

Shepherding the Flock (Pt.5)

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1 Peter / 1 Peter 5:2-4 . July 24, 2022

INTRODUCTION

1. We come again to our study in [1 Peter](#).
2. Please take your Bible and turn with me to 1 Peter chapter 5
3. In our last time together we looked at verse 1 and saw from Scripture who and what elders are in the church and what they do
4. Then we looked at [1 Timothy 3:1-7](#) and [Titus 1:6-9](#) and saw what qualifications elders were to meet before they became elders in the church
5. We also said that Paul uses the terms “elders,” “overseer,” and “pastor” interchangeably
6. Today we’re going to see in verses 2-4 what elders do and how they are to behave

1 Peter 5:1-4 NASB95

¹ Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed,

² shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

³ nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

7. Elders have one main duty and that is to feed the flock
8. In the words of verse 2 they “shepherd”
9. The terms “flock” and “shepherd” give us a picture of a shepherd leading sheep

LESSON

I. From Elder to Elders (v.1)

- a. The Exhortation (v.1a)

b. The Identification (v.1b)

· After Peter identifies himself as an elder to elders, he issues...

II. The Command (vv.2-3)

“Shepherd the flock of God among you”

The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version (2015 Edition) Chapter 5

This phrase broadly describes the functions of elders. The shepherd imagery suggests care, protection, discipline, and guidance (2:25 note).

Peter takes the word “Shepherd” (poimaino, aor.act.imp.) from his encounter with Jesus in [John 21:15-17](#), “15 So 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, “Tend My lambs.” 16 He said to him again 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, “Shepherd My sheep.” 17 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 all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said to him, “Tend My sheep.”

The verb “to shepherd” includes more than providing food. It extends to everything required for the safety and well-being of the sheep (Mounce).

R.C. Sproul wrote, “Today a pastor is expected to be psychologist, theologian, biblical scholar, administrator, preacher, teacher, and community leader. The minister spends so much time on secondary matters that he has little time to do his principal work, which is to feed the sheep through preaching and teaching. The greatest service your minister can do for you is to feed you, not with his opinion but with the Word of God.”

› How are the elders to shepherd the flock of God?

a. Shepherd By command (v.2a)

- i. This command is from God. It’s in the imperative mood.
- ii. Elders are to shepherd “the flock of God”

1. His emphasis recalls that of the biblical prophets (e.g., “the Lord’s flock,” [Jer 13:17](#); “the Lord God the Almighty will watch over his flock,” [Zech 10:3](#) LXX). Although Peter regards Christ as “the chief shepherd” (v 4), the “flock” belongs finally to God (cf. “people of God,” in 2:10). (WBC)
2. There are some pastors that don’t shepherd or feed the flock. God gave this warning in [Jeremiah 23:1-4](#), “1 “Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture!” declares the Lord. 2 Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel concerning the shepherds who are tending My people: “You have scattered My flock and driven them away, and have not attended to them; behold, I am about to attend to you for the evil of your deeds,” declares the Lord. 3 “Then I Myself will

gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and bring them back to their pasture, and they will be fruitful and multiply. 4 “I will also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing,” declares the Lord.”

3. Shepherding a “flock” is not easy

4. Believers are compared to “sheep”

> First let me mention that...

a. Sheep are mentioned “more than 500 times in the Bible” (LBD)

b. The first mention occurs in [Genesis 4:2](#), “Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.”

c. Sheep “were used in the sacrificial offerings” ([Ex.20:24](#); [29:38](#)) (SBD)

d. They were not easy to take care of:

i. “They require, more than any other class of livestock, endless attention and meticulous care” (Keller)

> For example...

ii. If they stray into unfamiliar territory, they become completely disoriented and cannot find their way home

iii. Sheep spend most of their time eating and drinking. If they become lost, they will eat poisonous plants or over graze and drink stagnant water

iv. A sheep’s wool secretes lanolin that permeates their fleece. Dirt, grass and debris clings to it. Since they cannot clean themselves, they remain that way until the shepherd shears them. Between shearings it must be cut away “from under their tails or they cannot eliminate waste and become sick and even die” (MacArthur)

v. Sheep are also defenseless against predators. When attacked all they can do is run in panic

1 Peter: The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Chapter 23: Shepherding the Flock (1 Peter 5:1–4)

It is not surprising, then, that Jesus likened the disoriented, confused, unclean, and spiritually lost crowds to flocks of sheep without shepherds (Matt. 9:36; Mark 6:34). They could not feed themselves spiritually and had no one to lead and protect them. The prophet Isaiah also compared humanity’s lost condition to that of stray sheep, “All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way” (Isa. 53:6).

1 Peter: The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Chapter 23: Shepherding the Flock (1 Peter 5:1–4)

Certainly Peter understood the imagery when he called believers the flock of God and commanded pastors to shepherd them. Since even believers are prone to wandering, taking in what is bad for them, becoming unclean, and are highly vulnerable, defenseless on their own, and often naive, the demand for shepherds who are faithful and responsible is compelling. And when the church is under severe persecution, as it was in Peter's day, it is even more vulnerable and in greater need of strong, godly, effective shepherds.

› Notice now what Peter says in shepherding the flock, they are to...

b. Shepherd By oversight (v.2b)

- i. "oversight" (episkopeo, pres.act.part.), means "to have scope over," or "to look upon" (MacArthur) or to "watch over it" (WBC). The noun is episkopos ("bishop," or "overseer")
 1. Episkopeo describes one who is literally a "watchman" "upon" (prefix "epi", upon) the sheep
 2. This verb is in the present tense which pictures these men as constantly, diligently, actively and responsibly overseeing the care of the sheep in their flock. They are constantly examining them for "*spiritual parasites*" and are ever on the lookout for the ravenous wolves in sheep's clothing
 3. The Latin equivalent is *super-visor*, someone who "looks over" things, a manager. From super-visor comes the English *supervisor*
 4. Episkopos was originally a secular title, designating commissioners appointed to regulate a newly-acquired territory or a colony. It was also applied to magistrates who regulated the sale of provisions under the Romans.
 5. In the LXX episkopos signifies "inspectors, superintendents, taskmasters," (2Ki 11:19; 2Chr 34:12,17) or "captains, presidents," (Neh 11:9,14,22).
 6. In the ancient Greek culture episkopos was often used to describe pagan gods, who supposedly watched over worshipers and over their nations. (See Ref article ISBE)
 7. Shepherds must watch over the sheep to assess their condition so they can lead, guard and feed them
 8. [Proverbs 27:23](#), "Know well the condition of your flocks, And pay attention to your herds"
 9. This is spiritual oversight, "which is the constant duty of the elders and the unceasing need of the flock" (Hiebert)

Martin Luther said, "The bishops are Christ's servants, and their business is to guard Christ's sheep, and feed them. Therefore to feed them is nothing else but to preach the Gospel, whereby souls are nourished, made fat and fruitful,—since the sheep thrive upon the Gospel and the word of God. This is alone the office of a bishop.

R.C. Sproul says, “The greatest service your minister can do for you is to feed you, not with his opinion but with the Word of God.”

Charles Spurgeon said, “Nothing so exhausts a man who is called to it as the care of souls. So it is in measure with all who teach—they cannot do good without spending themselves. You must study the lesson; you must bring forth something fresh to your class; you must instruct and impress. I have no doubt you are often driven very hard for matter, and wonder how you will get through the next Lord’s day. I know you are sore pressed at times if you are worth your salt. You dare not rush to your class unprepared, to offer to the Lord that which costs you nothing. There must be labor if the food is to be wisely placed before the lambs so that they can receive it.”

R.C. Sproul again says, “In churches today, particularly in America, enormous expectations are imposed upon the office of minister. Because of that, sixteen thousand pastors leave the ministry every year. Today a pastor is expected to be psychologist, theologian, biblical scholar, administrator, preacher, teacher, and community leader. The minister spends so much time on secondary matters that he has little time to do his principal work, which is to feed the sheep through preaching and teaching.”

c. Shepherd Willingly (v.2c)

This relates “to the elder’s personal attitude toward his assignment” (Hiebert)

- i. “Not under compulsion” (anankastos, adv.) “unwillingly” or “because you must” (Lenski)
- ii. “Voluntarily” (hekousios), “because they want to not like drafted soldiers but like volunteers; not needing to be urged to every task but as running to put their hands to it, delighted to do it” (Lenski), This is “deliberately and intentionally, as a matter of free will” (Hiebert).

James Moffatt said, “In periods of persecution there was a real danger in accepting office, for officials enjoyed an unpleasant prominence, which led to them often being singled out by the State authorities. Hence some were indisposed to take office at all.”

1. They should be willing like Isaiah was in [Isaiah 6:8](#), “Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I. Send me!”
2. Paul said he was under a divine compulsion to preach the gospel in [1 Corinthians 9:16-17](#), “16 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. 17 For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me.”
3. His preaching was not from pride. God chose and called him and set him apart for service. He saw it as a stewardship from God in [Colossians 1:25](#), “Of this church I

was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God,”

4. When elders do it voluntarily it “keeps the element of love predominant” (Kenyon).
5. “Personal love for the Lord and His people prompts willing service” (Hiebert)

John MacArthur says, “The obvious point is that the shepherd must be diligent rather than lazy, heart motivated rather than forced to be faithful, and passionate about his privileged duty rather than indifferent. When the heart is fully Christ’s and driven by love for Him and for souls, there is much internal compulsion that precludes any need for external motivational pressure.”

d. Shepherd According to God’s Will (v.2d)

“The idea is that it is in accordance with the will and purpose of God that you do what you do willingly.” (Mounce)

- i. Ministry is a calling by God - [Jeremiah 1:5](#), “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.””
- ii. Ministers are to minister “according to God’s will”

Leadership “is to be done as God himself would do it, or ... in a manner approved by God.” In either case, “The focus is on oversight performed with a due sense of accountability to God.” (Forbes)

e. Shepherd Selflessly (v.2e)

- i. “Not for sordid gain” or “filthy lucre” (AV)
- ii. The adjective *αισχροκερδής* is used in [1 Tim. 3:8](#) and [Titus 1:7](#); the adverb occurs only here in Peter (G. K. 190)
- iii. The idea is that any personal gain which is sought in a selfish way is shameful; the ministry is not intended for that purpose. The “for filthy lucre” of our versions is expressive, for filth is shameful (Lenski)
- iv. This speaks “to the shameful acquisition of it” (MacArthur)
- v. It is a “base or dishonorable gain” (Wuest)
- vi. [Isaiah 56:11](#) says that false shepherds have turned to “unjust gain”
- vii. They are “hireling” according to [John 10:12](#), “He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.”
- viii. Paul said in [Acts 20:33-35](#), “33 “I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or clothes. 34 “You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me. 35 “In everything I showed you that by working hard in this

manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' ”

f. Shepherd Eagerly (v.2f)

- i. “eagerly” (prothumos, adv.) occurs only here in the NT. It means “eagerly, willingly or freely” but the emphasis is “with inner devotion” (Lenski)
- ii. This is “showing an intense desire to do something” (BSL)
- iii. It is “a positive emotional desire to do the work” (Grudem) where “voluntarily” focuses on “the element of unconstrained or free choice” (Grudem)

g. Shepherd Gently (v.3a)

- i. “Nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge”
- ii. The Amplified Bible says, “Not domineering [as arrogant, dictatorial, and overbearing persons] over those in your charge”
- iii. This is a warning “against the haughty abuse of power” (Sproul)
- iv. “lording” (katakyrieuo, pres.act.part.), means “to dominate, to control, to exercise dominion over” (BSL)
- v. The preposition kata (“down”) indicates intensity and depicts a heavy-handed use of authority for personal aggrandizement, manifesting itself in the desire to dominate and accompanied by a haughty demand for compliance. It speaks of a high-handed autocratic rule over the flock, something forbidden of true shepherds. This cautionary note however does not do away with God-ordained, properly exercised authority which is to be administered in the local church by the pastor and the elders.
- vi. “It implies leadership by manipulation and intimidation” (MacArthur)
- vii. “The Shepherds are not to be little popes or petty tyrants” (Lenski).
- viii. This is something Paul was concerned about with the Corinthians which caused him to write in [2 Corinthians 1:24](#), “Not that we lord it over your faith, but are workers with you for your joy; for in your faith you are standing firm.”
- ix. Jesus used this as an example to his disciples after James and John’s mother asked if they could sit on his right and left hand in the kingdom in [Matthew 20:25-27](#), “But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. 26 It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave”;

h. Shepherd By example (v.3b)

- i. “but proving to be examples to the flock”
- ii. “examples” (tupos, n) lit. “to impress made by a blow” (Lenski)

- iii. Elders are to be models for the flock to pattern after
- iv. Paul said in [Philippians 3:17](#), “Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.”
- v. He said in [Philippians 4:9](#), “The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.”
- vi. He said in [1 Thessalonians 1:5-6](#), “5 for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. 6 You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,”
- vii. Titus was to be this to the churches in Crete in [Titus 2:7](#), “in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified,”

· Peter begins for verse with...

III. The Reward (v.4)

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

a. Its Source

“the Chief Shepherd”

- i. The shepherd imagery for Messiah first appears in the OT - [Psalm 23:1](#).
- ii. He is called “the Good Shepherd” in John’s Gospel (10:11)
- iii. The writer of Hebrews calls Him “the Great Shepherd” (13:20-21)
- iv. Peter has already referred to Him as “the Shepherd and Guardian of your soul” (2:25)

b. Its Reward

“The elders’ faithful fulfillment of the injunctions would be followed by the bestowal of the reward. The prospect of the future should have its impact upon their performance in the present” (Hiebert)

i. It’s given “when the Chief Shepherd appears”

- 1. “appears” (phaneroo, aor.pass.part.) means “to make manifest, to make clear, or to reveal” (MacArthur)
- 2. This refers to a single event according to the aorist passive participle “appears”; the Second Coming of Christ

ii. It’s “the unfading crown of glory”

- 1. The “crown” (stephanos) “denotes a wreath used as a crown” (Myers)

2. It is not a kingly crown (diadema) but “the crown of victory in the games, of civic worth, of military valour, of nuptial joy, of festive gladness” (Hiebert)
3. There were 4 crowns mentioned in the NT
 - a. “an incorruptible crown” ([1 Cor.9:25](#))
 - b. a “crown of glory” ([1 Thess.2:19](#); [1 Pet.5:4](#))
 - c. a “crown of righteousness” ([2 Tim.4:8](#))
 - d. a “crown of life” ([Jas.1:12](#))
4. The crown Peter mentions is “unfading” (amarantinon, adj)
 - a. It occurs only here in the NT
 - b. It’s “unfading” like the amaranth flower that “never faded or lost its bloom” (MacArthur)
 - c. The crown itself, as used in the genitive case, is “glory”
 - i. James referred to his crown as the crown that is life (1:12)
 - ii. Paul wrote of the crown that is righteousness ([2 Tim.4:8](#))
 - iii. This describes these eternal blessings as imperishable
 - iv. “The reward of eternal glory ought to be all the reason any shepherd needs for desiring to serve faithfully” (MacArthur)

CONCLUSION

1. What a motivation for service in the church!
2. “Shepherding the flock is a serious, sobering responsibility, and elders are accountable to God for their ministry” (MacArthur)
3. This is why James said in [James 3:1](#), “Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.”
4. That verse is a reminder of God’s high standards for elders
5. So elders are to “feed the flock of God”
6. This is done with the Word of God because believers need to be taught the Scriptures so that they are not “children tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine” ([Eph.4:14](#))
7. I think the best way to do that is expositively and systematically
8. That’s why we go through books of the Bible, so you can feed on every Word
9. Elders work hard at “preaching and teaching” ([1 Tim.5:17](#))

10. And Peter says there is a reward awaiting for them
11. It's the "unfading crown" which is "glory"
12. This will, as we have already seen, come from the Lord Jesus, who is the "Chief Shepherd"
13. Do you know the "Chief Shepherd" today?
14. You can right now by turning your life over to Him by repenting of your sin
15. Call on Him now to save you
16. Let's pray