



# 1 | 1 PETER 5:1-4

## SHEPHERD THE FLOCK

*God's church is to be cared for by consistent shepherds who are to be examples to the entire flock. God's church in turn is to disciple and shepherd one another.*

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### Call to Worship

As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God.  
<sup>2</sup> My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come  
and appear before God? —Psalm 42:1-2

### Songs

*Bow the Knee*  
*Only a Holy God*  
*Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us*  
*Oh How Good It Is*

## Introduction

Peter has us focus on the call of the pastor-shepherd. Being a pastor and an elder is a very high and holy calling. No one does this unless they are called by God to do it. The context of this charge to shepherd God's flock begins with a call to examine God's entire forever family.

For it is time for judgment to begin at the household [family] of God.  
— 1 Peter 4:17

Peter then considers his own self. "Lord, let judgment begin with me." This judgment of God's people can never be condemnation, for "there is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1) Judgment – not condemnation but examination – should always begin with leadership. The example and examination should always begin with leadership. Peter says, because judgment always begins with God's family, let's invite God's examination of us, and let's begin with the elders.

This discussion of pastoral leadership appears in the context of how Christians can endure the fiery ordeal of unjust treatment, trials, and tribulations in this life as they look with hope toward the next. We are in a nightmare period of darkness in our country, and we hope that it will pass. We need to stand together. We need to stand against the tyranny and the darkness. And by God's grace, we will.

Peter argues that strong, spiritual leadership is essential to thriving in this world. When leaders model holiness and hope to those sheep within their charge, the whole church will be able to look to the Chief Shepherd, who provides hope in hurtful times.<sup>1</sup>

**1 Peter 5:1-4** | 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 is going to be revealed: <sup>2</sup> 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; <sup>3</sup> not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. <sup>4</sup> And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

By the way, everything that we see here concerning the Pastor really ought to be applied to **any teacher or leader** in the church! That means if God calls you or has already called you to be an elder (which is another word for pastor or shepherd), or if God has called you to be a leader, or a deacon, or a missionary, or a servant, or a Sunday School teacher, than **you ought to listen to what I am about to say**. There is a higher standard of judgment for leaders and teachers of the word.

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. —James 3:1

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<sup>1</sup> Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on James and 1 & 2 Peter*, Swindoll's New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 235.

Notice Peter doesn't say he's a pope, which came much later, but he's humble. Peter says he is a "fellow elder." Peter is an apostle, but he's a humble person. He's a man who is growing and changing in Christ. He needs the presence of Christ to strengthen him. He's a weak man in need of Christ's strength, like all of us. It wasn't Peter's idea to be a pastor and a shepherd and apostle. He was called by God.

And remember, Peter failed miserably. Three times, Peter denied the Lord. But Jesus restored him. He asked Peter three similar questions.

Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these? —*John 21:15a*

Remember Peter had said, "Even if everyone else forsakes you Lord, I will never forsake you" (Mt 26:33). Peter failed. He denied the Lord three times. "Peter do you love me more than all the rest?" "Am I really number one in your life?" Peter three times says, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you." Remember Christ's restoration and threefold commission to Peter?

Feed my lambs. —*John 21:15b*

Tend my sheep. —*John 21:16*

Feed my sheep. —*John 21:17*

That's quite the calling. Let's remember that shepherds are not perfect. Far from it. None of the elders here come close to perfection. We are all growing and changing just like Peter. Peter often failed. I think that's why I am so encouraged by Peter. I relate with him.

We are all imperfect shepherds, but we know the Perfect Shepherd. I'm so glad we can all say, "The Lord is my Shepherd." This passage in 1 Peter calls Jesus "our Chief Shepherd" (5:4). Aren't you glad Jesus is the "Good Shepherd" (Jn 10:10)?

### *Sheep are Dumb*

The Bible isn't flattering us when it calls us a flock of sheep. You and I are sheep. We are Christ's sheep. Aren't you glad? Do you know what sheep are? *Dumb!* I don't mean to insult you; it's just the truth. You will never find sheep in the circus—ever! They're not jumping through hoops. They're not riding the elephants. Isaiah said,

All we like sheep have gone astray.—*Isaiah 53:6*

Sheep need guidance because we are human beings, and we are sinful. We are weak. We need Christ, our good Shepherd.

### *Sheep are Distracted*

You never see sheep guiding a carriage (like a horse) in Chicago. That would be interesting. They are too weak. They are too distracted. If there was a cliff, they'd lead you over it. They are quite distracted. But sheep will follow their Shepherd. Sheep need a Shepherd. Jesus is our Good Shepherd, isn't he? We need a clear voice to follow.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. —  
*John 10:27*

## Sheep are Dirty

You know what else sheep are? They're dirty. Sheep are very dirty without a Good Shepherd to clean them up. Flies can nest in the sheep's wool and leave larvae. They can next and leave maggots in the sheep's wool. Sheep are dirty. All we like sheep have gone astray. We need a good shepherd to guide us and clean us up.

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.—Psalm 23:5

He anoints our head with oil to keep the flies and bugs away. He cleans us with his living water. He sometimes sheers us and prunes us to keep us small and humble near him. Oh, I need the cleansing of my Savior.

*Jesus Became a Sheep, a Lamb of God.* And before you think that I'm just insulting you, because I'm not really insulting, because I'm one of those, too. I'm a lamb, too. Just remember that our Savior became the precious Lamb of God. He condescended and became like us. He knows how we are, and He became the Lamb of God. God sent under-shepherds to the church to care for his dear sheep.

**Key Thought:** God's church is to be cared for by consistent shepherds who are to be examples to the entire flock. God's church in turn is to disciple and shepherd one another.

Shepherds are called to care for the sheep in three ways: leaders must precede, feed, lead the flock and receive a crown for the flock. Leaders out there – ministry leaders, Titus 2 men and women, we should all strive to be disciple makers. Pastors, elders, deacons, mature men and women, who do we lead the congregation? We begin with getting to know the Shepherd. Peter knew the Shepherd in a precious way.

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## 1. SHEPHERDS PRECEDE THE FLOCK (5:1)

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1 Peter 5:1 | 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 is going to be revealed.

Peter knew the Shepherd in a precious way. He was witness to his suffering and to his glory. He saw the Lord suffer and rise again from the dead. What amazing training for a pastor and elder. Peter was given the gift of Christ revealed to him. What a gift to worship Christ in that way. That's a gift, but it is absolutely necessary for every leader in the church.

Peter was blown away by witnessing the sufferings and glory of Christ. You can see he has quite the reason to worship Christ. Because of his walk with Christ, Peter addresses his fellow elders very humbly as a "fellow elder," not an exalted apostle. God promised he would give his church true shepherds who truly walk with God.

And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. —Jeremiah 3:15

God gives shepherds who experience and share an understanding of him. Peter had an intimate understanding of Christ – witness of his suffering and partaker of his glory. All shepherds need to have this understanding.

Jonathan Edwards said that every home is like a little church and the father is the shepherd. We have so many shepherds here today! According to this passage we are all going to be held accountable. I want to be a shepherd after God’s heart.

### **PRECEDE THE FLOCK IN SUFFERING**

**1 Peter 5:1a** | So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ.

Peter was there when Christ sweat great drops of blood in the Garden of Gethsemane. He saw the Lord as he was being beaten the home of Caiaphas the high priest. Christ even met eyes with Peter through a window there after Peter had denied him. Peter scattered at the crucifixion “like a sheep without a shepherd,” but perhaps he could see the Lord from a place of hiding. Peter witnessed Christ’s sufferings.

*Perseverance.* The apostles were often called witnesses because they walked with Christ and were witnesses of his life and death and resurrection. Being an elder means that we are like all Christians “sharing in Christ’s sufferings” (4:13). If you live a holy life, the world will hate you. There is a demonic opposition against all Christians who want to live holy in Christ. “All who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim 2:12).

We’re called to persevere through persecution and trials and disappointments and discouragements. “The joy of the Lord is my strength” (Neh 8:10).

No matter what your suffering is on this earth, the joy we have in Christ is so much greater! And remember the words of Paul, “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Rom 8:18).

What do you turn to when you are suffering? Peter turned to worship. Look at what he says. He remembers the “sufferings of Christ.” He’s a witness to it! But he’s also a “partaker of the glory” that will be revealed at the Second Coming!

### **PRECEDE THE FLOCK IN GLORY**

**1 Peter 5:1** | 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 is going to be revealed.

As Peter begins his exhortation to the church—he first turns to the office of the pastors and elders. He says something very precious. He says, “I’ve not only witnessed the sufferings of Christ,” but I am “a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed.” You know the glory that we are going to experience when Jesus comes again? I’ve experienced it already.

### *The Glory of the Transfiguration*

Peter says, “I was there when the Lord transfigured himself.” Peter says, “I witnessed the glory that Christ had before the world began” up on that Mount of Transfiguration. Christ “led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light” (Mt 17:1-2). I saw his glory! Christ for just a moment peeled back the robe of His humanity, and the Shekinah glory of His blinding divine presence was revealed. Peter was saying, “*You know that one day we will see Christ in all His glory? Well, I as an elder have experienced it already.*”

### *The Glory of the Second Coming*

The Pastor and elders and deacons are to be witnessing the glory of Christ. The Pastor is to shepherd the flock by being “a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed” (5:1). One day Christ’s glory is going to be revealed to every person that has ever lived. Every soul that ever lived will finally understand Christ’s glory. But Christians are those who partake of his glory now. We are “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet 1:4).

Many people have gifts, but they do not have the character that comes from walking with Christ. The Lord’s people will rarely ascend to heights that the pastor has not scaled first. It is utterly vital that the pastor have a living dynamic loving walk with God, a man of fervent prayer. The pastor must be one who knows how to touch heaven and to cling to the Lord.

The pastor is one who must partake of the glory of Christ! He must succeed in his personal walk with God. In the book of Genesis, we read: Enoch walked with God (5:24), Noah walked with God (6:9). I want to know child of God do you walk with God? Your pastors and elders walk with God. And it is our highest joy to see you walking with him.

A leader must succeed in his walk with God. Any man that wants to lead God’s church must precede in his own walk with God.

To have power in preaching, he must constantly be before the Throne of Grace. He must succeed in devotion with his family. He has a family altar. He prays with his wife, prays with his children, prays with his forever family in Christ. He must be a man of continual prayer! The pastor must succeed in putting the Word of God into practice! It’s easy to defend what you believe. It’s a whole ‘nother story to live what you believe! The pastor if he is to preach powerfully, must live out the principles of God’s Word *before* he preaches them!

Let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.—1 John 3:18

In doing God’s will the pastor desperately needs to be conscious of the power of God to change people. Pastors do not change people—God changes people!

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## **2. SHEPHERDS FEED THE FLOCK (5:2)**

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The teachers and shepherds in the church are called to shepherd, which is sometimes translated “feed”. Pastors care for and feed the flock, to equip the members of the church

for the work of ministry (Eph 4:11-12). Yes, Christians are predestined to be conformed to Christ's image (Rom 8:29), but it doesn't happen automatically. The equippers are to equip. The church does the work of evangelism and discipleship.

### FEED WITH REVERENCE

1 Peter 5:2a | Shepherd the flock of God...

We are to shepherd God's flock. This is the flock of God! I love Psalm 23 that reminds us that God is the shepherd of his flock.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. <sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. —*Psalm 23:1-2*

This is Christ's church. He gave his own blood for each of you.

I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. —*Matthew 16:18*

We have to be so careful to feed God's church, because Jesus obtained it with his own blood!

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 he obtained with his own blood. —*Acts 20:28*

Dear saint, your shepherds know that you are God's dear child first. You belong to him. We want to treat you with all the care and reverence as the adopted child of God that you are. You belong to God, sealed with his seal of ownership, the blessed Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13-14).

### FEED WITH SUBSTANCE

1 Peter 5:2-3 | Shepherd the flock of God...

The word "shepherd" can be translated "feed." Do you know that sheep are hungry? The elders must feed the flock with good doctrine (take heed to the doctrine). God has spoken. His word is authoritative. He knows what is best. He gives us the wisdom because he knows the way life should be lived to its fullest. We desperately need sound teaching.

Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. —*1 Timothy 4:16*

Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. —*1 Timothy 4:13*

There are some elders who would rather *dissect* the Bible rather than *digest* the Bible. If the pastor does not "taste and see that the Lord is good" he will have nothing but dry bones to give to others!

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! —*Psalm 34:8*

### FEED WITH BALANCE

1 Peter 5:2b | Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight...

Preaching should be rich, expository, and practical! We are to “exercise oversight” over God’s flock, viewing their lives, and applying the Bible in practical ways.

*Watch out!* There are times when I’m driving with my kids, and they may be distracted, and I say “watch out!” Or I will teach them how to drive. That’s what the shepherd does. We teach them everything we can about how to live the Christian life. We are watching over their lives.

**People *do not* need entertainment in the pulpit; they need *food*.** The man of God must be so God-saturated that he preaches out of the overflow. Preaching must emphasize the whole counsel of God. Paul said to the Ephesian elders that he taught a balanced diet of God’s word.

I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. —  
*Acts 20:27*

God’s sheep need a *balanced* diet of the whole counsel of God. The sheep don’t need the pastor’s preferences or favorite parts of theology. It is best to preach through the Bible (lectuo continuo), book by book, chapter by chapter, verse by verse, line upon line, precept upon precept.

Since you are God’s flock, we can’t just teach you what we want. We are to teach you the word of God, line upon line and precept upon precept. We are to feed you what God has already prepared for you, not psychology, or a social agenda, or some feel good stories. We are to feed you “the sincere milk of the word” (1 Pet 2:2). We are also to feed you the “solid food” (Heb 5:12) of sound doctrine.

### FEED WITH GLADNESS

1 Peter 5:2c | Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly.

There is a joyful willingness in feeding the flock. This includes teaching in the pulpit and especially personal discipleship. We cannot be a disciple of Christ unless we are disciple makers.

The work of a pastor is rigorous. If your eyes are not firmly fixed on Jesus, you will not last long. There should be a joy about ministry, not a compulsion. The pastor that serves just for the paycheck or just for the honor of the position won’t last long in ministry. He will burn out. The true servant of God can say,

The joy of the Lord is my strength. —*Nehemiah 8:10*



### *Get Out of Bed*

**Let me illustrate** the negative side of this admonition with an amusing story. A young man fell sound asleep one Sunday morning when his mother burst in and said, “Wake up, son. You need to get out of bed *right now!*”

With his face buried in his pillow, he responded with a muffled voice, “Give me three good reasons why I should get out of this bed.”

Engaging in a tug-of-war with his bedsheets, she said, “**One:** because it’s Sunday and as Christians we always go to church on Sundays.”

The man moaned.

“**Two:** because we have only forty minutes until church starts and you haven’t even showered!”

The man tried to ignore his mother.

“**Three:** because you’re the pastor and you need to be there!”

*That’s ministry under compulsion!* While most pastors don’t need their mothers to pull them out of bed on Sunday mornings, pulpits are often filled with **preachers at the verge of ministry burnout**, who can barely keep going. Maybe they went to Bible college and/or seminary and acquired the degree and skills for ministry, but their heart is no longer in it. <sup>2</sup>

There should be a great joy and willingness when it comes to feeding the flock. We are to study the word and proclaim it with gladness. **There is a true joy in connecting with the sheep**, because there is a deep love from the pastor.

Sometimes a pastor is going to get a 3am phone call. That’s when you know if he really loves shepherding. You can tell by how he answers the phone! Does he say “oh no” is there a real joy to serve the flock. I can say, no matter what time, day or night, it is my highest honor to shepherd the flock. I even get excited at the worst of times, because I believe God is a God of deliverance and “fullness of joy.”

The shepherds are going to give an account, and so he must work hard! The truth of the matter is that ministry is hard work. There is not a place in ministry for the under motivated and the lazy. Much of the energy resident in any local church is in part the result of the leadership dynamic of its pastor.

A shepherd is to lead by feeding the flock!

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## 3. SHEPHERDS LEAD THE FLOCK (5:2-3)

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1 Peter 5:2-3 | 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; <sup>3</sup> not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

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<sup>2</sup> Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on James and 1 & 2 Peter*, Swindoll’s New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 237.

## LEAD WITH ENGAGEMENT

1 Peter 5:2a | Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight.

The term bishop, which means “overseer” is from the same word as is above “exercising oversight.” This comes right out of the Old Testament. Paul’s Hebrew mind was thinking of the word “**watchman**” in the Hebrew.

In fact, **the Hebrew nickname for a Christian in Israel is watchman.** We are all called to watch over each other and watch out for the enemy.

What is this oversight? It means we are to engage in the lives of God’s people. The pastor is not to be merely delivering homilies on Sundays and then isolated from the sheep the rest of the week. The shepherd should smell like the sheep.

We are going to give an account for each of the souls connected to this church. Some of you are visiting. I am not accountable for you. You haven’t willingly submitted yourself to this church. But I will give account for those who ask for oversight through church membership.

We are called to lead God’s precious flock by **getting them ready** for the day when we all meet Christ.

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. —*Hebrews 13:17*

Pastors and elders are to meet God’s people where they are. In their homes, in their lives. We are to engage their problems. The Bible is God’s sufficient word. It is everything we need to live a life of godliness.

This means we oversee the flock and give guidance as to how to walk with God, how to read the Scriptures, and how to apply God’s word to everyday life.

The pastor is to exercise oversight. He is to live among the sheep. He is to keep a close watch upon himself and those who God has put under his charge.

Or another sobering command to elders is Paul’s exhortation to the Ephesian elders.

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 he obtained with his own blood. —*Acts 20:28*

**We need to really know those for which we are going to give an account.** You can hear the earnestness and the seriousness in those words: you elders shepherd the people “whom God purchased with his own blood.” In other words, don’t take this work lightly. Pastors are to be deeply involved in the life of the sheep.

## LEAD WITH ENTHUSIASM

**1 Peter 5:2b** | Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you...

If an elder or pastor feels burned out and is not willingly and happily going about his duties to care for the flock, he should not be a leader in the church.

I can testify that I have great joy when the people of God call me at any moment. I look at the phone, and I get excited. I know there may be a difficulty on the other end of the phone line. But I'm excited to see how God is going to work "this one" out. There should be a heavenly enthusiasm when it comes to the pastor and all the church in serving the Lord.

Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!  
—*Psalm 100:2*

There is no greater joy to a true shepherd, than serving God's people.

## LEAD WITH EFFORT

**1 Peter 5:2c** | Shepherd the flock of God... not for shameful gain, but eagerly.

Eagerness implies effort. A pastor doesn't do it merely for a paycheck. That would be shameful gain. We do shepherd the flock **whether or not we are paid**, because we have submitted to God's calling. We love the sheep and want to be with them with great eagerness.

A leader and overseer is really an eager servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus came in the fashion of a slave, and the pastor should be a prototype of Jesus, conformed to his image.

**Our effort is not fleshly effort.** Our power comes from the resurrection of Christ. Truly "the joy of the Lord is our strength" (Neh 8:10). That is, as we experience the deep love of God, we will have plenty of vigor and energy for the task at hand.

In order to be a faithful pastor, we need to be following our Good Shepherd, being carried and loved by our Good Shepherd.

## LEAD AS AN EXAMPLE

**1 Peter 5:3** | Shepherd the flock of God ...not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

We are to have a family relationship with God's people, like a father setting the example. Pastors are to become sufficiently involved in the lives of the flock that they establish a godly pattern for the people to follow. **An example is a prototype, a mold to be duplicated.**

Set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.—1 Timothy 4:12

Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. —1 Timothy 4:16

Shepherds are to be a prototype of Christ. Every pastor should be able to say what Paul did to the Corinthians.

Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. —1 Corinthians 11:1

*An Example, not a Control Freak*

1 Peter 5:3 | Shepherd the flock of God ...not domineering over those in your charge.

Shepherds are not to command and domineer the flock. One thing that keeps pastors in check from being controlling and domineering is to have a plurality of elders. It is significant that Peter used the plural, **elders**. In reference to this ministry, the term always appears in the plural in the New Testament, affirming that the office was designed for a plurality of men.<sup>3</sup> There is a plurality of elders necessary in a healthy church. I can testify that the elders of our church have transformed my life. They have set the example of love, gentleness, tenderness, and courage. I can say the deacons have also embodied this. I am honored to serve with such humble men.

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## 4. SHEPHERDS RECEIVE A CROWN FOR THE FLOCK

(5:4)

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1 Peter 5:4 | And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

The pastor will, like everyone else, appear before the throne of God on Judgment Day. We will all give an account. And so, his motive for all he does is first, to honor the chief Shepherd. We are going to give God's flock back to God. It's not my flock or your flock. This is the flock of God. He laid down his life for the sheep. You belong to Jesus. One day Jesus is coming back for his dear flock. He knows you all by name. He's written you down in his book, the book of Life.

### THE CHIEF SHEPHERD'S RETURN

1 Peter 5:4a | And when the chief Shepherd appears...

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<sup>3</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., *1 Peter*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004), 264.

Chief Shepherd is one of the most beautiful titles for the Savior in all of Scripture. The shepherd imagery for Messiah first appears in the Old Testament (Zech 13:7; cf Psa 23:1).

We as pastors need to be careful how we treat the church, because Jesus is coming back for his bride! He's coming again. He could come at any time. I can't wait. How about you?

### THE CHIEF SHEPHERD'S ACCOUNTING

Hebrews 13:17 is very convicting.

Your leaders... 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. —Hebrews 13:17

Or another sobering command to elders is found in Acts 20:28.

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 he obtained with his own blood.

—Acts 20:28

Pastors and elders are going to give an account for the spiritual life of the congregation.

### THE CHIEF SHEPHERD'S CROWN

1 Peter 5:4 | And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

Can you imagine? After all that Christ has done for us, when he returns, he's going to give us a reward: the unfading crown of glory. At the Second Coming shepherds will receive the unfading crown of glory. In the Greco-Roman world of Peter's day, perishable crowns rather than trophies were the awards for victory at athletic events (1 Cor 9:24-25).

Temporal crowns would eventually rust, fade, or, if made from plants, die quickly. Peter was not looking forward merely to some unfading version of an earthly crown, but metaphorically to eternal glory, which can never fade.<sup>4</sup>

I believe we are all going to **be like the elders in the book of Revelation** who cast their crowns before the Lord. He is worthy, isn't he? Being a leader is such a high and holy calling. Paul said he had the daily care of all the churches.

Christ's undershepherds face a daunting task, but faithful oversight brings eternal reward in the form of greater service and joy in the Lord's heaven: "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master'" (Mt 25:23).<sup>5</sup>

#### Conclusion

Pray for your pastors and elders. Friday night, we were at my son's football game. Throughout the game, I didn't know who was going to win. It was a close game. But in the second half, my son's team just took off. They intercepted the other team. They blocked a

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<sup>4</sup> John MacArthur, Jr. *1 Peter* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004), 270–271

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

punt and returned it. And most of all, my son's team scored touchdowns. Lots of touchdowns. The coach on the sidelines kept telling his team: "Focus". The more they dialed in, the more they focused, the more they flawlessly executed their plays.

Dear saint, your pastors are asking you to focus. Focus on Christ our Chief Shepherd. Look to him. He will never let you down. Victory is guaranteed.