

The Book of I Peter – Part Eighteen

May 29th, 2011

1). We're going to be ending the book of I Peter today by studying the last chapter, Chapter 5.

a) Review the book...

b) And let's now read –

1Peter 5:1

The elders ["presbuteros" – literally meaning 'one who is older'] who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

a). This last chapter begins with an exhortation to 'the elders who are among you'. The term "elder" was used within the church in the same manner as the word 'overseer' or 'bishop' -

Acts 20:28

"Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers ["episkopos" – literally, watchman], to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

1Timothy 3:2

A bishop ["episkopos" – literally, watchman] then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

b) And it was, and still is, the duty of those in this position within the church to exercise spiritual oversight and spiritual guidance to its members, those comprising the church of God/the body of Christ.

c). And so it is to those who were in this position that Peter makes exhortation, and what follows is as pertinent now as when it was written.
d). We see in verse 1 that Peter describes himself as 'a fellow elder' which demonstrates that Peter neither claimed or assumed any higher position than that of an ordinary elder in the church. This does not take away from his standing as an Apostle, but it does show clearly that his position as an Apostle was not a matter of pride or self exaltation.

e). Peter is first and foremost a bondservant of Jesus Christ (**II Peter 1:1 – “Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ”**) and then, by the grace of God, an apostle... so perhaps we can see that this first and primary role as a bondservant of Christ must also hold true for all those in spiritual leadership.

2). We also see in our first verse that not only is Peter 'a fellow elder', but he is also a witness of the sufferings of Christ. The word translated 'witness' here is the Greek word from which we get our English word 'martyr'. What this means is that Peter is not referring to the act of seeing Christ's sufferings but to the act of testifying to what he has seen. In other words Peter is not merely claiming to have seen the crucifixion but to have been retained to give testimony concerning what he has seen.

a). Now, it may be that Peter's witness is not just in recounting the details of the crucifixion, but his own personal experience of the sufferings of Christ; that very thing that had been the subject of our last chapter. And we might remember his beating at the hands of the council that is recorded in the Book of Acts (Acts 5:29-42).

b). Peter also says that not only is he a witness to Christ's sufferings, he is also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed. The word translated 'partaker' might be better understood as 'a companion'. And what is set side by side for us in this verse is that which Peter has been saying all along in this letter... that suffering and glory go hand in hand, and the former must precede the latter.

3). Verse 2 then begins the exhortation to elders –

2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;

a). Shepherd = Greek – 'poimaino' = to tend as a shepherd of (figuratively, supervisor):-
-feed (cattle).

b). With this word we can get a sense of the duties of spiritually caring for the flock through feeding, tending, guiding and guarding the flock of God that God has been entrusted to them –

Acts 20:28

"Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

c). The church of God, as we see here in Acts, has been purchased by 'His own blood'. Christ has paid the price and the church belongs to Him. Those who are the under-shepherds of The Great Shepherd are to 'feed' and 'shepherd/guide/take care of' His flock on His behalf and take heed to themselves... and they are to do so in accordance with the will of their Master, that which is according to the scriptures, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. And it is to their Master alone that they will give an account.

d). Peter states that the elders' service, as an overseer and a service to their Master, is not to be done by compulsion - nobody is to force them to do it. There is no arm twisting, no politicking, no emotional blackmail - they must rather choose to do it willingly, voluntarily.

e). Nor, he continues, is their service to their Master to be done for dishonest gain - this literally would be translated, 'base or dishonorable gain' and would speak of commercializing their ministry in the sense of selling it in the marketplace in order to profit from it. Rather, they are to serve 'eagerly', and this word means to have a ready mind... to be predisposed to their task.

4). Peter continues -

3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;

a). So the elders' service to their Master is NOT to be done 'as being lords over those entrusted to them' - this would be having a high-handed, autocratic rule over the flock and this phrase could be translated, 'lording it over'. This unbalance in the hierarchy is the quickest way for sin and ungodliness to enter into the Body of Christ, thereby corrupting the relationships that are to be protected and cherished.

b). We find a similar phrase of "lording it over" in -

Matthew 20:25

But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. 26 "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.

c). And these verses come immediately after the mother of the sons of Zebedee has asked Jesus to grant that her sons would sit one on His right hand and one on His left in His Kingdom, a request that upset the other 10 disciples, placing these verses within a context of establishing someone in a position of preeminence and superiority. Such positions within the structure of the Gentile power of the day would be enforced with harshness and brutality, and Jesus draws a sharp distinction between the Gentile world and the actions of His disciples.

d). We have already seen a great example of this in the first verse of our opening scripture, where Peter assumes no preeminence amongst the other elders, but sees himself only as a fellow elder.

e). This would be the idea behind the exhortation in verse 3.

f). However, this does not do away with the God-ordained, properly exercised authority which should be administered in the local church by the elders.

g). Paul speaks of this in –

1Thessalonians 5:12

And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

1Timothy 5:17

Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.

j). And then there's the responsibility of those in the flock to make the choice to adopt the correct scriptural relationship to their elders as seen in –

Hebrews 13:17

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

k). So, rather than being 'lords' over the flock, the elders are instead to be 'examples' to the flock. The word translated 'examples' is the Greek word 'tuos' from which we get our word 'type' – the idea of course behind the word is that of 'a print left as an impression after a blow has been struck, a pattern or model of something else'. The idea here would be the same as that which Paul says in –

1Corinthians 11:1

Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

5). Then verse 4 of Chapter 5 brings us to the reward for those elders who are faithful in their service to their Lord –

...and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

6). And then Peter moves on –

1 Peter 5:5

You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.

a). In the original language the phrase ‘younger people’ seems to refer to organized groups of individuals – not just younger people in a general sense.

b). And we see that they are exhorted to ‘submit yourselves’ [hupotasso] to your elders – the elders in the local church who have the responsibility to be their spiritual ‘overseers’.

c). The focus for verse 5 is humility, of which submission should be an expression. And we see that we all need to be ‘clothed with humility’.

e). The word clothed describes the act of tying up or tucking up the long oriental outer-garments around the waist, as in readiness for work – it refers to the same action that Peter describes in –

1Peter 1:13

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind,

f). Humility is a virtue we are to ‘gird’ ourselves with; a virtue that must be in place so that we can properly run the race of the faith and properly serve our Master.

g). And the reason that this is so important for us is because, ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble’. I’m not exactly sure where this quote was originally, but it may be this –

Proverbs 3:34

Surely He scorns the scornful [‘scoffers’], But gives grace to the humble. 35 The wise shall inherit glory, But shame shall be the legacy of fools.

h). Here we see the scornful equated with ‘fools’ whose legacy will be shame, and the humble equated with ‘the wise’ who shall inherit glory. Whether or not this is the exact quote that Peter is referencing I don’t know, but it still holds the same truth in it that Peter is sharing.

i). “Opposed to” = Greek – ‘antitassomai’ = to range oneself against; to go against the order

This is a word that is a military term used of an army that is drawn up for battle and gives a chilling picture of God being set against the one who is proud for the purpose of doing battle with him.

j). Then, set in contrast to this, we see that God ‘gives grace to the humble’.

7). Moving on...

1Peter 5:6

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

a). And so, *because* God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble, we should *therefore*, so as to be recipients of His grace and not His resistance, humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. This would be the action of the wise person from Proverbs Chapter 3 – so that, as a result of our doing this, He will exalt us in due time – we will inherit glory at the Judgment Seat.

b). Now the phrase translated ‘humble yourselves’ is in the Greek in the passive voice which means that the subject of the verb is passive in the hands of God and is acted upon by Him. We would better understand this as, ‘Be humbled’, or ‘allow yourselves to be humbled’.

c). The means by which God is looking to produce humility in Peter’s readers is through the unjust persecution we have seen throughout the letter, and so the exhortation to them is to be submissive to the discipline that God is bringing through this persecution by acting in a God-honoring way to the persecution. Just as we have read in –

1Peter 2:19

For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.

d). We would also see this truth in –

Hebrews 12:5

And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?

e). But let's also keep in mind that the end result of walking in humility is exaltation to a position of rulership at the Judgment Seat.

f). And the truth here for us would be the same. If God deems it necessary for us to suffer unjustly in order to produce in us the humility we need, then we need to allow ourselves to be humbled by reacting to our suffering in a God-honoring way through faithful obedience to the scriptures, all the while realizing that this is an expression of God's love for us as He seeks to shape us for rulership.

8). Then the exhortation comes to its conclusion in verse 7 –

7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

a). What is said here is related specifically to its context – the unjust suffering that comes through persecution.

b). The harshness of the persecution Peter's readers were enduring would give rise to considerable concern on their part, but the exhortation is to cast this upon Him.

c). The word translated 'care' here ['merimna'] is the same word translated 'anxious' in –

Philippians 4:6

Be anxious [merimna] for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

d). Now the Greek word translated 'all' - 'all your care' – has the idea of the whole of their anxiety. So this is not speaking of each anxiety as it comes along, but rather of a resolve to cast all anxiety, both present and future, on Him with the result that anxiety will ultimately disappear.

e). And for ourselves what we see here would also be true. The word translated 'casting' literally means, 'having deposited with' and refers to a committal on our part to give all to God that would cause us anxiety. This is a decision we need to make and then put into practice.

g). Anxiety and worry are a contradiction to true humility, as they demonstrate unbelief. In clinging to our anxieties we show that we do not trust God, but rather trust ourselves, thereby exalting our self above God.

h). Now this may sound very difficult, and in one sense it is, but this may be because we have never grasped the significance of the second half of our verse - 'for He cares for you'.

i). These words can be literally translated, 'for it is a care to Him concerning you', or 'for you are His concern'. Why should we be anxious if we are His concern? He is more concerned about our welfare than we can possibly be, and He is concerned about it with a view to our future appearance before Him in Judgment, and His desire is that we be found worthy there.

j). And this is exactly what the Lord taught to His disciples, Peter being one of them, recorded in -

Matthew 6:25

"Therefore I say to you, do not worry [merimna] about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?28 "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;29 "and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.30 "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'32 "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.34 "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

k). So let's just remember that since the process of humbling us has been allowed to come to us in His permissive will, and He is using it to accomplish His purpose in our

lives with a view to the Millennial Kingdom which awaits us, we may know with certainty that He has our circumstance under His control and He has us in His care – so what do we have to be anxious about?

9). And Peter continues -

1Peter 5:8

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

a). This final exhortation in our letter comes with regards to the actions of the enemy of our soul whose intent is our destruction.

b). We are exhorted to 'Be sober, be vigilant' – and we will remember that the word translated 'sober' has to do with having a sound mind, a mind that is mentally self controlled so as to maintain the correct perspective having been transformed through the renewing action of the Word –

Colossians 3:2

Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Philippians 2:5

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

Philippians 3:15

Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.

e). And the word 'vigilant' means to be awake and watchful.

f). We must not fall into the sleep of complacency or lethargy, but rather to be watchful for the wiles of the devil.

g). And we need to maintain this ever-ready condition because our adversary, the one who opposes us before the throne of God, the accuser of the brethren, walks about like a roaring lion. The word roaring speaking of the howl of a beast in fierce hunger, seeking whom he may devour.

h). And when the attack does come we are to 'resist him'; we are to stand our ground and take courage. Both Satan and his emissaries are more powerful than us and so we

are not in a position to take the offensive against them, but clothed in our spiritual armor we are not to be moved.

i). And we are to stand our ground 'steadfast in the faith.' The word 'steadfast' is a military term that means locked together in a battle line, and that which we are to be locked together with is 'the faith' – that which we have believed concerning Christ and His coming Kingdom in all its aspects. It is by standing in the faith and by the faith that the power to resist the devil comes. As we do this it is God's power on our behalf that is our protection and the means of our victory. This is what we saw in –

1Peter 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

j). And we should do this in the knowledge that the same sufferings are experienced by our brotherhood in the world. Unjust treatment, being reviled, being spoken evil of, and persecution are the common experience of all Kingdom-seeking Christians; they are all part of the devil's onslaught against those who would seek to be rulers in the age to come. There is comfort in the commonality of the experience and comfort in knowing that God will use these very things to bring us to completion.

10). And then Peter wraps up his letter by saying –

1Peter 5:10

But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. 11 To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

a). It is 'the God of all grace', the One who is the source of all spiritual comfort and help in every situation, who has called us. This calling is much more than an invitation, it is a Divine summons, a summons based on the assumption that the one called is willing to obey the summons as an act of his free will. It is a calling that has an effect as it brings us to God's 'eternal glory' that we may be partakers of that glory in the age to come. It is a calling that will be realized through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God in response to our faithful obedience. And this calling has come by Christ Jesus, as it is only through His death and resurrection that we have eternal salvation and access to the Kingdom. The word translated 'calling' in Peter is the same word used in Hebrews Chapter 3, also in conjunction with faithfulness –

Hebrews 3:1

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house.

b). And according to our scripture, the fulfillment of our calling to glory will come 'after'...after we have suffered for a while, after we have been perfected, established, strengthened and settled.

c). The "suffering for a while" speaks of a little while and we would see this in contrast to the duration of the Millennial Kingdom. It is exactly that which Peter referenced in -

1Peter 1:6

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,

d). Being perfected, established, strengthened and settled are all verbs in the original language in the future tense which makes them speak prophetically of events yet to come. The word translated, 'perfect' here is not the usual Greek word that we have seen that means to come to completion, but comes rather from a word that means 'to fit or join together'. In this we can see that which was taught earlier in Peter -

1Peter 2:5

...you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

e). The word 'establish' comes from the same root word that the word 'steadfast' comes from that we looked at earlier.

f). The word 'strengthen' is a word that means to confirm in spiritual knowledge and power.

g). And the word 'settle' means to lay on a sure foundation.

h). And so as we would put these together we will realize that we are looking at a present process that will be brought to its full conclusion at Christ's Judgment Seat when we shall, from Him, receive glory in preparation for rulership.

i). This same process is also described in -

Ephesians 4:11

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ--¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

j). Christ Himself gave to the church the ministry of the apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor teachers for the purpose of properly and consistently preaching the unadulterated scriptures, the whole counsel of God, the word of the Kingdom. And this is for the purpose of those receiving the Word which is taught being transformed by that word in order to be equipped for the work of ministry. Just as we see in -

2Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

k). And we are to come to a place of spiritual maturity through the effective working of that same Word. As this whole process is enjoined, then eventually the whole body can be knit and joined together by what every joint supplies. But let's be absolutely clear, no joint can supply anything apart from the transforming work of the Spirit having taken place first. Spiritual maturity comes exclusively through mature, 'epignosis' knowledge that is brought forth from above through the proper engagement with the word of God -

Colossians 3:10

...and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge [epignosis] according to the image of Him who created him,

l). Spiritual maturity is not achieved by any other way. And this is exactly what the process of establishing, strengthening and settling in Peter is talking about. Both in Peter and in Ephesians it is God's work in us now, if we are willing to obey God's summons to our heavenly calling, which will find its final fulfillment for us at the Judgment Seat then.

m). With all this considered how could we say anything other than that which Peter says –

11 To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

11). And then he closes with –

1Peter 5:12

By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand. 13 She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

a). Peter acknowledges Silvanus, whose faithfulness as a brother is well known, as the one who has written that which he has dictated and he affirms once again that he has exhorted and testified that his readers in their persecution are standing in the true grace of God. May that be us as well.