

Session 8: The Importance of Leadership, 1 Peter 5

"But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect," 1 Peter 3:15.

Preparedness...Preparation...Throughout the Word of God, especially in the Epistles of Peter and Paul. Why?

Quick background of the letter:

Why did Peter write the letter?

- To encourage Christians who are suffering for Christ
- To understand the grace of God.
- To learn more about God
- To give an outline as to what our duties and responsibilities are in these last days.

Peter, at this setting, was writing to Jews and Gentiles alike.

Like any church, the churches (members) were struggling financially, physically, and in lack of leadership in various areas.

1 Peter 5:1-4, Importance of Leadership

- Written mainly to the eldership
- Eldership has a Jewish and a Greek background
 - Moses had elders to help him when responsibilities became overwhelming
 - Greeks, especially Egyptians, had elders that were leaders of the community and responsible for the conduct of public affairs (like town council members).
- Long before Christianity took it over, "elder" was a title of honor both in the Jewish and in the Greco-Roman world.
- Paul ordained elders in every community church in which he established (Acts 14:23).
- When a person enters the eldership, he enters the oldest religious office in the world...whose history can be traced through Christianity and Judaism for 4,000 years.
 - Very honorable responsibility...in the Kingdom of God
 - Highly honorable responsibility...in that he has been ordained a shepherd of the flock of God and a defender of the faith.

An elder is to accept the office:

- Not under coercion, but willingly,
- Not to make a shameful profit out of it, but eagerly.
- Not to "lord it over the congregation as a petty tyrant"... but to be the shepherd and the example of the flock.
- Human nature is such that for many people prestige and power are even more attractive than money.

Peter called himself a "fellow-elder" ... a great privilege.

Jesus, as the Shepherd of the flock, is a precious picture of humility and privilege...to be able to protect and care for the flock.

1 Peter 5:5...

Respect for the elders (older Christians) is dwindling and quickly fading away...and the world's view of the older generation is that they "are using most of the Government finances" and are not contributing to societies needs/necessities.

This is not just an issue in America's politics. This is a family issue.

Peter states that personal humility toward others is required of any Christian.

- God opposes the Christian who has a proud or arrogant heart in dealing with his fellow believers (thinking that he is more important, more knowledgeable. and more responsible than others).
- Peter states that the Christian is to cover himself with humility (this was a sign of honor, not a sign of defeat).
- Jesus showed this by washing the feet of the disciples (a most humble, and in some societies, humiliating position).

1 Peter 5:6-II

Here Peter speaks in imperatives, laying down certain laws for the Christian life.

1. There is the law of humility before God.
2. There is the law of Christian serenity (calmness) in God.
"Cast your burden on the Lord," said the Psalmist (Psalm 55:22).
"Do not be anxious about tomorrow," said Jesus (Matthew 6:25-34).
3. There is the law of Christian effort and of Christian vigilance (must be sober and watchful).
Advice to the troops...Cromwell said, "Trust in God, and keep your powder dry."
4. There is the law of Christian resistance. "Resist the devil..."
5. There is a law of Christian suffering.
After a Christian has gone through suffering, God will restore, establish, strengthen, and settle him.

1 Peter 5:12

Several informative statements that we need to know:

- The letter was either written by Silvanus (Silas) for Peter, used as an editing source for Peter's letter, and/or was the one that delivered the letter to the churches. Silvanus - Same one identified in Paul's letters and the Silas of Acts (Paul and Silas in prison) He was one of the pillars of the early church.
- Peter stated that he knew Silvanus to be faithful follower/brother.
- Peter sends the letter to encourage the faithful followers of Christ...
- Peter states that everything he stands for and has been suffering for...is to show the true grace of God.

What can we learn from this lesson to encourage us?

1. **Suffering, trials, troubles are inevitable...but we can overcome and be an encouragement to others.**
2. **True leaders are humble servants...not someone who insists in his own way.**
3. **True leaders do not expect to be in the lead; they expect to be led. A true servant is one who has manifested a humble and contrite heart in order to be led by the Master.**
4. ***We know who holds the future...so why worry about it.***

1 Peter 5:13,

"She" could be in reference to the Church (Bride of Christ)

"She" could be in reference to Peter's wife

Mark could be in reference to the writer of Mark

Mark could be Peter's son.

Babylon could mean Babylon of the East (where the Jews had been taken captive)

Babylon could mean "Rome"...which was referenced by Jews and Christians.

Is it necessary that we know in detail every reference mentioned in the Bible?

Of course not!

All opinions and feelings as to these references are speculative unless it is specifically pointed out in Scripture elsewhere. We need to understand that man's opinion and God's Word can be a distance apart. What are we to rely on? God's Word.

1 Peter 5:14

For centuries...a kiss on the cheek was an integral and precious part of Christian fellowship and worship.

- With the Jews it was custom for a disciple to kiss his Rabbi on the cheek and lay his hands upon his shoulder... i.e. Judas did this to Jesus.
- The kiss was the greeting of welcome and respect
- Paul's letters frequently end with the injunction to salute each other with a holy kiss (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26)
- In the early church (according to Tertullian/Augustine) the kiss was an essential part of the Christian worship.

This was a lovely custom and yet it is clear that it was sadly open to abuse.

That is why it was gradually diminished from any part of the Christian worship or fellowship with other Christian brothers and sisters.

As to "the kiss"...it was simply a means to say, "Peace be with you."

Where are we in Christian worship?

Do we know the true meaning of worship and fellowship?

If you were to define what worship should be like...how would you describe it and how would you be a part of it?

It is said by most pastors and clergymen today that "Fellowship between believers is what is lacking....not worship." Do you feel that we are lacking in true Christian fellowship today?

Why do you believe this?

Read Acts 2:42-47...Is this the goal of the church as to true fellowship?