

**BEING A PROPER PERSON IN LIFE  
TO CARE FOR THE CHURCH IN GOD’S ADMINISTRATION**

(Friday—Second Morning Session)

**Message Five**

**Aspects of the Eldership Revealed in Titus and First Peter**

Scripture Reading: Titus 1:2, 6-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-7

- Titus 1:2 In the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the times of the ages
- Titus 1:6 If anyone is unreprouvable, the husband of one wife, having believing children not accused of dissoluteness or unruly.
- Titus 1:7 For the overseer must be unreprouvable as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick tempered, not an excessive drinker, not a striker, not greedy for base gain;
- Titus 1:8 But hospitable, a lover of good, of a sober mind, righteous, holy, self-controlled;
- Titus 1:9 Holding to the faithful word, which is according to the teaching of *the apostles*, that he may be able both to exhort by the healthy teaching and to convict those who oppose.
- 1 Pet 5:1 Therefore the elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory to be revealed:
- 1 Pet 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;
- 1 Pet 5:3 Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.
- 1 Pet 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
- 1 Pet 5:5 In like manner, younger men, be subject to elders; and all of you gird yourselves with humility toward one another, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.
- 1 Pet 5:6 Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time,
- 1 Pet 5:7 Casting all your anxiety on Him because it matters to Him concerning you.

**I. Paul’s Epistle to Titus, which concerns the maintaining of order in the church, says that Paul was an apostle “in the hope of eternal life”—1:2, 5:**

- Titus 1:2 In the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the times of the ages
- Titus 1:5 For this cause I left you in Crete, that you might set in order the things *which I have begun* that remain and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you:
- A. The hope of eternal life, which is the divine life, is altogether a matter of the expression of this life not only for the coming age and eternity future but also for this age:
1. We have much to hope for in the eternal life, the life of God, because it is able to do many things that we are unable to do in ourselves.
  2. The hope of God’s promise is Christ as the seed of life, the eternal life, that is sown into the believers (Mark 4:26-29); we have hope because the seed of life as our hope has been sown into us to be our daily salvation.

Mark 4:26 And He said, So is the kingdom of God: as if a man cast seed on the earth,  
Mark 4:27 And sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and lengthens—how, he does not know.  
Mark 4:28 The earth bears fruit by itself: first a blade, then an ear, then full grain in the ear.  
Mark 4:29 But when the fruit is ripe, immediately he sends forth the sickle, because the harvest has come.
  3. We can meet the requirements of the elders described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 only because we have God as the eternal life within us; since the eternal life is within us, we can fulfill the highest requirements.

1 Tim 3:1 Faithful is the word: If anyone aspires to the overseership, he desires a good work.  
1 Tim 3:2 The overseer then must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, of a sober mind, orderly, hospitable, apt to teach;  
1 Tim 3:3 Not an excessive drinker; not a striker, but gentle; not contentious; not fond of money;  
1 Tim 3:4 One who manages well his own house, having *his* children in subjection with all gravity

- 1 Tim 3:5 (But if one does not know how to manage his own house, how will he care for the church of God?);
- 1 Tim 3:6 Not a new convert, lest being blinded with pride he fall into the judgment *suffered* by the devil.
- 1 Tim 3:7 And he also must have a good testimony from those outside, that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.
- Titus 1:6 If anyone is unreprouvable, the husband of one wife, having believing children not accused of dissoluteness or unruly.
- Titus 1:7 For the overseer must be unreprouvable as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick tempered, not an excessive drinker, not a striker, not greedy for base gain;
- Titus 1:8 But hospitable, a lover of good, of a sober mind, righteous, holy, self-controlled;
- Titus 1:9 Holding to the faithful word, which is according to the teaching *of the apostles*, that he may be able both to exhort by the healthy teaching and to convict those who oppose.
4. The high standard of the requirements in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 should not discourage us; instead, we should be hopeful in the realization that these requirements prove the capacity of the divine life in us.
- 1 Tim 3:1 Faithful is the word: If anyone aspires to the overseership, he desires a good work.
- 1 Tim 3:2 The overseer then must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, of a sober mind, orderly, hospitable, apt to teach;
- 1 Tim 3:3 Not an excessive drinker; not a striker, but gentle; not contentious; not fond of money;
- 1 Tim 3:4 One who manages well his own house, having *his* children in subjection with all gravity
- 1 Tim 3:5 (But if one does not know how to manage his own house, how will he care for the church of God?);
- 1 Tim 3:6 Not a new convert, lest being blinded with pride he fall into the judgment *suffered* by the devil.
- 1 Tim 3:7 And he also must have a good testimony from those outside, that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.
- 1 Tim 3:8 Deacons *must* similarly *be* grave, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for base gain;
- 1 Tim 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
- 1 Tim 3:10 And these also must first be proved; then let them minister if they are unreprouvable.
- 1 Tim 3:11 Women similarly *must be* grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.
- 1 Tim 3:12 Deacons must be husbands of one wife, managing *their* children and their own houses well.
- 1 Tim 3:13 For those who have ministered well obtain for themselves a good standing and much boldness in faith, which is in Christ Jesus.
- 1 Tim 3:14 These things I write to you, hoping to come to you shortly.
- 1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.
- 1 Tim 3:16 And confessedly, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.
- Titus 1:1 Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the faith of God's chosen ones and the full knowledge of the truth, which is according to godliness,
- Titus 1:2 In the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the times of the ages
- Titus 1:3 But in its own times manifested His word in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the command of our Savior God;
- Titus 1:4 To Titus, genuine child according to the common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.
- Titus 1:5 For this cause I left you in Crete, that you might set in order the things *which I have begun* that remain and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you:
- Titus 1:6 If anyone is unreprouvable, the husband of one wife, having believing children not accused of dissoluteness or unruly.
- Titus 1:7 For the overseer must be unreprouvable as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick tempered, not an excessive drinker, not a striker, not greedy for base gain;
- Titus 1:8 But hospitable, a lover of good, of a sober mind, righteous, holy, self-controlled;

- Titus 1:9 Holding to the faithful word, which is according to the teaching *of the apostles*, that he may be able both to exhort by the healthy teaching and to convict those who oppose.
- Titus 1:10 For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,
- Titus 1:11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who overthrow whole households, teaching things for the sake of base gain, which they ought not to do.
- Titus 1:12 One from among themselves, a prophet of their own, said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons.
- Titus 1:13 This testimony is true; for which cause reprove them severely that they may be healthy in the faith,
- Titus 1:14 Not paying attention to Jewish myths and the commandments of men who turn away from the truth.
- Titus 1:15 All things are pure to the pure; yet to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.
- Titus 1:16 They profess to know God, but by their works they deny *Him*, being abominable and disobedient and, as to every good work, disapproved.

B. An “overseer must be unreprouvable as a steward of God”—Titus 1:7a:

Titus 1:7 For the overseer must be unreprouvable as a steward of God, ...

1. A steward is not only a servant but also one who dispenses—1 Pet. 4:10.  
1 Pet 4:10 Each one, as he has received a gift, ministering it among yourselves as good stewards of the varied grace of God.
2. Therefore, an elder should be one who dispenses, or ministers, God to others.

C. An overseer must be “righteous” and “holy”—Titus 1:8:

Titus 1:8 But hospitable, a lover of good, of a sober mind, righteous, holy, self-controlled;

1. These words show that the requirements of an overseer are based not on his ability but on his manner of life.
2. To be righteous is mainly toward man, and to be holy is mainly toward God.

D. An overseer must be one who is “holding to the faithful word, which is according to the teaching of the apostles, that he may be able both to exhort by the healthy teaching and to convict those who oppose”—v. 9:

Titus 1:9 Holding to the faithful word, which is according to the teaching *of the apostles*, that he may be able both to exhort by the healthy teaching and to convict those who oppose.

1. The faithful word is the full revelation of the New Testament, and the elders must hold to this revelation, which is the teaching of the apostles; the elders in a local church should hold to this faithful word so that they may fulfill their duty in teaching—Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 3:2; 5:17.

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

1 Tim 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things

1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

1 Tim 3:2 The overseer then must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, of a sober mind, orderly, hospitable, apt to teach;

1 Tim 5:17 Let the elders who take the lead well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in word and teaching.

2. The elders’ holding to the faithful word is both to exhort by the healthy teaching and to deal with the opposers; this indicates that the overseers need to have two kinds of teaching—one kind to edify, nourish, and heal the saints and the other to fight the battle so that the mouths of the vain talkers and deceivers may be stopped—Titus 1:9-11.

Titus 1:9 Holding to the faithful word, which is according to the teaching *of the apostles*, that he may be able both to exhort by the healthy teaching and to convict those who oppose.

- Titus **1:10** For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,
- Titus **1:11** Whose mouths must be stopped, who overthrow whole households, teaching things for the sake of base gain, which they ought not to do.
3. Thus, all the elders have to dedicate themselves to study the Bible and the ministry books in order to be fully educated in the crucial aspects of the truth; when we are educated in the teaching of the apostles, we will be able to safeguard and protect the local church—1 Tim. 4:6.
- 1 Tim **4:6** If you lay these things before the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, being nourished with the words of the faith and of the good teaching which you have closely followed.
4. The more we study the Bible and the ministry books, the more enjoyment we receive; it is also a great enjoyment to help others in the church, especially to minister Christ to the young ones and the weak ones.
5. In God's economy to be an elder is a great blessing; thus, we should treasure the eldership.
6. The testimony of God today rests on the shoulders of the elders; they bear the Ark of the Testimony, Christ (Exo. 25:22; 26:33-34), for the Tabernacle of the Testimony, the church (38:21).
- Exo **25:22** And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the expiation cover, from between the two cherubim which are upon the Ark of the Testimony, of everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.
- Exo **26:33** And you shall hang up the veil under the clasps and bring in the Ark of the Testimony there within the veil; and the veil shall make a separation for you between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.
- Exo **26:34** And you shall put the expiation cover upon the Ark of the Testimony in the Holy of Holies.
- Exo **38:21** This is the sum of the things for the tabernacle, the Tabernacle of the Testimony, as they were counted according to the commandment of Moses for the service of the Levites by the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

## II. First Peter speaks of the elders' shepherding and its reward—5:1-7:

- 1 Pet **5:1** Therefore the elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory to be revealed:
- 1 Pet **5:2** Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;
- 1 Pet **5:3** Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.
- 1 Pet **5:4** And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
- 1 Pet **5:5** In like manner, younger men, be subject to elders; and all of you gird yourselves with humility toward one another, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.
- 1 Pet **5:6** Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time,
- 1 Pet **5:7** Casting all your anxiety on Him because it matters to Him concerning you.
- A. "The elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory to be revealed"—v. 1:
1. To shepherd the flock of God requires suffering for the Body of Christ as Christ suffered (Col. 1:24); this will be rewarded with the unfading crown of glory (1 Pet. 5:1-4).
- Col **1:24** I now rejoice in my sufferings on your behalf and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body, which is the church;
- 1 Pet **5:1** Therefore the elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory to be revealed:
- 1 Pet **5:2** Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;
- 1 Pet **5:3** Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.

- 1 Pet **5:4** And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
2. Every elder needs to be an eyewitness of the sufferings of Christ; this means that the elders should be ready to sacrifice their lives as a part of their testimony—v. 1; cf. John 21:19; 2 Pet. 1:14.
 

1 Pet **5:1** Therefore the elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory to be revealed:

John **21:19** Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had said this, He said to him, Follow Me.

2 Pet **1:14** Knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle is imminent, even as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.
  3. Every elder should be a martyr, a witness, one who sacrifices his life for Christ; nothing is more noble than living a martyr's life and dying as a martyr for the Lord; whether a church is strong or weak depends upon the loyalty, faithfulness, and sacrifice of the elders—cf. 1 Pet. 4:13.
 

1 Pet **4:13** But inasmuch as you share in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice exultingly.
  4. The main thought here is that the eldership depends not on what we can do but on what we are and the kind of life we live; the qualifications of the elders are not matters of ability but altogether matters of their life, living, and person.
- B. “Shepherd the flock of God among you”—5:2a:
1. Peter heard the Lord say, “I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep”; the Lord laid down His soul-life so that His sheep may have His divine life—John 10:11.
 

John **10:11** I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.
  2. After His resurrection the Lord found Peter, restored Peter's love for Him, and charged Peter to shepherd His sheep; then He prophesied that Peter would be martyred—21:15-19.
 

John **21:15** Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.

John **21:16** He said to him again a second time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.

John **21:17** He said to him the third time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

John **21:18** Truly, truly, I say to you, When you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry *you* where you do not wish *to go*.

John **21:19** Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had said this, He said to him, Follow Me.
  3. Eventually, Peter was martyred because of his shepherding of the Lord's flock; today the Lord is the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4a), and as His fellow shepherds, we must follow His pattern to sacrifice and live His suffering life as martyrs for the flock of God.
 

1 Pet **5:4** And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, ...
  4. Acts 20:28-29 indicates that because there are wolves, the elders must be martyrs to shepherd the Lord's flock; when we consider 1 Peter 5 together with John 10 and 21 and Acts 20, we can see that to be an elder requires a spirit of martyrdom.
 

Acts **20:28** Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.

Acts **20:29** I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

1 Pet **5:1** Therefore the elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory to be revealed:

1 Pet **5:2** Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;

1 Pet **5:3** Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.

1 Pet **5:4** And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

1 Pet **5:5** In like manner, younger men, be subject to elders; and all of you gird yourselves with humility toward one another, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

1 Pet **5:6** Therefore be humbled under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time,

1 Pet **5:7** Casting all your anxiety on Him because it matters to Him concerning you.

1 Pet **5:8** Be sober; watch. Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking someone to devour.

1 Pet **5:9** Him withstand, being firm in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are being accomplished among your brotherhood in the world.

1 Pet **5:10** But the God of all grace, He who has called you into His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen, *and* ground *you*.

1 Pet **5:11** To Him be the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.

1 Pet **5:12** Through Silvanus, the faithful brother, as I account *him*, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying fully that this is the true grace of God; *enter* into this *grace* and stand *in it*.

1 Pet **5:13** The co-chosen in Babylon and Mark my son greet you.

1 Pet **5:14** Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in *Christ*.

John **10:1** Truly, truly, I say to you, He who does not enter through the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up from somewhere else, he is a thief and a robber;

John **10:2** But he who enters through the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

John **10:3** To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

John **10:4** When he puts forth all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.

John **10:5** But they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.

John **10:6** This parable Jesus spoke to them, but they did not know what those things meant that He spoke to them.

John **10:7** Jesus therefore said to them again, Truly, truly, I say to you that I am the door of the sheep.

John **10:8** All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.

John **10:9** I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved and shall go in and go out and shall find pasture.

John **10:10** The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have *it* abundantly.

John **10:11** I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

John **10:12** He who is a hireling and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters *them*.

John **10:13** *He flees* because he is a hireling and it does not matter to him concerning the sheep.

John **10:14** I am the good Shepherd, and I know My own, and My own know Me,

John **10:15** Even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

John **10:16** And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must lead them also, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock, one Shepherd.

John **10:17** For this *reason* the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.

John 10:18 No one takes it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again. This commandment I received from My Father.

John 10:19 A division again took place among the Jews because of these words.

John 10:20 And many of them said, He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?

John 10:21 Others said, These are not the words of one *who is* demon possessed. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?

John 10:22 At that time the Feast of the Dedication occurred in Jerusalem, *and* it was winter.

John 10:23 And Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon.

John 10:24 The Jews therefore surrounded Him and said to Him, How long will You hold our soul in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.

John 10:25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and you do not believe. The works which I do in My Father's name, these testify concerning Me;

John 10:26 But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep.

John 10:27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;

John 10:28 And I give to them eternal life, and they shall by no means perish forever, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.

John 10:29 My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all, and no one can snatch *them* out of My Father's hand.

John 10:30 I and the Father are one.

John 10:31 The Jews again took up stones that they might stone Him.

John 10:32 Jesus answered them, I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of these works are you stoning Me?

John 10:33 The Jews answered Him, We are not stoning You for a good work, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a man, are making Yourself God.

John 10:34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, "I said, You are gods"?

John 10:35 If He said they *were* gods, to whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken,

John 10:36 Do you say of Him whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, You are blaspheming, because I said, I am the Son of God?

John 10:37 If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me;

John 10:38 But if I do *them*, even if you do not believe Me, believe the works so that you may come to know and continue to know that the Father *is* in Me and I *am* in the Father.

John 10:39 Then they sought again to seize Him, yet He went forth out of their hand.

John 10:40 And He went away again across the Jordan, to the place where John was baptizing at first, and He remained there.

John 10:41 And many came to Him and said, John did no sign, but all the things John said concerning this man were true.

John 10:42 And many believed into Him there.

John 21:1 After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. And He manifested *Himself* in this way:

John 21:2 Simon Peter and Thomas, called Didymus, and Nathanael from Cana of Galilee and the *sons* of Zebedee and two others of His disciples were *there* together.

John 21:3 Simon Peter said to them, I am going fishing. They said to him, We also are coming with you. They went forth and got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing.

John 21:4 Now as soon as the morning broke, Jesus stood on the shore; however the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

John 21:5 Then Jesus said to them, Little children, you do not have any *fish* to eat, do you? They answered Him, No.

John 21:6 And He said to them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find *some*. They cast therefore, and they were no longer able to haul it *in* because of the abundance of fish.

John 21:7 Then that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, It is the Lord! Therefore when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment around himself, for he was naked; and he threw himself into the sea.

John 21:8 But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits away, dragging the net of fish.

John 21:9 Then when they got out onto the land, they saw a fire of coals laid *there*, and fish lying on *it* and bread.

John 21:10 Jesus said to them, Bring *some* of the fish that you have just now caught.

John 21:11 Simon Peter therefore went up and hauled the net to the land full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and though there were so many, the net was not torn.

John 21:12 Jesus said to them, Come *and* have breakfast. But none of the disciples dared to inquire of Him, Who are you? knowing that it was the Lord.

John 21:13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave *it* to them, and the fish likewise.

John 21:14 This was now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples after He had been raised from the dead.

John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.

John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.

John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

John 21:18 Truly, truly, I say to you, When you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry *you* where you do not wish *to go*.

John 21:19 Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had said this, He said to him, Follow Me.

John 21:20 Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also reclined on His breast at the supper, and said, Lord, who is the one betraying You?

John 21:21 Peter therefore, seeing him, said to Jesus, Lord, and what about this man?

John 21:22 Jesus said to him, If I want him to remain until I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me.

John 21:23 This word therefore went out among the brothers, that that disciple would not die, yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, If I want him to remain until I come, what *is that* to you?

John 21:24 This is the disciple who testifies concerning these things, and the one who has written these things; and we know that his testimony is true.

John 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which, if they were written one by one, I suppose that not even the world itself could contain the books written.

Acts 20:1 And after the uproar had ceased, Paul, having sent for the disciples and having exhorted *them*, took leave *of them* and went off to go into Macedonia.

Acts 20:2 And when he had passed through those parts and had exhorted them with many words, he came into Greece,

Acts 20:3 And spent three months *there*. And when a plot was made against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he resolved to return through Macedonia.

Acts 20:4 And Sopater of Berea, *the son* of Pyrrhus, accompanied him, as well as Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians and Gaius of Derbe and Timothy and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus.

Acts 20:5 These had gone on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas.

Acts 20:6 And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread and in five days came to them in Troas, where we spent seven days.

Acts 20:7 And on the first day of the week, when we gathered together to break bread, Paul conversed with them since he was to go forth on the next day; and he extended his message until midnight.

Acts 20:8 And there were a considerable number of lamps in the upper room where we were gathered together.

Acts 20:9 And a certain young man named Eutychus was sitting in the window and began to sink into deep sleep while Paul conversed longer; *and* when he had been overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead.

Acts 20:10 But Paul went down and fell upon him, and embracing *him*, he said, Do not make a commotion, for his soul is in him.

Acts 20:11 And when he had gone up and broken the bread and eaten and had spoken for a considerable time, until daybreak, he therefore went forth.

Acts 20:12 And they brought the boy alive and were comforted, *and that* not moderately.

Acts 20:13 But we, going ahead onto the ship, set sail for Assos, from there intending to pick up Paul, for so he had arranged *it*, himself intending to go by foot.

Acts 20:14 And when he met us in Assos, we picked him up and came to Mitylene.

Acts 20:15 And sailing away from there, on the following day we arrived opposite Chios; and on the next day we put in at Samos. And on the day following we came to Miletus,

Acts 20:16 For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying *so that* if possible he might be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

Acts 20:17 And from Miletus he sent *word* to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.

Acts 20:18 And when they came to him, he said to them, You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you all the time,

Acts 20:19 Serving the Lord as a slave with all humility and tears and trials which came upon me by the plots of the Jews;

Acts 20:20 How I did not withhold any of those things that are profitable by not declaring *them* to you and by *not* teaching you publicly and from house to house,

Acts 20:21 Solemnly testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance unto God and faith in our Lord Jesus.

Acts 20:22 And now, behold, I am going bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing what will meet me there,

Acts 20:23 Except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in city after city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.

Acts 20:24 But I consider my life of no account *as if* precious to myself, in order that I may finish my course and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus to solemnly testify of the gospel of the grace of God.

Acts 20:25 And now, behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom, will see my face no more.

Acts 20:26 Therefore I testify to you on this day that I am clean from the blood of all men,

Acts 20:27 For I did not shrink from declaring to you all the counsel of God.

Acts 20:28 Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.

Acts 20:29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

Acts 20:30 And from among you yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverted things to draw away the disciples after them.

Acts 20:31 Therefore watch, remembering that for three years, night and day, I did not cease admonishing each one with tears.

Acts 20:32 And now I commit you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build *you* up and to give *you* the inheritance among all those who have been sanctified.

Acts 20:33 I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothing.

Acts 20:34 You yourselves know that these hands have ministered to my needs and to those who are with me.

Acts 20:35 In all things I have shown you by example that toiling in this way we ought to support the weak and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Acts 20:36 And when he had said these things, he knelt down with them all and prayed.

Acts 20:37 And there was considerable weeping by all; and falling on Paul's neck, they kissed him affectionately,

Acts 20:38 Especially pained over the word which he had spoken, that they would no longer behold his face. And they escorted him to the ship.

C. “Overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly”—1 Pet. 5:2b:

1. To oversee the church is not to rule it but to safeguard, preserve, and protect it as a shepherd oversees a flock; it means that we take the oversight, looking diligently to be aware of the situation.
2. *Not under compulsion but willingly* means not by constraint, pressure, or force; this is

like a mother's care for her child—1 Thes. 2:7.

1 Thes **2:7** But we were gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children.

3. To shepherd the flock “according to God” means that we shepherd it according to God's nature, desire, way, and glory, not according to man's preference, interest, and purpose.
4. We must overcome the temptation to seek gain through base means; we must earnestly love the saints and be willing to give our life for them without any thought of material gain—cf. 1 Tim. 5:17; 6:5.

1 Tim **5:17** Let the elders who take the lead well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in word and teaching.

1 Tim **6:5** Perpetual wranglings of men corrupted in mind and deprived of the truth, supposing godliness to be a *means of gain*.

- D. “Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock”—1 Pet. 5:3:
1. The elders should not lord it over the saints, because the church is not their possession; the church, which includes the elders, is God's possession.
  2. Among the believers, besides Christ there should be no other lord; all should be servants, even slaves—Matt. 20:25-27; 23:10-11.  
Matt **20:25** But Jesus called them to *Him* and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great exercise authority over them.  
Matt **20:26** It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant,  
Matt **20:27** And whoever wants to be first among you shall be your slave;  
Matt **23:10** Neither be called instructors, because One is your Instructor, the Christ.  
Matt **23:11** And the greatest among you shall be your servant.
  3. The elders' being patterns indicates that they are on the same level as the other saints; to be a pattern is to take the lead to serve and care for the church, that the believers may follow.
- E. “When the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory”—1 Pet. 5:4:
1. The crown given by the Lord to the faithful elders will be a reward for their loyal service; the glory of this crown will never fade.
  2. This crown will be a portion of the glory for the overcomers' enjoyment of the manifestation of the kingdom of God and Christ—2 Pet. 1:11.  
2 Pet **1:11** For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly *and* bountifully supplied to you.
- F. “In like manner, younger men, be subject to elders; and all of you gird yourselves with humility toward one another, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble”—1 Pet. 5:5:
1. The phrase *in like manner* indicates that the elders are on the same level as the younger brothers; also, the phrase *all of you* places us all on the same level.
  2. The word *gird* is derived from a noun meaning “a slave's apron”; such an apron girded up the slave's loose garments in the service; it is used here as a figure of speech, signifying the putting on of humility as a virtue in service—cf. Luke 22:27.  
Luke **22:27** For who is greater, the one who reclines *at table* or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines *at table*? But I am in your midst as the one who serves.
  3. The pride of the elders frustrates God's grace from coming to the church, but the humility of the elders keeps a living flow of grace coming into the church.
- G. “Be humbled under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time”—1 Pet. 5:6:
1. To be submissive to God's mighty hand, to be willing to be made lowly, is to take the God-honoring way that gives Him the ground to exalt us in His time.
  2. To be willing to be made low by God's humbling hand in His discipline is a

prerequisite to being made high by God's exalting hand in His glorification.

- H. "Casting all your anxiety on Him because it matters to Him concerning you"—v. 7:
1. The anxiety mentioned in this verse should come from our concern for the church's condition and for the saints' growth in life; as elders, we should be concerned to the uttermost for the church and the saints.
  2. In 2 Corinthians 11:28 Paul writes, "There is this: the crowd of cares pressing upon me daily, the anxious concern for all the churches."  
2 Cor **11:28** Apart from the things which *have not been mentioned, there is this: the crowd of cares pressing upon me daily, the anxious concern for all the churches.*
  3. At times when we are in extreme anxiety for the church, we need to learn to cast all our anxiety on the Lord because He cares for the church and the elders, and "it matters to Him concerning you"—1 Pet. 5:7.  
1 Pet **5:7** Casting all your anxiety on Him because it matters to Him concerning you.

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

### PETER'S EXHORTATION TO THE ELDERS

Prayer: Lord, show us Your way in the eldership. We ask You to cleanse us with Your precious blood. Because we are often polluted by our old man, our fallen nature, and our flesh, we need Your cleansing and Your forgiveness. Lord, open Your heart and open our mind so that we may have a way to get into Your Word.

#### **"The Elders among You I Exhort, Who Am a Fellow Elder and Witness of the Sufferings of Christ, Who Am Also a Partaker of the Glory to be Revealed"**

First Peter 5:1 says, "The elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory to be revealed." Peter's main thought concerning the elders is about the same as that of Paul. We should pay special attention to the main points in Peter's charge.

First, he exhorts the elders as a fellow elder, a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory to be revealed. Although Peter is directly referring to only his own status, all the elders should be witnesses of Christ, especially of His sufferings, and partakers of the glory to be revealed. This indicates that we should live a life that is absolutely one with Christ, a life that is Christ Himself. Such a life is a life of sufferings in this age and a life of glory in the future. The Greek word translated "witness" also means "martyr." If we are martyrs, those who share in the sufferings of Christ, we will be partakers of the glory in the coming age.

The qualifications of the elders are not matters of ability but altogether matters of their life, living, and person. Being a witness who shares in the sufferings of Christ and being a partaker of the glory to be revealed are matters not of what we can do but of what we are. It is possible to be a very capable person yet not be a witness of Christ or a partaker of glory. Therefore, we should care more for what we are than for what we can do. An elder should be a martyr, sharing in the life of Christ. We should live a suffering life because Christ, who is still the suffering One today, is life to us. Such a living prepares and qualifies us to be partakers of the coming glory. It is a basic thought in the New Testament that suffering comes first and glory follows (Rom. 8:17; 1 Pet. 1:11). If we suffer with Christ, we will surely reign with Him. However, the main thought here is that the eldership depends not on what we can do but on what we are and the kind of life we live.

#### **"Shepherd the Flock of God among You"**

First Peter 5:2a says, "Shepherd the flock of God among you." He also calls the Lord Jesus the Chief Shepherd (v. 4). In order to understand the concept of shepherding and martyrdom in 1 Peter 5,

we must remember the words of the Lord that Peter heard in John 10 and 21. Peter heard the Lord say, “I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep” (10:11). The Greek word translated “life” in this verse is *psuche*, which refers to the soul-life. The Lord laid down not His divine *zoe* life but His human life. As the good Shepherd, He sacrificed His *psuche* life for His flock. After the Lord’s resurrection, He found Peter and asked him, “Do you love Me?” Peter said, “Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.” The Lord responded, “Shepherd My sheep” (21:16). After the Lord charged Peter to be a shepherd, He prophesied that Peter would be martyred (vv. 18-19). Eventually, Peter was martyred because of his shepherding of the Lord’s flock. Because the Lord laid down His life for His sheep, He was the first martyr—He lived a life of suffering for His flock. Peter was also a martyr. The elders today must live as martyrs, sacrificing their lives for the church, the flock of God.

To be an elder requires us not only to be humble, temperate, and sober but also to be ready to suffer as a martyr for the church. As the good Shepherd, the Lord laid down His life for His sheep. Today He is the Chief Shepherd, and as His fellow shepherds, we must follow His pattern to sacrifice and live His suffering life as martyrs for the flock of God. The eldership requires not only that we give hospitality but also that we give our soul-life in martyrdom. We must give our life and our being for the church. If we have such a spirit of martyrdom, we will be a proper elder even if we cannot speak or pray eloquently. We must be willing and even aspire to give our life for the church. We should love the saints under our care to the extent that we would give our soul-life for them. If we do this, we will be partakers of the glory to be revealed. In order to be proper shepherds caring for God’s flock, we must be witnesses of the sufferings of Christ and partakers of the glory to be revealed.

In Acts 20:28-29 Paul said to the elders in Ephesus, “Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.” In Matthew 10:16 the Lord said, “I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.” Because there are wolves, the elders must be martyrs in order to shepherd the flock. The wolves in the Lord’s time and the apostles’ time were mainly the Judaizers, who were the Jewish religionists. In the same principle there are religionists today who seek as wolves to damage and destroy the flock of God. When we consider 1 Peter 5 together with John 10 and 21 and Acts 20, we can see that to be an elder requires a spirit of martyrdom. Although we may not suffer physical martyrdom, we must be willing to sacrifice our life for the church.

**“Overseeing Not under Compulsion but Willingly, according to God;  
Not by Seeking Gain through Base Means but Eagerly”**

First Peter 5:2b says, “Overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly.” Here Peter uses the word *overseeing* in his word to the elders. Paul similarly uses the word *overseer* to refer to the elders (1 Tim. 3:1-2; Titus 1:7). To oversee the church is not to rule it but to safeguard, preserve, and protect it as a shepherd oversees a flock. *Not under compulsion but willingly* means not by constraint, pressure, or force. This is like a mother’s care for her child.

According to 1 Timothy 5:17, in the ancient times some elders were supported financially by the churches. Thus, there was a temptation for material gain. Therefore, Peter writes, “Not by seeking gain through base means” (1 Pet. 5:2). Paul uses similar terms in 1 Timothy 6:5, which says, “Perpetual wranglings of men corrupted in mind and deprived of the truth, supposing godliness to be a means of gain.” Paul knew of some who pretended to be godly in order to get money from others. This is shameful. Brother Watchman Nee purposely avoided having special contact with wealthy saints, because he was not seeking base gain. We must overcome the temptation to seek gain through base means. We must earnestly love the saints and be willing to give our life for them without any thought of material gain.

**“Nor as Lording It over Your Allotments but**

### **by Becoming Patterns of the Flock”**

First Peter 5:3 says, “Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.” We daily lord it over our possessions, such as our house, furniture, and cars, but elders should not lord it over the saints, because the church is not their possession. The church, which includes the elders, is the possession of God. An elder should not be the lord and should not consider the church or the saints his possession. Instead, he should be a pattern. The elders’ being patterns indicates that they are on the same level as the other saints.

### **“When the Chief Shepherd is Manifested, You Will Receive the Unfading Crown of Glory”**

Verse 4 says, “When the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.” To receive the unfading crown of glory is to be a partaker of the glory to be revealed. The Lord is the Chief Shepherd, and He became a martyr for His flock. In a sense, He is still suffering. Therefore, the elders, who are His fellow shepherds, must also suffer for the flock with the view that some day they will be with Him in glory.

### **“In Like Manner, Younger Men, Be Subject to Elders; and All of You Gird Yourselves with Humility toward One Another, Because God Resists the Proud but Gives Grace to the Humble”**

Verse 5a says, “In like manner, younger men, be subject to elders; and all of you gird yourselves with humility toward one another.” The phrase *in like manner* implies that the elders are on the same level as the younger brothers. According to our natural thought, the young ones should be humble toward the older ones, but the older ones do not need to be humble toward the young ones. This thought places the elders and the young ones on different levels and creates ranks with the young ones of the lower rank submitting to the elders of the higher rank. However, the phrase *all of you* in verse 5 places us all on the same level. In the church there is no rank. The word *gird* describes the way a servant puts on a serving apron. The elders’ girding themselves with humility indicates that they are serving ones. This thought is precious. The elders must reject any thought that they are higher than others. They should not rule but should serve the saints. Paul has the same basic thought when he writes, “Not a new convert, lest being blinded with pride he fall into the judgment suffered by the devil” (1 Tim. 3:6). These two apostles had the same concern about pride among the elders.

In the eldership there are two main temptations: base gain and pride. If a leading brother’s love for the church causes him to labor to take care of the church full time, the saints may honor him by giving him material support. However, if his intention is to gain the support, he is seeking gain through base means. We must reject this temptation. The other temptation for the elders is to think that because they are elders, they have a special rank and are higher than others. Those who think this way have fallen into the pit of pride. We must be on the alert against these temptations.

In his exhortation Peter does not rank the elders above the other saints but puts all the believers on the same level. This is important. As elders, we must not rank ourselves differently from the other saints. Instead, we must consider ourselves lower than the others because we serve the saints. The serving ones are always lower than those being served (cf. Luke 22:27). Because we elders are the serving ones, we must continually gird ourselves with humility.

First Peter 5:5b says, “God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.” The church needs genuinely humble elders, for they will bring in grace. I have seen churches where the grace was lacking because of the elders’ pride. The pride of the elders frustrates God’s grace from coming to the church, but the humility of the elders keeps a living flow of grace coming into the church. Therefore, whether the elders are humble or proud makes a great difference.

### **“Be Humbled under the Mighty Hand of God**

### **That He May Exalt You in Due Time”**

Verse 6 says, “Be humbled under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time.” Verses 5 and 6 both concern humility. We need to humble ourselves because pride frustrates God’s grace from coming to us. If we are humbled, God will exalt us in due time, in the next age. Verses 1 and 4 also allude to the coming age. The present age is not the time to be exalted but the time to be humbled.

### **“Casting All Your Anxiety on Him Because It Matters to Him concerning You”**

Verse 7 says, “Casting all your anxiety on Him because it matters to Him concerning you.” Because this verse is often quoted out of context, we need to see that it continues the thought in the foregoing verses. Hence, the anxiety mentioned in this verse is the anxiety that should come from our concern for the churches. As elders, we should not be anxious for our possessions or family, but we must be concerned for the church and the saints. We should not be indifferent to the condition of the church. There should be times when we are so burdened and anxious for the church that we cannot sleep. At such times, we need to learn to cast all our anxiety for the church on the Lord because He cares for the church and the elders. In 2 Corinthians 11:28 Paul writes, “There is this: the crowd of cares pressing upon me daily, the anxious concern for all the churches.” Paul probably had no anxiety other than his concern for the church. The elders should follow this pattern. (*Basic Principles concerning the Eldership*, pp. 69-75)