

Lesson Notes: 1 Peter 5:1-4 (NIV based)

TITLE: Proper Functioning Of Ministry Leaders

READ: 1 Peter 5:1-4, with vv.4:17a,19 for context

v.1

What is an "elder" and what are the qualifications of an elder?

- - "To the elders" = Strong's #4245 "elders; {Romanized 'presbuteros'; Christian 'presbyter'} comparative of presbus (elderly); older; as noun, a senior;".
- - Qualifications of an elder: Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-7.
- - The terms 'elder', 'pastor' (or shepherd), 'bishop', 'overseer' are used interchangeable in the New Testament.

If some of us are essentially functioning as an elder or overseer of a ministry even though we do not officially hold that title, would God likewise hold us to these same principles that He does to official elders?

Is there any significance as to why the passage refers to elders in the context discussion of suffering for the cause of Christ?

- - Judgment begins with the house of God (v. 4:17), especially the leaders of the house of God first.
- - 1 Peter has also been addressing how believers should respond to and, if necessary, suffer under the authorities above them. Examples: believers (vv.2:11,13); slaves (v.2:18); wives (v.3:1); husbands (v.3:7); all believers (v.3:8).
- - By nature of their position, leaders of the house of God hold and wield authority over those that are in their flock.
- - In their use of their authority, leaders of the house of God have the responsibility to be devoted to the well-being of believers in their flocks, and assisting them in handling persecution well or alleviating [make more bearable] some of their suffering - NOT causing them more suffering - v.3.

Why does Peter refer to himself here as a "fellow elder"?

- - Peter is identifying with this segment of his audience.
- - Peter is identifying himself as one of them (elders).
- - By identifying himself as one of the elders, Peter is stating he is personally familiar with the aspects of this job and understands its corresponding problems and pitfalls. (v.2)

Why does Peter mention that he is "a witness of Christ's sufferings"?

- - Peter has personally witnessed and is reminding the elders of these principles.
- - Christ is the example for elders to follow. (vv. 2:21; 4:1)
- - In His suffering, Christ entrusted Himself to God. (vv. 2:23; 4:19)
- - Christ suffered as the leader or "Chief" or "Good Shepherd" of the flock of God. (v.4; John 10:11)
- - Christ suffered as the leader for the benefit of the flock. (John 10:11)

Why does Peter additionally mention that he "also will share in the glory to be revealed"?

- - These elders will likewise share in the glory that God has awaiting for elders. (v.4)
- - Glory is being stored up for elders for fulfilling the duties of this leadership. (v.4)
- - Great things will one day follow the suffering. (v.4)
- - This glory is a sure thing and perhaps already being put into existence but is being kept hidden or deferred by God for the time being. (v.4)

v.2

What does it mean to 'shepherd'?

- - "Be shepherds" = Strong's #4165 "shepherd; to tend as a shepherd of (figuratively, supervisor)".
- - Read Psalm 23, John 10:1-30.

To shepherd is:

- - to tend, to care for, to provide for, and to nurture with tenderness and compassion - especially on a spiritual level to lead members of the flock closer to God (spiritual food and water);
- - to guard against harm, or doctrinal or sin danger, that threatens the flock; always on alert;
- - to place the flock's well-being ahead of one's own well-being; self-sacrificing for the benefit of others;
- - to take on the God-given responsibilities and functions intrinsic with the shepherding job;
- - to lead the way through dangers and dry areas to green pastures and cool water;
- - to confront hostile forces or dangers with tenacity.

How or in what situations would a shepherd confront hostile forces?

- - Refute false doctrine.
- - Correct erroneous doctrine and beliefs.
- - Confront and admonish against sin.

Why is a group of believers referred to as "God's flock"?

- - They belong to God - not the property of the shepherd.
- - The shepherd is hired to care for God's flock.
- - Ultimately God's influence holds them together as a flock.
- - God gives His flock their identity, worth, and value.
- - A particular duty of the shepherd is to lead the flock closer to God.

Does this analogy of a shepherd / flock speak to the character of shepherds and their responsibilities to God? How?

- - Their character should be like that of the 'Good Shepherd' Christ - tenderness, compassion, etc.
- - God is their boss, even if they are unsupervised or unaccountable to other humans.
- - They should please God with how they are treating their flock, having purity of heart before God in relationships among those in the flock.
- - They are responsible and accountable to God for doing their job properly.

- - In the context of this passage, how shepherds use their authority is a major concern to God.

What is involved in "serving as an overseer"?

- - "serving as overseers" = Strong's #1983 "exercising oversight; {Romanized 'episkopeo' [bishop]} to oversee; by implication, to beware".
- - Involves managing, coordinating, arranging, and implementing all of the aspects necessary to run a ministry, with excellence.
- - Implies consistency of exerting full attention to the flock and not neglecting oversight.

vv.2-3

What are the shepherd / overseer's motivations and proper functioning to be for shepherding the flock?

v.2

- - Willing to serve rather than must or under compulsion / obligation / pressure.
- - Eager to serve (i.e. positive emotional desire) rather than greedy for money (i.e. self-centered desire/gain); implies purity of heart before God in relationships and interactions among those under his care.

v.3

- - Guiding and encouraging rather than demanding or dictating (i.e. abuse of authority and/or lust for power).
- - Examples to others rather than flaunting or wielding his authoritative power.
- - Lead by example and a good model, then the sheep will tend to follow his example and imitate him.

v.4

What does God have awaiting for shepherds / overseers?

- - Shepherds and overseers of God's flock will share in and receive future glory if they discharge their duties in a godly manner; enjoyment of glory will follow enduring of suffering.
- - There is coming a day of accountability for the shepherds / overseers.
- - Shepherds / overseers should be working for a special crown of honor from God rather than for status, power, or personal gain.
- - This passage is a motives-check and a behaviors-check for shepherds and overseers, which includes pastors, ministry leaders, and elders.

Why are elders being instructed in these verses 1-3 to also be shepherds and be overseers?

- - Elders in a church are not to function in their ministry position as just to only dictate and enforce policies - i.e. make policy decisions, and walk around and give orders.
- - While establishing policies is an important part of the elders' job functioning, God is saying here that elders are also to function in these other ways as described in these verses.

- - By implication then, elders must also function as shepherds and overseers, and in a hands-on manner in order to be effective as "examples to the flock". (v.3)
- - And therefore, being aloof as an elder or pastor, and limiting personal access and contact by one's flock members are counterproductive to being a good and effective example to the flock.

How should the proper activities and functioning of a shepherd / overseer impact how the flock and its members are enduring suffering in painful trials for the faith and for doing what is godly?

BIG IDEA: God will hold ministry leaders accountable to conduct themselves in their position of authority in a manner that is pleasing to God, holding the well-being of the flock in priority.

IMPORTANT SUB-POINTS: What are some other important points God is making here in these verses?

APPLICATIONS: What applications can you think of for how we should respond to the concepts in these verses?

PERSONALIZED APPLICATIONS: From these verses, what do you think God wants you to learn, or know, or remember, or put into effect in your life? How are you going to do that?

Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

"Strong's Greek Dictionary". *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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