

First Baptist Church Merritt Island
Shepherds of God's Flock

1 Peter 5:1-7

September 2nd, 2018

Main Point

The Lord cares for His people like a good shepherd cares for his flock. In His kindness and grace, God has set earthly shepherds among His people to lead them under the direction of Jesus. This morning, we will see Jesus' instructions to His shepherds and the responsibility of the flock to those shepherds.

Getting Started

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What are some ways you have suffered by not being alert to your surroundings?

How many of these situations were caused by your focusing on something or someone else?

Accidents happen. Sometimes we back our car into another car in the parking lot because we are not as alert as we should be. At times we take a wrong step on the stairs because we are not paying attention to our surroundings. Living life every day requires we be alert to our surroundings and to the pitfalls all around us. The same is true spiritually. To remain alert, we need responsible spiritual leaders who are leading receptive spiritual followers. One of the benefits of living in community as a church is that it brings together strong Christian leaders with people who are humble enough to follow them. Together, leaders and followers can expose the work of our enemy, Satan, and can live lives that bring glory to God and magnify His grace in our lives. Peter concluded his letter to a group of believers distracted by persecution by reminding them of these realities.

Observation

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

What guidelines and principles did Peter give for those who were in leadership? What cautions did he give?

Why would it be important for the leader to remember that the congregation he leads belongs to the Shepherd?

How does motive impact how a person leads?

Why is it important for spiritual leaders to carefully examine their motives?

Give some examples of both good and bad motives.

Peter gave instructions to church leaders. As a fellow elder, he addressed church elders who ministered in local congregations. He again referenced Christ's sufferings and second coming (5:1). He urged elders to extend care to their congregations freely and eagerly, not out of a sense of duty or for monetary gain (5:2). They were not to be arrogant in exercising their authority; rather, they were to offer positive examples to believers entrusted to their care (5:3). If elders were faithful and compassionate servants to their congregations, Christ would reward them when He returned (5:4).

ASK a volunteer read 1 Peter 5:5-7.

What is the relationship between willing submission to spiritual leaders and showing humility to one another? Is one of these more difficult for you than the other? Explain.

Do we have a choice when it comes to submission? Explain.

Peter counseled believers to respect their leaders and to be humble. They were to allow God to humble them under His sovereign rule. If they did so, God would honor them. They could put their cares on Him with the confidence that He cared for them. All believers are to display humility, realizing that God provides for their needs.

Application

What are some of the qualities you appreciate in your church leaders? How can you encourage your pastors as they seek to shepherd your church?

Commit to pray for your leaders. Ask them how you may pray for them, and lift them up in prayer.

What would it look like for you this week to clothe yourself with humility toward one another? Ask God to show you! Ask Him to strengthen you to have a humble attitude toward others.

What burdens do you carry that you need to let others carry? What steps do you need to take to hand your burdens over to God?

Discuss with the group ways of recognizing Satan's attacks. How do you respond when threatened by the enemy as you see signs of his prowling?

Prayer

God, thank you for providing godly leaders and a church to help us resist Satan and honor You with our lives. Strengthen our pastors and other church leaders as they serve under your leadership. May you help us to surrender ourselves first to You so we may joyfully follow the leaders you have given us.

Commentary

5:1-11. In this closing exhortation, Peter encouraged his readers who were suffering to be responsible. The word therefore in verse 1 shows that what follows in this section grows out of the preceding verses.

5:1-4. Peter encouraged elders to be exemplary, responsible servants. The term “elders” refers to the office of pastoral leaders in the church. The word appears to be used interchangeably here with “shepherds/pastors” and elsewhere with “overseers” (Titus 1:5,7). Peter’s appeal was based on the fact that he was a fellow elder and witness to Christ’s sufferings. This helped him identify fully with the “elders” he was addressing and gave added support for his plea. He commanded them to be shepherds of God’s flock. In other words, they were to nurture, lead, and protect God’s people without lording it over them. Elders who have served faithfully, despite suffering while on earth, will receive glory in heaven from Christ, the chief Shepherd.

5:5a. Here the term elders may refer to age, not office.

5:5b-7. Peter encouraged all believers to practice humility and trust God with their cares. Humility commends us to God and fellow humans, which is the opposite effect of arrogance and conceit.