

UNION GROVER BAPTIST CHURCH
October 23, 2022

1 Peter 5
A FORMULA FOR RELIEF

BIG IDEA FOR TODAY: God of all grace, the one who has called you to his eternal glory in Jesus Christ, will restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

Before we get into today's passage, let's recap from last week, and really the first four chapters of 1st Peter. The Apostle Peter is warning the church that there will be suffering. We will suffer and endure hardship in this life. If we expect otherwise, we are only fooling ourselves and are not paying attention to Scripture. Last week, Pastor Faber's story about his business and that hardship is a very good contemporary example of suffering.

One of the key verses to go along with last week's message was 2 Corinthians 4:8-9. **"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed."** In today's world we are afflicted, but we are not crushed down. We are perplexed by what is going on around us as we watch our society come to a point of complete breakdown, but we do not despair because we belong to Christ. We are not forsaken, because we are saved; not destroyed but eternally alive!

In 1 Peter 4:12, Peter calls all that hardship and suffering "our fiery ordeal." So, yes, there is great suffering, as Pastor Faber has covered over the last few of weeks in the first chapters of 1st Peter. But we do have a formula for relief from that suffering.

Today's passage is 1 Peter 5. Starting in verse 1, it reads: **"So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly;."**

First, what is an elder in today's church? Most Baptist churches do not appoint the specific office of elder. For a good definition we look to Titus 1, which are instructions to Titus from the Apostle Paul. Paul told him to appoint elders, and ... they must be above reproach, the husband of one wife ... his children are believers ... not open to the charge of debauchery ... not arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain ... hospitable ... self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined ... holding firm to the trustworthy word ... able to give instruction in sound doctrine.

I will leave further instruction on the establishment of elders within a church to Pastor Faber.

However, for our study today, and who I am referring to as elders or shepherds in the modern church, I will list a few. Preachers and pastors, for sure, and other ministry leaders, should be elders. Bible Teachers, such as Sunday School teachers, and other care givers within the church may be included. Those who oversee of the affairs of the church could be included. Each of the people in those roles have special responsibilities for ministry of all kinds.

In continuing to address the elders, 1 Peter 5:3-4 says elders should be, **“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.”** In short, elders should be kind, be examples, and not domineering. The reason, aside from simple humanity, is that in doing so they will receive the unfading crown of glory. There will be heavenly rewards for their efforts. They are not working their way into heaven, but will be duly rewarded for their work in the Kingdom.

For the rest of us, getting into verse 5a, we are to tune out the seductive messages coming from the world about success. Instead, we subject ourselves to our elders as we look for genuine relief from the hardships and suffering that exists in the world. **“5a. Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders.”**

When we look at Scripture, we must understand what younger means. It isn't necessarily our calendar age or experience, but it is our position relative to the elders of the church. Don't confuse being *subject to* or *submitting* with weakness. It is not; but it is *meekness*, which is a mild, moderate, humble, or submissive quality. We place ourselves under authority of the elders.

Continuing with the Scripture, we, being those in submission to our elders, clothe ourselves with humility, not just to the elders, but to one another. This is important in seeing how we are to respond to and interact with our brothers and sisters in Christ. In verse 5b., it says, **“Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”** By that, don't be arrogant; don't be pushy; don't run over one another. In short, use the Golden Rule. In the New Living Translation, Proverbs 3:34, says, **“The Lord mocks the mockers but is gracious to the humble.”**

Following closely with humility is being humble. Verse 6, **“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”** Remember that the worldly counter-culture does not see being humble as popular or a good thing. The world says that *Me-ism* is good, and the way to succeed, versus *humbleness*, which is a bad thing and will cause you to fail. That is because the world is narcissistic; it is all about self. Matthew 23:12, says, **“Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”**

Verse 8 is one of my favorite verses. It is a very pointed warning about being seduced by the outlook of the world. **“8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”** This isn't about drinking alcohol, although it could be when it is used to excess. Being sober-minded means that we do not allow ourselves to be captivated by worldly influences that causes unsound judgment. Someone who is sober-minded is not *intoxicated*, is calm under pressure, and is self-controlled. They think clearly.

Satan is your adversary and your enemy – he wants to kill, steal, and destroy: you; your family; your health; and, your joy. John 10:10, says, **“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”**

In talking about Satan, verse 9 says, **“Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.”** Your suffering may seem personal, and it may be personal, but the same kinds of suffering have been experienced for millennia. That is often hard to accept when we are going through the very deepest of issues with our health, our finances, or our family. Those things are hard because Satan works on your mind.

But there is so great a reward when we persevere. Peter says, in verse 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.”**

You are going to suffer, but there is a great reward. God knows that His people will suffer or there would not be so much written in Scripture about it. Romans 5:1-5, says this about suffering: **“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”**

This gets us back to the BIG IDEA: Our God, the God of all grace, the one who has called you to his eternal glory in Jesus Christ, who has given you salvation through Christ Jesus, will restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. It all points to Christ. That is our formula for relief.