

# (Through the Bible) 1 Peter 3-5

by Chuck Smith

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a positive lifestyle, submitting to one another in love, and honoring God in all aspects of life.*

**Duration:** 1:19:07

**Scripture:** Psalm 34:12

**Topics:** "Christian Living", "Spiritual Warfare"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the challenges faced by believers in the world. He emphasizes that those who have chosen to follow God may be seen as strange or boring by others who do not understand their faith. However, he reminds the audience that ultimately, everyone will have to give an account of their lives before God. The preacher encourages believers to be sober, watchful, and prayerful, and to have fervent love for one another. He also reminds them to resist the devil and to do everything for the glory of God.

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## Transcript

Shall we turn now to 1 Peter chapter 3, as Peter addresses himself to the wives. This particular section goes back to verse 13 of chapter 2, Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to king or supreme, governors unto them sent to the punishment of evildoers. So it is the will of God that in well-doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

So the idea of submitting to one another in love, and so he talks about first of all the servants submitting themselves unto their own masters. Christ leaving us an example. And now to wives, likewise ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they may also without the word be won by the conversation or behavior of the wives, or the lifestyle of the wives.

This particular Greek word is a difficult word to translate. The old English word was conversation, which doesn't mean verbal, but it means your lifestyle. And so it's a word that has lost its meaning through the years when this translation was made.

So you can translate that behavior or lifestyle or manner of living. So as Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, I don't need that anyone should write letters of commendation for me, because you are my living epistles known and of all men. Our lifestyle testifies to what we believe.

And more people are brought to Christ by the observing of the Christian life as you live it, than are converted through just someone laying the four spiritual laws on them. We were talking with a missionary who is in the Philippines and has a ministry basically to the Muslims. And he talked to the difficulty of the converting of a Muslim because for a Muslim, it is a capital offense to convert to Christianity.

He is and can be put to death by his family members if he leaves the Islam faith and becomes a Christian. It is a capital offense to convert a Muslim. But he said in order to convert a Muslim, they must see Christianity in action in your life.

You can't do it with words. They have to see the gospel demonstrated in your life. They watch, they observe.

And then he said they have to see a miracle in answer to prayer. And these are the things that convince the Muslim of the truth of Christianity. So Paul is declaring that our lifestyle is all important.

You wise who have unbelieving husbands, you're more apt to convert them by your lifestyle than you are by putting tracks in their peanut butter sandwiches so that when they bite into the sandwich, they get the word and they pull it out of their mouth and they read God loves you, you know. So it is the lifestyle, the way we live becomes the witness of what we declare. One of the weaknesses of the church is the lack of the positive lifestyle of the believer, professing one thing and living another.

That of course we call hypocrisy and that has been the bane and the curse of the church. So how we live is extremely important, just as important as what we say. While they behold your chaste lifestyle with reverence, who's adorning or beauty? Let it not be the outward, the fancy hairstyles, the wearing of gold or the putting on of fancy clothes.

I could get in big trouble at this point. Not my wife, I'm not thinking about her, I'm thinking about a television station locally. Who's adorning? Let it not be the outward adorning with the fancy hairstyles, the wearing of gold, putting on a fancy apparel.

But let it be the hidden man of the heart in that which is not corruptible, a meek and a quiet spirit which in the sight of God is very valuable. The true beauty is an inner beauty, not an outward beauty. Now there are some women who are outstanding artists and they can paint a beautiful face.

It takes them a while. It takes longer as the years go by. There's an old Swedish proverb, good looks don't last, good cooks do.

The idea is to encourage the young men not to look for a pretty face but to look for a good cook. But the true beauty, the beauty that doesn't fade, the beauty that grows with years is that inner beauty. Some of the most beautiful people in the world, that beautiful inner beauty.

You love to be around them because there's just such a beauty that comes forth from their lives. And Peter is saying, recognize that that is the true beauty. The true beauty is that which is inward, which shines out.

I do not believe that Peter is intending here to issue a prohibition against the ladies looking nice. I don't think that this is a prohibition as some have interpreted to be of wearing gold apparel or things of this nature. Not intended is that at all.

The intention is just that you recognize that true beauty is inward, that which God values, the meek, the quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is very valuable. For after this manner, in the old time, the holy women also who trusted in God adorned themselves being in subjection to their own husbands. Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham calling him Lord.

Now, I don't expect that you women are going to go this far as to call your husband's Lord unless it's tongue in cheek. And interestingly enough, Sarah had and asserted her place too. I mean, it wasn't a, you know, it was a two-way street.

When she was upset over Ishmael mocking her little boy, she said to Abraham, you get rid of that woman and her child. And Abraham, though it hurt him, got rid of Hagar and Ishmael. So, you husbands don't try to pounce on this scripture and use it as a club to beat your wives in submission.

Marriage is a give and take proposition and it is an understanding. Now, of course, with Peter, interestingly enough, has quite a bit to say to the wife. And if you read it in amplified, I think these guys were male chauvinists because they really jump onto this and amplify it.

Almost to an extreme. Peter has quite a bit to say to the wives, but he has very little to say to the husbands. Interestingly enough, Paul shares pretty much equally as quite a bit to say the wise, but then he has also quite a bit to say to the husbands, as far as the marriage relationships, interpersonal relationships within marriage.

But you are the daughters of Sarah, as long as you do well and are not afraid with any amazement. Now that's a peculiar phrase, not afraid with any terror. And I don't understand what Peter is saying by that.

Maybe some of you have some ideas you can share with me. Having devoted six verses to the wives, he now devotes one to the husbands. Likewise, ye husbands dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto a weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.

Getting along, you know, our prayer lives can be hindered by friction within the home. And so it's important that there be a harmony within the house. It's important that a husband recognize the weaknesses of the wife and honor her as a weaker vessel, watching over her, taking care of her, shielding her.

As I have said, basically in marriage, God has two rules, one for the wife, one for the husband. In giving two rules, he keeps it simple so that it's almost impossible to say, well, I forgot the rule. He's giving you just one so you can't forget.

And in giving the rule, God was thinking of the other. So when he said, husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church, he knew that a woman's greatest need was that of knowing that she is loved supremely by her husband. And the woman is always fishing for the affirmation of this.

Honey, do you love me, honey? Do I look nice? Do I look sharp tonight? Is this, you know, do you like this outfit? And she's always fishing for, honey, you're beautiful. I love you. You're everything to me.

She's needing this assurance and she fishes for this assurance because she needs the security of knowing that she's loved. Now, Peter is saying, honor her knowing that she's weaker. Give her that security.

Give her that strength. You are the strong one. Give her that strength.

Let her feel the protection. Let her feel secure. Your big, strong arm around her.

And she feels that security and she needs to feel that security. Then the Lord said to the wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands. And God knew that guys have this stupid male macho image of themselves and that they've got to feel that they're strong and powerful and in control, that they're running the show.

And a challenge of their authority is a real threat to their manhood. And so in the challenging of the authority, they then feel they have to assert their manhood. And big boys don't cry.

That is, big boys aren't emotional. And so to assert my manhood, I become very strong, cold, and aloof. I'm running the show and I don't need you and I don't need anybody else.

I can do it myself, you know. Oh boy, what that does then is just compound the insecurity of the wife that caused her to challenge you in the first place. And you can get a horrible cycle going here as it works against the marriage to destroy it.

Because the more cold and aloof you are, the less secure she feels. The less secure she feels, the more she challenges your decisions. The more she challenges your decisions, the colder you become.

And so you can just tear a marriage apart. And so these are important rules. They're basic to a good marriage.

Because the more the wife submits to the husband, the easier he finds it to show his love. The more he shows his love, the easier she finds it to submit to it. Now it may be stupid, he may lose everything, but he's here and he loves me.

And you know, we're together, we'll make it. But if you're cold and aloof, this jerk making a stupid mistake, and he's probably going to take off when he's lost everything. He'll be gone and then I won't have anything.

What am I going to do? And she feels secure, so she has to challenge everything that you do, everything that you say. So these are basic, simple rules. And always, as far as the wife, it is subjection to the husband.

To the husband, it is the honoring and the loving of his wife. And when it is working, it becomes a beautiful combination and your lives can be enriched and your prayers effective. Heirs together.

We are heirs together of the grace of life. There is no kind of a hierarchy in the spiritual realm. The men do not have an advantage over the women or vice versa.

As far as in Christ, we are all one. So anybody who is looking for the superior sex or anything else, you will never find it in Christianity. For in Christianity, it removes any kind of barriers that exist between people.

And we all come the same way to the same Lord to receive the same grace. And we are all one heirs together of the grace of God. We share together equally in the things of the Lord where there is neither male nor female, bond or free.

Christ is all and in all. Finally, addressing now both be of one mind, having compassion for one another. Love as brethren be pitiful.

Now that word is changed in the usage to it would better be translated full of pity. You see, that's what it's actually saying, pitiful. But we've come to think of pitiful as a poor cat that's lost an eye or something.

So be full of pity or another translation of the Greek word is tender hearted. Be a softy, be tender hearted. I pray that God will always grant to me a tender heart, a heart of compassion to be like Jesus.

I must have it. How many times you read in the gospel and Jesus looked upon them and had compassion on them. He was tender hearted.

He was a soft touch. Anybody could get to him. He was always moved by the needs of people.

And may God help us to be tender hearted, not to become calloused or indifferent to the needs of people around us, but that we might have tender hearts full of pity and be courteous, beautiful Christian trait, courtesy. It doesn't hurt, but it pays big dividends. How important to be courteous, not rendering evil for evil.

Now that's what the natural man would like to do, isn't it? I'll get even with you. Evil for evil or railing for railing. Some woman really railed on me this morning.

Now it isn't the first time. Every time they let her out, she comes around here and rails on me. A couple of Sundays ago, she was throwing clay pots out in the patio railing.

This morning she came home as I was greeting people at the end of the second service. And I was greeting a couple of young men first time they were here. They were telling me how much they enjoyed the service.

She comes up and grabs me and start calling me a filthy viper and all kinds of stuff, you know, just really railing on me. And it would have been easy to have railed back, but the poor woman is mentally disturbed. But this poor young kid didn't know what happened, you know.

I mean, his eyes got big and he just, he was just telling me, you know, how much he'd enjoyed the message and how it spoke to him and all. And then she comes up with all of this and his eyes get big and all. And then John got hold of her and drug her off as she was railing going around the corner, you know, John dragging her.

And this kid said, I didn't know what was going on. I was ready to do something. He said, boy, you really handled that well, you know.

Well, the thing is, I know the woman, I know her problems, but it is so easy to rail back. But there's an interesting proverb that says a soft answer turns away wrath. Now, I had an interesting experience several years ago.

It was during the height of the hippie thing around here, where these hippies had these old vans and held together with baling wire, you know, they, material things didn't mean anything to them, paint all over them. And I was going down Fairview and one of these hippies pulled out in front of me and one of these old vans and it died just as he got in front of me. And he, it was dangerous moving.

I mean, he shouldn't have pulled out in front of me, but he did and the thing died. And there were traffic coming on my left where I couldn't get around him. So I just laid on my horn and I was really upset.

And this hippie kid, you know, the beard and the whole thing got out of his van. And he looked back at me and just gave me the peace sign, you know, you know, suddenly I felt real terrible about laying on my horn and the attitude that I had. I mean, here's a, here's a kid, you know, high in LSD telling me peace brother.

And here I'm supposed to be a minister telling people how to have peace. And I'm all upset because of this stupid move of his. And it really ministered to me how that a soft answer turns away wrath.

I mean, I was ready to tear him apart and just how it all vanished. Just, you know, if he got an out railing, I'm sure I would have jumped out of the car and round up and grabbed him and told him what a stupid move that was, you know. But his attitude was such that, you know, I just sort of chuckled to myself and said, well, why not have peace, you know.

So don't render railing for railing. That only creates, you know, that only builds. And, you know, that's, well, you read, you know, there's so many nuts on the highway today.

You know, you get out and rail, some of these guys, they'll pull a gun and shoot you. Have you read some of these things that are happening on the road? I mean, it's getting dangerous living. Contrary wise, blessing.

And really that's, the kid did bless you, peace brother, shalom. Knowing that you are there unto called, that you should inherit a blessing. We ought to be seeking to bring blessings to people.

So bless those that curse you, Jesus said. Do good to those who despitefully use you. This is what we've been called to do.

For he that will love life and see good days. Now here, Peter goes back and just quotes a portion out of the Psalms. And again, it is interesting to me because it shows us Peter's good working knowledge of the scriptures.

And as he is writing in his own little exhortations here, he goes back and he quotes a portion of Psalms 34, about three or four verses out of Psalms 34. He that would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil in his lips that they speak no guile. Let him turn away from evil and do good.

Let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and his ears are open unto their prayers. But the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

Do you want to have a good life? You want to see good days? These are the rules. Just keep your tongue, refrain it from evil, speaking evil. And your lips from speaking deceitfully.

Turn away from evil. Do good, seek peace, pursue it. You'll have a good life.

And who is he that will harm you if you are followers of that which is good? But, and if you suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye. And be not afraid of their terror, neither be trouble. Now, he's moving into a new section in which he's going to be talking about suffering.

And for the most part, suffering wrongfully, suffering for righteousness sake. You remember when Peter was arrested for the preaching of the gospel and they beat him and told him not to preach anymore in the

name of Jesus Christ. And Peter and his friends went away rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer that kind of persecution for Jesus.

Now, Peter's telling us the very same thing. In other words, Peter is not preaching something he didn't practice, but he did this very same thing himself. When he was suffered for righteousness sake, he rejoiced.

Happy are you. Jesus said, blessed are ye. And the word blessed is happy.

When men persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake, rejoice and be exceeding glad. For great is your reward in heaven. There's where you have to get the right perspective.

You have to look on to the heavenly future. So if you suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye. Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled, but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.

Give a special place for God in your life and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you for the reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and reverence. So live the kind of a life that is an example that will provoke people to question you. What makes you different? Why is it that you are not upset over this? Be ready to give to every man an answer for that hope that you have.

Having a good conscience that whereas they may speak evil of you as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good behavior in Christ or lifestyle in Christ. For it is better if the will of God be so that you suffer for well-doing than for evil doing. That's always a better thing.

If you suffer for evil doing, you've got it coming. But if you suffer for well-doing, then that is a better thing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins.

He's referring, of course, to the cross. Jesus went to the cross and died there for your sins. The just died for the unjust.

God made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. The purpose of the cross is to put away our sin, which had separated us from God. The effect of sin is always alienation from God.

You see, God created you in the beginning for fellowship. He wanted you to be one with him. But a holy, pure, righteous God cannot be a part of sin, inconsistent with the nature of God.

So man fell into sin. As the result, lost fellowship with God. The purposes of God were thwarted by sinful man.

So in order that man might have fellowship with God, the purposes of God restored, Jesus suffered once for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might be able to bring you to God, that he might be able to wash and cleanse you from your sin in order that you might have the purposes of God accomplished in your life as you fellowship with God. Being put to death in the flesh, but he was made alive by the Spirit, by which also he went and preached unto the spirits that were in prison, which sometimes were disobedient. When once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, wherein few, that is, only eight souls were saved by the water.

Jesus preached to the souls in prison. Now, in the prophecy concerning Jesus in Isaiah 61, it says, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach the good tidings to the meek.

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those that are bound.

What is he talking about? The prison was death by which men were bound. They were held captive. Jesus came to open the prison to those that are bound, or to open up Hades to those people who were bound there, who died before Jesus died for our sins.

So, when he died, he descended into hell, and he preached to those souls that were in prison. And when he ascended out of hell, he brought with him those who had been captive. In Ephesians chapter 4, Paul tells us that he who has ascended is the same one who, first of all, descended into the lower parts of the earth.

And when he ascended, he led the captives from their captivity. Luke's Gospel, the 16th chapter, Jesus describes what hell was like prior to his death. Two compartments, no capacity of crossing from one to the other.

One was a place of torment, the other was a place of comfort. Those who died in faith went to the place of comfort and were comforted by Father Abraham. They are the ones to which Jesus preached when he descended into hell.

But God did not leave his soul in hell, neither did he allow the Holy One to see corruption, but this same Jesus has God raised from the dead. And Matthew's Gospel, chapter 27, tells us that the graves of many of the saints were opened and they were seen walking in the streets of Jerusalem after his resurrection from the dead. He led the captives from their captivity.

So, opening the prison. The like figure, that is, the eight souls saved by water, the like figure wherein to even baptism doth also now save us. So, they were saved by the water or by the ark in the water.

Even so, baptism, Peter says, saves us. But then, lest people make a mistake, he points out, it isn't the physical ritual, it isn't the washing away of the filth of the flesh, but it is the answer of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So, the true baptism is a matter of my heart.

Now, I do believe that everyone who believes in Jesus Christ should be baptized in water. I definitely believe in water baptism and I personally believe in water baptism by full immersion. But I do believe that water baptism by full immersion is only a symbol of the work of the Spirit that has transpired within my heart.

The old man being dead, now buried in water, and the new life that I now have, the life of the Spirit through Jesus Christ. Baptism becomes a beautiful symbol of that. As I go down in the water, it's being buried, the old life just being buried, and as I come up out of the water, it's that new life in the Spirit in Christ.

And it becomes a beautiful symbol. But, if it has not happened in my heart, it cannot happen by the ritual. The ritual itself cannot save me.

Now, you may be baptized by sprinkling, by dunking, by full immersion, and still not be saved. You know, they could hold you down there until you drown and it still won't save you. The rite of baptism doesn't save.

It symbolizes that which has already transpired in my heart. If it hasn't transpired in my heart, then baptism is meaningless. In fact, it's worse than that.

It's almost condemning to me, such as communion is condemning to the person who doesn't believe. The partaking of the bread and the cup. If you don't believe in Jesus Christ, you're actually partaking in your own damnation.

You're witnessing against yourself. And he that eateth and drinketh, unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to his own soul, not discerning the Lord's body. So, the same, if you go through the rite, or the ritual of water baptism, and it hasn't happened in your heart, it's only a witness against you.

It doesn't save you. So, I do not believe in what is called baptismal regeneration. I do not believe that if a person is not baptized, then they are not saved.

I can't believe that. You're saved by believing in Jesus Christ. Now, because I believe in Jesus Christ, I want to obey Him, and thus I am baptized.

As a sign of what has transpired already within my heart. But should I never get around to being baptized, by some unfortunate accident or circumstances of some kind, I will still be saved. I have every confidence of that.

It isn't the putting away of the filth of the flesh. But it's that work of the Spirit within my heart, the good conscience toward God. By the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is gone into heaven, and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him.

Jesus, before He ascended into heaven, said to the disciples, All power is given to me in heaven and earth. Have you ever imagined how much power that must be? Look at the universe. Think of the power that brought it into existence.

All power, He said, is given to me in heaven and in earth. And so He ascended to the right hand of God. The angels, the authorities, the powers, the rankings of angels are all subject unto Him.

For as much then as Christ hath suffered for us, that is, has gone to the cross in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind, for He that has suffered or come to the cross, as far as His flesh is concerned, hath ceased from sin. Now, this is the same rationale that Paul had in Romans chapter 6. As far as baptism is concerned, as far as my old man being crucified with Christ, dead, buried in the water of baptism, as I come up, it's the resurrection, it's the new life in the Spirit. And they who are really living the new life in the Spirit have ceased from sin.

Paul said, how are we who are dead to sin going to live any longer therein? John tells us in his epistle, and we'll be getting that in a couple of weeks, that whosoever is born of God does not practice sin, because we have God's seed now in us. We've been born again by the Spirit of God. And we cannot practice sin.

Now, if you are living a life of practicing sin, then you had better take inventory. The Bible says, he that thinks he stands, take heed, lest he falls. There is a way that seems right unto man, but the end thereof is the way of death.

Whosoever is born of God does not practice sin. We've been born of a new nature, not a sinful nature anymore. You can't lay it on the path, the old nature, because that nature died, and whosoever then has come to the cross, has suffered, and that is co-crucifixion with Jesus, I am crucified with Christ, is then dead to the old life and sin, the flesh hath ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his life in the flesh, following the lust of men, but he is to live now to fulfill the will of God.

For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the heathen when we walked in lasciviousness, in lust, in the excess of wine, in revelings, in banquetings, in abominable idolatries, wherein they think it strange now that you do not run with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you. So, it used to be that we lived the unbridled life of the flesh, a life of lasciviousness and unbridled lust, revelings, the excess of wine, banquetings, abominable idolatries, the good description of the world scene. And those that are in the world think it's strange now, you don't do it anymore.

What do you do for fun now, man? You ever had them ask you that, you know, what do you do for fun? You know, you don't get bombed out of your head and make a fool of yourself. So, what do you do for fun? And they say, oh man, he's got religion, you know, he's no fun anymore. They speak evil of you.

But they are going to have to give an account to God themselves. Every man must appear before God to give an account. They are going to have to account for their lies before the one who will judge both the living and the dead.

It's an awesome thing to realize that one day each man will stand before God to be judged. And those that have lived the life of riotousness, lasciviousness, are one day going to have to answer to God for a totally wasted life. What did you do with your life? And they've taken God's precious gift, the gift of life, and they've wasted it.

Wasted it upon themselves, upon their own lusts, their own desires. For this cause was the gospel preached also to those that are already dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit. But the end of all things is at hand.

Be therefore sober and watch unto prayer. The church has always lived in the consciousness that we are in the last days, and in a sense that is always true. Every generation is the last days.

I'm living in my last days. You know, I'm going to go. If the Lord doesn't come to take the church, it's going to be the last days for me one of these days.

You know, who knows? Twenty, thirty, five years from now? Last days. You know, our days are all limited. When I was a young person, it seemed like, you know, life was forever.

But now you begin to number your days because you want to use what time you have to the best advantage for the Kingdom of God. So, that's basically what Peter is saying. He's getting older now and he is coming from a more matured view.

The end of all things is at hand. And it was for Peter not long after this. He was beheaded by Nero.

Be therefore sober, watching and praying. And above all things, have fervent love among yourselves. Among the body of Christ there should be a fervent love.

For love covers a multitude of sins. How true that is. How many things we can just overlook if we love hard enough.

How many things we don't see because we love. And how many things we can see when we hate. I mean we watch like eagles.

And every little thing we are ready to pounce on. But love fervently in the body of Christ. Be hospitable one to another without grudging.

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Now God has given to each of us gifts. And interestingly enough there was a gift of hospitality.

And there are some people who have that gift of hospitality. And they make marvelous hosts and hostesses. You know they can just have anybody in.

And they just have that gift of hospitality. Others don't have the gift of hospitality. And it's a strain whenever people come over.

They get tense, they get nervous. And have you ever seen the person with the gift of hospitality? Hey, they don't worry about what they are serving. That doesn't bother them.

It doesn't have to be perfect. Just lay it out on the table. Everybody grab what you want you know.

And you feel comfortable. But those that don't have the gift you go there and you feel strain you know. I want to make sure you look proper and I don't spill anything on my shirt.

You know and you only take one of the little hors d'oeuvres. You know and you always feel under pressure. But we each of us have various gifts.

Use your gifts for the whole body's sake. That the body might be benefited by the gifts that God has given to you. Being good stewards of that which God has entrusted to you.

God has given to each of us, entrusted to us gifts, abilities, talents. Now, I want to be a good steward of that which God has given to me. I want to use it.

Use it well. It's been entrusted to me and I'm responsible. And if any man speaks, let him speak as the oracle of God or as a spokesman for God.

If any man ministers, that is serves, let him do it with the ability which God gives to him. That's so important. You know you can't be more than what God has enabled you to be.

So, just do it with the ability that God gives you and then don't worry about it. We've got to learn to just do our best and then just commit the rest. Now, this is hard for a person who is a perfectionist.

They do their best and then they worry about the rest. Why didn't I say this? Why didn't I do that? Oh, did I do the right thing? Oh, you know. And they're constantly worried about what they have done.

Hey, was it your best? Oh my, yes. So, let it go. God doesn't require more than your best.

So, whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all to the glory of God. So, if you speak, speak as a spokesman for God. If you minister, do it with the ability God gives.

That God in all things may be glorified. You see, it isn't to bring glory to you. As we minister, we need to minister to bring glory to God through Jesus Christ to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever.

Amen. Now, beloved, don't think it's strange concerning the fiery trials which are going to try you as though some strange thing happened unto you. Boy, one of the weirdest things happened to me the other day.

I went through one of the worst trials, you know. Hey, no, no, no. It's not strange the fact that your faith is going to be tried.

Rejoice in as much as you are partakers of Christ's suffering that when His glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy. Jesus is coming again to be revealed in glory before the world and those that are His will He bring with Him at His coming. Great gladness and joy, exceeding joy in that day when we come with Jesus to establish God's kingdom upon the earth.

And so rejoice that we were able to suffer with Him that we might reign with Him. If you're reproached for the name of Christ, oh, how blessed you are. For the Spirit of glory and of God is resting upon you.

On their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or as a thief or as an evildoer or as a busybody in other men's matters. In other words, there are things that you're blessed for suffering for and there are things that you're not so blessed if you suffer for them.

If you're a thief and you're caught and you get sent to jail, there's no big glory in that. Yet if any man suffers as a Christian, Jesus said, persecuted for My sake in the Gospels, let him not be ashamed. Let him glorify God on this behalf.

And of course, in those days, many of them were put in prison for being Christians. Now, if you're put in prison because you're a murderer, no big glory. But if you're put into prison because you're a Christian, then, you know, rejoice.

That's great. That's good. Now, if you were arrested for being a Christian, could they find enough evidence to convict you? Something to think about.

For the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God. And if it begins with us, what shall the end be to those that obey not the Gospel? I mean, if God is going to judge the believer, what about those who don't even believe? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing as unto a faithful Creator. Now, this suffering, of course, is, going back the whole context, is suffering persecution because you're a child of God.

And if you suffer persecution because you're a child of God, then just commit your life to God, the keeping of your soul to God. He's a faithful Creator. And you've got to just learn to just commit yourself.

Now, the elders, the overseers, which are among you, and I exhort, because I am also an elder or an overseer, an older man, and I am a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and I'm also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Peter witnessed the death of Jesus Christ. I was a witness, he said.

And also he was a partaker of the glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. He saw Jesus transfigured, Moses and Elijah talking with him of the things of the kingdom. And Peter was so stoked by this experience, he said, Oh Lord, you know, let's just build three tabernacles, let's just stay right here.

You know, let's not go down from this place, this is beautiful. And let's live in the kingdom. I don't want to go back to that old world, let's just live here in the kingdom, the glory.

I was a partaker of the glory that's going to be revealed. The Lord sort of took him in a time machine on out to the future, the glory of the kingdom, and he was a partaker for a time in it. His exhortation, feed the flock

of God which is among you.

Now, when Jesus confronted Peter in the 21st chapter of John, after his resurrection, he told the disciples to meet him up in Galilee. And they came up to Galilee and Jesus didn't show up and Peter said, Well, I'm going to go fishing. The other said, I will go with you.

And so they went out and they fished all night and caught nothing. And on the morning, Jesus was standing on the shore and he called out, he said, Catch anything? Nah. Why don't you throw your nets out on the other side? And so they threw their nets out on the other side and immediately, the nets were full of great fish.

So heavy, they couldn't even pull them into the boat. Now, when John saw that they couldn't pull in the nets because of the multitude of fish, he said to Peter, So, Lord. And so Peter grabbed his fishing coat because he was naked.

He dove in and swam to shore. The other disciples got in a little rowboat and they rowed on into shore, dragging the net with them. And when they got to shore, they found that Jesus already had a fire built.

There were coals, bed of coals, and he had some fish on them. And he said, Come on and eat. And then he said to Peter, Peter, do you love me more than these? Now, the these is a problem.

Was Jesus talking about the fish or was he talking about the disciples? You see, the last time before his death, that he was having a conversation with his disciples, he said, All of you are going to be offended tonight because of me. And Peter said, Lord, though they are all offended, I will never be offended. So basically, Peter was saying, Lord, I love you more than they do.

Though they're all offended, I'll never be offended. He's bragging. And Jesus said, Peter, before the cock crows, you're going to deny me three times.

They could kill me and I'd never deny you. And so he's in a sense saying, I love you more than them. And so Jesus could have been indicating the disciples, Do you love me more than these, Peter? Or he could have been talking about those fish.

Because they represented the old life. The life from which he had been called. And catching 153 great fish with one toss of the net is pretty much the epitome of success in your old chosen field.

Peter, do you love me more than the epitome of success in your chosen field? Either one is a very probing question. And Jesus said, Lord, you know that I am very fond of you. And Jesus said, Then feed my sheep.

Three times he asked the question, and it could be because Peter denied him three times. That he was giving him three times an opportunity to say, yes, Lord, I love you. But each time Jesus responded, feed my sheep.

Jesus had said to Peter at one time, Peter, Satan has desired you that he might sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you. And when you are converted, strengthen your brethren.

Feed my sheep. That was the calling that God gave to Peter. And that is the calling that Peter now passes on to the elders.

And I do feel that this is one of the most important exhortations to any and all ministers. Is to feed the flock of God which is among you. I think that that is the perennial call of God to every minister.

To feed the flock of God. And I think one of the greatest tragedies in the church today is that there are so few pastors who really feed the flock of God. With the word of God that will nourish their souls unto eternal life.

You know, the flock of God gets fed all kinds of hodgepodge. You know, you can go to church and get good doses of psychology and philosophy. But to really just be fed the word of God is a rare thing.

Feed the flock of God which is among you. Taking the oversight, not by constraint. That is not under pressure.

But willingly. And not for filthy lucre's sake. But of a ready mind.

He's warning against professionalism in the ministry. Warning against an emphasis upon money. Warning against really the prostituting of the gifts of God.

For your own enrichment. Not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Neither is being a lord over God's heritage.

This shepherding doctrine concept. Warning against that. But be an example to the flock.

That was Paul's exhortation to Timothy, wasn't it? Be thou an example unto the believer. And the minister should indeed be an example of that which he declares to the people. And when the chief shepherd, that is Jesus Christ, shall appear, you will receive a crown of glory that fades not away.

Now, there are promises of the crown of life in the Scripture. And here's the promise to those who minister to the body of Christ. A crown of glory.

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves to the older men. Yes, all of you be in subjection to each other. And be clothed with humility.

For God resists the proud. Now, you want God to be resisting you? It's interesting how that throughout the whole Scriptures, God has such an abhorrence towards pride. And yet, pride is such a common thing among men.

God resists the proud. Six things God hates. Yet, there are seven that are an abomination unto Him.

Proud look. God hates it. It's an abomination.

Pride goeth before destruction. A haughty spirit before a fall. Be clothed with humility.

For God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, and He will exalt you in due time. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.

He that exalteth himself shall be abased, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. So much is said concerning our attitudes towards ourselves, which is reflected in our attitudes towards others. Casting all your care on Him, for He careth for you.

Two different Greek words. The first one should be translated perhaps anxiety. Casting all your anxieties upon Him.

The second Greek word is used as of a shepherd watching over his flock. For He is watching over you with concern, loving concern. So, casting all of your anxieties on Him, because He watches over you with loving concern.

Be sober. Be vigilant. On guard.

Because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion is walking about seeking whom he may devour. The sons of God were appearing before God in the book of Job chapter 1. And Satan also came with Him. And God said to Satan, where have you been? And he said, going to and fro throughout the earth, walking up and down in it.

Here Peter tells us that your adversary, the devil, walking around like a roaring lion, just looking for whom he can devour. You have to be on guard. Be sober.

Be on guard. And resist Him, whom resists dead fast in the faith. Remember in our lesson in James, resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Now, there's an interesting thing about our own mental attitudes. And we can be defeated before we ever get to a problem, because we've taken that kind of a mental attitude towards it. And with Satan, we think of his power and his cunning and all.

And we think, oh man, Satan's attacking me. And we just sort of melt. What can I do? He's so tough.

He's so powerful. And we don't resist. When I first moved from Ventura down here to the Santa Ana area, went to Santa Ana High School.

And I was just in high school when we moved down. And we had a fellow in high school, his name was Bill Duffy. Great guy.

Tremendous football player. And I went out for football. And I was playing fullback.

And we were having intra-squad scrimmages. And it was 38 on 2, and I was the number 3 back. And so that was my call to carry the ball around the right end.

And I was headed down for a touchdown, and Bill Duffy, man, and his, ooh, Bill Duffy. Everybody was just terrified of this guy. And so he comes charging over and hits me.

And I just sort of just, oh, Bill Duffy. Pleasure to be tackled by this guy. I mean, he's really great.

And the coach called me over, and he really read me off. He said, you know, you didn't even resist. You just folded.

What's the matter with you, Smith? And really read me the riot act for not trying to bowl him over. Well, you know, I was so awed by the name and by this guy. Of course, after I played a while with him, I found out that he's human just like anybody else.

And so you do your best to smash him just like you do everybody else. But sometimes with the devil, we've got that saying, oh, the devil's a ho, you know. And we just crumble instead of resisting.

Resist dead fast. Hey, he's no match for you when you've got the power of the Spirit on your side. Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

As Martin Luther wrote in his song, The Prince of Darkness Grim, we tremble not at him. One little word will wipe him out. The name of Jesus.

Hey, you've got authority and power over him. And he is no match for you in Christ. So resist him steadfastly.

Don't just give in. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Going about like a roaring lion, he scares us to death with his roar.

But resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are all over the world. But the God of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal glory. Oh, I love that.

The God of all grace, he's called you unto his eternal glory. Paul tells us that in the ages to come, he might be revealing unto you what is the exceeding richness of his love and his kindness towards you in Christ Jesus. He's called you unto the eternal glory.

Paul prayed for the Ephesians that they might know what is the hope of their calling. God has called you to eternal glory. He's called you to share his eternal kingdom with him in that glorious kingdom world without end.

Kingdom of righteousness and love and peace and blessing. Joy eternal. But the God of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you've suffered for a little while, make you mature.

And that's the effect of suffering. It has a way of causing us to grow up. It has as its effect the maturing of our lives in Christ.

Establishing you, strengthening you, and settling you. Those are traits of maturity. To him be glory and dominion forever and ever.

Amen. And so he ends his little epistle with this doxology. And now the rest is just sort of personal notes by Silas, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose I have written.

So Silas, who was the companion of Paul on many of Paul's missionary journeys, is now a companion of Peter. Perhaps Paul is in prison at this time. And so Silas has gone with Peter.

And he is the one who does the actual writing of this epistle that was dictated to him by Peter. And Silas was known to a lot of these people because he had traveled with Paul. Peter had not known many of these people.

But Silas, having been around with Paul, he's a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, and I have written briefly exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein you stand. Now the church that is at Babylon that is elected together with you greets you as does Mark, my son. And this is probably John Mark, who was also a companion of Paul and of Barnabas, and now is working with Peter.

Peter at this time is writing probably from Babylon. His epistle. Then greet one another with a kiss of love.

Agape. Peace be with you that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

So Peter's first epistle. Next week we'll study the second epistle written about six years later. A lot of good exhortation in this epistle.

The purpose is to bring us into spiritual maturity, into a life of strength and blessing and hope in Christ Jesus. And may we now be doers of the Word and not hearers only, because that's self-deception. You've got to put it into practice for it to have any value in your life.

And I encourage you, read again this first epistle of Peter, having now the background of the study. Let the Spirit of God now minister to you its truth as He brings to your remembrance those things that we have studied, and He enriches you in your walk and in your faith and in your life in Christ. May the Lord be with you and bless you.

Give you a good week in Jesus' name.

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