

Feed the Flock of God

by Willie Mullan

Willie Mullan emphasizes the vital role of elders in feeding the flock of God with both milk and meat from the Word of God.

Duration: 1:19:56

Scripture: Philippians 1:27, 1 Thessalonians 2:1-5, Hebrews 13:8, 1 Peter 5:1-4

Topics: "Flock Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the first four verses of 1 Peter chapter five. He emphasizes the expectation of Peter for the elders to 'see the flock of God.' The speaker divides the four verses into ten headings, highlighting the importance of carefully examining the verses. The main emphasis is on the work of the elders, particularly those dedicated to word and doctrine, to see and care for the flock of God. The speaker also mentions the need to provide both milk and meat of the word to different members of the congregation.

Transcript

A hundred and sixty-seven, please. Nine, six, seven, when my life work is ended and I cross the swelling tide, then the bright and glorious morning I shall see, I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side, and His smile will be the first to welcome me. Nine hundred and sixty-seven, please.

1 Peter, and we're at chapter 5. You'll notice that we're taking four verses. First four verses of 1 Peter, chapter 5. And if you've looked at your notes carefully, you will find that I have divided the four verses into ten headings. And I assure you that when you get ten headings out of four verses, you must be looking at the verses very carefully.

That's what we intend to do. Now, the principal subject of these four verses is this expectation of Peter to the elders to seed the flock of God which is among you. And it's this great phrase that we are to underline most this evening.

Seed the flock of God. And when Peter gave this expectation, he was emphasizing two things. He was emphasizing, first of all, the work the elders must do.

And especially the elders who are given over to word and doctrine. They must seed the flock. That's the great job of any man who's got gifts from God, and picks the plates of an elder or an overseer, or a

shepherd who is given full time to word and doctrine.

That is his job, is to seed the flock. And there are two ways of doing it. You cannot seed the flock, you know, by giving them bulls instead of Bible.

That's what some of them are trying. They're making bull in our age. Well, that won't seed the flock, I assure you.

And if you give them tennis instead of truth, that won't seed the flock. Or if you just thought to have an entertaining night, that won't seed the flock. You know, the flock is fed on the word of God.

It's the only thing that will seed the flock. You know, Peter knew all about this wonderful job of feeding the flock. Just turn back to the second chapter there, 1 Peter chapter 2, and do you remember him saying this? Our newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby.

You see, that's one of the things that the elder or the teacher or the shepherd must pay attention to. That there are always young believers in the congregation. And I assure you that each Tuesday in this class, there's a special part put into every Tuesday meeting that is for the young people.

It's just milk that they may grow thereby. And they need that. That's how they grow, and that's the feeding for them.

And it's up to me to get it out of the word of God. But you know, Paul knew better about this feeding too. Let's have a look at what he said in Hebrews chapter 5. Hebrews chapter 5. And he's talking here about our Lord Jesus Christ.

And in verse 10 he says, He was called of God and high priest after the order of Melchizedek, of whom we have many things to say and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye asked of the teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principle of the oracles of God. And I'll become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat.

For every one that use of milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness, free as a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age. And you see, each Tuesday as I come to these particular portions, I must remember that there are babes here, some only a week or two saved, some coming out of the depths of darkness, some who have certainly ever opened the word of God before.

And I must remind myself that I must get milk for these babes out of the word of God. But then there are children here, all believers, men and women who know the doctrines of God. And I must feed them on strong meat.

And so that's my task. I've got to feed the flock. I've got to see that the young ones get the milk of the word.

And I've got to see that the older ones get the meat. And so that's how the feeding's done. It's done by milk and by meat.

And in some places there's neither milk nor meat. Yes, this is the great exhortation here. Feed the flock of God.

But I want to point out to you that Peter is emphasizing two things when he gives this exhortation. He's not only emphasizing the word, feed, but he's emphasizing the phrase, flock of God. You know, some people who are kind to me come along and say, you know, Mr. Monk, you've got a great flock down there.

Well, my dear friend, it's not mine. It doesn't belong to me. That's one thing that's sure.

It's not my flock. It's God's flock. And every sheep in the flock is purchased by the blood of Jesus.

And every sheep is marked with this crimson slot. They're being bought out of the market of sin. And God is carefully taking them home.

And on the way to heaven, I'm one of the sellers he employed to feed them. The flock doesn't belong to the Baptists, remember. This is one thing that I keep telling all the Baptists.

If the Baptist council happens to be sitting now in Fitzwilliam Street, and they think they own this flock, they've got to think again. Because they don't own a sheep in it. And I think it's one of the things that will guard us from popers.

Men don't own this flock. And men have nothing to do with this. And men must learn this.

That the flock is the flock of God. It is God's flock. It doesn't belong to anybody else.

It's a great thing to learn. Because it makes me respect you all the more. Because you're one of the sheep of his pasture.

And I've got to be very careful with you. This is what is stressing here this evening. It's stressing that we should feed the flock of God which is among us.

But I want to take the whole paragraph and do it properly. And it begins with this phrase, The elders which are among you. And I want you to notice that Peter is recognizing the elder figure.

You know, I'll be amused when I look at some of the Brethren commentaries. And I know we've got Brethren here this evening. But I'm going to you this, that if you look at all the Brethren commentaries, they're afraid to acknowledge that these are the elders that God has sent.

They all talk in all the commentaries that this is elder Brethren. That this is the elder ones among the assembly. It is nothing of the kind.

Now, supposing I said to all the elder Brethren here this evening, Feed the flock of God. Let me pick one out. Mr. Gilliland's an elderly man.

Supposing I said, Mr. Gilliland, next Tuesday you'll come and you'll take the bibles out and you'll feed the flock of God. You know what he would do? He would say, Mr. Moore, I can't do that. I'm not able to do that.

This is not talking to elder Brethren. This is talking to elders who are a gift from God. You know, in every true assembly there are elders.

They're afraid to say this because they couldn't find the elders. Yes, but there are elders, you know. And it's a gift from God.

You know, when a company of people meet in a room and they may meet for a bible reading or they may meet for some kind of spiritual entertainment or a spiritual night of singing or praying. Remember when a group of people meet like that, they do not constitute a local church. I think you know that far too many meetings spring up and they almost take their churches.

Let me tell you that a local church is composed first of all of God-given elders and of teachers who are elected by the assembly and the faith. And any meeting in a room is not on the governmental lines of God, you know. And I think we just push the government of God aside too much, too often and think we can do away with it.

God has given us the qualifications for elders and for deacons in this book. And the New Testament church is composed of elders and of deacons and of saints. You know, when Paul was writing the letter to the Philippians, let's have a look at that now, the letter to the Philippians.

Here's what he said in the first verse. Paul and Philoia, the servants of Jesus Christ, through all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are the Philippi, with the bishops and deacons. See the word bishops there? And it's a very interesting one.

It's a Greek word, episkopos, and it's the word that the Episcopal desk takes its name from. It's the very same word as in our chapter tonight when we come to the word oversight. Let's go back to the chapter for a moment and then I'll tell you what I was going to tell you about Philippians.

You see our chapter, 1 Peter 5? Now, the word elders there in verse 1, that's the word presbytery. That's the Greek word presbytery. That's where the Presbyterians get their name from.

They believe that they should be called Presbyterians because they have an oversight of elders. And so they have, because that's what the word means, it's elders. And of course the Episcopal church takes its name from the oversight, which is episkopos, which means the Episcopal.

And they just say that they're the Episcopal church because they've got an oversight of bishops. But the word elder and the word bishop, it's the same word. And I don't know why they should have divided on it, because both are the same.

The elder and the bishop and the shepherd and the oversight, it's all the same person. And we'll find as we go through it's the same person. What I wanted you to see in the Philippines is that a local New Testament church is composed of bishops or elders or oversight or shepherds, whatever word you like to take now, or rulers, that's another one.

But you must have these elders or shepherds, or you must have this God-given oversight or rulers, or you can't have a God-given assembly. And then you must have beacons. The elders look after the spiritual side of the work, and the beacons look after the material side of the work.

We're going to paint this church soon, and the beacons don't ask me what color they'll paint it, nor do I care. If it's green, white or gold, I'll accept it, or orange or purple, whatever I like, it's all the same to me, I don't care about colors. That's their job.

And if you have any barley with them, don't come to me, I'd love to do the painting. The deacons look after the money and the material side and many other things. The elders or the bishops or the shepherds or the rulers or the oversight, they've got to look after the spiritual side of things.

So I want you to get the hold of this, you know, this is God's order. You know, in the New Testament church, there were just the saints. And let me say this, there were not two membership roles.

Myself of the rest, no one joined themselves on the rest. They didn't take any solutions. Just came, and then got the deacons out of them.

And then God gave them elders. And this is what Peter's talking about. He's talking about the God-given elders.

Now, which I'll let you see into the depths of this subject. Let's go to the Acts of the Apostles, and we're at chapter 20. The Acts of the Apostles, and we're at chapter 20.

Now, Paul is passing very near to the coast of Ephesus here, and he stops at a place called Miletus in verse 17. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church. Now, if these elders had not been recognized by the church, the church wouldn't have known who to send.

But this local church at Ephesus, they had God-given elders, and the church had recognized them. And Paul was sending for them, and they came to him, it says in verse 18, and when they were come to him, he began to speak to them. Now, among other things, this is what he said to them in verse 28.

He said, "...take heed therefore unto yourselves, unto all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost's house made you overseers." Now, do you see that the word elders and the word overseers is just the same? Because he calls for the elders, and then he immediately calls them overseers, so that you can see quite clearly that the oversight, this is the elders' board. And I want you to notice this. He said, "...take heed therefore unto yourselves, unto all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost's house made you overseers." It isn't the church that elects the elders and all.

The Holy Ghost gives them, and it's up to the church to recognize them. And in a moment you'll find you ought to know them that have the rule over you. But I want you to get the hold of this.

That he's saying to them, "...take heed therefore unto yourselves, unto all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost's house made you overseers, to feed the church of God." You see, the flock of God is the church of God. It's the local church he's talking about now. It's the local church at Ephesus.

And that's the flock of God at Ephesus. But I want you to get this bit. "...over which the Holy Ghost's house made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." With the blood of God, if you like.

That's a very tight one for some of the boys who don't believe in the deity of Christ, you know. You see, the name of Christ is not in the verse at all. Somebody said maybe he was talking about the Holy Ghost.

All right then, is it the blood of the Holy Ghost? Somebody says it's bound to be God, because he says the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Yes, you know, the blood of Jesus Christ is so precious that there is divine value in it. That you could say, the blood of God.

Mind you, that's a tremendous statement. And I want to tell you that that's what makes the flock very precious, because it's a purchased flock. This flock was never bought at Fitzwilliam Street.

This flock was bought by the blood of Jesus. And when you're purchased by the blood of God, you'll never perish. God will get the flock home, you know.

Don't think that it's indulged into the market of sin to buy the sheep to let somebody take them off them. How dare you? He'll take them home. And they'll not be a hoof left behind either.

They're purchased by blood, and the blood that paints on them will never lose its power. But the bit I want you to get is that elders and overseers are one and the same. And I want you to see clearly that the elders and the oversight is given by the Holy Ghost over which the Holy Ghost has led you overseers.

You know, that's most interesting, isn't it? Now, let me show you something else that's interesting. Let's go to 1 Thessalonians, and we're at chapter 5. 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5. And this is what Paul is saying to this assembly at Thessalonica. Chapter 5, verse 12.

He says, And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you and are over you in the Lord's. That's the overseers, you know. That's the oversight.

That's the elders. That's the bishops. I want you to get the hold of this, that are over you in the Lord and admonish you.

And he says, We beseech you, brethren, to know them. You must know, good elders. And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.

You just don't know how much work's put into it for you sometimes. But maybe one day in the sweet by and by you'll wake up. He says, Beseech you to know them and to esteem them and be at peace among yourselves.

It's always somebody else of the congregation shooting arrows at the elders. Ah, well, we'll survive no matter about you. You get to my place, you don't worry about Eucharist.

They don't take any sleep from me. They're too carnal to be thought twice about. Yes.

Here's what you ought to do, if you can read right. You should esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And that's the Word of God.

And it's the thing to put in the back of your mind. But let's go a bit further with this. Have a look at 1 Timothy, chapter 5. 1 Timothy, chapter 5. And Paul wrote this very carefully.

It's inspired, you know, verse 1. Rebuke not an elder. Why don't you do that for your information? You know, sometimes I have been liking young fellows and sometimes young girls who like to come and tell me how to do it. And you'll only come once here.

When I finish with you, you'll not come again. And I have no mercy on anybody who's too stupid. You couldn't carry this class on for two nights and you're not coming to tell me.

I was sent here by God and gifted by God. And I'm one of the rulers here, just one of them. And when you start to take the job of me, I'll throw you in the street.

And I'll see that the assembly does it. And if they're not prepared to do it, then I'm prepared to go. But I'm not taking any of those cheeks from you.

It's quite plainly put here, you know. Rebuke not an elder. You just wouldn't know what you're talking about at times.

Or you just keep your tongue in between your teeth. And here's what it says further down the chapter, you know. It says this, verse 17.

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour. Now, what does it mean by ruling? And what does it mean by ruling well? And what does it mean by double honour? Well, you'll see in a moment what double honour means. It says, let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour.

Especially they. And now it's making a differentiation between the elders. Especially they who labour in word and in doctrine.

You see, we've got a bunch of elders here. And I think there's not the like of them in the country. But I'm the one that sets apart the labour in word and doctrine.

And that's all I do. And let me assure you, it's all I intend to do. Because that's my job.

My job is labouring in word and in doctrine. And I can challenge this assembly for 19 years now. Have I done it? My, I have laboured in word and doctrine.

Now, I'm specially set apart. And I'm to be counted worthy of double honour. All the elders of honour, or should have.

But the one that's set apart is to have double honour. You see, here's what it means. It says, let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour.

And especially they who labour in word and doctrine. For the scripture says, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the cause. You see, I'm the labourer here.

And the labourer is worthy of his reward. Yes, of course I get paid. Of course I'm supposed to get paid.

You don't want to muzzle me, do you? You'll neither muzzle me one way or another. No. I refuse to be muzzled.

Remember how the old jurors used to treat the ministers. They used to say, Lord, you keep them humble and we'll keep them poor. Is that the way they worked? Well, you're not supposed to muzzle the ox that treads out the cause.

And I tell you that it takes a bit of treading out sometimes. Sometimes I'm working till five o'clock in the morning, treading the corner. Going upstairs half-dead, just for an hour's sleep before the day begins.

Well, that's just to point out that there are elders who labour in word and doctrine. And then here's something I think that should be put in red letters in every New Testament, verse 19. Against an elder, receive not an accusation, but report two or three witnesses.

Now, you'd wonder why God put that in. Well, I can tell you this. You see, if I labour honestly for God, and if I sit down for hours and I tread out the cause, and I'm determining in my heart to feed the flock, I'm determining to bring milk to the babes in Christ to build them up.

And I'm determining all the time to bring strong meat to them who are full-aged. You know, I'm building up the flock. I'm keeping it healthy.

I'm keeping it on the way. There's not a way to have it. The old devil doesn't like it.

So you see that every man that would labour honestly in word and doctrine is a target for the enemy. And somebody will tell Ivan, or bring an accusation, Oh, I could spend the night and the rest of the night teaching him about it. I knew where there was a godly old pastor, a man who could handle the word of God and feed the flock and bless the saints.

And you know, a woman whom he visited because he thought she was a maid, she told a lie on him. She said he came in and put his arms round her and knocked her down on the couch and a whole lot of things. And I met him in the vestry and he was crying and he said, I never did it before my nature, I never did it.

Oh, but the church brought him up before me. And he stood at the front of the church and put his hand on the Bible and the big steers gliding him. And he says, In the name of Jesus Christ my Lord, I never laid my hand on that woman's shoulder either.

And she rose from her seat and walked up the aisle and put her hand on the same Bible and said, In the name of Jesus Christ, he knocked me down. And the church split like that and they hadn't the right to. She would need two or three witnesses according to this book.

And I stood by the pastor just because there were no witnesses. And I would do it again. And six or seven years later when she was dying of cancer, she said to three of the elders that stood by him and held onto her hand and said, I told a lie on him.

He never did it. He never touched me. The bitch.

I had to put an adjective or two to that thing. And I was saying, God would forgive me too. Yes.

I'll tell you this. Learn this from my thing. You might save somebody's broken heart.

Don't you receive an accusation unless there are two or three witnesses. And you'll be going by the word of God. Because the devil would always shoot the man, you know.

A lot that has been done. Many a time I have fought for a man of God. And for all that I have fought for a man of God once, when about 40 of them were against him.

And a wee lot, two lays on him. Oh, I could tell you all about it. Yes, it's a wonderful thing to be sent of God.

It's a great thing to be used of God to bless the flock. It's a wonderful job, and one wouldn't have it any other way. But the old devil can see, though, exactly.

You know that Richard Baxter was one of the greatest ministers of the word of God that Britain ever had. Or maybe ever will have. And a Roman Catholic woman going to have a baby blamed it on Richard Baxter.

Richard Baxter never was near the woman. And when she was dying, she confessed that the priest in the town told her to blame Richard Baxter for his hair. That terrible thing.

Don't you ever be on the devil's side. You make sure that you are on the side of this book. And when you find some man of God being accused, look for the witnesses.

And if they are there, you are all right. Yes, there is a great loss in this book, you know, about elders. There are men who are saints of God to the flock, to feed it.

You'll notice as we get back to 1 Peter chapter 5, that there is not only a recognition here, but there is an expectation here. You see, elders can exhort elders. And we didn't go into that too much this evening.

But you know, there is a humiliation here. I like this bit. You know, the more that I listen to Peter preaching, and the more that I study the writings of Peter, the more I love Peter.

I think that Peter was one of the greatest men that God ever had. Oh, it's true, he was only a fisherman. Here is what he said here.

The elders which are among you I exhort to, I am also an elder. He's not taking the place of the Pope there, you know. He's just taking the place of being an elder, that's what he is.

He says, I'm just one of the elders. You know, when you see this man, right through this book, one day he went into the house of Cornelius, you remember now. And Cornelius immediately fell down on the ground and wept.

And he lifted him up quickly and said, stand on your feet. I also am a man. He could educate the lot of the boys who liked people to bow at their feet.

You know, he met men as a man. He preached to elders as an elder. He's writing this book as the apostle of Jesus Christ to the churches scattered throughout Pontius.

He was a great character. But how humble and how lowly this man followed the Lord. But you know, there is not only a recognition here of elders, and an exaltation here, and a humiliation here.

You know, there's a commendation here. The elders which are among you I exalt who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ. You know, that should commend him to any writer.

He was one of the witnesses of the sufferings of Christ. And you know, I don't need to go into that this evening, or I take too much time. Because I wrote a little booklet on the witness of the sufferings of Christ.

And I point about that on the day of Pentecost when Peter was preaching. He talked about the time when men with wicked hands took Christ and crucified Him. You know, it must have been a very moving moment in Gethsemane When that crowd came through the gate with the torches, the eastern moon was shining, and our Lord was away alone under the old olive tree.

And you know, as He came out from the shadows of the olive tree, He said, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. He said, Here I am. And you know, they took Him with wicked hands.

It must have been a terrible moment to see them bending His hands behind His back and firing them. No wonder Peter drew the sword. I feel if I had been there with a sword, I'd been with them.

Only I wouldn't take one ear off, I'd take one off on one side, and one on the other, and the bit in the middle between. Ah, He was moved. Yes, He witnessed the cynical sufferings of Christ.

That's the bit I want you to get the hold of. And then when He talked to the nation, you know, in ecstasy, He said, you know, He denied the Holy One and the just. And He desired a murderer in His place.

And when He talked to the whole Sanhedrin, that great council of the Jews, He said to them, This is the stone that you builders rejected. You know, He saw the national sufferings of Christ. It's a terrible thing, you know, when the nation rejects you.

And it's a terrible thing when the nation rejects the King of Kings. Yes, Peter saw the physical. Peter saw the national.

But we were reading here the other week. Turn your page back again to chapter 2 again. See verse 22.

Talking about Christ, He said, Who did no sin. Neither was guile found in His mouth. Who, when He was reviled, reviles not again.

When He suffered, He present not. But committed Himself to Him that judges righteously. Who, His own self, bear our sins in His own body on the tree.

You know, He saw that bit. That's substitutional. That's not physical sufferings.

That's not national sufferings. That's He, His own self, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. You know, He was a witness of the sufferings of Christ.

He got the right to speak to men. And this is what commends Him to them. You see, there's the recognition here of elders.

And there's an expectation here, I exhort. There's a humiliation here, who am also an elder. There's a commendation here, a witness of the sufferings.

There's an expectation here. You know, I like this, what Peter says. He says, a witness of the sufferings of Christ.

And also, a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. There was no loss. Forgetting that's above itself.

Oh, He never even thought about being lost again. He says, you know, I'll be in the glory. My dear friend, He never even thought anything else.

He says, I'm a witness of the sufferings. And I'll tell you this, I'll be a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. You know, that's the way Paul talks.

Paul talks about rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. That's the way he talks. That's the way John talks.

John says, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him. We shall be glorified. My, these great men of God never bothered with this erroneous doctrine of being lost again.

They were heading for the glory. Yes, Peter says, a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Now, I want you to get this.

There's an identification here, the flock of God. I have already told you that they were purchased by blood. And they were purchased by blood eternally.

The blood would need to lose its power before we could lose the flock. Yes, that's the blood that bought them out of the market of sin. But I want you to get this little bit in.

Let's go back to John's Gospel, chapter 10, for a moment. John's Gospel, chapter 10. And the Lord Jesus is speaking here.

He says, verily, verily I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice.

And he calleth his own sheep by name. You know, this is one thing about the flock of God. It's not only purchased by blood eternally, but every single individual member is called by Christ personally.

Calls them all out by name, you know. You remember when Saul the Baptist was getting saved? Why, the Lord bent over the bough of the street of heaven and said, Call! Call! Call him by name. As he calls me by name, I can remember the day he called me.

Called me out of darkness into marvelous light. The flock of God is, first of all, purchased by blood eternally, called by Christ personally. And then what he says here, he says, Yes, and when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him.

You know, they're guided by Christ continually. You get that? Because that's for the young folks. You're purchased by blood eternally.

You're called by Christ personally. You're guided by Christ continually, and you're nourished by the Word, spiritually. This is your only food.

Don't substitute anything for this. My, this is the food for your very soul and spirit. Yes, this is the flock of God that's identified with you.

And then we want to get back to 1 Peter. Let's look at this now, because this is something I wanted to say. 1 Peter, chapter 5. I think we've got this as we go along now.

There's a recognition here of elders. There's an expectation here, I exhaust. There's a humiliation here, Peter calls himself an elder.

There's a commendation here, he was a witness of the sufferings of Christ. There's an expectation here, he's a partaker of the glory that shall be. There's an identification here, the flock belongs to God.

It's purchased by Him, called by Christ, guided by Christ, nourished by His Word. Now, there's an explanation here. Peter is saying, keep the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof.

And what oversight? I've already told you, it's Episcopos. That's the word that Episcopalian comes from. You know that old Nicholson, when he was here preaching, he couldn't say Episcopalian.

I can hardly say it either, I have to fiddle about with him a bit. But he always said Episcopian. He's going to introduce one or two of the old Church of Ireland ministers as Mr. Jones from the Episcopian Church.

Well, it was all right, wasn't it? I don't know what Episcopian means, but I'm sure it fitted them all right. But this word is the word Episcopos, and it's the word that the Episcopal church takes because they have an oversight. Oversight of bishops.

For they don't seem to realize that the word bishop and overseer and elder are all the same thing. You see, at the first of the chapter he's calling them elders. Here in the second verse he's saying, take the oversight thereof.

But you know, while these words are all intermingled with each other, there's a difference in this one. Not only does it be rendered oversight, not only bishop, but it's rendered by a very interesting phrase. Shall I show it to you? Have a look at Hebrews.

And we're at Hebrews chapter 12. And you need to read from verse 14 to get the truth here. Hebrews chapter 12, verse 14.

Follow peace with all men. Well, that's a complete phrase, remember? And the emphasis is on following. He's trying to exhort these ones to follow peace with all men, and then there's an apostasy.

And you know, if you're a man of God at all, you'll want to follow peace with all men. But if you're a faithful man of God, you'll not be at peace with all men. I've been following for a long time, but I haven't caught up with it.

You see, I say things out loud in this Bible class. I've got to do that if I'm faithful. Then it annoys some people.

They don't like me to say it. So they're at war with me over that. Well, no matter how hard you follow, you won't catch up while you're down here.

But still you're being exhorted to follow peace with all men. And then it says, follow peace with all men and holiness. You see, you have to follow holiness too.

Of course, I would think that a man or woman who professes to be saved, and they're not following peace and they're not following holiness, I don't think they're saved at all. I think when you get saved you want to be holy. Our secretary prayed at our morning meeting last Sunday morning, standing beside me trembling, I could feel him shaking.

And he said, Lord, help us to be as holy as is possible for human beings down here to be. And I said, Amen. I said, Amen.

If we follow peace and we follow holiness too. And he said here to them, without which no man shall see the Lord. You see, I believe that if you don't follow peace and you don't follow to be more holy, you're not saved at all, you'll not see the Lord.

Because I know that there's a lot of holiness meetings distort this doctrine. I went to preach at the big convention once, and a big banner across the hall as I went in, read like this, Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord. That's not the text at all.

That's a distortion of the truth. That's not what this book says. This book says follow peace and there's a comma there, and holiness.

Without what? Without what? Without the following of the both of them, no man will see the Lord. But the fellow who takes the word without and puts it on the other side of holiness, and says without holiness no man shall see the Lord, is writing a wee Bible of his own and he's not allowed to. Surely you've seen it a thousand times and people swallow it.

On the day that I went to the convention, you see, I preached from a banner. He told them how far on, but I wasn't at peace that day, I can assure you. And a good lot of the so-called holy boys weren't holy either.

They were mad. Well, they're not allowed to write a Bible. Who told you you could write a Bible? You couldn't write anything.

Don't you dare to distort the word of God. Don't you dare to take the commas out. Don't you dare to shift the words.

I could shift the words and make a wonderful text too. You're not allowed to do that. You're leading people up a blame valley.

You're not even preaching truth, you're preaching error. You see, when I talk about them like that, they don't like it. Never ask back again.

You're not holy enough for them. Well, I'm telling you what it says. You can read, can't you? Follow.

That's what he said, follow. Peace with all men is the comma there. And holiness, you're to follow the two of them.

Without which, no man shall see the Lord. And then, that's not the end of the statement. He says, looking diligently.

See those two words, looking diligently? Well, it's one word in the Greek New Testament. It's episkopos. You know what an overseer is, don't you? Some of you women are overseers in the military.

You examine the cloth, don't you? You're overseers. What do you do? You look diligently. It's the same thing, isn't it? You're learning Greek and you didn't know it.

Yes, looking diligently, that's exactly what you do. You examine it very closely. This is exactly what the elders have to do.

That's why they're rulers. That's why they're the overseers. They've got to look diligently at the cloth.

Got to watch the cloth at all times. You see, there are three things they've got to watch for. It's looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God or fall from the grace of God, as it is in the march.

You see, sometimes I hear young folks talking and they mean well enough, you know. But I can tell you this, you know, they're getting away from grace and they're putting the emphasis on work. Well, it seems to me we're just packed of fancy that's going all around now.

And this is the greatest baloney in this world, you know. Because this is bargaining with God. This is saying, I'll give you so much if you give me so much back.

Ah, well, that's not great. You're a race of bargaining with God now. You're going to buy blessings, aren't you, love? You're a being who drinks and somebody's enjoying you being a race.

You don't buy anything from God. God, who gave His Son freely, with Him, gives us all things. That's gracious.

You say, I'm not worthy of it. That's stupid. Nevertheless, that's grace.

Don't you go back to bargaining with God or trying to buy blessings from God. You're failing or falling from the grace of God. You're back to work, you know.

You're going to do something, you're going to give something to get something. Ah, that's not grace. You know, we need to look diligently, not only left some fall from the grace of God, but we need to look diligently left any root of bitterness springing up trouble you and thereby many be defiled.

You know, sometimes a fellow can get the bit between his teeth. The dear little woman here, she's here now, came to see me yesterday. She said, dear wee woman, I once had you there, so you didn't worry.

You just sit up as if it wasn't you. And she said to me, I've arrived with my husband this morning. So she's not the first one, you know.

There's a load of them here. She said, what's the temple? And in the temple, I went out and slammed the door. I went down the street and I said, I'm going to have an action on the way.

I'm going to get rid of this. Just like that. So finally it's not as easy to get rid of all that.

And I sat down beside her and I said, you know, you lost the temple. And you've made a proper fool of yourself. And you're all wrong.

You're wrong. And she was a being, you know. I never forgot her.

She looked at me and she said, I expected you to say that. And you know what's wrong with you. Well, let's pray about it.

We'll pray way up the street and tell the solicitor to stop this man. Go way back and put their arms around him and love him. This root of bitterness can get into you, you know.

And it should make a proper fool of you. And there's nothing in the thing at all. Oh, I've seen men walking about and you should see their faces.

They're in misery. There's some wee thing annoying them. It's the great pity of them.

They get all fussed up about it. There's nothing in it. And when you sit down and give thought to them, you know, you can put it right, because you've got to look diligently at where the flaw is.

And then you know the oversight has got to look diligently in case some people get away from grace and let the root of bitterness spring up within them, unless there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. You know, there are a great lot of careless Christians in Ulster. You know, this booklet our father fought for, tried to take this off us once upon a time, you know, and they tried to close the doors of the meeting so that we couldn't have it and we couldn't preach.

And the head of Scotland was died with the blood of the covenants. And that's why we have it tonight. And if some of them would rather sit at home and look at the old Surrey TV and they're going to let their heritage go.

We're an open door here on Sundays. And we have a playing band. But there's a crowd of bastards and I don't know where they are on Sunday night.

We are holding a fortune on them. And if it's good on you and you lose it, you'll cry along with me. I assure you, you never can when you have it.

You'll have to go to hell. And you can fiddle about, you're wonderful. Oh, I can see diligently, you know, I can see the flaws.

And tell me you pulled your socks up and got back into the gospel battle again. Because the Lord has needed you. Casey's explaining here what the Oversight is all about.

Let's get back to 1 Peter. We must do it all now when we're at it. 1 Peter chapter 5. There is not only the identification of the flock and the explanation of the Oversight, there's an obligation here upon all the elders.

Casey says, Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the Oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly, not for self-delucere but of a ready mind, neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being in samples to the flock. You know, the elders are the examples. And in so many ways.

Let's have a look at Hebrews chapter 12 for a moment. Hebrews chapter 13 it is. Hebrews 13.

This is the great text I preached on at one Sunday morning. Verse 7. Remember then which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow. Considering the end of the conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever.

You know, the elders must give an example of faith. And you'll find the elders at all times with their eyes on the Lord, not worried about the rebels. Silence all the Lord round about us.

For through many of God's people are on the boat quaking. Have you not got the Lord with you? And the Lord's looking after you. Nobody touches you unless the Lord allows it.

And if he allows it, then it's the best thing that ever happened to you. Wish we could settle it like this. If the elders, they should be an example in faith.

They should be an example in faithfulness. Let's have a look at this quickly. This is 1 Thessalonians.

This is a lovely one and I don't want you to miss it. 1 Thessalonians, chapter 2, verse 1. For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you that it was not in vain. But even after that we had suffered before and were shamefully entreated, as you know at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

For our expectation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guise. But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our hearts, neither at any time used we flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak of covetousness, God as witness, not of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others. Yes, you know, the apostle was going in here under faithfulness to God written all over it.

You see, verse 7. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherishes her children. You know, there's not only the faith of the rulers to follow, but the faithfulness. And then there must be the friendliness.

You know, the friendliness of the nurse is a great thing. When I was in hospital they put me in a little room all by myself and I was really delighted about that. I'm a lone ranger and I can stick it forever and ever.

I would have made the best monk in the country. No bother at all, but the sister came in one morning with the nurse with her and she said to me, my dear, thus you look miserable. Well, I said, sister, I have watched you for days and you are miserable every day.

And the nurse laughed, you see. And the sister said, what do you like? She said, you know, what Mr. Bollinger just said to you is what we have been saying for months. She said, every time we meet you, sister, you are fit.

It just looks as if you are going to tear us apart. And then she laughed, you see. She said, you know, I'm really a happy person.

I said, sit down for a minute on the side of the bed, sister, to tell you. And let the weaner sit down for a minute too. Give her a minute off.

And I began to tell her how happy I was and the joy that was in my heart and the peace that was in my soul. And you know her happiness wasn't coming from the same source at all. But this girl became one of the most gentle nurses to me I have ever seen.

She came in there every day, you know, fiddling about fixing the pillow just to get a yarn with me. And she wasn't in love with me, you see. And you know, she would say before I left the place, gloriously saying, you see, you know, the elders need to have a faith and a faithfulness and a friendliness.

I think that around here the young folks can come and tell me anything. And no, I won't tell their dad or their ma either. If I can be trusted, they can come and rattle it up.

And I'll help them. And they know that. And you need to have a friend, you know.

You see what he said down the chapter a bit. Verse 11, he said, you know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you as our father doth his children. Yes, there needs to be the faith to follow.

And there needs to be the faithfulness to see. And there needs to be the friendliness that attracts. And there needs to be the followliness that can both charge and exhaust.

Ah, yes, you see, this is the example of the elders. You know, there's an appreciation here. This is really lovely, let's have a look at it.

1 Peter 5. He says, verse 4, And when the chief shepherd shall appear. You know, I like that bit. That's our Lord Jesus.

That's one of the titles of Christ when he comes again. You know, when he came the first time, he was the good shepherd. He had come to give his life for the sheep.

And when he rose again from the dead, he was the great shepherd. The God of peace brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant. But you know, when he comes again, he'll be coming as the chief shepherd.

He loves the flock more than any one of us could ever love the flock. But when he comes, he's coming to reward his servants. And I'll have you notes here, that the elders who have done their work well, shall receive a crown of glory.

But faith is not a way. You know, when we all stand at the judgment seat of Christ, there'll be crowns handed out. Those who have been saving souls will get that crown of rejoicing.

When you have hard work, saving souls. And Paul talks about ten forces weighed up from the crown of righteousness. You know, to walk right all the time, it's hard work, it's like a tight wire rope.

Some of us fall off now and again. Yes, and he talks about the crown of life. If they beat our people unto death and they'll give you a crown of life, we must be prepared to die for him.

But I can tell you this, only the elders will get a crown of glory. And only the elders deserve it. Hardest job of all is to feed a flock.

You get no medals. And you're not mentioned in despatches. You get all the kicks and curses and criticisms of carnal Christians that could be ever levelled in anybody's head.

Ah, but when the day dawns and the shadows flee away, crown of glory. Dr. Ryan said, Willie, I'm going in for them all. I'm getting that crown of righteousness and I'm getting that crown of joy and I'm getting that crown of life and I'll get that crown of glory.

And an old woman standing by said, I didn't think you worked for the Lord for that. He says, dear, when I get them I'll just cast them at his feet. I won't be able to cast them at his feet.

It's lovely to cast the crown of glory at the feet. Great portion for next Tuesday, have a look at it before you close your Bible. See what it says there.

Verse 6, it says, humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God. What does that mean now? Oh, we need to get into that next Tuesday. God bless you.

660 days. 660, when this passing world is done. When has sunk yon redeemed son.

When the paragate I gain never to go out again. Then, Lord, shall I fully know. Not till then how much I owe.

660 days. When this passing world is done. When the paragate I gain never to go out again.

Dear Lord, part us in our fears. This our blessing. Help our friends on the road home.

Lift the fog a little bit. Lord, give us Thy tender touch as we part. For Thy name's sake.

Amen.

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