

“REMINDERS OF Truth” ©2009

The Epistles of 1 & 2 Peter

BY DR. EDGAR PIERCE



XI- Remember to Shepherd the Flock:

1Pe 5:1-7

There is a quote contributed to a man named James Baldwin, “Children have never been good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them.”

This quote points out rather well the critical need we have for those who are in a position of leadership to be careful with their actions and their words. Whether the leadership is in the family, the church, the community. I have often wondered why some churches have the same problems from generation to generation. Perhaps it is that the next generation learned it from the last.

In keeping with our overall theme of *Reminders of Truth* I have chosen for a title of this section as *Remember to Shepherd the Flock*.

I- Exhortation to Leaders:

1Pe 5:1 *The elders which are among you I exhort...* Our purpose would not be well served if we get into a long dialogue about the meaning of the word elder and what office it was or is. Peter is exhorting the leadership of the early church. It is seldom that any church can rise above the leadership of the older saints within the church.

Below is a very good rendering of Biblical teaching on leadership.

The following principles of leadership emerge from biblical teaching:

- 1. Christian leaders should be certain that their goal is to serve God and others, not to receive the title or honor that comes with leadership.*
- 2. Leaders should not use their position for their own advantage or comfort. No task should be "beneath" them, although some tasks may be delegated. They should not ask others to do what they are unwilling to do themselves..*
- 3. Leaders will seek to distinguish their own preferences from the will and welfare of the group as a whole.*
- 4. Normally the position should seek the leader. There may be some situations in which persons may apply or volunteer. Nevertheless, when someone strongly desires a particular*

responsibility, his or her motivation should be carefully examined.

5. We must learn to see each other as valuable to the Lord and basically equal in his sight.

Millard J. Erickson, The Standard, May, 1982

Some place Peter above the other saints and make him more than I think Christ intended. Notice Peter writes to them as an equal elder not a superior. ...**who am also an elder...** The KJV does not do this justice here because in our English language we so not see that he is calling himself a fellow elder, an equal not a superior.

He also is a witness. **and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:** He reminds them that he had observed the suffering of our Lord. He subtly reminds them also of the glory to come beyond the suffering.

II- Shepherd the Flock:

The KJV renders **1Pe 5:2** **Feed the flock of God which is among you...** The word “Feed” literally means to act as a shepherd. So when we read this in the NASB it reads, “**shepherd the flock of God among you...**”

I do not read many poems in my preaching but I want us all to listen to why it is critical that the flock is shepherded.

The Lost Sheep

'Twas a sheep, not a lamb, that strayed away in the parable Jesus told.

A grown-up sheep that had gone astray from the ninety and nine in the fold.

Out on the hillside, out in the cold, 'twas a sheep the Good Shepherd sought;

And back to the flock, safe into the fold, 'twas a sheep the Good Shepherd brought.

And why for the sheep should we earnestly long and as earnestly hope and pray?

Because there is danger, if they go wrong, they will lead the lambs astray.

For the lambs will follow the sheep, you know, wherever the sheep may stray;

When the sheep go wrong, it will not be long till the lambs are as wrong as they.

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And so with the sheep we earnestly plead, for the sake of the lambs today;

If the sheep are lost, what terrible cost some of the lambs will have to pay!

This tugged at my heart why it is so important to shepherd the flock and feed the sheep because the next generation of lambs is at stake. They will not find their way to the Master Shepherd if we as the sheep of God do not do what is right and guide them to the Master.

III- Lead the Flock:

Peter gives us some great insight into being the right kind of shepherd in the next two verses. Lets break this apart a little and learn to be a good leader.

1Pe 5:2 taking the oversight thereof...I see so many today that do not have the backbone nor the stomach to lead. They have to take an opinion poll to find out what is right and wrong because they do not have any moral compass directing their lives.

David Guzik said, “*For Peter, the job of being a shepherd can also be understood as being an overseer. This word for leadership comes to the church from Greek culture, and it means someone who watches over, a manager, or a supervisor.*”

Beloved, if we are called of God then we should lead to the best of our ability and not shift the responsibility and play the blame game. It did not say take the glory and shun the responsibility but taking the oversight. Be willing to lead but make sure you are leading God’s way not for person gain or preference.

1Pe 5:2 not by constraint, but willingly; Some render this not under compulsion, but voluntarily. Most of us have been forced at some point in our lives to do things we did not want to do. Most of the time we do not find any joy in them, not necessarily because of what the job was, but because we were forced.

Shepherding the flock of God is one of the greatest joys that God can allow a man to do. True, it comes with a set of frustrations and stress but what joy it brings.

Some think that preacher are only in it for the money. I have known very few rich preachers. The one or two who have money have inherited it. Most did not make it from preaching. Peter tells us as we lead to make sure it does not become a job for a paycheck. He

said in **1Pe 5:2 not for filthy lucre.** We might say it this way...not for dirty money.

1Pe 5:2 but of a ready mind; The opposite of being conscripted or constrained to do something is to do it with a ready mind as it says here. Ready mind means eagerly.

1Pe 5:3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage....Have you ever seen someone who had a position of power who became a dictator over the underlings? Leaders like this may have a following but is not a joyous following. One thing that we all must remember as leaders is this is not our church but it is God’s, His heritage.

1Pe 5:3 but being ensamples to the flock. Would the work of God and the advancement of the Kingdom be enhanced or subtracted from if all the saints were like us? No, let me make that a little more personal, if all were like you.

Peter reminds us we should be an example for people to follow. Paul defending himself said in **2Th 3:9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.**

Now to be a leader means that extra scrutiny is given to each decision that is made or not made. People will praise more than you deserve and criticize more than deserved as well. But, it is like the fire in Jeremiah’s bones it will not go away.

IV- Reward of the Shepherd:

I think most would agree that we live in a time of instant gratitude and pleasure. We do not see the big picture of life with eternal eyes; most times, we see just a day, week or month. I was paid every day when I was young and worked in the fields picking beans and strawberries or hauling hay. Today most get their paycheck weekly or at a minimum of monthly so we are used to receiving rewards instantly when compared to a lifetime or eternity. God does not settle His accounts at the end of the day.

1Pe 5:4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

We do not, nor will not, know the rewards that we are laying up in heaven. We do know that Jesus is coming to give the awards. **Revelation 22:12** says, **And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.**

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An elderly preacher was rebuked by one of his deacons one Sunday morning before the service. 'Pastor,' said the man, 'something must be wrong with your preaching and your work. There's been only one person added to the church in a whole year, and he's just a boy.' The minister listened, his eyes moistening and his thin hand trembling. 'I feel it all,' he replied, 'but God knows I've tried to do my duty.' On that day the minister's heart was heavy as he stood before his flock. As he finished the message, he felt a strong inclination to resign.

After everyone else had left, that one boy came to him and asked, 'Do you think if I worked hard for an education, I could become a preacher, perhaps a missionary?' Again tears welled up in the minister's eyes. 'Ah, this heals the ache I feel,' he said. 'Robert, I see the Divine hand now. May God bless you, my boy. Yes, I think you will become a preacher.'

Many years later an aged missionary returned to London from Africa. His name was spoken with reverence. Nobles invited him to their homes. He had added many souls to the church of Jesus Christ, reaching even some of Africa's most savage chiefs. His name was Robert Moffat, the same Robert who years before had spoken to the pastor that Sunday morning in the old Scottish kirk.

Lord, help us to be faithful. Then give us the grace to leave the results to you.

Listen what *1 Corinthians 3:11-15* says, *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

Oh, to hear the words, "Well done" from the lips of Christ when He comes will be worth it all. The reward at the end will be worth the journey pain. The end will be worth it all. We must continue to build on the foundation of Christ as we attempt to lead the flock and shepherd the sheep.

V- Humbled under God's Hand:

Peter gives a warning to the young in the next verses. Time has a way of humbling the young who ready to conquer the world with pride.

Most when they are young think they know more than they do. It is amazing to see how smart our parents get as we get older. How those things they did and the decisions they made that we disagreed with shape our decisions and we find we make them the same way as we get older.

1Pe 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: 7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Peter is reminding the younger ones that they do not know everything because they have not had the time to pass the elders has had.

Humility is ultimately a reflection of our submission to God. Also, rewards can carry us only so far in motivation to do what is right. Love is the greatest motives.

Notice it says that He will exalt...this again points out to me that we need to serve not for the reward of men but ultimately for the glory it brings to God. so remember to Shepherd the flock for all the right reasons.