

# The Best Is Yet to Come

by Warren Wiersbe

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*The sermon emphasizes that the best is yet to come for Christians who serve, submit, stand, and suffer, highlighting the importance of faithful service, humility, and perseverance in the face of adversity.*

**Duration:** 32:38

**Scripture:** Matthew 18:12-14, Hebrews 9:27, 1 Peter 5:1-10

**Topics:** "Faithful Service", "Future Glory"

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## Description

In this sermon, Peter emphasizes the theme of glory and the wonderful future that awaits Christians. He highlights the importance of serving and being faithful in one's role within the church, comparing the local church to a flock of sheep. Peter encourages believers to serve willingly and eagerly, not seeking personal gain or power. He assures that those who are faithful in their service will receive a crown of glory from the chief shepherd when he appears. Additionally, Peter discusses the significance of submitting to those who are older in the faith and standing against the devil's schemes. He concludes by acknowledging that even those who are suffering as Christians have a great future ahead of them.

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## Transcript

1 Peter chapter 5 is a fascinating chapter because in it Peter looks in two directions at one time. Don't ever drive like that. John Bunyan has an interesting character in the Pilgrim's Progress called Mr. Looking Both Ways.

But that's not what Peter is doing in chapter 5 of 1 Peter. He's remembering and he's looking forward. As you read this chapter you see him sort of reminiscing about some of his experiences with Jesus Christ.

In verse 1 he remembers his suffering. In verse 2 where it says feed the flock he must have remembered that breakfast meeting when Jesus said take care of my lambs and feed my sheep. When he talks about not being lords over God's heritage Peter must have remembered those times when he and the other disciples argued over who was the greatest.

When he talks about being clothed with humility verse 5 that certainly reminded him of the upper room when Jesus put on the garb of a servant and washed their feet. That little word make you perfect up in verse 10 is the same word for the mending of the nets. When Peter wrote that word he must have remembered that time when he was mending the nets and the Lord Jesus called him.

Talking about Satan as a lion in verse 8 certainly reminded him of that evening when Jesus said Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to have all of you disciples that he may sift you as wheat but I'm praying for you that your faith fail not. So throughout these words Peter is looking back but he's also looking ahead and over and over again he talks about glory. Verse 1 the glory that shall be revealed.

Verse 4 the crown of glory. Verse 10 he's called us to his eternal glory. Verse 11 to him be glory.

The path of the justice is the shining light that shines more and more into the perfect day and I think the great theme of chapter 5 is that the best is yet to come. He's talking about the wonderful future we have as Christians. Now everybody doesn't have a future.

If you're here tonight and you've never been saved, you've never been born again, you don't have the life of God in your heart, you don't have a wonderful future. In fact you have a very dismal future. It's appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment.

Depart from me ye that work iniquity I never knew you. The Lord knows the way of the righteous but the way of the ungodly shall perish. But for those of us who know Christ and are seeking to live for Christ there is a tremendous future awaiting us.

In fact in chapter 5 of first Peter the apostle describes for us four persons who can look forward to a very wonderful future. Now of course they're all Christians but they are Christians who are going through certain experiences. Even though every believer in Jesus Christ is going to heaven, not every believer is going to have a well done when he gets to heaven.

Even though every true Christian born again through faith in Christ will experience the glory of heaven, not every Christian is going to have the crown of glory or the glory that is earned through faithfulness. And so we ought to examine our lives tonight and see whether or not we fit into what Peter's talking about here. Now who are the four persons that Peter talks about who have a bright wonderful future ahead of them? Verses one through four, those who are serving.

Verses five six and seven, those who are submitting. Verses eight and nine, those who are standing. Verse ten, those who are suffering.

Now if you are a believer who is serving, you've got a wonderful future ahead of you. If you are a believer who is submitting, you've got a wonderful future ahead of you. If you're a believer who's standing against the wiles of the devil, then you've got a great future ahead of you.

And if you're a Christian who's suffering, you've got a great future ahead of you. Let's meet these four persons. Verses one through four, the Christian who is serving, the elders who are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder, Peter didn't claim to be anything more than that.

He didn't call for himself any high position in the church. He didn't claim to be something that he wasn't. He was an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed, shepherd the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight of it not by constraint but willingly, not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind, an eager mind, not as being lords over God's heritage but being examples to the flock.

And when the chief shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. He compares the local church to a flock, to sheep. That is a marvelous picture.

Someday I want to write a book about the pictures of the church in the Bible. I think many Christians don't understand the great privilege it is to be a part of a local church. We're members of a body, we're stones in a temple, we're a part of a bride, we're soldiers in the army.

Many pictures of the believer but the one that you find over and over again is the flock, the flock, sheep. He compares us to sheep and our Lord was very wise when he did that. You see, we Christians as sheep are prone to wander.

That's why we have to have shepherds. One of the great delights of the ministry is studying the Word of God and preaching the Word of God. There the shepherd feeds the sheep.

But all one of the difficulties of the ministry is chasing the sheep down, finding the sheep that are wandering and going off and saying, look, you ought to get back where you ought to be. Sheep are prone to wander. Sheep are very defenseless.

They have to have someone protect them. Sheep, by and large, enjoy flocking together. And when they get away from the flock, they get into trouble.

And I've seen this with Christians. Sheep are clean animals and they're useful animals. You can you can fleece them, they can reproduce, you can get milk from them.

And Christians ought to be useful to the work of the Lord. He compares the church to a flock. Now, a flock has to have a shepherd.

In fact, in the New Testament church, there was a plurality of elders, as we have here at Moody Church. We have elders who are on the pastoral staff. We have elders who are elected by the church.

And we work together to give leadership to the church. He's suggesting here that the flock of itself cannot function apart from leadership. It was not the sheep who led the shepherds.

It was the shepherds who led the sheep. This is why God has ordained that out of his church, people are called, they are endowed, they are gifted to give spiritual leadership. Now, it's not an easy job.

Somebody likes, every once in a while I meet someone who likes to tell me stories about preachers. I guess every vocation has jokes. I suppose you're told jokes about musicians and organists and doctors are always told doctors jokes.

The ones I feel the most sorry for are undertakers. In the first place, most of them don't have a sense of humor. In the second place, there's nothing funny about what they do.

It's difficult. But you heard about the little boy who said to his friend, what does your father do? Oh, he's a preacher. Ha, my dad works for a living.

I'd much rather punch a clock from eight to four. Be a lot easier. You ever stopped to think of the burden of souls giving an account for your ministry among people? Not easy.

And so he exhorts these elders and says, now look, beware of certain sins. Number one is the sin of laziness. He said, don't you do it because you have to do it.

Do it because you want to do it. I know men who preach because they have to say something. I'd much rather preach because I have something to say.

I feel sorry for that preacher who constantly has to be urged, pushed, moved, or that elder, that church officer. Beware of laziness. There's no room for laziness.

Now you can be a lazy preacher. During these past seven years, I could have crawled up into my crow's nest up there in my study and read comic books. Nobody would have known the difference, except on Sundays when you stand in the pulpit and have nothing to say, or you go out to a funeral and you have nothing to say.

Watch out for laziness. He warns them, watch out for greed. Don't do what you do to make money.

That's a danger. Then he goes on to say, watch out that you don't do what you do just to get authority. Don't be dictators.

We have pastors like that today. They're dictators. Instead of using their authority to build up the people, they use the people to build up their authority.

Little tin gods. If you don't agree with them and their way of doing it, they can't listen to you. It's got to be done this way.

This is the way we did it in our last church. If you don't like that, he said, don't be like that. You're not supposed to be a dictator.

Did you know that you can't drive sheep? You lead them. If the shepherd gets behind the flock and tries to push them, they'll go in the opposite direction. Sheep love to do that.

They just love to go the wrong way. The shepherd has to go before the sheep and lead them by love. He warns them that each shepherd, each elder, has his own particular ministry.

Neither is being lords over God's heritage. That word heritage means a different part of the inheritance. It's the same word used when the Jews went into the promised land.

They cast lots and and this part was given to Dan and this part was given to Isaac and this part was given to Judah. In the church, the ministry is divided. The church isn't divided, but the ministry is.

It's impossible for one man to do everything. And so he says, you have your responsibility over here. And another elder has a responsibility here.

And another elder has a responsibility there. Now work together and don't be envious of somebody else's ministry. It's always a sad thing when a church looks for a wonder man who can do everything.

It would be utterly impossible to find such a man. Now what he's saying to us in verses one through four is, if you're faithful in serving, the chief shepherd is going to appear. And when he appears, he'll give you a crown of glory that's not going to fade away.

When the runners in the races won, they were given a crown of leaves. And after a few days, those leaves had faded away. If you and I are faithful in our work, you're doing your job.

I'm doing my job. The elders, the deacons doing their job. When the chief shepherd appears, he'll say, well done.

Here's your crown. In other words, we don't do what we do to please people. We don't do what we do to please ourselves.

We do what we do to please the Lord. The serving. In five through seven, he goes on to discuss the submitting.

Those who are submissive to the Lord can anticipate God's blessing in like manner. Ye younger submit yourselves unto the elder. Now there, the word elder means older in the faith.

Yea, all of you. You say, well, I'm not young and I'm not old. All right.

This includes you. All of you be subject one to another and be clothed with humility. Peter must have seen that night when the Lord Jesus put on a towel, got down, washed their feet, clothed with humility for God resisted the proud, but he gives grace to the humble.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time. Humble yourselves there literally means permit yourself to be humbled. Sometimes we humble ourselves in pride.

We tell everybody how humble we are casting all your care upon him for he careth for you. God will bless those who are submitting. You see, one of the dangers in a church is competition.

Somebody belongs to this Sunday school class. Somebody belongs to that group. Someone belongs to this group and there's a danger of competition.

There's always the problem of the younger Christians who are coming along saying, well, these old fogies up there, they don't know what's going on in this church. He's talking here about the danger of division in the church. And often division is along the lines of age.

Now it takes young and old to build a church. I'm out in pastors conferences. I anticipate even more of them in the days to come.

And every once while I hear some pastors say, I want to be a church of young people. I says, great. Where are you going to get your wisdom? Kind of hard to have deacons who are all young people, elders who are all young people.

Somebody else says, oh, I can't stand this new crowd of young people coming along. Boy, give me the seasoned saints who came out of the forties. Great.

I think I'm one of the saints who came out of the forties. I got saved in 1945. But one of these days we won't be here.

You see how foolish that is? It can't be all the young and all the old. It needs to be both and each submitted to the other. The young submit to the old for wisdom.

The old submit to the young for enthusiasm and new ideas. Every church needs new enthusiasm and new ideas. Back in Peter's day, the Greek cities were divided up into youth guilds.

We think that our big youth ideas are so new. They aren't. They had them back in Greece.

And the various young men and young women would get together in guilds. Now when these people got saved, they organized the church into guilds. They had youth conferences and youth meetings.

And sometimes these young people would refuse to submit to the leadership of the older ones. Peter said, that's a sin. The older ones need to listen to the young and the younger ones need to listen to the older ones.

One has wisdom. One has zeal. One knows the roots of the past and the mistakes of the past.

The other has the great vision for the present and the zeal for the future. Now put them together. You've got a winning combination.

Get them fighting each other. You got problems. And so the answer is to submit, humble yourselves under God's hand.

If you get under God's hand, one day his hand will turn over and lift you up. But you exalt yourself. You say, well, if we can't do what we want to do, we'll go someplace else.

That won't solve any problems. You just take your troubles with you and you create division in the church. And dividing the church is a great sin.

Because the word of God says, let's strive to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. And so some of you younger people don't like it when the elders say, this is our policy. They have no right to make a policy like that.

Oh, yes, they do. And you better submit to it. The elder may not like it when the young people say, well, we've got to make some changes here.

Don't make changes. Been this way for 87 years. Can't be like that.

We have to listen to one another. That's the beauty of the church. The shepherd and the sheep, the older and the younger in unity and in love, the submitting.

Now, I suggest to you that if we don't submit one day, we're going to answer for it. If we don't submit, if we are the cause of trouble, friction, competition, instead of cooperation, we're going to answer for it someday. I don't think God ever called me to destroy his work.

Verses eight and nine, he talks to those who are standing and boy, if anyone knew anything about the devil, Peter did. Camel Morgan has written a marvelous little book called Peter and the church. He's also written a book called the voice of the devil.

You got to get those two books and read them together because Peter has a great deal to say about the devil. Be sober, be vigilant because your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion, walking, walketh about seeking whom he may devour, whom resists steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. We're not going through this alone.

Now, what are we supposed to do about the devil here? He's compared to a lion. Other places, he's compared to a serpent. As a serpent, he deceives.

As a lion, he devours. If he cannot deceive my mind, he seeks to devour me with suffering. And Peter knew these people were going to go through suffering.

He talked about that fiery trial that was going to come, and part of that fiery trial was going to come from the fire of hell. Satan has always been the adversary of the church. The Apostle Paul warned the elders at Ephesus in Acts chapter 20.

He said, you watch out. The wolves are going to get in. They'll scatter the flock.

They'll destroy it. But if the wolves can do it, what about the lion? I enjoy seeing wild animals. I'm always glad there are bars between me and the animals.

We were in the Kenya game park over there in Africa. We didn't see anything really dangerous. We got about 200 or 300 feet away from a rhinoceros, but he wasn't paying any attention to us.

He was bigger than the car was, and he knew it. But I've never wanted to tangle with a lion. I love cats.

I always enjoy when my cat comes along, jumps into my lap, you know, and takes over. That doesn't bother me. I'd hate to have a lion do that.

Now, Peter gives us three instructions about the devil, and people better heed these instructions. Number one, you respect him. Be sober.

You don't joke about the devil. You don't laugh about the devil. Respect him.

Be sober. Recognize him. Be vigilant.

Keep your eyes open. Keep your ears open. Because Satan's always at work.

Respect him. Recognize him. And resist him.

How do you resist him? Whom resist steadfast in the faith? Steadfast. Standing fast. In what? In the faith.

What faith? Faith in Jesus Christ. That's what Jesus did. He didn't run when Satan came roaring at him.

He just stood there and said, it is written, it is written, it is written. Now Satan's going to do his best to devour the flock and to divide the flock. He always wants to do this.

And sometimes he finds Christians who will help him. Peter says, those who are standing, excuse me, those who take their stand in the faith, those who take the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, those who take the shield of faith, they'll fight him. They'll resist him.

And they'll overcome him. But alas, there always are those saints who give in to the devil. Peter himself did it.

Jesus warned him. He says, Satan's after you. He wants to get a hold of you.

I'm praying for you. Peter boasted and said, oh, though the rest of this crowd forsake you, I'll never do that. And pride walks right into the devil's trap because pride is one of Satan's tools.

Those who are standing can look forward to God's blessing and God's glory. Finally, verse 10 and verse 11. But I'm always glad for that little word, but it means a contrast here.

We're talking about Satan coming at us as a roaring lion, but the God of all grace who have called us onto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, he will give me grace and glory. They always go together. There is no glory without grace.

And when you have grace, it always leads to glory. The God of all grace who have called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after ye have suffered a while. Make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you to him, be glory and dominion forever and ever.

Amen. He's talking here about the suffering, suffering, glory, suffering, glory. This is always the Bible pattern.

Verse one of chapter five, a witness of the sufferings of Christ and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Chapter four, verse 13, but rejoice in as much as you are a partaker of Christ's sufferings that when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy. Verse 15, don't suffer as a murderer.

Verse 16, if you suffer as a Christian, don't be ashamed. Let him glorify God. All the way through this book, it's suffering and glory.

Suffering and glory. Paul says the same thing. I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, we're going to suffer. There are going to be the human sufferings of everyday life. We aren't getting any younger.

There's going to be sickness. There's going to be pain. There's going to be surgery.

There's going to be medication. There's going to be death. These are, these are things that belong to the, to the human part of life.

There are things that belong to the spiritual part of life. Satan's going to fight us. We're going to go through suffering.

In fact, one of the best things that can happen to the church of Jesus Christ in America is a good taste of suffering. It'll separate the men from the boys. It'll separate the sheep from the goats.

It'll separate the hangers on and spectators from those who are laying their lives down to serve Jesus Christ, the suffering. Now, what does Peter say about suffering? He says, number one, God provides the grace. If you're worrying about tomorrow or next week or two weeks from now, God provides the grace.

He's the God of all grace, all grace, not part of the grace, all grace. God has cornered the market on grace. Nobody can outbid him.

He has all grace. And his throne is a throne of grace. And his word is the word of his grace.

And the Holy Spirit is the spirit of grace. And Jesus Christ is full of grace and truth. And so you and I can depend upon God providing all the grace.

Not only does he provide the grace, but he promises the glory. The God of all grace, who has called us to his eternal glory. Now, in between the grace and the glory, what is God doing? In between the suffering

and the glory, what is God doing? Grace in suffering, glory, no suffering, what happens in between? He tells us what happens.

Make you perfect. That word means mature you, equip you, develop you. Why is God doing what he's doing in our lives? He doesn't want us to stay in diapers.

More problems are created in churches by people who have been saved long enough to be teachers, but instead they're still in diapers and they demand attention, burping them and giving toys to them and changing them. Now you do this because you love them, but oh, you wish they were doing it for somebody else. The book of Hebrews was written to a church like that.

He says for the time you've been saved, you ought to be teaching others, but now somebody else has to teach you the ABCs. You're back in a spiritual second childhood. What does God want to do? He wants to mature us.

He wants to equip us to get out and help other people, not be taking in all the time, but giving out. That's what that word means. After you have suffered a while, make you perfect.

So God provides the grace and God gives the promise of glory. And in between the suffering and the glory, God is perfecting our character. God is building into us patience and love and faithfulness and loyalty and devotion.

And the result of this is he establishes us. Make you perfect. Establish.

Now Peter knew the meaning of that word establish. It means to stand solid like a rock. And that was his name.

Rock. Petras, Peter, the rock. Now there was a time in that man's life when he was like shifting sand.

Simon was a sand dune that blew about, but oh, he went through suffering. And when you take sand and you put it under pressure and heat, you come out with rock. And we say, oh Lord, why are you doing this? I'm making a rock out of you.

Do you know that the ultimate of this is a jewel? If that pressure and that heat continue, the result is a beautiful jewel. And I read that in the book of Revelation, when it describes the jewels up there, we're going to be a part of those jewels. You say, I can't take any more pressure.

Yes, you can. I can't take any more heat. Yes, we can.

God is taking us as clay and he's putting the clay in his furnace and there's pressure and there's heat and there's suffering and he's making a jewel. Now if you want to be a lump of clay, that's fine. You want to be a half formed piece of stone? That's all right.

That's your business. God won't force it on you. But oh, the Lord says, you know, I can give you grace.

I can give you grace for surgery. I can give you grace for heartache. I can give you grace for anything you go through.

I'm the God of all grace. And he giveth more grace. And if you'll just trust me, all of this is going to result in glory.

The suffering. I think this is a good chapter for me as I look forward to a new ministry. I think it's a good chapter for you as a church as you look forward to God calling a new pastor here.

We don't look back. We look ahead. Now we look back to think of what Jesus has done for us.

Peter did that. But we look ahead. It's glory.

It's glory in serving. Don't give up the ministry God's given to you. Keep on serving, whether it's in the choir or ushering or teaching a class or visiting or holding an office or wrestling with problems on a committee.

Keep on serving. It leads to glory. Keep on submitting.

If pride and competition get in, there will be trouble. Submit to one another. Learn how to say let's try it your way.

Learn how to say let's work together on this. Keep on standing. If you don't stand, you go backward.

Keep on standing, resisting the devil and keep on suffering. The church is the purest when the church is suffering. The church has the most power when the church is suffering.

When we are at ease in Zion, when we are lackadaisical, when we're in our rocking chairs, when we're complacent, God can't bless. But oh, when we're going through the furnace, He's walking with us. When we're going through the waters, He's right there to make sure we don't drown.

Oh, it's wonderful just to walk with the Lord. And the best is yet to come. Jesus is going to come.

I must one day give an account to the Lord for my ministry, and that's why I want to be in the center of His will. You must one day give an account to the Lord of your ministry. That's why you want to be in the center of His will.

We don't do it for people. We don't do it for human praise. We do it that one day He might look at us and smile and say, well done.

Brothers and sisters, the best is yet to come. Let's live in the future because the next step is glory, glory, glory all the way. Let's pray.

Gracious Father, thank you for the abundant life we have that has taken us off of a dead-end street and put us on that marvelous road, the path of the just, which is as the shining light that is shining more and more that perfect day. Thank you for the Moody Church family. Help us, Lord, to be faithful, faithful to stand, faithful to serve, faithful to submit, faithful to suffer, because we realize that faithfulness leads to glory.

I pray, O God, speak to every heart here. If someone here has never been saved, is walking on that broad road that leads to hell, may that one tonight come and trust Christ. If there's some careless, backslidden, worldly Christian here, Lord, convict that heart and bring that one to a place of dedication.

We would give ourselves afresh to you this hour, in Jesus' name, amen.

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