

## SERMON 5th JULY 2020

### 1 Peter 5: 1-7

#### Friends:

One thing that this pandemic has shown the world is that “leadership” is “vital” to how each country has responded to the threat of coronavirus!

- Generally speaking the countries with good and proactive leadership, willing to make difficult decisions have had better success at controlling this deadly virus!
- “Leadership” is crucial to any organization and as we know from God’s Word, “leadership” is ordained by God! God changes times and seasons, He “deposes” leaders and “raises” up others!  

(Dan. 2:21)
- “Rosalyn Carter”, former first lady of the United States said:  
*“A “leader” takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they “don’t” necessarily want to go, but “ought” to be!”*
- And “then” we come to “leadership” within God’s church!
- Our “denomination”, “Presbyterian” is named after the type of “leadership” we believe is “Biblical” and what is “good” for the Church of Christ!
- “Presbuteroi” (Greek) means “elders”: recognized leaders within the Christian community!
- Verse 1:  
*“To the elders among you, I appeal as a “fellow elder” and a witness of Christ’s sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed!”*
- Peter spoke about the coming judgment at the end of Chapter 4, so this prompts him to “focus” on the need for “purity” of “heart” before God in relationships among those in the church “beginning” with the “leaders” in the “church”!
- So we are “now” at the “conclusion” of Peter’s letter, calling his hearers to “stand firm” in the faith and to “do so” in the midst of sufferings they must expect!
- Throughout his letter Peter calls for “two attitudes”: on the one hand, “humility towards others”; on the other, “bold resistance to evil”!
- These “attitudes” are “fundamental” for living for Christ in our world!
- They are by “no means” “contradictory”, as our Lord Jesus showed them by his example: “Meekness and Majesty” defined Him!
- “Lest” Peter seems to be too naughty in this prediction of judgment, Peter immediately “classes himself” with the elders:- “as a fellow elder”!

- This lets the “elders” know that he thinks of himself as one of those with whom judgment will begin – even he, an “apostle”, is “not exempt”, nor should any among his readers think themselves “too important” or “too sanctified” to be exempt!

**Friends:**

As your “pastor” I am “just like you”! I am “no closer” to God than anyone else!

- We are all “simul justus et peccator”! In our “justification” we are one and the same time “righteous and sinners”!
- Our “sin” is imputed to Jesus, His “righteousness” is imputed to us!
- “So my sin goes to Jesus, His righteousness comes to me in the sight of God”!
- The apostle Paul, who calls himself the “worst of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15), never put himself “above” others; said this about the Christian race:

*“I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be “disqualified”!”*

(1 Cor. 9: 24-27)

**Friends:**

There is “nothing worse” to watch an athlete win a race at the Olympics only to be “disqualified” due to a technical error! Jubilation turns to disbelief then to heartache!

- I “wonder” how many people die and believe they are “Heaven-bound” just to find out they’ve been “disqualified”! How can that be? “I’ve done all kinds of good things and helped all kinds of people!”
- Salvation is not earned by us but received as a free gift from Jesus!

**Friends:**

Don’t be “disqualified” from “Heaven”!

- While it is “remarkable” that Peter the apostle would take the “less exalted” title “fellow elder” to speak to elders, it is even “more remarkable” that he should describe himself as a “witness of the sufferings of Christ”!
- This “phrase” would bring to mind the familiar details surrounding Christ’s crucifixion, including the most “painful episode: in Peter’s life: for we remember what kind of “witness” Peter was; one whose “courage failed” and who three times denied that he never knew Christ!

(Matt. 2:6)

- Why does Peter mention this?
- Probably to “demonstrate” that restoration even from “grievous sin” is “possible” with Christ!

- “Elders”, and in fact “everyone” in the church, are encouraged to display a “humble” willingness to be quick to repent of sin “rather” than a hypocritical ‘pride’ and an unwillingness ever to admit to doing wrong!
- The “fact” that Peter is also “one” that will share in the “glory” to be revealed: “shows” that full restoration from sin is certainly available through Christ! **(V1)**
- Peter is an “elder” who has sinned, repented, been restored, and will share with Christ in glory!
- Peter can ‘rightly’ “exhort” any elder whose life there is “sin” likewise to “repent” and be “restored” “before” God’s disciplinary refining fire reaches him.
- Verse 2:  
*Peter charges the elders to “tend” the “flock of God” that is under your “care”!*
- This ‘verse’ means: “Shepherd” the “sheep of God”!
- The word “pastor” is translated from the Greek “poimen”, which “means” a “shepherd”!
- This verb Peter “uses” is the same one Jesus used when he said to Peter: “Tend my sheep” in John 21:16!
- Peter now tells the “elders” how they are to “act”, listing “three sins” to which elders are especially prone and three antidotes to which they should “give attention”!
- “John Calvin” summarized this section:  
*“In exhorting pastors/elders to their “duty”, he points out three vices: “sloth”, desire for “gain” and lust for “power”!”*
- Verse 2:  
*“Not because you must, but because you are willing!”*
- Not by constraint but voluntarily, because you want to please God!
- It means not doing the job “simply” out of obligation or ‘because’ someone has to do it!, “but” because the elder has freely and willingly chosen to carry out this valuable God ordained calling!  

*(1 Tim. 3:1)*
- “No one” should be “pressured” into accepting a church position which he or she does not really want to have – God always wants our “ungrudging” service, and He will “provide” another solution!

### **Friends:**

If you find yourself “grumbling and complaining” when “serving” within God’s church, its time to reevaluate if you are serving the Lord Jesus “OR” your “own” “selfish” interests!

- An “elder” or “Christian leader” is to serve not for shameful gain or dishonest gain! **(V2)**

- Some elders and pastors serve in “volunteer” capacities but Scripture also says “elders” who direct the affairs of the church are worthy of double honour especially those whose work is “preaching and teaching”! The worker “deserves his wages”!  
(1 Tim. 5: 17-18)
- The Christian “worker” doesn’t enter God’s service to become “rich”!
- “Greed and selfish” interest are so near at hand in all “human hearts” that especially in this work of leadership they must be constantly “guarded against”!
- Verse 3:  
*“Not lording it over those entrusted to you; “but” being “examples” to the flock!”*
- This verse shifts our attention from “inward” motivation to “outward” behavior!
- An “elder” greedy for power over others will “domineer”, delighting in the use of his or her authority and seeking to increase, preserve or flaunt it!
- “By contrast”, the elder who seeks “not” his own status but the edification of others will strive continually to make his life an example to others; a pattern to imitate!
- Pastoral ‘oversight’ is “not “dictatorial rule!
- “Always” be on the lookout for anyone who ascends a religious throne and starts to draw to himself the obedience that is “due” to the LORD!
- The “elder” does have authority, he or she must “lead”, no one wants to attend a church that has a leadership vacuum!
- The elder is to lead others in humble obedience to God by being himself humbly obedient to God!
- The elders “life” must support his “words”!
- Of course our Lord Jesus is the “perfect example” of a life lived in total obedience to God! He is the “perfect” human being!
- If you “want” to “imitate anyone” imitate the “Lord Jesus”, our Saviour, King and perfect substitute on the cross at Calvary!  
(Eph. 5:1)
- “However” the early church expected all their “leaders” to live in a way which others could imitate as well: “they did not have to be perfect to be “examples” to the flock!”
- The apostle “Paul” frequently “urged others” to imitate his example:-

*1 Corinthians 4:16:*

*“therefore I urge you to “imitate me”*

- Paul also told both Timothy and Titus that they were to live as examples of the Christian life to others!

*(1 Tim. 4:12, Titus 2:7)*

- In “all leadership within the church”; elders, committee members, children and youth workers, bible study leaders, Op shop assistants, choir, parents, grandparents, care givers; “they” should realize that the requirement to live a life worthy of imitation is not “optional”: it is a “major part of the job”, challenging though such responsibility may be!

### **Friends:**

Being a Christian “leader” should “never engender “pride”!”

- “Rather” a continual “humility” is needed ‘because’ the “leader” is “aware” that sin remains in his heart and any growth in ‘holiness’ of life has only come about by God’s grace!
- I “know” as a Christian leader I struggle to be “holy”; I struggle with “temptation”; and at times, often “too many times” I give in to temptation and sin and feel ashamed!

*I immediately go to God in repentance, asking for mercy and forgiveness!*

- Just like “King David” in Psalm 51; I pray continually “wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from sin”!
- David says:  
*“Surely I was sinful at birth”!*
- David continues:  
*“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me!”*

### **Friends:**

People are watching us as believers let’s show them by our words, actions, prayers and love that Jesus is a great Saviour, always ready to receive anyone who truly calls on His Name!

- Verse 4:  
*“And when the “Chief Shepherd” appears, you will receive the “crown of glory” that will never fade away!*
- Peter writes this “whole letter” as an apostle of the Lord. From start to finish Peter “speaks” for his Lord!
- Peter wants the “elders” to “minsters” as “servants” of the Lord!
- Peter is concerned with their “motives” more than with their methods!
- Peter knows that their relation to Jesus Christ will “shape” the way they “care” for His people!
- To “know” the Lord is to “seek” to be like the Lord!

- Greg Beale got it right:  
*"We become what we worship!"*
- What people "revere", they "resemble", either for ruin or for restoration.
- As Scripture 'shows' us we are "all worshippers", and "what" we worship exposes us and changes us!

**Friends:**

"Worshiping" is not "optional"!

- Because we are creatures made by God, "worship" has been woven into us, it engages our entire self and becomes inseparable from the lives that we live!
- "Therefore" how we live our lives will declare what we are worshipping because we "are" what we worship!
- At the "heart" of worship is "Love"! What we worship will be the thing that we "love the most"!

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind!"  
(Matt. 22:37)

- I love books, I love reading, I love travelling, I love facts, I love my wife, I love my family, I love eating, I love pastoring, I love Op Shops, I love zoos, I love museums and art galleries and I love God!
- What "do" I "spend" the "most time" on?
- "For where your "treasure" is, there your "heart" will be also!"

(Matt. 6:21)

**Friends:**

Did you "grow" in your "love for God" during "lockdown?"

- Is God your "number 1" love and concern?
- "A. W. Tozer" understood "worship" when he "said":-  
*"Any man or woman on this earth who is bored and turned off by worship is "NOT" ready for Heaven".*
- Let's "not forget" that the "Chief Shepherd"; the Chief Elder" gave his "life" for the "sheep"!
- Elders are only "under shepherds!"
- Elders "authority" is "not" original: they minister "only" in Christ's "name" and "according" to His "Word!"

- Peter had “seen” Jesus “glory” at the Transfiguration”, “but” now Peter looks “ahead” to the “glory to come”!

*“When the Chief Shepherd “appears”.....”*

- Jesus “showed” His glory to Peter in the fishing boat and will reveal Himself “again” in the clouds of heaven at this “2<sup>nd</sup> appearing”!

### **Friends:**

Do “you” honestly “believe” that Jesus Christ, the baby in the manger, will come “again as the Risen Christ”, who had gone into Heaven and rules the “universe” at God’s “right hand”!

- The Bible is “clear” “suffering now, and glory to come”!
- When Christ “returns” we will “see” the “face of the LORD!”
- Faithful “elders’ will receive the “crown of glory”!
- All “faithful “believers” will receive the “grown of life”!

*(Rev. 2:10)*

- The elders reward and joy are the glory of their LORD!
- Our “heavenly inheritance” will “never” fade away!
- New cars quickly lose value and get scratches and dents!
- “New houses” quickly date and need on going maintenance! They eventually fall apart and many need to be demolished!
- Our “clothes” quickly “lose” their freshness and holes and threads quickly appear.
- And what about “technology”!
- Our phones, computers, tablets quickly become out of date, break down and end up at the recycle centre!
- And our “bodies”: we all are getting “older”; “no one” is getting “younger”!
- Our bodies are “all falling apart”!
- Paul sums it up well:  
*“Outwardly we are wasting away!”*

*(2 Cor. 4:16)*

- “Eternal youth” is a “fallacy”! No medications; no ointment; no surgery; no guru can “stop” death for “anyone”!
- “Christianity” gets us “ready” for “death”!

- Isaiah Chapter 28, Verse 5 says:-  
*“In that day “the LORD Almighty” will be a glorious crown, a beautiful wreath for the remnant of His people”!*
- “Only” in “Jesus Christ” do “all promises” of God come to “fruition”!
- Jesus “himself” is our “inheritance”!
- The “faithful elders” who receive their crowns of blessing from the LORD will “cast their crowns” before God’s throne remembering the “crown of thorns” our Lord wore for them!  
(Rev. 4)
- Verse 5:  
*“In the same way you who are “younger”, submit yourselves to your elders!”*
- “All of you”, clothe yourselves with humility, towards one another, “because” “God “opposes” the “proud”, but shows “favour” to the “humble”!”
- “Respect” for those who have been faithful believers for “many years” is a good thing in the church!

#### **Friends:**

“Humility” applies to all of us!

- Peter uses a “metaphor of clothing” or “tying on of a servants apron” to speak of the atmosphere of “HUMILITY” toward one another which should characterize the Church of Christ!
- “Humility” is an “attitude” which “puts others first”, which thinks of the desires, needs, and ideas of others as “more” worthy of “attention” than “ones own”!
- “Of course” Christ himself is the perfect example of “true humility”!
- As “believers” we know we did “not make” ourselves “nor” “save” ourselves!
- Our “humility” springs from our “total dependence” on the grace of God!
- Let’s “follow” our Master Jesus:
- “Jesus”; God in the flesh; had “everything to boast of”, “but” humbled himself, and became obedient to death – even “death” on a Roman “cross”!

(Phili. 2:8)

#### **Friends:**

For the Christian, “humility” is absolutely “indispensable”. Without humility there can be **no** self knowledge, **no** repentance, **no** faith and **no** salvation!

(A. W. Tozer)

- “God “opposes” the “proud”, but gives “favor” to the “humble”!” **(V5b)**  
(Proverbs 3:34)
- God acts this way to the “proud” because they are arrogant, haughty and think of themselves as ‘more important’ than everyone else!
- The “proud: trust in ‘themselves’; while the “humble” trust in God and God delights to be trusted!
- The “proud” seek glory for themselves, while the “humble” give glory to God!
- God gives grace and favour!
- “Grace” is God’s undeserved favor towards ‘us’, and is needed “not only” to save us from eternal judgment but also to enable us to live the Christian life!
- God continually opposes the proud but continually giving grace to the humble!
- Verse 6:  
*Humble “yourselves”, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time!*

**Friends:**

If God opposes the proud, it is ‘good wisdom’ to “humble “oneself” before Him”!

- This “involves’ accepting the twists and turns of life as God’s providence!
- It involves bowing down to God’s wisdom even when we “don’t understand” why God is doing things that particular way!

**Friends:**

This morning place “yourself’ in God’s hands!

- There is “no safer place” in the universe than “under” God’s mighty hand!
- It’s so easy to worry about your family, your job, your standing in society, your health, your finances, your future, your life!
- “Before” these fears “overwhelm” us, we remind ourselves that God “cares” for us: so we cast all our “anxieties” on God! **(V7)**

**Friends:**

The Bible is an “honest” book that relates to the real world we live in!

“Feeling stressed?”

You can do it without even trying!

- As believers in a hostile world, we “will” suffer, we “will” get anxious! The Bible tells us what to do with it: “give it away”!

- Give it to God, let Him deal with it!

**Friends:**

The “beginning” of ‘anxiety’ is the “end of faith”; and the beginning of “true faith” is the end of anxiety!

- “This week”, “humble” yourselves under God’s mighty hand!

***Let’s Pray***