

4 August 2019

1 Peter 5:1

1 Peter 5:1-4: Peter now turns his attention to those entrusted with the care of the church;

As (V5) opens, Peter exhorts the leaders of the churches to: Feed the flock of God; (Get that, the church IS the GOD'S FLOCK). And so, FEED God's flock to which you've been called.

No elder should be forced or coerced into the ministry; but, if called of God, it should be willing, voluntarily; and he should be humbled and glad to oversee the churches.

They MUST not be hirelings; their goal in seeking to lead God's people MUST NEVER BE for monetary gain.

And then, they must never lord over, (or be domineering) over God's heritage/flock.

But before we proceed too far into the text, I want to clarify some specific words/terms that Peter used in his charge to the elders of the churches.

What is an ELDER: # 4245 The Greek word is Presbuteros, which describes the man or men who were called by God to manage & lead the churches. The word elder indicates a man of spiritual age, who is mature in the faith of Christ; not a novice or one that has newly come to the faith.

Next: We see the word OVERSIGHT: #1983: The Greek word is Episkopeo. This describes what the elder's calling is in the church of God. It means to look after, inspect, & oversee; to care for the flock of God as an under-shepherd under Christ, the Chief Shepherd.

So now, let's unpack the responsibilities of the men who are called to lead, oversee & manage the churches (local assemblies) of the Lord Jesus Christ:

FIRST: Elders are called by God to FEED the flock of God to which they have been called. They are to tend to their spiritual care by caring for their never dying souls. They are to point them to obedience to God and His Word; to stir up the Word in their minds and hearts. This is done by Feeding/Preaching/Teaching the Word of God to them.

FEED the flock of God saith Peter! That is their principle calling!

The word FEED is #4165: It is the Greek word Poimaino, which means to shepherd the flock of God. This literally means to herd, feed, and tend to the flock and keep it intact and together.

It also means to protect the flock from enemies, described as wolves in Acts 20; but also, from the great enemy of Christ and our souls, Satan.

Matthew 16:18, Acts 20:28-32.

The enemies of the church are wolves in sheep's clothing, (Paul here called them grievous wolves). This means that they will be violent and unsparing! Satan's workers and ministers; their chief design is the tear up the flock and get you to go back into the world.

Satan will send his workers to ENTER INTO the flock; as Paul said in Acts 20:29, they will enter in among you and they will scatter and destroy the sheep of any and every church if we allow him to.

How does Satan do his work? He will plant seeds of pride & arrogance & strife & hatred, & even malice into your mind about someone else in the church; if you allow him to do infect your mind. His mission is to destroy this church and you with it. James 4:7.

This is why we MUST NOT be ignorant of His devices and methods; we must not let him take the high ground or get the advantage in our hearts; we MUST be able to recognize one his attacks! We must raise the shield of faith if we would QUENCH His fiery darts. We must, by the grace of God, be able to withstand him in the evil day! 1 Peter 5:8-9.

But there is also a 3rd layer of protection that the that elders are to provide for their sheep, and that is, they must, at times, protect the sheep from themselves, and from straying from the flock into trouble.

Deuteronomy 32:7-8, Deuteronomy 9:12-16, Hebrews 3:12-13.

Prone to wander are the people of God if they are not tended to by their under-shepherds. If you are a child of God, you need shepherding, you need to keep close to the flock.

I believe Peter's exhortation is a direct reference to what the Lord told him on the seashore of the sea of Galilee after His resurrection. John 21:15-17

And so, to the elders, Peter wrote; shepherd the flock that God has called you to shepherd. Keep them together, feed them in good/green spiritual pastures; protect them and watch out for wolves that would scatter and devour them. Psalms 23:1-2, Jeremiah 3:15, Ephesians 4:11-14

Next: Don't let this thought pass from your minds; if you are in Christ and a member of this church, you are part of God's flock. The Flock of God.

Peter wanted these elders/overseers to never forget that the flocks that they were called to minister to WERE NOT THEIR FLOCKS, but God's. My primary responsibility is to direct your hearts to follow Christ! Not me!

Psalms 95:6-7, Psalm 100, Jeremiah 23:1-4

And then, one of the most difficult things for a man to know of a certainty is that God has called him into the ministry.

Men don't call men into the ministry of elders & overseers, God calls them.

Acts 20:28, 13:1-2, 14:21-23, 2 Timothy 1:6.

I am not against Bible Seminary training and college degrees; but a seminary degree does not qualify a man for the ministry; the calling of God qualifies him for the ministry! 1 Timothy 3:1

One of the insults thrown at the Apostles of Christ was that they were unlearned and ignorant men; (these men were not educated in our seminaries, they are not qualified to teach the people); but it was also said of their detractors that

they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. THAT is what they should have PROVED them to be qualified, to speak as God's representatives.

In fact, the Jews insulted Jesus and called Him an uneducated man. John 7:14-15

This, after He taught them powerful truths and proofs of His identity, which, they could not deny! This after He taught them with authority! But they stumbled over the fact that He was never educated under the scribes and Pharisees.

Further instruction for God called Elders: Taking the oversight thereof, (over the flock), not by constraint, but willingly

Take care of the flock that God has called you to, care for their spiritual needs, and also their physical (earthly) the need arises; know your flock as best you can.

Be very careful as an under-shepherd; when the need arises, personally admonish and rebuke them for sin, or when they stray, but always do it in meekness and humility. NEVER forget that they are God's flock; they belong to Love them and encourage them in the Word; lead them to eat and digest the Word and to fill themselves with it; but most of all, to live by it.

Seek the lost that are among you saith Peter to the elders; endeavor to restore those that have sinned; and protect the flock from false teaching or from falling into sin, or back into the world.

Here is where I will be very honest with you; there are times when I see sins or signs that there may be sin or wandering; but I don't immediately engage and tell you; I don't say, HEY you shouldn't be doing this or that.

There are times though, when I might be led of God to say something; other times, I simply commit you to the Lord, and ask God to make the corrections that are needed in your life.

There is a delicate balance to leading the flock and lording over it. I will tell you that I am probably less apt to engage unless a sinful pattern develops in your life.

Ultimately, I want the Lord to discipline you and chastise you; for I know that when He works in your life, the work will be well-done.

Peter then commanded elders: DO NOT TAKE oversight of the flock of God by force, or by being pressed into the ministry by those that think you should be in the ministry, when you do not see yourself in the ministry.

The taking of this oversight should be WILLINGLY; and with a desire to serve Christ and feed the people of God! If a pastor must be forced into the ministry, he is not called into the ministry.

This is a true saying, if a man DESIRE the office of bishop, he desireth a good work

And then, no man should desire the ministry based on pay; if God has called him to the ministry; God will take care of him. If God has called him into the ministry; he will be of a ready mind; he will willingly and gladly, (and fearfully) obey that

call.

Finally: Elders/Overseers MUST not lord over God's heritage, but they should be godly examples to the flock to which God has called them.

An elder and overseer of God's flock is not to be domineering, and he must not rule as a dictator. His rule is to be from an attitude of humility; he is to be servant to all that are in the church.

In fact, lordship and dominion came up within the ranks of the Apostles when James and John asked the Lord to GRANT that they would sit on His right and left hand in His glorious kingdom.

Mark 10:41-45.

God has called his servants to be humble/servant leaders and examples to the flock. 1 Timothy 4:11-14

In closing: One of Satan's greatest tools that has eroded and weakened the church of Jesus Christ is the resistance of pastoral authority.

There are MANY who resist making the commitment to become members of local NT churches, in large part because they do not want to submit to pastoral oversight. But what does the Word of God say?

I will not force anyone to become a member of GFBC; but at the same time, if you're a Born-Again Christian and one of God's sheep, why wouldn't you desire to be committed to a local NT church?

Listen, I've been told, why should I submit to you? Because by doing so, you are submitting yourself to God!

Hebrews 13:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

God's sheep should love to be in submission to the authority that Christ has set over them.

My prayer is that THIS message will strengthen our assembly; but also, I humbly present myself before you as your elder/overseer as one that needs your constant prayers that I would NEVER neglect my calling to care/feed you with the good Word of God. But also, that I would never domineer or lord over you, as God's heritage.

But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Matthew 18:6: