

March 7, 2021

The Sobriety of Hope

1 Peter 5:1-14 – Humility and Trust Define the Christian Community

So I exhort the elders (*presbyters*) among you, as a fellow elder (*presbyter*) and a witness (*martyr*) of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker (*communicant/participant*) in the glory that is going to be revealed: ²shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight (*episcop-ing*), not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; ³ not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. ⁵ Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders (*presbyters*). Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” (*Prov. 3:34*)

Franzmann on the first 5 verses: “It calls for a sober and responsible congregational life: The elders are to exercise their shepherd’s office with a pure zeal, conscious of their responsibility to the Chief Shepherd who is about to be manifested. The church is to submit obediently to its elders. All are to be clothed in humility, 5:1-5.”

v. 1 How does Peter describe himself in between saying “I exhort” and getting to the exhortation?

What are “elders” (Greek, *presbyters*) in the New Testament?

Weidner: “These elders were not always, yet doubtless often, those oldest in years, but rather the most experienced and matured among the converted members of the Church...It was only after the Apostolic age that the office of bishop and elder or presbyter was gradually separated. During the lifetime of the Apostles, these wielded the supreme direction of the Congregations, but they put themselves on a level with the elders, hence Peter calls himself here a *fellow-elder*, and John describes himself as an *elder* (2 John 1; 3 John 1).”

v. 2-3 What is the exhortation to these presbyters?

Weidner: “We have here a full description of the nature of this oversight, and in three clauses, in each both negatively and positively, Peter warns against three great sins of the pastoral office. The office of the ministry is the highest of all vocations and ought not to be entered upon *of constraint*, from outward motives, by force, by outward persuasion, or from worldly motives, but from pure and holy motives. **But willingly.** ‘No one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the sacraments, unless he be regularly called’ (AC XIV), but the *inner* call is also necessary. Every one should give evidences of this inner call, which consists partly in the state of the inner life, and partly in the necessary fitness for the office. Every true pastor must for himself have the consciousness within him that the ministerial office is the work above all else which God has given him to do. He ought with Paul to be able to exclaim, ‘Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel’ (1 Cor. 9:16, 17).”

v. 4 Who is the Chief Shepherd of the Church? What is this appearance?
What will faithful shepherds who exercise their office in humility and honesty receive?

v. 5 What is God’s attitude *and action* towards both the proud and the humble?

⁶Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. ⁸Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. ¹⁰ And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Franzmann on vv. 6-11: “It calls upon all to submit to the governance of God and to trust in His care, to be vigilant and firm in resisting the devil, in the assurance that suffering is the normal lot of the people of God and that the God of grace will sustain them, 5:6-11.”

- v. 6 “mighty hand” – almost always calls to mind the Exodus from Egypt
- v. 7 based on the instruction in this verse, what would be one of the chief expressions of pride/arrogance?
- v. 8 “be sober-minded; be watchful” – message Peter heard from Jesus Mt. 24:42/Mk 13:34-37/Lk 12:37
- v. 9 How does Peter encourage them towards standing firm? Do we find courage in this, or shame?

Weidner: “Christ, however, has broken the power of the devil, and those who believe on the Son, and trust and live in Christ, are freed from his power, and are able to resist him.”

- v. 10 “suffered a little while” – never feels little at the moment, but compared to *eternity* (cf. 2 Cor. 4:17)
“restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you” – verbs with overlapping meaning, also progression

¹²By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. ¹³She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. ¹⁴Greet one another with the kiss of love.

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

- v. 12 Typically these phrases are referring to a co-author and/or letter-carrier, rather than another epistle
Silvanus (Silas) journeyed with Paul beginning with the Second Mission (Acts 15:22–18:5)
“exhorting and declaring” – words for encouragement and witness/testifying
“this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it”- may every pastor finish preaching with this!

Bede the Venerable- “He began the letter with grace, he finished it in grace, he scattered grace throughout the middle of it.”

- v. 13 Babylon – some take this literally, others as a nickname or codeword for Rome (Rev. 14:8, 17:5)
Mark- probably the same John Mark who traveled with Paul (Acts 12:12, 25), abandoned them (Acts 15:37-39), but is restored and works with Paul later (Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11; Phil. 24). Thus he would be well known to the churches of Asia Minor. He wrote the Gospel from Rome based on Peter’s testimony (according to early church testimony- Papias, early 2nd century)
“my son” – spiritually, as Paul with Timothy (1 Cor. 4:17)
- v. 14 “the kiss of love” – an affectionate greeting based in a family-bond

O Almighty God, who hast instructed Thy holy Church with the heavenly doctrine of the Evangelists and Apostles: Give us grace, that being not like children carried away with every blast of vain doctrine, we may be established in the truth of Thy Holy Gospel; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen