob/Israel)
- Psalms 23:1 David states that The LORD is his shepherd and develops this shepherding care (provision, leading, restoring, caring, and comforting).
(Shepherd: Personal, David)
- Psalms 28:9 David asks that The LORD would be Israel's shepherd and that he would carry them forever.
(Shepherd: Corporate, Israel)
- Psalms 78:52 In a context that is recalling the marvelous works of God on behalf of Israel, a concise overview of major elements of Redemptive History to this point, it is stated regarding the Exodus, "Then he led out his people like sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a flock."
(Shepherd: Corporate, Israel)
Note what this looks like too as this section further develops 78:53-55), the provision and care of the Shepherd:
"He led them in safety, so that they were not afraid, but the sea overwhelmed their enemies. And he brought them to his holy land, to the mountain which his right hand had won. He drove out nations before them; he apportioned them for a possession and settled the tribes of Israel in their tents."

¹⁶ The Shepherd Leader: Achieving Effective Shepherding in Your Church. Timothy Z. Witmer. P&R Publishing, 2010. (Hereafter: Witmer), Pg.13

¹⁷ Witmer, Pg.13

We then observe as the Psalm continues and finishes that he directs this shepherding care for his people through his servant David, the Shepherd-King (see above, Leaders of Israel as Shepherds).

- Psalm 80:1 The requests of the psalmist is that The LORD, the Shepherd of Israel, who leads his people like a flock and who is enthroned upon the cherubim, to come and save.
(Shepherd: Corporate, Israel)
- Isaiah 40:11 In a context of comforting Israel in view of The LORD's person and character it is stated that he will shepherd his people... tending his flock and gathering the lambs in his arms.
(Shepherd: Corporate, Israel)
- Jeremiah 23:1-8 First a rebuke to the failed/false shepherds, then a promise of good shepherds, and finally a view to the Chief Shepherd.
 '"Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!' declares the LORD. Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: 'You have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares the LORD. Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the LORD. 'Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.' 'Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when they shall no longer say, 'As the LORD lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,' but 'As the LORD lives who brought up and led the offspring of the house of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.' Then they shall dwell in their own land.'"
- Jeremiah 31:10 In a context of magnificent restoration promise to Israel it is stated, "He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock."
- Ezekiel 34:1-24 What David spoke in a united and strong kingdom captured the very heart of The LORD as reflected in Ezekiel's prophecy of both rebuke and preeminent restoration, David articulated that The LORD was his shepherd and Ezekiel demonstrated just how magnificent this truth was and is... pointing to the Son of David, Israel's Chief Shepherd-King.

"The word of the LORD came to me: 'Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord GOD: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered; they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them. 'Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: As I live, declares the Lord GOD, surely because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd, and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep, therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: Thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep. No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them. 'For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice. 'As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and male goats. Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet? And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet? 'Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with

your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken."

Micah 5:4

Reference to Messiah... "And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD...."

Shall Not Lack

"Old age with its feebleness shall not bring me any lack, and even death with its gloom shall not find me destitute. I have all things and abound; not because I have skill and wit with which to win my bread, but because '*The Lord is my Shepherd.*' The wicked always want, but the righteous never; a sinner's heart is far from satisfaction, but a gracious spirit dwells in the palace of content."¹⁸

The scope of which David is speaking when he states that he "shall not lack" is comprehensive and includes not just the essential elements of physical sustenance, but that which will also satisfy and sustain his inner man. The images immediately provided are physical provision, but their application is immediately seen to be much more comprehensive and to fail to see some measure of unity between the scope of provision is to not understand he who supplies what is needed.

When David speaks of not being deficient in a need he speaks from the vantage point of Redemptive History as well as from experience.

Exodus 16:13-21

The LORD provided mana for the Israelites in the wilderness and the people gathered and did *not lack*.

Deuteronomy 2:7

The LORD provided for the people of Israel during their forty years of wilderness wondering and they did *not lack*.

Deuteronomy 8:7-10

Israel was transitioning from forty years of provision to being given a wonderful land of their own in which they "*will lack nothing.*" "For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land he has given you."

¹⁸ Charles Spurgeon; The Treasury of David, Volume 1 – Psalms 1-57. Hendrickson Publishers. (Hereafter: Spurgeon), Pg.354

Psalm 34:10 David later testifies in the Psalms, "...those who seek the LORD lack no good thing."

This brings me to address the scope of the application of The LORD being David's Shepherd and Israel's Shepherd. While Psalm 23 is very personal in its immediate context the application is both personal and cooperate, just as David would not lack, so "...those who seek the LORD lack no good thing." This is because The LORD is both David's Shepherd and all faithful Israel's Shepherd too as demonstrated in several cooperate verses and as again drawn out here.

The English Standard Version Study Bible draws this out well, stating, "when they sing this psalm, they see his majesty in the way he personally attends to each of his covenant lambs. He is the shepherd for Israel as a whole; and in being such, he is the shepherd for each faithful Israelite as well."¹⁹

"To say, 'The LORD is my shepherd, ' is also to say, 'I shall not want.'"²⁰

Matthew 6:25-34 The Lord provides for his own and his provision does not *lack*.

23:2

Green Pastures and Still Waters

He makes... and he leads. Do sheep have to be made to lie down in green pastures? Is this partially satisfying his "not wanting"? Yes and yes. Sheep have to know that there is provision and that they are secure before they will take to a resting position on the ground and these elements of provision and security are outside of themselves and require that they be wholly shepherd dependent to enjoy proper rest. Those whom The LORD Shepherds know this rest as his provisions are sure and his protection is absolute.

Green pastures were a luxury enjoyed even in the desert during the winter and spring – affording the sheep the opportunity to have a steady and generous context for feeding without having to be moved from place to place in search for provision and this would afford the sheep the ability to rest, to lie down. The still/quiet waters were also indicative of a peaceful context of provision.²¹ However, The LORD is not limited to seasonal care, but always provides that which is good in its provision and that which will afford his faithful rest. Though as we will see there are dark valleys to traverse too and this is all under his perfect care.

¹⁹ ESV SB, Pg.966

²⁰ Rhodes, Pg.52

²¹ VanGemeren, Pgs.253-254

Beginning with the familiar image of the natural care a shepherd provides David further develops just how magnificent and comprehensive his Shepherd's care truly was for him.

The Shepherd Lead's His Sheep, A Provisional Lead. From the time that The LORD redeemed and drew his people out of Egypt he has provisionally led them... through the wilderness and into his promised land and those who know this Good Shepherd continued to seek his leading of them.

23:3

Restoration of Soul

He restores... and he leads.

Restore: Return to an original or proper condition.

Soul: The inner man, the essence of one's person.

“The restoration, refreshment, or revival of the soul (or life) indicates the returning of life or vitality.”²²

The refreshment and satisfaction in The LORD is absolute and complete. David is testifying to not only being provided for with continued welfare, but for being restoratively cared for by his Shepherd. However, this restorative care is more than binding injuries, it is caring for one's inner man – his whole person.

Paths of Righteousness

Righteous: That which is absolutely true, right, and just - finding its purest and complete application in The LORD, it is at the essence of his character to do that which is perfectly true, right, and just.

David is being led by The Righteous Shepherd in ways that honor him and reflect the perfections of his character - that which is righteous or true, right, and just - these are not only good, but to the chief benefit of man and therefore a preeminent care to him.

VanGemeran develops this leading on paths of righteousness directly through the shepherding metaphor and states that it is not leading one to obtain righteousness, but is leading on right paths and this is an element of protection and care. These are the most direct paths and less wearisome for the sheep.²³

²² ESV SB, Pg.966

²³ VanGemeran, Pg.254

The New English Translation of the Bible also makes this conclusion as reflected in their translation of 23:3, "He leads me down the right paths for the sake of his reputation."²⁴

His Name's Sake

For his name's sake - The LORD is acting on behalf of himself, and this is good.

This restoration and leading is The Good Shepherd's care of his own and he does this for the greatest good which surpasses their welfare and joy, it excels to his own reputation and magnification (the chief ends of man - glorifying God and in this faithful care of his own he is also affording them the high privilege of participating in their own chief good, making much of him). Therefore, it is worth again noting here that having a high or right view of God and a proper view of man is so essential it is fundamentally taken for granted in this study, but it comes down to this: if God would seek someone or something else's good or exultation or glory over his own he is effectively committing idolatry which is inherently impossible, but this is what contemporary Evangelical Culture would frequently seek (esteeming man over God if only in the most 'pragmatic' ways). *When we fail to see* that our chief good is God's exultation and that he was not desperate to secure our affections and even salvation *then we have* made ourselves Lord and have no proper affection or understanding of the One True LORD as revealed through the Scriptures.

When he leads David, Israel, and in his unfathomable kindness even us in paths of righteousness it is because this first and foremost makes much of him and it is for his name's sake and we are the beneficiaries and this is a kindness that we are fools to take for granted and that we will never properly comprehend. Do not forget the question posed in Psalm 8:4, "...what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?" If this bothers you then I am grateful because coming to terms with these wonderful truths will advance you toward one of our chief goals of this season in the Psalms, that you might become better worshipers of God. We would do well to mimic John the Baptist in his relationship with Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:30

The LORD acting and being asked to act for his own name's sake, the most consistent and right thing to do:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1 Samuel 12:22 | "For the LORD will not forsake his people, for <u>his great name's sake</u> , because it has pleased the LORD to make you a people for himself." |
| Psalms 23:3 | "He leads me in paths of righteousness for <u>his name's sake</u> ." |
| Psalms 25:11 | "For <u>your name's sake</u> , O LORD, pardon my guilt, for it is great." |

²⁴ NET Bible, Version 2.0 Digital Copy through the Lumina App, full information and full copies available at bible.org. (Hereafter: NET)

Psalms 31:3	"For you are my rock and my fortress; and for <u>your name's sake</u> you lead me and guide me..."
Psalms 79:9	"Help us, O God of our salvation, for <u>the glory of your name</u> ; deliver us, and atone for our sins, for <u>your name's sake</u> !"
Psalms 106:8	"Yet he saved them for <u>his name's sake</u> , that he might make known his mighty power."
Psalms 109:21	"But you, O GOD my Lord, deal on my behalf for <u>your name's sake</u> ; because your steadfast love is good, deliver me!"
Isaiah 48:9	"For <u>my name's sake</u> I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off."
Isaiah 48:11	"For <u>my own sake</u> , for <u>my own sake</u> , I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another."
Ezekiel 20:9	"But I acted for <u>the sake of my name</u> , that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they lived, in whose sight I made myself known to them in bringing them out of the land of Egypt."
Ezekiel 20:14	"But I acted for <u>the sake of my name</u> , that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out."
Ezekiel 20:22	"But I withheld my hand and acted for <u>the sake of my name</u> , that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out."
Ezekiel 20:44	"And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I deal with you for <u>my name's sake</u> , not according to your evil ways, nor according to your corrupt deeds, O house of Israel, declares the Lord GOD."
Ezekiel 36:22	"Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for <u>the sake of my holy name</u> , which you have profaned among the nations to which you came."

David's inner man has been refreshing restored more perfectly than the binding up of a lamb and he is led not simply to good things, but to the best, to righteousness and these cares and provisions are not on account of the sheep but the Shepherd.

The Shepherd Lead's His Sheep, A Directional Lead. From the time that The LORD redeemed and drew his people out of Egypt he has directionally led them... through the wilderness and into his promised land and those who know this Good Shepherd continued to seek his leading of them.

Walking Through the Valley

I walk... and I will fear not.

Shadow of Death: The Hebrew term is in the Old Testament seventeen times and only translated "shadow of death" four times - each such time is in the Psalms. Thirteen other times it is translated: Deep Shadow, Deep Darkness, Gloom.

"Phraseology used to convey a perilously threatening environment."²⁵

The shadow of death is referred to as "...an epithet of the most fearful darkness...."²⁶

As other commentators have concluded the reference to "the valley of the shadow of death" may have been an illustrative picture of the deep ravines that shepherds and their sheep would have to traverse at times, but VanGemeran further unites his "right" or "righteous" paths as perhaps necessarily going through such places in that they are the most direct even if they are with elements of danger.²⁷ The elements of danger being the unknowns of beast, nature, and foe, but even here the shepherd is their companion and leader and they need not fear any evil.

James Boice further comments on traversing these dark valleys and states, "It is important to note that 'the valley of the shadow of death' is as much God's right path for us as the 'green pastures' which lie beside 'quiet waters.'"²⁸

The Good Shepherd makes... he leads... he restores... he leads... and here he accompanies, therefore though I walk through the valley I will fear not.

Rod and Staff

The Shepherds tools were his rod and his staff, particularly valuable in dark place. They were the tools of direction and protection²⁹ and a means of guidance and defense.³⁰ The rod was for the clubbing of wild animals and the staff was to keep the sheep under control.³¹

²⁵ MacArthur, Pg.762

²⁶ C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch; Keil & Delitzsch: Commentary on the Old Testament, Volume 5 – Psalms. Hendrickson Publishers, 2001. (Hereafter: Keil & Delitzsch), Pg.208

²⁷ VanGemeran, Pg.254

²⁸ Boice, Pg.211

²⁹ MacArthur, Pg.762

³⁰ Keil & Delitzsch, Pg.208

³¹ VanGemeran, Pg.253

"The rod and staff represent God's constant vigilance over his own and bring 'comfort' because of his personal presence and involvement with his sheep."³²

These tools comfort, they restore one to a better disposition, they help to see that the sheep are satisfied with one's care, and ultimately because they are in the hands of their accompanying shepherd they provide peaceful rest through hardship.

In the midst of chief darkness David finds comfort and solace in the care of The LORD. Then from this apparent lowest of places he appears to transition to the most complete applications of the abundance of care he receives, it is not just that he is secure from harm - he is also secure in abundance.

23:5

"I shall not want." I understand these last two verses as the fuller reflections of The Shepherd's abundant provisions – whereas the metaphor may have subsided its poetry has not and I see this as the natural overflow of the magnificent truths articulated in picture above here seen with poetic emphasis in the natural realm of man. David is showing with poetic emphasis that this is what it looks like to walk with The LORD as one's Shepherd. It is not that he has exhausted the metaphor and is moving along to another one, but that not being able to exhaust it he explores its immediate outworking's of celebratory provision, of kind blessing, of unparalleled hope, and a satisfaction that can rest in The LORD's presence.

The Shepherd's care has demonstrated itself to be more than provisional, but abundantly provisional and this becomes increasingly clear as there is abundance in the presence of enemies, refreshment, provisions, and spiritual satisfaction.

A Prepared Table

The prepared table effectively sets the context for the celebratory blessing. It is the stage on which The LORD will exercise his kind abundance toward those in his affectionate care.

A Silenced Enemy

It is unclear what the status of these enemies are beyond that they are in opposition to David and thereby in opposition to The LORD. What is clear is that in the midst of The LORD's good provision and care they are left to only observe – either in submission or are simply impotent to contend with the sheep under the blessing and care of the Shepherd.

³² VanGemeren, Pg.253

Anointed Head

The anointed head here appears to reflect one who is fully satisfied and refreshed. You can better understand this and even distinguish it from the frequent references of anointing priests and kings with two references from the Gospels that capture the exercising of this Jewish blessing performed for one another and refreshment for oneself.

Luke 7:46 "You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment."

Matthew 6:17-18 "But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

John MacArthur further explains that anointing with oil also conveys one who is blessed or in blessed context and draws this out with the following Scriptures.³³

Psalms 45:7 "Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions"

Psalms 92:10 "But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; you have poured over me fresh oil."

Psalms 14:15 "...and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart."

You can imagine that in a primarily arid context that does not have packaged lotions and moisturizing soaps in at one's immediate disposal how refreshing and in turn what an immediate blessing it would be to have oil poured over one's head. Do not lose sight of the value of this blessing when peering through the lens of your artificial abundance of comfort.

An Overflowing Cup

This appears to be a poignant image of abundance. One has been provided and the provision is beyond what can naturally be contained. Again, it is framed in the context of a celebratory image: a prepared table, anointing with oil, and now an overflowing cup. It is enough that The Shepherd generously provides, gives rest, cares for, leads, and protects, but he does far more for his beloved.

³³ MacArthur, Pg.762

A Second Metaphor – *Worthy of Consideration*

Identifying the last two verses as a second metaphor, The LORD as a Host, VanGemeran sees the image being one in which the honored guest at a banquet would be anointed with perfumed oil by his host. He also sees the cup as a symbol of entertainment and its overflowing reflecting the Lord as giving his best. Further, he ties these abundant and good provision here back to the abundance and good provisions expressed by the green pastures and still waters.³⁴ These are helpful insights and are part of the reason that I see more continuity with the psalm as a whole, but dividing it as VanGemeran and others have may very well be a more accurate structuring with the two metaphors as parallels so I hold my conclusion with a respectful charity.

C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch state the following regarding this expression of blessing that David articulates here, "After the figure of the shepherd fades away in v.4, that of the host appears. His enemies must look quietly on (Psalm 31:20), without being able to do anything, and see how Jahve provides bountifully for His guest, anoints him with sweet perfumes as at a joyous and magnificent banquet (Psalm 92:11), and fills his cup to excess."³⁵

23:6

Pursued by Goodness and Mercy/Love

He leads... he leads... I walk... and now "goodness and mercy follow."

Mercy, Kindness, Love they Follow, they Pursue .

Keil and Delitzsch make an argument that the historical context of Psalm 23 can be, with confidence, placed at the time that David was a fugitive from Israel under Absalom's rebellion. I have read their argument for this and am not persuaded to present, but with this conclusion they obviously see various elements of the Psalm through a certain contextual paradigm. Most striking of those, to me, was that while being pursued by enemies in the immediate context they draw out that David also states that he will continually be pursued by goodness and mercy/love all the days of his life and that these elements/blessings will functionally overtake his natural pursuers. Now, while I do not see the historical context being as clearly defensible as Keil and Delitzsch, I do appreciate their bringing this to light if only in a general and not precise application as David was a man who knew what it was like to be pursued from his youth to his later years, but David clearly knew his greater pursuers (revealed to be goodness and mercy/love) would and did prove to be dispatched not by his enemies but by his Shepherd.

³⁴ VanGemeran, Pg.255

³⁵ Keil & Delitzsch, Pg.208 (Note that I clarified the cross references made in the quote by adding the term "Psalm" and I did redact a Hebrew term that was provided in the first cross reference as I do not have the capacity to reproduce it properly in this format and do not believe to have done harm or foster misrepresentation.)

House of The LORD

David states that goodness and mercy/love will pursue him all the days of his life - he enjoys and anticipates an enduring and complete care from his Shepherd and it is his Shepherd's presence that he craves and finds his chief satisfaction over every other abundance and provision for just as the Shepherd acts on his own behalf so every good thing finds its source in him and David longs for the source even over the provision. This is most clearly expressed in his consistently longing and satisfaction with being in the House of The LORD or his presence.

David again is finding his chief satisfaction in being in the presence of The LORD. His place of great longing is The LORD's abode and here he would gladly remain as he has insatiable desire to be with his Good Shepherd.

Psalm 27:4 "One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple."

Forever or Length of Days... is possibly an example of the second line of the parallel being more intense/strong than the preceding. The translation footnote on the New English Translation states that the phrase "...is traditionally translated 'forever.' However, this phrase, when used elsewhere of people, usually refers to a lengthy period of time, such as one's lifetime, and does not mean 'forever' in the sense of eternity."³⁶

It appears to be an expression of the full length of David's days... so long as he has breath in his lungs his desire is for the place of The LORD's presence.

Jesus as the Good Shepherd

As proposed in the introduction I am persuaded that the primary attraction of Psalm 23 to those who know the Lord is its very core statement/truth, "The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want." I think this is made quite plain through the development of the psalm, but when attention is given, as I did my best to provide, to the development and expectation of the Chief Shepherd throughout the Old Testament Scriptures it becomes all the clearer and invigorates a fire in one's soul to desire to walk with him as Shepherd and sheep. There is also a tension that naturally develops when attention is given to the failed shepherding of Israel's under-shepherds and the longing for the promises of David's Greater Son and his own Shepherd-King. Jesus unambiguously showed himself to be this promised Shepherd-King, the Good Shepherd himself.

³⁶ NET, Footnote Psalm 23:6

Matthew 6:25-34	The Good Shepherd calls to end for anxiety over provision as he competently and generously supplies what is needed to those who seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.
Matthew 11:2-6	The Good Shepherd comprehensively cares for his own: healing and restoring souls. "...the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them." (11:5)
Matthew 11:28-30	The Good Shepherd gives light burdens and rest for souls that come to him.
Mark 6:34	The Good Shepherd has compassion for the sheep with no shepherd.
John 6:1-59	The Good Shepherd provides sustenance for his own and what he provides will sustain their whole person and is God's good gift for them.
John 10:1-18	Jesus is the Good Shepherd, therefore, I shall not want. "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.' This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So Jesus again said to them, "<u>Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.</u> All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. <u>I am the door.</u> If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. <u>I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.</u> <u>I am the good shepherd.</u> <i>The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.</i> He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. <u>I am the good shepherd.</u> <u>I know my own and my own know me,</u> just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and <u>I lay down my life for the sheep.</u> And <u>I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also,</u> and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because <i>I lay down my life that I may take it up again.</i> No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."
John 14:27	The Good Shepherd provides unparalleled peace. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

Under-Shepherds of the Good Shepherd

In his book on Pastoral Ministry, Timothy Witmer, provides the thesis of his book and of the work of Pastoral Office, “The fundamental responsibility of church leaders is to shepherd God’s flock.”³⁷ An imperative that is simple only in wording light on its footprint on the page and one that I wholly agree with too. The New Testament Pastor has been charged by the Chief Shepherd to shepherd the flock of God. Any other activity outside of this is superfluous and can be disposed of if necessary and any other activity that impedes this is unacceptable and requires the most expedient purging possible. “Failure to shepherd, therefore, impacts church health.”³⁸ It is therefore, my great longing that I might join the company of David, “With upright heart he shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hand.” Psalm 78:72 “The care of the Lord for his people is to be reflected in those whom he calls to lead.”³⁹

This charge to shepherd God’s flock is poignantly clear when viewed through the Apostle Peter who after denying his precious Lord three times is restored with three charges.

John 21:15-17 “When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘**Feed my lambs.**’ He said to him a second time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ He said to him, Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘**Tend my sheep.**’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ and he said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘**Feed my sheep.**’”

This restored Under-Shepherd went on to charge those to whom would continue the work of Under-Shepherds of the Good Shepherd’s Church.

1 Peter 5:1-4 “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.*”

³⁷ Witmer, Pg.2

³⁸ Witmer, Pg.3

³⁹ Witmer, Pg.14

Personal Reflection and Application

How will truths from this section impact your thinking, praying, daily walk, and worship?

[illegible]

Further Reflection and Application

The reason for including a “primer” for 1 Peter 5 was to establish a robust foundation for the biblical concept of God as our Shepherd and his consistent use of natural leadership serving as shepherds over his people. One could only imagine the range of thoughts and truths that were saturating Peter’s mind when he gave his charge to the Elders in the opening of chapter five, but undoubtedly many of these included elements were among them. Now that you have worked through this introduction to the study of the chapter take time to write out some of your reflections and how they will impact your appreciation and understanding of Peter’s charge here and the nature of this subject throughout the Scriptures.

Thoughts and Reflections: God as the Shepherd of His People.

Thoughts and Reflections: God Appointing Various Expressions of leadership to Shepherd His People (Giving Particular Attention to The Church and its Elders).

A Call to Shepherd God's Flock (5:1-4)

“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.” 1 Peter 5:1-4 ^{ESV}

As one walks through the historical narrative of the book of Acts, it becomes plain that, while the Apostles were establishing the foundations of the Church, their leadership would not again be duplicated. The office of the Apostle would conclude at the end of their respective lives. In place of the Apostles' leadership, there would be the appointment of Elders within the local churches that were multiplying throughout the known world. This office of Elder would *not* be a rebranding of the office of the Apostle, which had authority over the Church *at large*, but would be an office held by a plurality of men exercising oversight over *local* churches. There was, in the early a church, an overlap of these offices – most plainly demonstrated in Acts 15 where the Apostles and Elders of the church in Jerusalem had gathered to work through the dispute brought to them by the church in Antioch. However, there was a clear distinction in roles and authority. So, it is most striking when the Apostle Peter chose to directly identify himself with the Elders of the local churches to whom he was writing when giving them their high charge of shepherding Christ's Church. He does not dismiss his Apostolic office, but personally identifies in the work that these men have been called to within the local church, thereby demonstrating how highly he esteemed the charge. This should come as no surprise though, as Peter himself received a like charge directly from Jesus himself at the time of his personal restoration on the seashore following the Lord's resurrection.

“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:

“So....”

Peter begins here with “so” or “therefore” as a way of drawing attention back to that which has preceded, thereby informing that what follows. The first four verses here are a magnificent charge to the Elders of the local churches, and what Peter appears to be drawing back to is the final portion of chapter four, verses twelve through nineteen.

The reason for the conclusion that Peter is not extending this reference back further is that, while verses ten and eleven do address the gifting and service of the church, the section has a clear conclusion to it, ending with a micro doxology. Following this is the beginning of a new section that starts with Peter using the more intimate reference of “beloved” when addressing his readers. As he now begins this next charge in chapter five, he explicitly ties himself to the work of an Elder in the shepherding of the church, a role that is very personal in its care and execution.

With this in view, it appears that the backdrop to this opening exhortation and the subsequent relational charges that follow are made with an eye to the subject matter of verses twelve to nineteen of chapter four: the suffering of the believer and of Christ, the revealed glory of Christ, and a righteous evaluation of the House of God. Each of these same subject matters will be addressed in chapter five.

5:1-7, Proper ordering and conduct for the House of God (also a reference to future glory in 5:4).

5:8-9, Struggling with the adversary and universal suffering among the church.

5:10, Future glory in Christ.

“I exhort the elders among you”

Peter has provided instructions and charges to various elements and members within the church and, while precise, they are also plainly provided for the *whole* church to hear, thereby creating a context of understanding among the various relationships and responsibilities therein. Further, the public nature of his instructions and charges provide a context of mutual accountability within the church. This extends to the leading of and submission to the eldership.

Peter here exhorts or urges the Elders to a clear order of conduct within the local churches among whom they serve. Note that he could make such a broad charge to the various churches he was writing to throughout Asia Minor because the established pattern of the New Testament Church was that a plurality of Elders were to be appointed among each of them – men qualified for the work of overseeing and caring for the local church. This was not an elective form of government, but the pattern established by Christ for his Church through the Apostles and a matter of first order.

“This is why I left you in Crete, *so that you might put what remained into order*, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you....” Titus 1:5 ^{ESV}

It is these men, the Elders, to whom Peter is providing a very precise and weighty charge.

“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”

“Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ...”⁴⁰

Though an Apostle, Peter chose to directly identify with the leadership of the local churches, the Elder and as stated above. Acts 15 makes the distinction and temporal overlap of the offices of the Apostle and Elder quite clear. However, Peter overtly draws out that the Apostolic office was one of shepherding oversight. In this, he clearly established the foundation for the church’s continued leadership, but he also overtly identified with the type of leadership God has consistently provided his people – overseeing shepherds.

⁴⁰1 Peter 1:1

Having identified with the local church Elder, Peter goes on to address an important element of his Apostolic testimony: a witness to the sufferings of Christ. As an Apostle, Peter was one who had a unique firsthand witness of Jesus' full public ministry, including his suffering (of which Peter had a tragic role in his moment of failure), and Jesus' resurrection. A sample of this testimony was expressed in Acts 10.

"As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." Acts 10:36-43 ^{ESV}

Usually Peter's testimony is that he (and others) were witnesses to Jesus' resurrection. However, keeping with the larger contextual flow of the letter, he chose to speak of being a witness of Christ's suffering, especially as Christ's suffering is a consistent theme of his letter and the foundation by which believers can understand their own suffering.

Peter used this same term of suffering (πάθημα) to speak of Christ's suffering two other times in the book, and both times were with a view to future glory.

"Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories." 1 Peter 1:10-11 ^{ESV}

Even the prophetic expectation was a combination of suffering and then glory.

"But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed." 1 Peter 4:13 ^{ESV}

It was plainly understood that to be associated with Christ in his suffering was also to be associated with him in his future glory.

Finally, the last reference to suffering in the book, also in this chapter, has a view to future glory:

"Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you." 1 Peter 5:9-10 ^{ESV}

Peter was a firsthand witness of Christ's suffering and only one of three disciples that saw a foretaste of Christ's glory (at the transfiguration). He knew and spoke authoritatively that there was a glory to be more fully and perfectly revealed.

Note also that he frames these truths by identifying himself as a partaker in this future glory. He did not view Christ's forthcoming glory as something from which he or other believers were detached, but an intimate hope. Peter described himself as a partner, a participant, as one having a shared identity, or role, or experience with the glory that is going to be revealed.

A major component of this shared future glory is the completion of a believer's salvation – a matter that Peter has directly referenced in the beginning of the letter when he was extolling our magnificent redemption in Christ. There he specifically frames it with the same language of revealed (ἀποκαλύπτω) that he goes on to use here in chapter five.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed (ἀποκαλύπτω) in the last time.” 1 Peter 1:3-5 ^{ESV}

“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 (ἀποκαλύπτω). . . .” 1 Peter 5:1 ^{ESV}

Now, just because salvation and glory are spoken of in terms of future revealing does not immediately tie them together, but it is a consistent treatment of the two subjects, which are otherwise plainly bound together, perhaps most plainly in Paul's language of the sweeping elements of salvation in Romans 8, “And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.” Romans 8:30 ^{ESV}

Once more, a view to future glory is a means by which believers properly calibrate their present thinking, particularly as it relates to suffering: “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” Romans 8:18 ^{ESV} This is especially helpful to remember here as this matter is specifically framed in a context of exhortation to the leadership of the local church, the Elders. Peter was giving a bold encouragement to action, to fulfill a precious and high calling in the caring of the beloved of God, and he was identifying himself with these men, not just in their service, but in their mutual hope.

“Shepherd the flock of God that is among you”

Peter has plainly addressed the Elders of the local churches of whom he was writing, and here he communicates that Elders are Pastors... they are shepherds – that is the calling of the office. Therefore, the charge to the Elders is to shepherd the local flock over which God has providentially placed them.

Again, at its core, the Elders' responsibility is to shepherd the local church. That is not a component or a significant element of their call – it is their call.

It is also helpful to remember here that Peter clearly drew from the Old Testament with a natural fluency, and it is a reasonable conclusion that he, like Jesus, drew from the wealth of the Old Testament's treatment of the shepherding leadership that God has always expected for his people. *If you have not already, it would be worthwhile to consult the included Psalm 23 Primer included at the beginning of this Study Guide.*

Note also that there is a qualification to the scope of this calling. Peter does not call Elders to shepherd all believers or even various persons with whom they might have personal contact. The call is to the flock of God that is among them, namely the local church. Elders were and continue to be appointed to local churches, and their authority and application of service was and is with the local church context. There can, and certainly should be, reciprocating respect among other congregations, but the Elder's call is to a local flock.

The Scriptures are clear that the Shepherd's call within the local church is one of leading, feeding, caring, protecting, and if necessary, dying. This is because the local Elders stand in as the Good Shepherd's stewards.

Note Peter's articulation of the relationship between the actions of the Elders and the descriptions of the Lord.

In 1 Peter 2:25, the Lord is referred to as the Shepherd and Overseer of the believer's souls. "For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."

In 1 Peter 5:2-3, the Elders are called to shepherd and oversee the local church. "...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."

It is plain that the charge and role of the Elders is that of the under-shepherd, ones who steward the immediate care and leadership of the local church over whom Christ is the head and Chief Shepherd. It is *his* Church (corporately and locally), and they are therefore *his* sheep... no man or men have rights or possession of a church; it is God's Church. Never is it Pastor *Whoever's* Church. It is *God's* Church, and the Pastors are local under-shepherd's entrusted with its pastoral care.

Sidebar: The charge is to "the flock that is among you" – the *local* pastors are your pastors, not the well-known conference speakers, podcasters, bloggers, and book authors. There is one Chief Shepherd, and the Holy Spirit has providentially placed local Elders over the care of local churches and the members therein. It is not that there is a lack of value to other men and their resources, it is that these men and their resources do not need to be confused with their proper place by esteeming them *above* your pastors... who the Apostle Paul exhorts should be respected and esteemed very highly in love. "We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves." 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 ^{ESV} Not all Elders are equally gifted, eloquent, or strong,

but the men the Lord has placed over a given local church are God's men for that church. If they are deficient or weak then plead to the Chief Shepherd to strengthen them for the formidable task for which they have been called, and pursue wisdom for ways in which you might also graciously strengthen their hands and make their labor joyful.

An extremely valuable insight into the fulfilling of this charge to shepherd the flock of God is expressed in Paul's parting words to the Ephesian Elders in Acts 20.

"Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. And when they came to him, he said to them: 'You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all." Acts 20:17-36 ^{ESV}

Paul made an intentional effort to see the Elders from the church in Ephesus one final time and in this farewell exchange he gave them clear charges and warnings as Elders of this local and beloved church.

He spoke of his own exemplary leadership, which would have been a model for them to follow and for the whole church to learn and benefit from:

He served the Lord with humility and tears.

He served the Lord amidst persecution/trials.

He did not fail to speak the truth.

He taught both in public and private contexts (including homes).

He declared the gospel to all people (repentance and faith in Christ).

He valued the Lord's glory in his present and finishing faithfulness over his own welfare.

He taught and declared the whole counsel of God.

He diligently admonished with tears.

He did not covet welfare or riches.

He provided for his needs and the needs of others.

While not using Peter's exact language, Paul explicitly exhorts these Elders:

Pay careful attention to themselves – all are prone to wander, drift, and even potentially fail.

Pay careful attention to the local flock – all are prone to wander, drift, and even potentially fail. These men are their leaders and protectors as the Holy Spirit has made them overseers of this local body. Note here what is and is not being stated with “the Holy Spirit made them overseers.” This was not communicating an overt supernatural setting apart of these men as Elders like Paul and Barnabas were set apart as missionaries in Acts 13. Rather, the pattern in the New Testament was plainly one of identifying and setting apart qualified men – men whom the Lord providentially qualified and placed in their respective churches at a given time. However, now once recognized and serving in role as an Elder it is recognized, if fulfilled as directed by the Lord, that the Holy Spirit has placed them in oversight of a given local church and they must fulfill that high calling accordingly.

Overseers of local churches shepherd the local church of God. It is *God's Church* and they are *his* people, *his* sheep, and as personally charged to Peter – the pastor is called to shepherd the sheep.

To explicitly distinguish God's ownership of his Church and every local expression of it, we see the Church as those whom God obtained with his own blood.

Pay careful attention to the threats of the enemy which would seek to destroy the local flock from within. It is recognized that some use the crafty tools of deception in teaching and thereby lead sheep astray. Further, some threats include failed/wicked shepherds, such as those referenced in Jude 12, “...shepherds feeding themselves....” Likely a direct reference to Ezekiel 34:2,10.⁴¹ By contrast, a protection was admonishment – a correction or warning rooted in a proper understanding of the content and persons.

“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.”

Peter goes on to unpack his charge to the Elders who, in shepherding Christ's Church, are to exercise oversight willingly and eagerly, as an example to the flock. By contrast, they are not to act under compulsion or for shameful gain, nor are they ever to lord themselves over others.

Oversight is the core element here, and it is a stewarding leadership and care of something or someone – here the application being the local church. With this, it must be understood that oversight is not simply or primarily administrative care or management of the church's various ministries and programs. Oversight first is an intentional assessment of the sheep: are they demonstrating growth in

⁴¹ “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord GOD: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep?” Ezekiel 34:2 ^{ESV}
“Thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep. No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them.” Ezekiel 34:10 ^{ESV}

grace, are they loving one another, are there indications of struggling or wandering, are there blind spots in their life, are there areas of overt rebellion, where can compassionate care be applied, where are they struggling, where might correction or rebuke be necessary, how to labor in prayer for them, how to intentionally communicate the nuances of truth in a way that will be most impactful to their understanding and growth? Oversight is effectively a running pastoral inspection of the sheep – not micromanaging their lives or being a busy-body, but keeping their welfare ever before them for their maximum care. To do this effectively there has to be an intimate proximity of lives – the shepherd needs to *know* his sheep and they his voice and care, hence the natural outworking of the local church.

Peter states that this care is not be carried out under duress or compulsion, rather it is to be executed deliberately and willfully. John MacArthur states that this may have been a warning against laziness and indifference.⁴² However, there is no place to take on the title or the work of pastoral ministry because you need a job or simply feel like it's something you should do.

Tragically, in many circles there have been years of bad counsel about pastoral ministry stating things such as, “if you can do something else then do it,” or the variant, “if you can be happy doing something else then do it.” That is a tragic and demeaning way to view pastoral ministry, and it is in direct contrast to Peter’s statement here. Someone taking on this high calling under compulsion is either in a state of mind for which they must repent or likely not ever qualified – not even crossing the threshold that introduces the qualifications for office as laid out in 1 Timothy 3, “The saying is trustworthy: If anyone *aspires* to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.” 1 Timothy 3:1 ^{ESV}

Along with this are some of the more foolish statements that have been viewed as cute critiques of pastoral challenges but are actually quite shameful. The all too common refrain that is communicated in various ways – that individuals would love the church more or the ministry of the church more if it were not for the people. As a Pastor of Christ’s Church, I cannot understand what they truly mean or how they would continue to see themselves qualified for the work. Such statements are akin to stating someone enjoys being a parent except for the having children part. Of course, lives are messy, challenging, and sometimes tragic, but such is the nature of the work. Unlike parenting, if you are not shepherding willingly, but under compulsion, then you need to find something else to do and, in the process, also examine your love for the local church.

Another admonition is that the work of shepherding must never be for dishonest gain, which itself is one of the most common elements of a false teacher. It is the wolf mingled among the flock that is compelled by a love of money and the pursuit of it and its perceived benefits by manipulating, abusing, and otherwise deceiving God’s people. However, even among those who are otherwise sincere, this is a danger as leadership can promote opportunities to various abuses. So it must be remembered that this also is a disqualifying characteristic, “...not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, *not a lover of money.*” 1 Timothy 3:3 ^{ESV}

“For an overseer, as God’s steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or *greedy for gain....*” Titus 1:7 ^{ESV}

⁴² The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1Peter; John MacArthur Jr; Moody Publishers, 2004; (Hereafter: MacArthur Commentary), Pg. 268

However, the failures and abuses of some here does not merit a wrong overcorrection. So long as a pastor is not wrongly governed by financial or material benefits, there is a proper place for remunerating them for their work. This is directly stated to Timothy and could be reasonably inferred to the Thessalonians.

“Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,’ and, ‘The laborer deserves his wages.’” 1 Timothy 5:17-18 ^{ESV}

“We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.” 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 ^{ESV}

Financially freeing pastors for their work does not elevate them to a unique Christian standing (one that gets paid for their Christianity), but expresses both honor and the desire to see them free to more completely fulfill their charge and exercise their gifting. Some men, such as Paul, were able to generously provide for themselves and others while diligently ministering. However, the more common experience is that those among the Elders who carry the heavier teaching and preaching responsibilities usually uniquely benefit from being fiscally free to devote the whole of their time and attention for service to and through the local church. This is a stewardship for which they will give an account to the Lord, and there must be a careful balance of not being governed by the fiscal or material benefit in being free for this work.

Note also that this is a pattern that the Lord established for the Levites and the Levitical priesthood – effectively having their portion and provision through their service to the Lord. This is even carried over to the singers in Nehemiah, demonstrating the value of their work and therefore the value in fiscally freeing them to serve in this way.

The last matter of contrast that Peter addresses for the shepherding work of the Elders is that of being exemplary and not lording themselves over the people. Tragically, lording leadership is a profound problem.

Manipulation and intimidation are common expressions of this offense, and because it is often less obvious than laziness and the pursuit of financial gain, it is both more common and in its own right more cruel.

Because I have observed this all too common threat to the leadership of the church, I chose to gift a dear friend and fellow Elder two books following his ordination: a Greek New Testament to encourage him in his study of the languages, and a copy of George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* as a caution about the drifting that naturally occurs with authority if one does not carefully watch their heart.⁴³

The abuse of authority is usually applied for one’s gain or morbid recognition.

⁴³ I recognize that the book was primarily a critique/rebuke against Communism, but the principles are plainly transferrable when it comes to authority and its abuse.

Lording oneself over others is the antithesis to how one is to care for Christ's Church, a matter that he explicitly stated to the disciples, "And Jesus called them to him and said to them, 'You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'" Mark 10:42-45 ^{ESV}

"Genuine rule in the church is an administration of Christ's lordship by His willing servants. Church leaders are designated as 'those standing before,' or 'those leading or guiding,' but not 'those being lords.'" ⁴⁴

Remember that this is Christ's Church and those who are under-shepherds have been provided an allotment of his beloved. It is not at the discretion of the steward to do as he pleases with that which has been entrusted to his care.

Edmund Clowney made a helpful observation in helping one guard themselves from this all too common offense: "Our awareness of the Lord gives dignity to our obedience and humility to our rule. In both we serve [Christ]." ⁴⁵

Now, by fitting contrast, the final element to this extended charge ends with a leadership and care that is exemplary to the flock. This is a pattern of life and service that others can take on from having followed and learned from faithful Elders within the church, and such is the aim of shepherding: demonstrating a Christlikeness that can be replicated in the life of each believer.

This brings the charge full circle – the call to shepherd the flock while providing the flock an example of Christlike leadership and faithfulness.

It is commonly understood that good leadership in all spheres of life by design is to be exemplary, but especially within the church and by the Shepherds whose very qualification base is the pattern of the mature believer (not some artificial ideal, but a reasonable pattern of maturity).

Note again that a proper example requires close proximity – the example is not a generic ominous call to do well... but a life put on intimate display. The flock should know the range of elements of a life that closely intersects their own... and they should see first-hand how a variety of elements and experiences in life have truth brought to bear on them. They do not just hear a great charge of application, but see it. With this they also see the correction of failures and missteps and just how hard it is to do as we would exhort one another, but also the grace that accompanies the pursuit.

Along with oversight (the personal evaluation and care of the sheep), herein is another deficiency of being shepherded by proxy through a "Great Bible Teacher" who will never know you by name or provide personal shepherding care to you and whom you never know outside of the polished, edited,

⁴⁴ 1 Peter; D. Edmond Hiebert; Moody Press, 1992; (Hereafter: Hiebert), Pg. 305 – Note the provided quote redacted two parenthetical additions that included transliterations of words and Scriptures references. This was to simplify the quote without losing its message. The references were: 1 Thessalonians 5:12, Romans 12:8, Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24, and Acts 15:22.

⁴⁵ The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of 1 Peter; Edmund Clowney; Inter Varsity Press, 1988; (Hereafter: Clowney), Pg. 204

and well prepared engagements and mediums in which you engage them. The presence and value of such men is genuinely valuable, but only when understood for what it is: supplemental. Remember, while one could argue that Paul, Peter, John, and others often ministered through pastoral correspondence, it was also to many whom they knew by name and had experienced their personal care. Those names that so consistently fill the conclusions of their letters are people they really knew and really loved and who benefited from their personal example.

Again, take note of the high value of the local Elders who provide examples to the flock:

“Brothers, join in *imitating* me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the *example* you have in us.” Philippians 3:17 ^{ESV}

Paul unapologetically directs the church to follow the example of his zealous pursuit of Christ.

“It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to *imitate*.” 2 Thessalonians 3:9 ^{ESV}

Paul and others willfully sacrificed what was reasonably their rights/opportunities to intentionally put a model of conduct on display for the church. Such is the nature of leadership, particularly within the church and in particular such is the nature of leadership that is executed, not under compulsion, but willingly.

“Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers *an example* in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.” 1 Timothy 4:12 ^{ESV}

While a younger Elder, Timothy is to nevertheless provide an intentional example. Here five critical areas for the life and welfare of the church are expressed: speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. An element of his teaching and preaching would necessarily include his comparatively younger life too.

“Show yourself in all respects to be *a model* of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.” Titus 2:7-8 ^{ESV}

Titus also received clear instruction that he was not only to lead and instruct, but to model too. A model of good works and demonstrating himself to be an irreproachable teacher of God’s truth.

A particularly precious example is also found in the Old Testament priest and scribe, Ezra.

“For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.” Ezra 7:10 ^{ESV}

Ezra set his heart to study the Scriptures.

Ezra purposed to apply the Scriptures to his life.

Ezra taught others the Scriptures.

Studying, applying, and teaching is a robust pattern for an exemplary life.

The faithful Elder’s life should be one in which the church body wants to know what he does each day and then seek to mimic it themselves. How do you study, pray, meditate, work, etc.?

A faithful, sacrificial, joyful example... such a magnificent contrast to lording oneself over others... and exactly what Jesus chose to do too.

“You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. *For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.* Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”
John 13:13-17 ^{ESV}

“And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”

The explicit narrative of the whole of the Scriptures is that the Chief Shepherd is the Lord, namely Jesus Christ. For a more complete treatment, I would again refer you back to the Psalm 23 Primer at the beginning of this Study Guide.

The title Chief Shepherd is so magnificent. Comprehensively articulating the beauty of a shepherd who faithfully fulfills his charge to his flock, the Scriptures tell us this is how the Lord of glory chose to express his care for his people time and time again. This also makes it so unambiguously plain that it is *his* Church. Any Elders who participate in leading a local church are doing so in Christ’s stead, but not because he is absent or unwilling. He is perfectly shepherding his Church, but he has chosen to entrust the functional and immediate person-to-person care and leadership of it to faithful and qualified men until he chooses to call his Church to himself (at this time member-by-member, but in time as a corporate whole).

Understanding that the Chief Shepherd is Jesus Christ makes plain that his appearing is a reference to his returning in glory to condemn the unrighteous and reward his own. This will be the most polarizing moment in history as it will be one of absolute terror and joy – wholly depending on one’s relationship to Christ.

“Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring. This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.” 2 Thessalonians 1:4-10 ^{ESV}

Note that Peter has spoken to Christ’s glorious return throughout the letter, and here, the final time, it is Christ as the Chief Shepherd of his battle seasoned flock whom he has perfectly kept and will now also reward.

Regarding this reward, Thomas Schreiner highlighted what several commentators addressed on varying levels, that crowns were well established elements of the culture – woven vegetation that may be flowering and awarded to athletes and military victors. However, these crowns, like a bouquet of

flowers in a wedding, served an honorable, but temporary role – they will fade and diminish. By contrast, the Lord awards an unfading and enduring crown for his faithful servants.⁴⁶

There are various rewards referenced in the New Testament, specifically crowns:

Crown of Righteousness: Awarded to all who have loved Christ's appearing, 2 Timothy 4:8.

Crown of Life: Promised to those who love God and to those who were faithful unto death, James 1:12, Revelation 2:10.

Crown of Glory: Rewarded to the faithful under-shepherds of the Church, 1 Peter 5:4

Some rewards/crowns are for all true and enduring believers, but not all rewarding is equal and neither are all such honors. Wayne Grudem argues that the "Crown of Glory" referenced to in Peter is a specific honor conferred on limited persons – a public affirmation of their honor by God.⁴⁷ This is not a point of pride any more than how God chooses to graciously gift the various members of his body. Rather it is a point of affirmation and encouragement. Reward, honor, and affirmation are fleeting and of little consequence and value in this work on the temporal side, but esteemed and highly valued in the eternal. This, therefore, serves as a perfect counterbalance to the aforementioned warnings against bad motivation and conduct for shepherds of God's Church.

⁴⁶ The New American Commentary: 1,2 Peter, Jude; Thomas R. Schreiner; Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003; (Hereafter: Schreiner), Pg. 236

⁴⁷ Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Peter; Wayne Grudem; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988; (Hereafter: Grudem), Pgs.190-191

Personal Reflection and Application

How will truths from this section impact your thinking, praying, daily walk, and worship?

[illegible]

Further Reflection and Application

Peter opens chapter five with a subject that he has developed throughout the book and will continue to give significant treatment to in this final chapter too, future glory. This view to future glory plainly shaped how Peter viewed his time of sojourning and its accompanying suffering. Consider how this subject has been addressed throughout the book and how it should impact your own perspective, understanding, and engagement of the time of your sojourning and its accompanying suffering.

With each text write out a reflection or summary statement, and at the conclusion of the section, reflect on this work and write out a final reflection on this most precious and weighty subject.

Examples of a reflection or summary statement have been provided for the first two references.

“In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

1 Peter 1:6-7 ^{ESV}

Example Reflection/Summary Statement: Tested faith glorifies God at Jesus' great revelation.

“Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.” 1 Peter 1:10-11 ^{ESV}

Example Reflection/Summary Statement: There will be glory... but by design it was always to be preceded by suffering – Christ's suffering first and foremost, but also the suffering of his people too.

“He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.” 1 Peter 1:20-21 ^{ESV}

“All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.” 1 Peter 1:24-25 ^{ESV}

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” 1 Peter 4:10-11 ^{ESV}

“But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.” 1 Peter 4:13 ^{ESV}

“If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.” 1 Peter 4:14 ^{ESV}

“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....” 1 Peter 5:1 ^{ESV}

“And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.” 1 Peter 5:4 ^{ESV}

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Examples of a reflection or summary statement have been provided for the first two references.

“In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

1 Peter 1:6-7 ^{ESV}

Example Reflection/Summary Statement: Tested faith glorifies God at Jesus' great revelation.

“Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.” 1 Peter 1:10-11 ^{ESV}

Example Reflection/Summary Statement: There will be glory... but by design it was always to be preceded by suffering – Christ's suffering first and foremost, but also the suffering of his people too.

“He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.” 1 Peter 1:20-21 ^{ESV}

A Call to Submission and Mutual Humility (5:5)

“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.’” 1 Peter 5:5 ^{ESV}

The church is a family – a group of persons bound together in various expressions of relationship that have parameters of conduct and expectation. Peter did not charge the whole church to shepherd the flock of God, but in hearing the charge to the Elders, the other members of the church understand the roles of their leadership and by extension their own roles too. However, there are times that further precision is appropriate, such as demonstrated here for the younger persons within the church, specifically the younger men, who are called upon directly to be subject to the Elders. Then there are more broad calls to the roles and expectations within the church too – charges that incorporate the entire church body without exclusion. Such is the case with Peter’s command for the church and all the members therein to clothe themselves with humility toward one another.

“Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders.”

To better appreciate Peter’s use of “likewise” here it will be helpful to see how it used it in a relational context elsewhere in the book such as the two instances in chapter three where two different relationships are being addressed – one who submits and the other as the one being submitted to.

“Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands....” 1 Peter 3:1 ^{ESV}

“Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way....” 1 Peter 3:7 ^{ESV}

Likewise, in 3:1 and 3:7 carries a continuation of theme to precise groups (wives and husbands) before the sweeping commands, exhortations, and calls to action for the larger group (everyone).

So here, in chapter five, there is an precise opening charge to the Elders in how they are to engage the body and then a “likewise” to carry this thematic discussion to a precise group, those who are younger, who are in turn also directed on their own engagement of the body, particularly this leadership that the Lord has just addressed before, then going on to a broader discussion to the whole body again.

Note also, that the use of “likewise” in 3:7 was not a call to for husbands to submit, but it bridged a complementing narrative to the preceding one.

This “younger group” also serves as a counter to the exhortation to the Elders – effectively the two spectrum ends of the believing body:

Elders, don’t lord your authority, but lead well.

Younger people, submit to the leadership God has placed over you.

By way of the flow of argument, this matter is fairly clear, but the persons involved are not quite as wholly clear, and this has led to much discussion among expositors of this text. Fundamentally, the question comes down to who are the two parties being addressed here?

Elders as in church leadership and/or senior members of the body (be it senior by age or maturity)?
Young persons in regard to age, maturity, or as a general contrast to the Eldership?

The plainest conclusion would appear to be that the use of “Elders” here is a reference to the office because of how Peter uses the term in 5:1-2. However, one must also recognize that the same terms can be used differently within the same general context such as observed with the term “Elders” in 1 Timothy 5.

First note the term for Elder is: πρεσβύτερος

“Do not rebuke an older man (πρεσβύτερος in the masculine form) but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women (πρεσβύτερος in the feminine form) as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.” 1 Timothy 5:1-2 ^{ESV}

Here “Elder” or πρεσβύτερος is plainly speaking to senior persons – both male and female.

“Let the elders (πρεσβύτερος) who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.” 1 Timothy 5:17 ^{ESV}

Here “Elder” or πρεσβύτερος is speaking to the Office of the Elder.

Ultimately there is a degree of tension that may not be resolved... but it is likely there could be a double application here as Elders were traditionally and by common practice older – men who had proven themselves faithful, were seasoned and tested, men who were wise and strong in the Scriptures. These are elements that take time. And in many cases they are both lost and, in some measure, confused by the introduction of professionalizing pastoral ministry by introducing the extrabiblical requirement of seminary and like training that upon completion confers on someone the presumption of qualification for the Office of Elder. This is not to say that there is not a value to seminary and professional training, but there is a tragedy when young men are perceived as qualified because of a very few years of professional education, while many older men who are qualified by the standards laid out in the Scriptures are passed over. Further, this potentially confuses relationships in the church when a young pastor is trying to find his way and often his theology and also when you come across like passages where there is a natural expectation of the mature/seasoned men leading the younger who are in turn submitting. Timothy was obviously a “younger” pastor, but he was personally discipled by the Apostle Paul, had the capacity to demonstrate his pastoral leadership, and was no child.

D. Edmond Hiebert balances this discussion by stating that it was not necessarily always or primarily about age, but seniority and goes on to state, “It does indicate that those leaders were not neophytes, but mature members of the Christian community.”⁴⁸ Later he provides the contrast of the young men

⁴⁸ Hiebert, Pg. 299

stating, “The term seems to refer to those who were not only younger in years, but also younger in the faith and in Christian experience.”⁴⁹

Thomas Schreiner, recognizing that there is not as plain a conclusion here as other places, offers variously proposed conclusion, including that “younger” would not necessarily be speaking of age or maturity, but the whole of the congregation outside the eldership – a formal contrast using the language of age. However, he personally concludes that this is indeed a direct statement/charge to younger men who among the congregation naturally have the most natural aptitude to resist formal/senior leadership.⁵⁰

So, while having its nuances to work through, the call remains clear – there is to be submission. This is the fourth and final treatment on the subject of submission or being subject to an authority (person or structure).

First, the general call for submission to every human institution, the authorities that God has providentially placed over you (2:13-14).

Second, servants called to be subject to their masters (2:18).

Third, wives called to be subject to their husbands (believing and unbelieving alike) (3:1).

Fourth, those who are younger are to be subject to the Elders (5:5).

As has been plainly developed throughout the book, to be subject is to place oneself under the authority of another – implicit with this is complying with their directives, commands, and leadership. Those in leadership are not always those who should be in leadership when it comes to the prior matters of submission: human institutions/governing authorities, masters, and even some husbands. Nevertheless, they are who the Lord has providentially placed in those roles and they are to be submitted to accordingly. However, here the relationship is different, or should be, as these are the under-shepherds of the local manifestation of Christ’s Church. These are men who have, at the minimal, met the requirements established in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and who are also heeding other clear directives and commands fitting for the office of Pastor-Elder such as addressed here by Peter. Such men are to be submitted to as the providentially appointed leadership for a given local church. This is God’s order, as are the other relationships of leadership and submission, and both roles are to be properly honored as unto the Lord.

“Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another”

While distinct from the instructions to the younger members of the church, this command plainly develops out the same vein of instruction – submission having its own natural humility to it. This though is plainly a command to everyone, which would include leadership to the youngest member and in its execution it is applied to the same spectrum – having humility toward one another. This would not require a dissolving of distinctions, roles, or proper honoring, but an other-esteeming love, a viewing others more highly than yourself in your engagements and actions. There is a one-another

⁴⁹ Hiebert, Pg. 308

⁵⁰ Schreiner, Pg. 237

component here as this humility is not just an absence of selfish/unrighteous pride, but a humility in application toward others.

“Smooth relations in the church can be preserved if the entire congregation adorns itself with humility. When believers recognize that they are creatures and sinners, they are less apt to be offended by others. Humility is the oil that allows relationships in the church to run smoothly and lovingly.”⁵¹

The command specifically uses the language of clothing oneself with humility. This is to be completely covered in humility – allowing it to become a plain identifying element to one’s person.

This term was consistently spoken of as binding something on one’s person, such as an apron that would accompany the act of service – it is a willful clothing of oneself for the work of service, which is indeed attractive, precious, and pleasing to God. It is to the one who so clothes themselves in this matter that he gives grace.

“The term *humility* speaks of an attitude which puts others first, which thinks of the desires, needs, and ideas of others as more worthy of attention than one’s own.”⁵²

Perhaps the most explicit example of so clothing oneself with humility can be observed in John 13. “Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.” John 13:3-5 ^{ESV}

“For God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

The citation is from Proverbs 3:34, “Toward the scorers he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor.”

Both Peter and James quote this text identical to one another with similar contextual element.

1 Peter 5:5, [Ο] θεὸς ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται, ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.

James 4:6, Ὁ θεὸς ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται, ταπεινοῖς δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.

Also, both passages are addressing submission and dealing with the opposition of the devil (a subject rarely *directly* addressed). What is interesting in this regard is that submission and humility are critical elements in not affording the devil a foothold or opportunity for assault. This is apparent in the other places too:

Matthew 4, Jesus maintains a righteous submission to the Father and a proper humility – not a cowering or disposition of weakness, but humility.

⁵¹ Schreiner, Pg. 238

⁵² Grudem, Pg. 194

Luke 22:31-34, in the context of proud confidence, Jesus speaks to Peter's forthcoming testing which was a violent assault on his personal pride.

"He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil." 1 Timothy 3:6 ^{ESV}

It is quite a striking reality to hear that the Lord would oppose or resist someone... how much he must disdain this offense to so precisely address it in this way.

This is certainly a different matter, but of a like nature to what Peter has already expressed regarding other conduct that the Lord despises.

1 Peter 3:10 ^{ESV}, "The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth."

Psalms 34:16 ^{ESV}, "The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth."

This should secure anyone's attention when they are considering the alluring nature of pride... The Lord God opposes, or resists, the proud – the morbidly and unrighteously self-confident and elevated of thought.

A complete contrast – opposing versus giving, specifically giving grace – the generous and underserved favor of God, a necessary element not only for salvation proper, but for the sanctification process and living well in this time of sojourning (there is not a time that grace is not needed). Unpacking this further, Wayne Grudem points out that both opposes and gives are present tense verbs here – these are continual actions by God, he has and continues to both oppose and give.⁵³

⁵³ Grudem, Pg. 194

Personal Reflection and Application

How will truths from this section impact your thinking, praying, daily walk, and worship?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Further Reflection and Application

Both the natural life and the Christian life have different seasons and there is a progressive maturity that naturally accompanies them along the way. Peter chose to directly engage those who were younger – giving them specific instructions regarding their relationship to the Elders. What are some ways that this might work itself out in the local church? Specifically, what should be the conduct and disposition of those who are younger, and how is this culture developed by the larger church body?

In a book that gave so much attention to both suffering and future glory, there was also a significant amount of attention given to relational matters within the church. Consider some of these relational matters addressed and how Peter's command to have humility toward one another might better inform their faithful application.

Write out your thoughts and reflections as well as how you might progress toward a more diligent application of this command in your life.

Examples of Relational Matters in 1 Peter

"Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart..." 1 Peter 1:22 ^{ESV}

"Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust." 1 Peter 2:18 ^{ESV}

"Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered." 1 Peter 3:7 ^{ESV}

"Show hospitality to one another without grumbling." 1 Peter 4:9 ^{ESV}

A Call to Humility Under The Shepherd's Faithful Care (5:6-7)

“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 Peter 5:6-7 ^{ESV}

One of the most profound cures for so many ailments and struggles in this life is maintaining a right view of God and thereby a right view of oneself too. This will inevitably produce a proper humility, not only with others as previously commanded, but before God. Further, it has the precious benefit of providing an unparalleled relief from the burdens of anxiety no matter what their source.

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you”

In view of both the command to clothe themselves in humility and the Lord's disposition toward the proud and the humble, Peter again commands them to humble themselves – clearly a point of plain emphasis.

Once more the weight of contrast is extraordinary and, if believed, should absolutely dissolve any tension to feed pride over a vigorous pursuit of humility. This would be true with Peter's commands and statements alone, but it is a robust truth expressed in a variety of contexts:

“At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, ‘Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, ‘Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.’” Matthew 18:1-4 ^{ESV}

“Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”
Matthew 23:12 ^{ESV}

“He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.” Luke 1:51-53 ^{ESV}

“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”
Luke 14:11 ^{ESV}

“But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” Luke 18:13-14 ^{ESV}

The most extraordinary and perfect expression of this was by Jesus himself:

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Philippians 2:5-11 ^{ESV}

So, there is clearly a strong theme and modeling of humbling oneself before God, but there is also the contextual element of suffering here. Suffering provides a most natural opportunity to embrace a proper humility when one recognizes that the Lord, who is both sovereign and perfectly good, is working out his plans even through a path of personal pain and trial. This is in intentional contrast to the temptations that can accompany suffering – the welling up of pride and anger that one should not be made to struggle or that God is wrong in his ways. Humility is a reflection that one understands the revealed character and ways of God and, upon understanding them, submits to them with confidence in both his goodness and his forthcoming reward.

Further, how could one not humble themselves “under the mighty hand of God”? Such was the folly of Pharaoh who so intimately saw the work of the hand of God and constantly refused to genuinely humble himself before God – he was obstinate and rebellious because of a profoundly hard heart... which is the antithesis to being properly humble.

Peter may have even chosen to reference the mighty hand of God with a view to prior times that God’s people have been humbled by suffering and have come to see his magnificent power in his delivering and even exalting them – most notably the magnificent deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

“But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, ‘O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?’”

Exodus 32:11 ^{ESV}

“Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, and by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great deeds of terror, all of which the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?”

Deuteronomy 4:34 ^{ESV}

“You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.” Deuteronomy 5:15 ^{ESV}

“...you shall say to your son, ‘We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt. And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.’” Deuteronomy 6:21 ^{ESV}

“If you say in your heart, ‘These nations are greater than I. How can I dispossess them?’ you shall not be afraid of them but you shall remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt, the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs, the wonders, the mighty hand, and the outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. So will the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid.” Deuteronomy 7:17-19 ^{ESV}

“And I prayed to the LORD, ‘O Lord GOD, do not destroy your people and your heritage, whom you have redeemed through your greatness, whom you have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand.’”
Deuteronomy 9:26 ^{ESV}

“And the Egyptians treated us harshly and humiliated us and laid on us hard labor. Then we cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great deeds of terror, with signs and wonders. And he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.” Deuteronomy 26:6-9 ^{ESV}

“As I live, declares the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out I will be king over you. I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out.” Ezekiel 20:33-34 ^{ESV}

“And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly.”
Daniel 9:15 ^{ESV}

What again is so incredible here is that God commands something for our greatest good and benefit, in ways that are in no way necessary for him to be worthy of all worship, thanksgiving, and praise. Yet, he commands the act of humbling oneself for the purpose not just of having a right view oneself, a right view of God, and an affectionate service to others... but also “so that,” or with the purpose of his exalting you at the proper time. A reflection of the aforementioned grace... he gives grace to the humble... he rewards the obedient in ways unimaginable. God chooses and takes pleasure in esteeming, in exalting the humble.

This is also where confidence in God must direct one’s joyful submission to his commands – he will exult, esteem, make much of, and lift up the humble at the time of his choosing, when he determines in his good providence and plan to be best.

A final reflection here is that this was Jesus’ personal experience... one of humility and exultation. How extraordinary that the Lord is pleased to treat us as his very own.

“Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

The NET Bible chooses to articulate its translation here in such a way that it explains that the *means* by which one humbles themselves under the mighty hand of God is *by* casting all their cares on him: “And God will exalt you in due time, if you humble yourselves under his mighty hand *by casting all your cares on him because he cares for you.*” 1 Peter 5:6-7 ^{NET}

Explaining their translation they state, “As such, it is not offering a new command, but is defining *how* believers are to humble themselves. Taking the participle as means enriches the understanding of both verbs: Humbling oneself is not a negative act of self-denial per se, but a positive one of active dependence on God for help.”⁵⁴

⁵⁴ NET Bible, 1 Peter 5:7, Note 12

D. Edmond Hiebert concurs that the participle “casting” modifies the main verb of humbling oneself.⁵⁵ This unites the call to humble oneself to casting one’s anxieties on the Lord. Therefore to persist in holding fast to one’s anxieties is a violation of the preceding command to humble oneself under the mighty hand of God.

Further, what a vivid picture is supplied for the expected course of action here: casting all your anxieties on him. A picture of throwing something off onto another... explicitly stating “Here, you take it.”

This is such a strong narrative in prayer... and there is such a peculiar wrestling process that usually accompanies this, which makes no sense... as the outcome is absolutely the one needed and desired... it is almost like a small child in a fit from exhaustion and both fighting and craving rest at the same time.

The matter is not simply one of jettisoning worries or elements of weighty concern, but thrusting them on to one who would be displeased not to take these burdens on for his beloved.

Perhaps one of the cruelest things would be to cast your cares or anxieties on one who has no regard for you or the matters at hand... in such a case there would be no assurance of your cares and anxieties having a proper resolution, being nurtured to a safe landing, or even mortified if an enemy. But this is not what Peter states here. Instead, the call is to cast or jettison one’s cares and anxieties on him who cares for you, the most perfect Father. In what better hands could one leave their anxieties and cares... certainly not your own. So how precious in every way is this building conclusion to the letter. There is so much about suffering and struggle in this temporal world and then the call to cast these matters to the one not only big enough to handle them, but who cares enough to bear the burden of these matters. Perhaps here Peter could remember his beloved Lord’s exhortation, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30 ^{ESV}

On the other side of the matter is that failure to obey here is sin, and it may specifically be rooted in pride. “Humility also manifest itself in handing over our worries to God (v.7a), and hence it follows that worry is a form of pride. Worry constitutes pride since it denies the care of a sovereign God. The antidote to worry is believing in and resting in God’s care for believers (v.7b).”⁵⁶ Schreiner further supports this statement by affirming what has been established above, that casting all of one’s anxieties on the Lord is the means by which a believer submits to the command to humble oneself before the Lord. Speaking to “casting” he states, “The participle, [casting], should be understood as an instrumental participle, and it explains *how* believers can humble themselves under God’s strong hand. Seeing the relationship between the main verb (‘humble yourselves,’ v.6) and the participle (‘casting all your anxiety upon him,’ NASB) is important because it shows that giving in to worry is an example of pride.”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Hiebert, Pg. 312

⁵⁶ Schreiner, Pgs. 238-239

⁵⁷ Schreiner, Pg. 240

Finally, it is highly probable that Peter was also alluding back to the comforting truths of the Psalms here, “Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you....” Psalm 55:22 ^{ESV} Counsel well worth heeding.

Further Reflection and Application

How does having a right view of God and yourself (expressed by humbling ourselves under his mighty hand) impact your daily life?

How might you properly elevate a right and high view of God in the days ahead?

In the study guide you read:

D. Edmond Hiebert concurs that the participle “casting” modifies the main verb of humbling oneself.⁵⁸ This unites the call to humble oneself to casting one’s anxieties on the Lord. Therefore, to persist in holding fast to one’s anxieties is a violation of the preceding command to humble oneself under the mighty hand of God.

This needs to be carefully thought and prayed through, as maintaining anxiety, when commanded to cast it upon the Lord, is a sin. When we hold fast to our fears and worries, we are affirming that our own hand is sufficient to hold our burdens... and that to submit them to the Lord is a threat to having them properly addressed. It is a perplexing proposition, but such is the nature of sin. However, what is extraordinary here is that the Lord is very patient and compassionate. This is not a matter of forsaking an overt vice that pocked one’s former life outside of Christ. This is a matter that we want nothing more than to be rid of and yet we find the process so very frightening and unclear – feeding the very problem that we would see resolved.

Take some time to review this section in the study guide once more and then meditate on that most precious truth that accompanies this command, “he cares for you.” Following this time of review and mediation use the following space to do one of the following exercises:

Write out a prayer expressing your efforts to submit to this uniquely challenging and precious command – wrestle until satisfied in Christ.

OR

Write out how you might graciously come alongside someone under the burden of anxiety – expressing how you might seek to strengthen their hand to be successful in this weighty challenge.

⁵⁸ Hiebert, Pg. 312

[illegible]

Personal Reflection and Application

How will truths from this section impact your thinking, praying, daily walk, and worship?

[illegible]

A Call to Vigilance and Awareness of Universal Suffering (5:8-9)

“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.” 1 Peter 5:8-9 ^{ESV}

Through the first half of chapter five, Peter has established that the Good Shepherd has generously extended his care through the faithful charge of his under-shepherds. He has called the church to a mutual humility in its care for one another and a proper submission of itself to the Lord in the context of suffering. Then he provided a most precious charge to find the Lord sufficient in his sustaining care – taking the anxieties and cares of his people. Now comes that which thematically fits with the Good Shepherd’s care, but of a very different nature. This is a warning not of the opposition of the world, or of common slanderers and evil doers, but the most vile and profound adversary who vigorously pursues the destruction of others, particularly God’s people. The enemy is real, and Peter provides righteous guidance accordingly. This guidance reflects the truth that John stated in 1 John 4, “Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” 1 John 4:4 ^{ESV}

“Be sober-minded; be watchful.”

Peter was calling upon the believers to have both a confidence in God’s perfect care and to have an active situational awareness in this fallen and hostile world, demonstrating that confidence in God does not need to be confused with naivety. This was a call to clear-thinking watchfulness in view of a proactive enemy whose modus operandi is to steal, kill, and destroy.

In a larger context that was full of eschatological hope, Paul expresses this active vigilance to the Thessalonians who were certainly acquainted with struggles and persecution: “Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, ‘There is peace and security,’ then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.” 1 Thessalonians 5:1-8 ^{ESV}

Later Paul again expressed his own sober-minded watchfulness: “Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.” Acts 20:31 ^{ESV}

Expressions of proactive vigilance:

“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.” Ephesians 4:26-27 ^{ESV}

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.” Ephesians 6:10-13 ^{ESV}

“Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.” 1 Timothy 3:7 ^{ESV}

It is not often that there is reference or instruction of the believer having direct/personal engagement with/against the devil – these appear to be the closest and provide consistent and clear instruction among themselves.

Being sober-minded and watchful are necessary elements of resisting the devil and his tactics. The believer is to have an unobstructed mind for prayer and the whole of life – a person who thinks right about God’s truth and the impact that has on life. It is here that the prohibition against things such as alcohol⁵⁹ find their firmest standing as their abuse obstruct clear thinking, compromise judgment, and lower inhibition – the exact condition one would love to find their enemy, compromised. However, it is not enough to be clear minded. One must also be watchful, vigilant. There needs to be an active awareness of threat or compromise – not a crippling awareness that obstructs normal life engagements, but an alert and attentive posture.

These are baseline expectations of an airline pilot who, while in a domestic and peaceful, context has no proactive threats per se. Still no one wants an impaired and unalert pilot... because the dangers associated with their failure are their destruction, the destruction of their passengers, the potential destruction to unknown third parties, and the destruction to the airline’s good name. Now consider the job of the Air Marshal, who is called to a constant sober-minded and watchful disposition when on duty. He knows there is an enemy who is seeking any and all opportunities to destroy, and it is his charge to find and stop the enemy as quickly and decisively as possible. His job is one of preserving and saving lives, and therefore it is invaluable and imperative that he is sober-minded and watchful. Now, the difference is that the believer never comes off duty. Not to say there can never be down time or recreation, but not at the expense of compromise and failure in maintaining a proper disposition of sober-minded alertness.

⁵⁹ “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit...” Ephesians 5:18 ^{ESV}

‘Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.’

What a weighty statement... “your adversary the devil” – the personal nature of this relationship is because of one’s true relationship in Christ. It is not just God’s adversary, but your adversary because of your identification in Christ.

But do not miss the contrast, it has just been plainly stated that the Lord of glory “cares for you....” It is a terrible reality to have an adversary such as the devil, but it is incomparable to recognize that God cares for you.

Consider even this one insight that expresses the gentleness of care amidst personal assault, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” Luke 22:31-32 ^{ESV}

There is an active pursuit of prey... an aggressive hunter seeking out one to overtake, destroy, and consume. His prowling is a present active verb... he is actively in the act of the hunt. In his prowling, he is seeking with the aim to devour/consume.

So vitriolic is Satan’s hatred for Christ that he would aim to destroy his children – not that they can be forfeited or lost to him, but they can forfeit or lose reputation, credibility, confidence, or joy. Suffering might just become so great that their temporal sojourning is not short enough and full of cynical dissatisfaction. These are all potential tragedies and require extreme due diligence both for oneself and others. So very delicate is the potential for succumbing to this enemy that Paul even warns married couples to guard their intimacy with one another – restricting themselves only for intentional times of prayer, “...so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.” 1 Corinthians 7:5 ^{ESV}

One must be aware of their own struggles, weakness, and susceptibilities, particularly when there is such a formidable and aggressive enemy.... Thus, the call sober-minded, watchful, vigilance.

Be aware: “Satan sows discord, accuses God to men, men to God, and men to men.”⁶⁰

Some additional known tactics and actions of Satan:

Afflicting Job with natural and physical harm, “So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.” Job 2:7 ^{ESV}

Provoking David to sin in his leadership of Israel in taking a census, “Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.” 1 Chronicles 21:1 ^{ESV}

Standing to accuse the High Priest Joshua, “Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.” Zechariah 3:1 ^{ESV}

⁶⁰ The MacArthur Study Bible, NKJV. Word Bibles, 1997. (Hereafter: MacArthurStudy Bible), Pg. 1949

Attempting to manipulate Jesus to prideful failure – even by means of using the Scripture, “Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, ‘All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’” Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.”

Matthew 4:8-11 ^{ESV}

Obstructing and undermining the gospel message’s reception, “And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.” Mark 4:15 ^{ESV}

Filling Judas’ heart with profound personal betrayal, “Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them.” Luke 22:3-4 ^{ESV}

Peter being sifted... pressed to a point of supreme tension, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat...” Luke 22:31 ^{ESV}

Operating a counterfeit ministry, “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.” 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 ^{ESV}

Influencing those who have apostatized, “Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons....”

1 Timothy 4:1 ^{ESV}

“Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.”

Resist, oppose, withstand. The command in response to this grave threat is to resist. This is not a pacifist engagement – this a fight for your life and the glory of God.

Edmund Clowney draws out the modeling of firmness present in Jesus entering into the final elements of his public ministry and his suffering by citing two passages, one from Isaiah and one from Luke.

“But the Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have *set my face like a flint*, and I know that I shall not be put to shame.” Isaiah 50:7 ^{ESV} The prophesied Messiah would remain fixed and confident in The LORD.⁶¹

“When the days drew near for him to be taken up, *he set his face* to go to Jerusalem.” Luke 9:51 ^{ESV} This setting of his face is often expressed as a resolute or determined setting of himself to the direction and passion before him. Jesus was firm and fixed on the direction and the work.⁶²

⁶¹ Clowney explains that in Isaiah 50:7 the Septuagint the word “firm” as the term used in 1 Peter 5:9, Clowney, Pg. 216

⁶² Clowney highlighted that the verb here in Luke 9 is a similar to the adjective in 1 Peter 5 (Luke 9: στηρίζω, 1 Peter 5: στερεός), Clowney, Pg. 216

Further developing this proper resolved gaze on the Lord, the object and centering of our faith, Clowney makes a very helpful observation regarding how one properly resists the devil while firm in one's faith: "Peter has reminded us that the testings do not destroy our faith, but purify it. Since the peculiar nature of faith is its looking, not to oneself, but to the Lord, it is most strongly grounded when it is most dependent. 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' So the Lord said to Paul, and Paul could therefore say: 'For when I am weak, then I am strong.' In order to resist the devil we draw near to God."⁶³

This is not some strange battle stumbled upon in a dark alley and it is not some mystical engagement. This is spiritual warfare carried out with the tools that the Lord has generously provided his church. This is perhaps most explicitly put on display in Ephesians 6: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints...." Ephesians 6:10-18 ^{ESV}

The tools provided are clear: truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the word of God, and prayer.

"Here the objective sense of 'the faith,' the true gospel message adhered to, is essential. Victory is not assured by the personal tenacity with which we cling to our personal beliefs. Victory lies in adhering to the work of Christ on the cross, where He defeated the devil (John 12:31-33). In Christ, Satan is now a defeated foe."⁶⁴

Thomas Schreiner argues that standing firm is as simple and direct as staying steadfast in faith.⁶⁵ One stays steadfast in the faith by being mighty in the Scriptures and faithful in prayer. Also, by availing themselves of the most natural resource the Lord has provided to strengthen and refine these matters, the local church:

"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes." Ephesians 4:11-14 ^{ESV}

Suffering is a kindred experience by believers throughout history and throughout the world. This suffering is likely both associated with the activities of Satan and would also encompass the larger matrix of suffering.

⁶³ Clowney, Pg. 216 (underlining added)

⁶⁴ Hiebert, Pg. 316

⁶⁵ Schreiner, Pgs. 243

In the devil's prowling, he is seeking... seeking to devour. In the believers' resisting, they are knowing... knowing that such suffering as they are experiencing is the "common reality" throughout the fallen world, but the Lord keeps his own and will properly care for, reward, and esteem them.

Further, knowledge of the larger scope of suffering of believers throughout the world impacts one's resisting the aggressive pursuit of the devil in part by giving a perspective on endurance and Christ's sufficiency. This understanding of the suffering brotherhood also promotes a helpful calibration that it is the Church that suffers... not necessarily you the individual. True, one does suffer as an individual, but if it is suffering for righteousness' sake, or as stated in chapter four, "as a Christian." Then suffering is rooted in one's identity in Christ and not one's own person, conduct, or even enemies. It is in this suffering, in Christ, that one finds victory, rest, and reward. It is also in this suffering that one finds that they are not alone – such is the experience of the brotherhood of the Church throughout the world. A brotherhood that has a shared affection for its Lord and one another – one that labors in prayer and faithfulness for those whom they may never meet on this side of eternity, but who are championed as family – a family who endures the same struggles ranging from their own flesh, a hostile world, and a prowling enemy.

Also, when aware that one has an adversary as terrible as the devil, "*your* enemy," it is most encouraging to also hear you have others in the fight with you too, "*your* brotherhood."

So, the call to sober-mindedness and watchfulness is bolstered by a persevering vigilance that is informed by the reality of their present context with a view to their future rest and reward.

Personal Reflection and Application

How will truths from this section impact your thinking, praying, daily walk, and worship?

[illegible]

Further Reflection and Application

The language that Peter implores here is by its very nature very sobering, but still is the command to action: be sober-minded and watchful. Without being sensational, what does this look like in your daily life? How do you maintain a proper vigilance and even stand firm against such a formidable enemy?

Peter speaks of the universal struggle of believers and the reason for this common suffering appears to be that there is an active/aggressive adversary who pursues their ruin. This is not always the devil personally, quite rarely is it a personal assault, and this against an extraordinary few persons, but most certainly as a result of his worldwide reach and influence. The devil himself being identified as the prince of the power of the air... “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.” Ephesians 2:1-3 ^{ESV}

How does this universal suffering impact you personally, and how might you submit yourself in loving service to those in Christ throughout the world who are also suffering?

A Call to Comfort after Suffering (5:10)

“And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.” 1 Peter 5:10

Peter appears to bring the letter to a full circle here... he laid such a robust foundation in chapter one – establishing the believer’s glorious salvation in Christ before making a more complete case for suffering preceding glory. Now he is again affirming that the Lord is indeed the source, means, and giver of all grace, and this has been so magnificently expressed to his beloved by their calling and redemption in Christ. Further, as he established in chapter one, the salvation that he has provided will be seen through to completion. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1:3-7 ^{ESV}

“And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.”

Maintaining an eternal perspective reminds one that this suffering is but for a little while... even if it consumes the entirety of one’s life, it is helpful to remember that this present experience of life is but a mist, “For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.” James 4:14 ^{ESV}

“For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.” 2 Corinthians 4:17 ^{ESV}

Note also how this pattern is being addressed one last time in these final verses of the letter:

ARE: Suffering, “...the same kinds of suffering **are** being experienced....” 5:9
AFTER: Suffering, “...**after** you have suffered for a little while....” 5:10
WILL: Glory, “...the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, **will** himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.” 5:10

It is also helpful to remember once more that the Lord will do all these things for you, because “he cares for you...” Peter reminds us all that this path riddled with suffering, struggle, and even vile enemies is God’s good path for his children. It is not a wasted journey, and it is guaranteed to end magnificently because God himself has called you to his eternal glory in Christ and he will perfectly care for and complete you.

This is a magnificent pairing: temporal suffering and eternal glory in Christ provided by the God of all grace.

As stated, this is now Peter's final time addressing suffering in the book, a well-established theme that was rooted in Christ's suffering and maintained a view to future glory. Consider the scope of how he has addressed both Christ's suffering and the suffering of the believer throughout the letter.

Christ's Suffering

The predicted sufferings of Christ,

"...inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories." 1 Peter 1:11 ^{ESV}

Christ was the living stone rejected by men.

"As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious...." 1 Peter 2:4 ^{ESV}

The rejected stone became the cornerstone.

"So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.....'" 1 Peter 2:7 ^{ESV}

Christ suffered as an example to be followed.

"For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps." 1 Peter 2:21 ^{ESV}

Christ suffered though sinless.

"He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth." 1 Peter 2:22 ^{ESV}

Christ did not adversely respond though adversely treated - rather he entrusted himself to the just judge.

"When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly." 1 Peter 2:23 ^{ESV}

Christ's suffering on the cross paid the penalty of sin and satisfied the wrath of God - believers now can be righteous and live righteously.

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed." 1 Peter 2:24 ^{ESV}

Christ suffered for the sins of others - bringing about redemption and reconciliation with God and men (who submit in faith).

"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit...." 1 Peter 3:18 ^{ESV}

Christ suffered in the flesh.

"Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin...." 1 Peter 4:1 ^{ESV}

Christ's sufferings and future glory to be revealed.

"But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed." 1 Peter 4:13 ^{ESV}

An element of Peter's apostolic testimony is that he witnessed the sufferings of Christ.

"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...." 1 Peter 5:1 ^{ESV}

Believer's Suffering

Grieved by various trials.

"In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials...." 1 Peter 1:6 ^{ESV}

Spoken against as evildoers.

"Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation." 1 Peter 2:12 ^{ESV}

It is a gracious thing to be mindful of God while enduring suffering unjustly.

"For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly."
1 Peter 2:19 ^{ESV}

Better to suffer for doing good than for actual offenses.

"For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God." 1 Peter 2:20 ^{ESV}

Believers are not to engage in retaliatory reviling.

"Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing." 1 Peter 3:9 ^{ESV}

Should suffering come for righteousness' sake, one will be blessed.

"But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled...." 1 Peter 3:14 ^{ESV}

Have a good conscience when you are slandered and reviled so that the offender(s) will be put to shame.

"...having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame." 1 Peter 3:16 ^{ESV}

It is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

"For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil."
1 Peter 3:17 ^{ESV}

Think in view of Christ's suffering - there is an advantage to suffering in the flesh: ceasing from sin.

"Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin...." 1 Peter 4:1 ^{ESV}

Believers maligned by unbelievers for not participating in their wicked conduct.

"With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you...." 1 Peter 4:4 ^{ESV}

Do not be surprised, but rejoice by the coming of fiery trial - having a view to future glory (suffering in identity with Christ, rejoicing in identity with Christ).

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.” 1 Peter 4:12-13 ^{ESV}

Those insulted for Christ are blessed - having the Spirit of glory and of God upon them.

“If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.” 1 Peter 4:14 ^{ESV}

Do not be ashamed for suffering as a Christian, but glorify God.

“Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.” 1 Peter 4:16 ^{ESV}

Those suffering according to God’s will are to entrust their souls to the Lord while doing good.

“Therefore let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.” 1 Peter 4:19 ^{ESV}

A like suffering among believers is experienced throughout the world.

“Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.” 1 Peter 5:9 ^{ESV}

After a season of suffering the believer can anticipate future restoration and glory in Christ.

“And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.” 1 Peter 5:10 ^{ESV}

Note how Peter speaks of God here.

Who he is: The God of all grace.⁶⁶

By “the God of all grace” it appears that Peter was communicating that God is both the source and generous supplier of grace. Generously giving his children blessings, joy, hope, and life in Christ.

What he has done: Called his beloved to eternal glory in Christ.

“The glory to which God calls is his glory in Jesus Christ. Peter had experienced the awe of Christ’s glory in the cloud that accompanied his Master’s transfiguration. Yet after Christ’s resurrection he had also joined his glorified Lord on the familiar shore of the lake of Galilee for a breakfast of broiled fish. Peter’s hope of glory was not an indefinable nimbus cloud: it was as definite as the scarred hand of Jesus that passed the breakfast fish. Peter had heard the call of God in the voice of Jesus; he had seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus.”⁶⁷

⁶⁶ This is the only like reference in the New Testament – interesting that it is used here at the conclusion of a book so centered on suffering.

⁶⁷ Clowney, Pg. 218

What he will do: Restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish the believer.

Restore: To make whole again. To put in order, to make right, to complete⁶⁸

Confirm: To set fast so as to sustain.⁶⁹

Strengthen/establish: To make strong. “And when you have turned again, *strengthen* your brothers.” Luke 22:32 ^{ESV}

Establish: To be founded, grounded, stable.

Edmund Clowney sees this list as describing the Lord promising a firm foundation for believers.⁷⁰

John MacArthur concurs with Clowney, stating, “These terms all connote strength and immovability, which God wants for all believers as they face the spiritual battle (1 Cor. 15:58; 16:13; Eph. 6:10; 2 Tim. 2:1). He sets them firmly on the truth of divine revelation, where they stand in faith and confidence until they realize their eternal glory.”⁷¹

By contrast Wayne Grudem argues that these four items are addressing the restoring and recovering of that which was lost, compromised, or taken through righteous suffering. “...*the God of all grace* will *restore* them or ‘make them fully prepared and complete’ with respect to any resource or ability which they have lost through suffering. He will *establish* them firmly in any position, rightful privilege, or responsibility which this suffering has taken from them. He will *strengthen* them for any weakness they have been made to suffer, any inadequacy for overcoming evil which they may have known. And we should add that he will *settle* them in any rightful place from which the suffering has wrongfully removed them. In sum: all loss will soon be made right and for eternity.”⁷²

This appears to contextually fit with Peter’s developed narrative, and it is quite similar to a statement that Jesus made directly to Peter regarding other losses for kingdom work: “Then Peter said in reply, ‘See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.’” Matthew 19:27-29 ^{ESV}

⁶⁸ Clowney, Pg. 218

⁶⁹ MacArthur Commentary., Pg. 287

⁷⁰ Clowney, Pg. 219

⁷¹ MacArthur Commentary, Pg. 287

⁷² Grudem, Pg. 198 – Italics in original – also, two parenthetical statements were omitted as they did not provide any necessary contribution to the quotation – they were more fitting for commentary.

Personal Reflection and Application

How will truths from this section impact your thinking, praying, daily walk, and worship?

[illegible]

Further Reflection and Application

No one desires to suffer, and the experience of suffering is never short enough. However, suffering for righteousness' sake is never without meaning, never without restoration, never without reward, and never without a perfect Comforter.

Reflect on these truths and write out your thoughts and reflections that the God of all grace provides restoring comfort in immeasurable proportions.

A Call to Worship (5:11)

“To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” 1 Peter 5:11 ^{ESV}

This is the second micro-doxology in the book and is of a like content and nature. Here it appears that in view of God’s righteous and good safekeeping and the assurance of future glory, Peter erupts into a moment of unqualified worshipful praise to God.

Peter extols the everlasting sovereignty of God here – to him who has dominion or lordship of all creation forever and ever. This frames a right view of God and thereby a right view of this temporal life with its suffering and struggles... he is Lord over these things and he is and will accomplish his purposes.

Further Reflection and Application

Peter noted the brevity with which he wrote, but still he includes two very small doxologies. Worship was clearly not only a priority for Peter, but something that could not be restricted even on paper.

How do the range of truths that have been expressed in this chapter alone inform your worship, and how might you more fully give your mind and heart to truth that they would have moments of erupting praise to God?

Personal Reflection and Application

How will truths from this section impact your thinking, praying, daily walk, and worship?

[illegible]

A Call to Stand Firm and to Affectionate Greetings in Christ (5:12-14)

“By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.” 1 Peter 5:12-14 ^{ESV}

When Peter opened his letter it might have been thought to be a broad impersonal broadcasting of truth to various churches. However, his concluding greetings demonstrate that it was far from an impersonal distribution of truth – it was written to churches with whom there was a measure of relationship. He speaks of Silvanus, Mark, and the church at Babylon in a manner that there is a presumption of knowledge and relationship. Finally, he concludes with provoking a culture of righteous affection among the fellowships. Peter knew the taxing nature of sojourning in this temporal life, particularly with its associated suffering and struggles, but he also knew that the value of the relationships within the church too. No small portion of the letter addressed matters of the one-another life that the church has been called to and the conclusion of his letter puts a personal touch on these very things.

“By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.”

Silvanus, also known as Silas, was clearly a faithful co-laborer as plain from Acts 15 where he was significantly esteemed among those of the church in Jerusalem as he goes out as part of a special affirmation team following the Jerusalem Council. Later he was a ministry companion alongside Paul and Timothy in Corinth and Thessalonica.

At this time he appears to be serving alongside Peter and participating in the successful distribution of this letter to the churches and is highly valued and esteemed by Peter as a faithful brother. This was a common affirmation for a letter bearer so as to establish their credibility as a courier and also potentially as a first-tier expositor – having been near or in relationship with the author being able to speak most directly to the letter’s contents.⁷³ This however does not inherently imply that Silvanus served as Peter’s scribe for the letter taking strict dictation or polishing up the details. This would pose no threats to the integrity of the letter or its inspiration, but it is simply not an argument either introduced or defended here so it must be categorized simply as speculation of unknown facts.

Peter did write a relatively brief letter, but it was comprehensive in truth – saying so much in an economy of words. In this “brief” letter we have here how Peter viewed his letter, as exhortations and declarations of the true grace of God. Further we have his plain expectation too, that they should stand firm in this true grace of God.

⁷³ Schreiner, Pg. 249

By “the true grace of God” it is understood that Peter was speaking to the larger/sweeping principles of the book as they were fixed on the glorious gospel of Christ, present suffering, future glory, and the roles of living well now in this temporal context of sojourning.

“She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son.”

Peter states, “She who is at Babylon,” and this has been most plainly been understood as a local church, which is how the NET Bible chose to translate it, “The church in Babylon.” However, there is reasonable discussion about whether this was not a personal greeting such as the one from Mark that immediately accompanies this one. It is recognized that Peter was married and that his wife accompanied him and also that there were prominent women in various places that would have been well known. These are matters that could be considered, but they do not hold up well under fair scrutiny, as Peter’s wife would have likely been directly named if that was the intent and the probability of these several receiving churches immediately recognizing a generic reference to an unnamed woman is unlikely too. What is consistent is to see the church referred to in a like manner, effectively communicating greetings from another local assembly otherwise known as a sister church.⁷⁴

The conclusion reached at the outset of the study is that Babylon was not a reference to the actual city of Babylon (though it is an extremely prominent city in the Scriptures – receiving its primary attention in the New Testament in the book of Revelation), but Peter appears to be using it as a way of referring to Rome (another extremely prominent city, particularly in the timeframe of the New Testament).

When introducing the book of 1 Peter the following was stated, “There are various possibilities as to why this reference [to Babylon] if he was indeed writing from Rome, but it may have been because while Babylon’s glory had gravely diminished at this time it was an iconic city for magnificently opposing the things of God – idolatrous indulgences enjoying the fancies of fleeting power.” Also stated, “Along with this [the book] plainly alludes to the historic dispersion and exile from Judah – drawing back to the temporal experience of this world where believers are but sojourners – something [Peter plainly developed] within the letter.” However, it is possible that the common use of Babylon when referring to Rome was not until the second century – well after Peter wrote his letter.⁷⁵ This would not wholly dismiss Peter’s use of the Babylon for Rome here, but it does need to be considered.

In referencing those within the larger Church, namely at “Babylon” he refers to them as chosen, chosen in Christ, just as Peter’s recipients and all who in the Church are effectively chosen by God. Peter spoke to this from a different angle in chapter one where he spoke of the readers as “elect” in verse one and “born again” in verse three (he unambiguously states that it was God that caused them to be born again).

⁷⁴ Hiebert, Pgs. 329-330

⁷⁵ Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary; Robert L. Thomas; Moody Publishers, 1995, Pgs. 206-207

There is an expression of larger greetings from the church in “Babylon” as there is a shared affection for one another even when there is great distance and no familial connection. In this regard the Church is the largest true fraternity in the world, having the most perfect bond even when its individual members do not always have any personal or first-hand knowledge of others.

Finally, Peter shares of the greetings sent by Mark who has himself been a ministry companion to others, including Paul and Barnabas, but who is clearly close to Peter who refers to this younger brother in the faith as a son to him.

The introduction of John Mark came in Acts 12 when Peter was supernaturally released from prison and joined other believers who had gathered at John Mark’s mother’s house for prayer. There was plainly a significant connection between Peter and John Mark’s home, which would have naturally produced a unity among them that carried over through this time too.

“Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.”

Greeting with a kiss is a common New Testament command and does not get a cultural exemption. It may be that the execution is different, but the principles remain the same be it handshakes, hugs, or even... kisses.

“Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.” Romans 16:16 ^{ESV}

“All the brothers send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.” 1 Corinthians 16:20 ^{ESV}

“Greet one another with a holy kiss.” 2 Corinthians 13:12 ^{ESV}

“Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.” 1 Thessalonians 5:26 ^{ESV}

“Greet one another with the kiss of love.” 1 Peter 5:14 ^{ESV}

It will likely be quickly noted that the other references to this greeting state, “holy kiss” and Peter states, “kiss of love.” This is not communicating anything different. The other references come from Paul and he and Peter express things differently, but more to the point, Peter is articulating the same thing from a different angle. A kiss of greeting among the church’s members is both holy and affectionate – perhaps seeing this together is most helpful, “a holy kiss of love.”

Peter provides his final command and it is a simple expression of mutual affection in Christ, greeting one another with a kiss of love.

Clowney highlights that the gathering of the church is the setting for this command, which was carried out either in the service proper when the letter was being read or at its conclusion.⁷⁶

This greeting did not carry with it undertones of intimate affection whose context is restricted to husband and wife, but it was of a like qualitative nature of intimate affection for a family who sincerely loves one another.

⁷⁶ Clowney, Pg. 225

By application it can be carried out with a “handshake,” but if the “handshake” is of no distinguishable difference than that politely offered to a stranger or exchanged among business colleagues then something is certainly lost. However, a kiss of greeting offered out of a flirtatious lusting or carried out with numbing indifference is also in no way honoring this command and may well be more grossly offending it.

Greetings, coming and going, are unique moments of direct exchange with another in which you affirm their value to you. In Christ and in fulfillment of the many commands to love one another, this is one of the most common and natural engagements one has with other believers. One can think of it in a like manner to military officers saluting one another – it is a constant demonstration of respect and honor to another. How much more natural should greetings of affection be for those within Christ’s church?

Finally, Peter concludes as he opened, an affirmation of that which has been generously provided them in Christ, peace. Shalom is still recognized as a common Jewish greeting (meeting and departing), but it is in Christ that one has peace – peace with God and the prospect of peace with man, certainly others in Christ.

In a context that would effectively begin the magnificent journey of redemption and the institution of his Church, Jesus stated to his beloved friends words that would ever so graciously endure through the present and until he returns: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” John 14:27 ^{ESV}

"Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

Hebrews 13:20-21

Personal Reflection and Application

How will truths from this section impact your thinking, praying, daily walk, and worship?

[illegible]

Further Reflection and Application

Peter’s letter was clearly not impersonal. Being in the Church is to be in relationship, not only with the Lord, but with his people. What might you learn from the greetings that are exchanged at the conclusion of the letter? How do they inform your understanding of Peter’s pastoral over professorial tone of the letter as a whole?

Does your theology have names and faces? Consider those with whom you are in relationship with through the church and how you might pray specifically for them as you meditate on the range of truths throughout this letter that expressed so plainly, “the true grace of God.” Write out some plans of action in this area.

Does Peter expect you to greet other members of the church with a kiss? Consider what is being communicated by Peter and write out how you will put this command to action (if it is handshakes and hugs, then explain).

Peter writes so much of suffering and concludes with peace. Having labored through this book, what are your concluding thoughts on this?

[illegible]

NOTES:

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