



Empowering People to Change the World

Peter's Final Charge – Build a Healthy Church

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Road Declaration

1 Peter Graphic

Culture is important. Culture for most of us is like water to a fish. We don't recognize it nor understand it, but we just accept it as the atmosphere we live in.

- It's the manners we have.
- It's the way we greet people and treat people.
- It's even how we dress.
- Your home has a culture. The local church has a culture.
- The Road Church has a culture.

But what is a safe culture? What is a proper church culture? How do we model the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven, at The Road Church?

Peter concludes his letter with his recommendations on how to have a healthy church culture.

Peter's Final Charge: Build a Healthy Church Culture

- This is the final charge, the final thoughts from Peter. How important it is to have a healthy church culture.
- A healthy church culture within can withstand a demonic worldly culture from without.
- The reason for the fall or split of many a church is the unhealthy trends within the culture of the church!

Read 1 Peter 4:17...chapter 5...

- I began with 4:17 because I believe that's the natural trajectory of which Peter is concluding his letter. The judgment of God begins with the leadership of the church and then flows down from there. Why?
- Because the pastors, directors, and leaders within the local church are the most responsible for the culture of the church. God's standard begins with the pastoral leadership and elders of the church.

- If the pastors and leaders in the church are healthy, the church will be healthy. If the pastors and leaders have healthiness in their culture with each other or their families, that also will cascade down into the church.

1 Peter 5:1

“The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed.”

- This is amazing humility on Peter’s part. Even as an apostle, Peter defines himself as a *fellow elder* not exercising any leadership over the elders and pastors he’s writing to.
- And look what he does next. He identifies his greatest shame and failure—witness of the sufferings of Christ—the very place where he denied Christ!
 - Peter denied to a lowly servant girl that he even knew Jesus.
 - Peter left the scene and wept.
 - It was his greatest failure! His greatest shame.
 - Yet he can now speak of it because he has experienced the glory of God’s forgiveness.

When We are Vulnerable about our Failures, God gives us Favor

- When we identify our weaknesses, our shame, and our failures, we think people will think less of us, look down upon us, but the opposite is true. When we identify ourselves as below those we are around, they tend to elevate you and have greater respect for you. Because they observe someone who is safe, someone who is humble.
- But it’s more than that. When we share our deepest hurts and pain, people intuitively feel that you are secure. You are secure in who you are. We need leaders who are secure in their identity. They have no need to pose but take off the masks and show their humanity to us.

Verses 2-3

“Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”

- Peter is saying *I'm a fellow elder and I have sinned but been restored* and just as Christ suffered for us, should we not suffer for our people?
- The metaphor Peter uses of a shepherd shepherding the sheep of God would have been most meaningful to Peter, because Jesus used it with him in his restoration process.
- Remember the story? Peter is fishing and Jesus appears, instructs them in how to catch on the right side of the boat and then He says these words to Peter:

John 21:17, “He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?’ Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’

And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed My sheep. Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry *you* where you do not wish.’ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’”

Peter, more than all the other Apostles, Understood the Value and Importance of Feeding the Sheep in the Local Church

Peter now gives us the three vices of leadership in the local church.

John Calvin, the great reformer and Bible Commentator writes,

“In exhorting pastors to their duty, he points out three vices especially which are often to be found, namely sloth, desire for gain, and lust for power.” (John Calvin on 1 Peter 5:2-3)

Three Vices and Three Antidotes to Pastoral Leadership

“not by compulsion but willingly”

- This is by pressure. Not feeling pressure or a sense of obligation but love your job. Love what you're doing. Excited to willingly serve the members of the church.

“not for dishonest gain but eagerly”

- In order to financially gain in dishonest ways. It's not saying that a pastor should need finances or even gain finance but do it in honest godly ways.
- Eagerly gain through blessing those around you.

“nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock”

- Being power hungry over others. Being domineering over the members of the church. The word means *forcefully ruling over with excessive use of authority*.
- Using force as in the military or political realms.
- Rather, be an example of kingdom leadership—model another form of leadership.
- Paul often told his followers to imitate him, and Peter is doing the same.
- Listen to my EmpowerU podcast on “Organic Leadership.”

Verse 4

“And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.”

- He is saying that our rewards as pastors is often not fully realized in this life, but it will come later, a “crown of glory” that cannot fade!

Peter is instructing us as pastors and leaders to be humble, to love God’s people, to equip and empower and focus on being a good example to the church.

Healthy Leadership leads to Healthy Membership

Verse 5

“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.’”

- “Likewise,” now Peter shifts to the members of the church.
- Submission to the leadership of the church is vital. On the one side, they are not to “lord over” or be power hungry, yet they still must govern the local church.

- Someone has said, “Everything rises and falls on leadership.” So, it is with any organization but especially the local church. The leadership of a church must lead. But HOW we lead is vital.
- Pastors lead by example but then the church must submit.

Submission: Sub—under, a Mission, means Subbing to a Mission!

- There can only be one mission in a church. At The Road we talk often about the Kingdom of God.

Why Should we be Clothed with Humility?

1. The *proud think of themselves* as more important than everyone else. They trust in themselves. they seek glory for themselves.
2. The *humble trust* in God. They seek God’s glory.
3. The *proud are resisted* by God.
4. God gives *supernatural grace to the humble*.

Do you Need more Grace from God? Be Submitted to God and God’s Leadership

Verses 6-7

“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

- Walking in humility means you are setting yourself up for God to exalt you. No longer do you need to exalt yourself. Let God exalt you.
- “Cares” here means *anxieties and concerns*. Cast all your anxieties upon Him!

Casting all of one’s Anxieties upon God is the Pathway to Humility

- When we learn to cast all our anxieties upon Christ, we learn a new freedom in our lives.
- We come to realize we can’t change ourselves, but Christ can—an inside out healing.
- The background of this statement is Psalm 55:22 “Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain you.”

Humility Makes us Vigilant against the Devil

- We often think of humility as weakness and being passive. Well, that's not at all what Peter is describing here. He is saying that humility gives you the grace and power you need to fight the devil.

Verse 8

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”

- We are in a spiritual war with the devil. Be vigilant in watching out for the devil. The word here is *diabolos* referring to a personal spiritual being, a fallen angel, who has an army of demons under its charge.
- Like a lion who is always looking, searching, and ready to pounce on its prey, so is the diabolical one. You better be vigilant, resistant, and steadfast.
- The New Testament gives us many examples of demonic power at work.
- Characteristics of the diabolical one at work.
 - Bizarre, violent, irrational, and evil behaviors
 - Opposition to the Gospel
 - Malicious slander, falsehood and lying in speech
 - Bondage to addictions
 - Self-destructive behavior
 - False doctrine
 - Emotions of fear, hatred, depression, anxiety, and anger

Be Humbly Courageous—Resist the Diabolical One

We have God's grace, power, and peace to guide us!

Verse 9

“Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.”

- The natural outgrowth of humility in Christ, is a new courage to fight!
- And such faith means we will suffer, but look around, anyone who resists Satan suffers!

Verses 10-11

“But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*. To Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

When we Resist Satan in the Grace of God, God will Perfect, Establish, Strengthen and Settle You.

Final Thoughts:

Verse 12

“By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand. She who is in Babylon, elect together with *you*, greets you; and so *does* Mark my son. Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.”

- Silvanus is probably Silas who is a constant companion to Paul and Luke mentions him in Acts 15 and 18. He is probably the messenger who carried Paul’s letters and, in this case, is carrying Peter’s letter.
- As Peter concludes he says *that this is the true grace of God in which you stand*. That’s clearly the point in this last part. The way into the grace of God is through a walk of humility.
- “Babylon” cannot refer to the ancient city in Mesopotamia, for at this writing it’s a small obscure place for which there is no evidence of a visit by Peter or even an existing church, but there is evidence Peter is in Rome at this writing and we might believe, as in Revelation, that Babylon refers to Rome.
 - As in ancient times, in the Old Testament, Babylon refers to the place of worldly power, the center of power in the world.
 - The center of opposition to the Gospel.

- But Peter is not alone—he is with the church in Rome.
- And he has Mark, the writer of the second gospel, with him too.