

Glory is Coming

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[0 : 0 0] So we'll start reading from 1 Peter chapter 4. We'll pick it up at verse 19, I think. We'll pick it up. 1 Peter, pick it up, chapter 4, verse 19.

Therefore, let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful creator while doing good. 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's 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. Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

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 sufferings are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

[1 : 3 8] And after you've suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

By Silvanus, a faithful brother, as I regard him, I've 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.

Well, let's pray. Our Father in heaven, thank you for your life-giving word. Thank you that you speak to us. And you teach us and instruct us and rebuke us and correct us through your word.

And you train us and equip us that we might live righteously in this world. Please help us to hear your word humbly and obeyed this morning. For we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.

[2 : 4 2] Well, I've got a bit of a graph here for you to see. And as you look at this graph, what do you think it represents? A bit of a downhill decline. Well, it actually represents the rating that Australians over the age of 14 give for the ethics and honesty over time, which is reported by Roy Morgan in a professional survey.

Now, who do you think it's of? Politicians? I don't want to mock any particular profession here. No, not politicians.

No, not teachers. Not lawyers. Not accountants. Not even used car salesmen. Not stockbrokers.

And I hear the choir singing out here, yes, ministers of religion, leaders of God's church. In 1996, they were rated highly at 60%.

In 27, they were rated at 35%. And the latest number in 2021, 30%.

[3 : 50] And I can only guess that it slipped today a bit lower. Nurses, if you're a nurse, that's a great profession. You are rated the highest, right, in ethics and morality by this survey over time consistently.

The media makes us more and more aware of the failure of Christian leaders. And unfortunately, there's a continuous stream of stories to tell. The monumental failings of Christian leaders has never been more public than the last few years.

And today, we're looking at 1 Peter chapter 5, where God addresses both shepherds and sheep, which means that God is addressing every one of us in this room.

So, look at the passage here, chapter 1, verse 5, chapter 5, verse 1, sorry, it says, so. Now, why does Peter say so in chapter 5, verse 1? What is the connection between chapter 4 and chapter 5?

Well, I take it the reason is that judgment begins in the house of God. We saw that last week. Peter's just been talking about Christian suffering for Christ in chapter 4, verse 14.

[5 : 02] Not as an offender, but as someone who's righteous. And he tells that judgment begins in with the household of God in chapter 4, verse 17. Now, it's literally the house of God, is the idea here, and that is always referring to the temple or the tabernacle where God symbolically dwelt.

But in 1 Peter, we've learnt that we're actually like living stones being built into this temple, this tabernacle, this spiritual house. And it quotes Ezekiel chapter 9.

There, if the righteous are scaredly saved, what will become the ungodly and the sinner? And then, in Ezekiel chapter 9, sorry, that wasn't Ezekiel chapter 9, that was somewhere else, that's, where's that from?

H, you see it there, you can find out. But in Ezekiel chapter 9, it says, kill old men, it talks about coming out of the temple, out of the tabernacle of judgment, something in the house of God, in Ezekiel chapter 9, it says, kill old men outright, young men and maidens, little children and women, but touch no one on whom is the mark, and begin at my sanctuary.

So they began with the elders who were before the house. Now, the elders were the ones who were supposed to be the ones who led the people in truth and righteousness, but actually failed to do so in Ezekiel's day.

[6 : 29] And judgment begins in the temple where the priests would actually instruct the people in the Word of God, and judgment starts with the leaders of God's people, that's where it starts, which gives us the link in the chapter 5.

Those who are the elders of the church were the ones who will be judged in the first instance. So, I exhort the elders among you, right? At one level, it's only appropriate that judgment starts with the leaders of the church.

those who lead are the ones who are to lead in being more and more like the one we follow, Jesus. And God has raised him from the dead to be both Lord and Christ. We're supposed to follow Jesus.

And if we fail in leading like Jesus, then we have failed greatly. And so we have this word to the shepherds. So, those who lead need to do that well and not lead the flock of God astray.

Notice that Peter doesn't think of himself as one who is exempt or above the other elders in the church here. Even though he's an apostle, he makes his appeal as a fellow elder, right?

[7 : 40] As a fellow older man. And notice also that when he speaks as a witness of the sufferings of Christ, he is one who saw Jesus crucified. But in saying that, just remember this with me, in saying that, he can't help but being reminded everyone of his great failing.

Because when he saw the Lord Jesus crucified, he was there when he denied the Lord Jesus as well. And yet he's been restored by the Lord Jesus. And so he's someone who's confident in going to glory.

He's confident of being in heaven, of having eternal life. When Jesus is revealed in all his glory, he's confident he'll be okay. But now we really need to think carefully about elders, right?

An elder, let me get this right with you, an elder in the first instance is simply an older man. So here's a Venn diagram I'm going to draw for you, right? Very impressive picture, I'm sure.

Right? Now, you can't appoint someone to be an older man, right? Just like you can't appoint someone to be a certain age. You are the age you are.

[8 : 53] And I'm getting to be an older man, although I live in denial, right? You are at the age you are. Some people are older and some people are younger.

And that's going to be the way it is all through the age that God's appointed us to be, whatever age we are at this time. And yet, he's addressing older men who have oversight as shepherds.

Those who shepherd God's people are the older men, which is what elder means, right? However, not all older men are those who are overseers of God's flock.

You don't become an overseer just by being older. That doesn't make you an overseer. So it looks something like this, right?

There you go. Very, very technical drawing. The overseers of God's flock are to come from within the older men of the church, right?

[10 : 02] They are to be like shepherds who shepherd a flock of sheep. So David was the king of Israel, was a shepherd. We read about that in 1 Samuel 17 and 2 Samuel chapter 7.

And so he was a leader of God's people. God himself describes himself as a shepherd who will one day set his servant David to be his shepherd who will feed the shepherd and shepherd God's people as king over his people.

You can read about that in Ezekiel 16 and in Hebrews 13 he describes Jesus as the great shepherd of the sheep. And those who are the younger need to submit to the older who are overseers.

That's what the text is saying to us here. Okay, there's a very technical diagram. Now let's have a look at God's flock. The big thing he says about these older men who are overseers is that they are looking after those who are God's flock.

That is, they look after people who belong to God. The church doesn't belong to a man, the church belongs to God. And all too often church leaves behaviours if the church belongs to them and it's their project for their glory.

[11 : 22] The people in the church are their assets to be deployed to build their kingdom. But the church belongs to God. The gathering of God's people belongs to God.

Paul says the same thing to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20 verse 26. 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 you retained with his own blood.

Ezekiel chapter 20 verse 28. God has entrusted the ones that he has died for into the care of older men who are overseers this side of heaven.

And so shepherds are to shepherd with oversight. The elders are to be shepherds with oversight. The word shepherd is the same word that Jesus used with Peter in John chapter 21 verse 16 when he calls Peter to literally shepherd my sheep.

The shepherd knows the sheep, the shepherd leads the sheep, the shepherd feeds the sheep, the shepherd protects the sheep, the shepherd directs the affairs of the flock, watches over God's people.

[12 : 36] But notice a shepherd is very profound, right, is a shepherd. He's not a personal coach, right?

A shepherd has a flock. Otherwise, they are not a shepherd. And his goal is to move the whole flock together and find the lost sheep and bring the whole flock to glory.

That is the role of the shepherd. And shepherding notice is an active thing, verse 2, with oversight comes authority and responsibility.

It's not just looking at, right? But it's also involves acting, making decisions, discerning, saying what's right and what's wrong.

And sometimes those decisions won't be fully understood, right? But need to be trusted. Directions need to be followed because there's responsibility that goes with the task.

[13 : 52] See, judgment begins at the household of God and starts with the shepherds. Shepherds are entrusted with making sure the flock isn't torn apart by the wolves who come in with false doctrine.

That's Acts chapter 20 and Titus chapter 1. Titus will need to make sure that the sheep are not behaving badly and call them to account. They just will. shepherds will remind people of the gospel and keep our minds fixed on the grace of God to be revealed.

We've learnt that in 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 13. Shepherds make sure that God's people have good food to eat, clean water to drink, that no goats come and muddy the water and wreck it for others and they make sure that everyone's healthy.

That's the work of the shepherd. Okay. And then we see this list of not, but, in verses 2 and 3.

That's exercising oversight. Not under compulsion, but willingly. The elders, the overseers of the church are not to do it because they are forced to do it, compelled by others to do it, but willingly.

[15 : 10] Now leadership is something we exercise because we're willing to do it, willing to enter into the joy of serving. Willing to suffer as Christ suffered. We mustn't manipulate, force, coerce people to be elders in churches.

That will never produce good leaders, good shepherds, good leadership. The elder, the overseer, the shepherd, needs to serve willingly, not begrudgingly.

Following the example of the chief shepherd, Jesus himself. It's the heart that counts. If the heart's not in it, then the person's not fit for the position.

I've got ten fingers pointed at myself here. A shepherd who resents the sheep will not be a good shepherd of the sheep. So leadership's not something to be complaining about.

So can I encourage you, please pray for the leaders of our church, that we would serve willingly. all too often the temptation is to have the wrong attitude.

[16 : 19] And we do it honestly, right? Not for shameful gain. Not worrying about whether you're paid for it or not, not wanting double time and a half or calling our charge out fee when it comes after dinner.

The shepherd will serve and go the extra mile, early mornings, late nights, they'll do the mundane tasks, the job that no one wants to do, they'll stack the chairs, they'll pick up the paper, they'll clean the floor.

They will serve cheerfully. Elders overseas of the church are not to do it for financial gain, verse 2, dishonest gain. It's okay to be paid for the job, that's appropriate, right?

But it's not to be done for shameful gain, for greed, to become rich. The elder mustn't do it because they love money. There are ways to make money in ministry.

The tele-evangelists have got it down to a fine art, they are fabulously wealthy. And those who preach a prosperity doctrine are loaded up with the money from those they've ripped off and led astray.

[17 : 32] The gospel is not about riches now, greedy financial gain now, the gospel is about generosity, greed, it's not a shameful lust for money.

The gospel is about suffering now with glory to come, that's the gospel. The gospel worker needs to be satisfied with what the church will pay them, not look to become a minister in a bigger church who will pay more, not to be the person who's on the career path for financial gain, not to do it for the incentive of the annual bonus, not to be the career path to a greater position of authority in some church, not a job there because they can't do anything else.

And unfortunately, the reputation of the gospel suffers time and time again from pastors guilty of this shameful lust for money.

We're told in 1 Timothy 6 that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Elders are not to serve for financial shameful gain.

Godliness with contentment is great gain, we're told in 1 Timothy 6. Money is a good servant but a terrible master.

[18 : 45] The bottom line, the gospel worker must not be in the job for the lust for making more and more money. Now the policies in our church are this, that the gospel worker, the paid pastors, do not handle money at all.

people, we don't keep church money in our possession so please don't want to ask us to do that kind of thing. We will do the right thing and we'll be seen to do the right thing.

So please pray for the leaders of our church that we'll serve eagerly, whether paid or unpaid, and that we'll continue to look forward to the reward kept in heaven and not a decadent lust for money in this world.

There are examples you see there. The example, the shepherds, the elders need to be an example to the flock. Leaders are not in the ministry for power and prestige, right?

They're not to be domineering, see it there, not domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock. Not getting things done by threatening to punish or standing over others.

[19 : 54] We're not to get a power trip from the job, we're not in the job to push people around, tell them what to do. The shepherds, the elders need to set an example for the flock. The first and foremost is the example of Christ himself who suffered for the sheep and in the context of suffering the elders need to set the example for others in how to persevere through the fiery trials that come our way, keeping their head in trusting ourselves to him who judges justly.

We won't use threats, we won't use manipulation, we won't use intimidation, we won't use politics to get our way, we won't treat people harsh, spiritually, we'll be different to the leaders in business, we will lead by example, we'll be those who put into practice what we preach.

Paul says, follow my example as I follow Christ, Peter says, be an example to the flock, the shepherd, the overseer, should be one who has a lifestyle which is a model.

Jesus himself says it, he says the disciples are not to lord it over others like the worldly leaders do, but set an example of humility himself in Mark chapter 10 45, didn't he?

Jesus didn't come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. Leadership's not a matter of do what I say but not do what I do.

[21 : 15] It's a matter of do what I do and do what I say. It's a matter of followability. So please pray for the leaders that we will set an example for the flock and please pray that more and more leaders will raise up in our church who will be willing godly examples of God's flock rather than see the shortcoming of other elders and pastors and shepherds they might actually put themselves into willingly leadership and lead rightly.

The need today is for more and more good leaders in God's church. People who will count the cost and be willing to lead. At one level it's much easier to be told what to do than to try and organise it to happen.

It's so much easier to let others lead and let others take responsibility. And remember there in verse four, when the chief shepherd appears you'll receive the unfading crown of glory.

shepherd. Remember leaders, shepherds of the sheep are under shepherds. Jesus is the chief shepherd, the one who is the shepherd of all the sheep. He rules over the flock.

And if shepherd, shepherd will, they'll not be disqualified. They will receive the unfading crown of glory when Jesus returns. That's the reward.

[22 : 43] Jesus will put his hand on the shoulder and say, well done, good and faithful servant. I've judged you a good shepherd, one who protected, who led, who cared for the sheep. You did it willingly, not under compulsion.

You did it eagerly, not with a motive for greed and financial gain. You set an example, not ruling harshly, domineering, but gently. That's good. So the model for leadership in the church simply looks like this.

Here's another bit of a really fancy diagram for us. First of all, you see, Jesus is the chief shepherd. And he rules by his word.

That's how he does it. And he leads and guards and protects and shepherds the sheep by his word. He's the chief shepherd. And there are shepherds who exercise oversight who are under him.

And the shepherds who exercise oversight under him are actually submitting to Jesus, the chief shepherd. Which then brings us to the next slide.

[23 : 54] The flock, the local church. This is the model. Jesus, the chief shepherd, shepherds, the under shepherds, and the under shepherds shepherd the flock, which is the church.

And you notice that the sheep who are members of the flock are then to submit to the shepherds exercising oversight. Remember, everyone is a sheep first.

Likewise, verse five, humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that the proper time, oh, sorry, verse five, likewise, you who are younger be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves all of you with humility toward one another, for God opposed the proud but gives grace to the humble.

The younger ones are to submit to the older ones. Actually be subject to them, subject to the older men. The flock, the local church, need to submit to the oversight of the shepherds and the older men are going to lead.

It requires the younger ones to submit, to yield, which itself requires humility, doesn't it? Something that all God's people are to have. And we know what humility is, as you know, it's not thinking less of yourself, denying you have any redeeming qualities, that's not humility.

[25 : 12] It's thinking of yourself, thinking of ourselves less. Or, I did a bit more research this week on this, Mr. C.S. Lewis said in Me, Christianity, a truly humble man would not be thinking about humility at all.

He'll not be thinking about himself at all. That's the truly humble man. He won't be thinking about humility, he won't not be thinking about himself at all. But God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble.

That's a quote from Proverbs chapter 3. In the context it is that God really does judge. He stands against the arrogant and the proud, he stands for the humble. There's a judgment which begins at the house of God.

And since it's the case for everyone, we're all to humble ourselves, submit to the rightful rule of God, which is then exercised through submission to the older men in leadership in the church.

Now that's something that we're not good at in Australia. We're not so good at doing that. And it's a detriment to church life. Hebrews chapter 13 verse 17 puts things in a slightly different way.

[26 : 22] Obey your leaders and submit to them for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning for that would be of no advantage to you.

God has sovereignly established every situation in our life. Verse 6, humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God so at the proper time he might exalt you.

God is the one who resists those, sorry, resisting those who God has appointed into leadership, sorry, is actually resisting God himself.

You read about that Romans chapter 13 and even if our humbling of ourselves is hard there will be a time when God exalts, God lifts up, God gives recognition to his faithful people.

So we take comfort that God does care for us, he knows our situation. and so we're to stand in verses 8 to 13. So be sober minded, which will enable us to stand firm in Christ.

[27 : 26] Peter speaks about being sober minded three times in this letter, in chapter 1 verse 13, in chapter 4 verse 7 and here. Think rightly, verse 8, be sober minded.

Don't think fancifully, don't think immaturely, but consider things clearly in the cold light of day so to speak. And the one thing to consider soberly is this, that Satan really does want to tear us down.

There's a real element, Satan standing behind things not working out as they should in this world. there's a real element of Satan rejoicing in causing grief to God's people.

Satan may be a defeated foe, yes, he may be in a strong chain, yes, but he still roars, he still threatens, he's still the father of lies and nothing gives him greater joy than people believing his lies and swallowing them and being destroyed by them.

So he's to be resisted. When he roars out, reject God, resist him. When he roars out, submit to no man, resist him.

[28 : 53] When he roars out, give up on Jesus, he doesn't really care for you, resist him. When he roars out, glory is not worth it, the life of sin is much better, resist him.

And as we resist him, we'll take our stand against him. Think soberly means recognising that we are not the only one suffering for the name of Jesus.

Verse 9. You see that? Resist him, stand firm in your faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

The pattern of Christian life in this world is this, suffering now, glory to come. God himself will bring us through the time of suffering that he's appointed for us to endure.

That's his promise there in verse 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, to him be the dominion forever and ever.

[30 : 00] That's our sober-minded reckoning of things. That's our steady resolve. Well, Peter concludes by telling us that he's written a short note and we're to stand firm in it.

Stand firm in it, verse 12. By Silvanus, a faithful brother, I regard him, I've written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God.

Stand firm. Firm in it. Standing in grace is standing in the place, the state that God's put us in. You may not realise it straight away, but this is a real encouragement to us all.

We stand in grace, the gracious place we've been put in, recognised as God's people, saved by grace. Christ. And yet, that also includes the place of suffering that we might find ourselves in for being Christians.

See, it's not hard to stand firm, is it, when it's easy. It's not hard to stand firm when things are going easy and things are good. It's only when things get tough that we need to be told to stand firm.

[31 : 21] things may be difficult for all kinds of reasons, the things that Satan stirs up, the things that people who oppose us say about us, the things that people do to make life hard for us, the things that people think about us that lead them to treat us unfairly and unjustly.

That's when sober-minded thinking and understanding things rightly is so important for we know that glory is coming. both sheep and shepherd to be mindful that glory is coming, suffering now glory to come, the chief shepherd will appear, the God of all grace will bring in the kingdom, he's called us to eternal glory in Christ, something far far greater than this world could ever give us, glory is coming and when he does come, the good shepherds will receive the unfading crown of glory, will receive the reward, well done, good and faithful servant, the chief shepherd will appear no doubt about it and when he does it will be time for judgment to begin with the household of God but until then we need to stand firm in the faith because on that day he will restore, confirm, strengthen and establish his eternal glory and we will spend eternal glory with Christ Jesus himself who has eternal rule over the kingdom of

God for all eternity and so to him be dominion forever and ever, amen let's pray our father we look at your word this morning we're encouraged, we're rebuked, we're challenged we ask in your mercy that you help us to heed your word hear your word and live your word and we pray father that our church will be a place where the reputation of Christ is held high and that leaders, all of us who are leaders and all of us who are shepherds and sheep will be doing so for your glory and praise we pray in Jesus name amen