

The Life and Letters of Peter

Lesson Eleven: Humility Toward One Another

Review

Last time we studied about the purpose and reactions to suffering. What are they?

Why is he teaching this?

Divide the following into paragraphs:

5:1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed:

2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;

3 not lording it 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 will never fade away.

5 Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

12 With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.

13 She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark.

14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

List the people/groups Peter specifically addresses in this section

Peter's Directions

<p>Peter starts with the elders. How does he identify himself with the elders?</p> <p>What are his directions to the elders?</p> <p>What should their attitude be?</p> <p>What is their reward?</p> <p>Who is the rewarder?</p> <p>Peter opened up his letter (1:4) referring to "an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time." How does the verse we are looking at (5:4) repeat this concept?</p>	<p>5:1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed:</p> <p>2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;</p> <p>3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.</p> <p>4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.</p>
<p>What are Peter's directions to the younger men?</p> <p>Why does he say "in the same way"?</p>	<p>5a Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older.</p>

Clothed with Humility

<p>How are the believers to behave toward one another?</p> <p>How does this connect with the instructions given to the men?</p> <p>What does the verb "clothe" indicate?</p> <p>The reason Peter uses for this humility is a quote from Proverbs 3:34: "He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble." The Jews Peter was writing to would have been familiar with the stories of many of their kings who had not humbled themselves and were punished by God.</p>	<p>5b All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."</p> <p>6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.</p> <p>7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.</p>
<p>Jesus taught a parable about humility that Peter is quoting here. What does Jesus mean in this parable?</p> <p>How would this apply to the believers of Peter's letter?</p>	<p>Luke 14: 7 When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable:</p> <p>8 "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited.</p> <p>9 If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this man your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place.</p> <p>10 But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests.</p> <p>11 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."</p>
<p>Peter adds another thought for the believers. What are they directed to do here? Why?</p> <p>What connection does this have with the previous verses about humility?</p>	<p>7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.</p>

Dealing with the Devil

<p>Peter encourages the believers to be self-controlled and alert. This is the third time he reminds them to be self-controlled:</p> <p>1:13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.</p> <p>4: 7 The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.</p> <p>In light of Peter's theme about dealing with suffering, why is being self-controlled so important?</p>	<p>8 Be self-controlled and alert...</p>
<p>The believers are to be self-controlled, watching for their enemy. What is he described as?</p> <p>What is he doing?</p> <p>How are the believers to respond to him?</p> <p>Why would Peter insert this section after his admonition to be humble toward one another?</p>	<p>8b Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.</p> <p>9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.</p>
<p>Look how James repeats this same pattern: Why is pride connected to the devil?</p>	<p>James 4: 6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."</p> <p>7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.</p>

Benediction

<p>What things do we learn about God in this segment?</p> <p>How does verse 10 connect to Peter's earlier thoughts in verse 5?</p> <p>What promise does Peter give to the believers?</p> <p>How might this be important to the persecuted Christians of the time?</p>	<p>10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.</p> <p>11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.</p>
<p>Who does Peter mention by name in his closing?</p> <p>Mark is the author of the gospel of Mark, who knew Paul and Silas, as well as Peter.</p> <p><i>Acts 15:39-40 [Paul and Barnabas] had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.</i></p> <p>Silas traveled extensively with Paul on his missionary journeys in verses like this: <i>Acts 18:5 When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.</i></p> <p>What do we know about the relationship of Peter, Mark and Silas here?</p> <p>It is uncertain what Peter means by "she who is in Babylon", but most scholars believe it is a code word for the church at Rome, where Peter likely wrote this letter. The persecution was great at this time.</p>	<p>12 With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.</p> <p>13 She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark.</p> <p>14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.</p>

How did Peter meet his goal of "I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it."	
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Lesson for Life

Peter encourages the believers to be self-controlled and alert, keeping watch for the devil. How can you be alert for is schemes?

John Bunyan has a marvelous illustration of the lion in his allegorical classic from the 1600's, Pilgrim's Progress. We shall close this Unit with his illustration of the battle between Christian and the lions.

Now, when he was got up to the top of the hill, there came two men running to meet him again; the name of the one was Timorous, and of the other, Mistrust; to whom Christian said, Sirs, what's the matter? You run the wrong way. Timorous answered, that they were going to the City of Zion, and had got up that difficult place; but, said he, the further we go, the more danger we meet with; wherefore we turned, and are going back again. Yes, said Mistrust, for just before us lie a couple of lions in the way, whether sleeping or waking we know not, and we could not think, if we came within reach, but they would presently pull us in pieces.

Christian: Then said Christian, You make me afraid, but whither shall I fly to be safe? If I go back to mine own country, that is prepared for fire and brimstone, and I shall certainly perish there. If I can get to the Celestial City, I am sure to be in safety there. I must venture. To go back is nothing but death; to go forward is fear of death, and life-everlasting beyond it. I will yet go forward. So Mistrust and Timorous ran down the hill, and Christian went on his way. ...

Christian: ...I must walk without the sun; darkness must cover the path of my feet; and I must hear the noise of the doleful creatures, because of my sinful sleep. Now also he remembered the story that Mistrust and Timorous told him of; how they were frightened with the sight of the lions. Then said Christian to himself again, These beasts range in the night for their prey; and if they should meet with me in the dark, how should I shift them? How should I escape being by them torn in pieces? Thus he went on his way. But while he was thus bewailing his unhappy miscarriage, he lift up his eyes, and behold there was a very stately palace before him, the name of which was Beautiful; and it stood just by the highway side.

So I saw in my dream that he made haste and went forward, that if possible he might get lodging there. Now, before he had gone far, he entered into a very narrow passage, which was about a furlong off the porter's lodge; and looking very narrowly before him as he went, he espied two lions in the way. Now, thought he, I see the dangers that Mistrust and Timorous were driven

back by. (The lions were chained, but he saw not the chains.) Then he was afraid, and thought also himself to go back after them, for he thought nothing but death was before him. But the porter at the lodge, whose name is Watchful, perceiving that Christian made a halt as if he would go back, cried unto him, saying, Is thy strength so small? Fear not the lions, for they are chained, and are placed there for trial of faith where it is, and for discovery of those that had none. Keep in the midst of the path, and no hurt shall come unto thee.

Difficulty is behind,
Fear is before,
Though he's got on the hill,
the lions roar;
A Christian man is never long at ease,
When one fright's gone, another doth him seize.

Then I saw that he went on, trembling for fear of the lions, but taking good heed to the directions of the porter; he heard them roar, but they did him no harm. Then he clapped his hands, and went on till he came and stood before the gate where the porter was. Then said Christian to the porter, Sir, what house is this? And may I lodge here to-night? The porter answered, This house was built by the Lord of the hill, and he built it for the relief and security of pilgrims. The porter also asked whence he was, and whither he was going...

(he stays at the house)

... So he went on, and Apollyon met him. Now the monster was hideous to behold; he was clothed with scales, like a fish, (and they are his pride,) he had wings like a dragon, feet like a bear, and out of his belly came fire and smoke, and his mouth was as the mouth of a lion. When he was come up to Christian, he beheld him with a disdainful countenance, and thus began to question with him.

Apollyon: Whence come you? and whither are you bound?

Christian: I am come from the City of Destruction, which is the place of all evil, and am going to the City of Zion.

Apollyon: By this I perceive thou art one of my subjects, for all that country is mine, and I am the prince and god of it. How is it, then, that thou hast run away from thy king? Were it not that I hope thou mayest do me more service, I would strike thee now, at one blow, to the ground.

Christian: I was born, indeed, in your dominions, but your service was hard, and your wages such as a man could not live on, for the wages of sin is death; therefore, when I was come to years, I did, as other considerate persons do, look out, if, perhaps, I might mend myself.

Apollyon: There is no prince that will thus lightly lose his subjects, neither will I as yet lose thee; but since thou complainest of thy service and wages, be content to go back: what our country will afford, I do here promise to give thee.

Christian: But I have let myself to another, even to the King of princes; and how can I, with fairness, go back with thee?

Apollyon: Thou hast done in this, according to the proverb, 'Changed a bad for a worse;' but it is ordinary for those that have professed themselves his servants, after a while to give him the slip, and return again to me. Do thou so too, and all shall be well.

Christian: I have given him my faith, and sworn my allegiance to him; how, then, can I go back from this, and not be hanged as a traitor?...

Apollyon: Thou didst faint at first setting out, when thou wast almost choked in the Gulf of Despond; thou didst attempt wrong ways to be rid of thy burden, whereas thou shouldst have stayed till thy Prince had taken it off; thou didst sinfully sleep and lose thy choice thing; thou wast, also, almost persuaded to go back at the sight of the lions; and when thou talkest of thy journey, and of what thou hast heard and seen, thou art inwardly desirous of vain-glory in all that thou sayest or doest.

Christian: All this is true, and much more which thou hast left out; but the Prince whom I serve and honour is merciful, and ready to forgive; but, besides, these infirmities possessed me in thy country, for there I sucked them in; and I have groaned under them, been sorry for them, and have obtained pardon of my Prince.

Apollyon: Then Apollyon broke out into a grievous rage, saying, I am an enemy to this Prince; I hate his person, his laws, and people; I am come out on purpose to withstand thee.

Christian: Apollyon, beware what you do; for I am in the King's highway, the way of holiness; therefore take heed to yourself.

Apollyon: Then Apollyon straddled quite over the whole breadth of the way, and said, I am void of fear in this matter: prepare thyself to die; for I swear by my infernal den, that thou shalt go no further; here will I spill thy soul. And with that he threw a flaming dart at his breast; but Christian had a shield in his hand, with which he caught it, and so prevented the danger of that.

Then did Christian draw, for he saw it was time to bestir him; and Apollyon as fast made at him, throwing darts as thick as hail; by the which, notwithstanding all that Christian could do to avoid it, Apollyon wounded him in his head, his hand, and foot. This made Christian give a little back; Apollyon, therefore, followed his work amain, and Christian again took courage, and resisted as manfully as he could. This sore combat lasted for above half a day, even till Christian was almost quite spent; for you must know that Christian, by reason of his wounds, must needs grow weaker and weaker.

Then Apollyon, espying his opportunity, began to gather up close to Christian, and wrestling with him, gave him a dreadful fall; and with that Christian's sword flew out of his hand. Then said Apollyon, I am sure of thee now. And with that he had almost pressed him to death, so that Christian began to despair of life; but as God would have it, while Apollyon was fetching of his last blow, thereby to make a full end of this good man, Christian nimbly stretched out his hand for his sword, and caught it, saying, Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall I shall arise; and with that gave him a deadly thrust, which made him give back, as one that had received his mortal wound. Christian perceiving that, made at him again, saying, Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. And with that Apollyon spread forth his dragon's wings, and sped him away, that Christian for a season saw him no more.

In this combat no man can imagine, unless he had seen and heard as I did, what yelling and hideous roaring Apollyon made all the time of the fight -- he spake like a dragon; and, on the other side, what sighs and groans burst from Christian's heart. I never saw him all the while give so much as one pleasant look, till he perceived he had wounded Apollyon with his two-edged sword; then, indeed, he did smile, and look upward; but it was the dreadfulest sight that ever I saw.

A more unequal match can hardly be, --
Christian must fight an Angel; but you see,

The valiant man by handling Sword and Shield,
Doth make him, though a Dragon, quit the field.

So when the battle was over, Christian said, I will here give thanks to him that delivered me out of the mouth of the lion, to him that did help me against Apollyon.