**1 Peter 5:1-4**

**“Shepherds serving the Shepherd”**

1. **Intro**
2. **Vs. 1 Personal experience with Jesus**
3. **Vs. 2-3 A loving care for God’s sheep**
4. **Vs. 4 A desire to please only Jesus**
5. **Intro.**

Having just written five tings that the persecuted Christian can do during a season of sever persecution Peter takes the opportunity to address the responsibility of the leadership of the church during such a season. What we learn from Peter’s words in verses 1-4 is that “***persecution obligates that pastor’s and church leaders to increase in their responsibilities***”. In 4:17 Peter wrote that such persecution was first coming to the church and as such refinement for their maturity; since that was true for the church it is even more so for the pastor’s and leadership. This is the context of the words Peter now writes as he encourages them to work “***faithfully, eagerly as examples***”!

Vs. 1 This section gives us a bit of insight into the structure of the early church that needs a bit of clarification as Peter describes the leadership of the local church as:

1. ***Vs. 1 Elders***: Peter identifies himself by this same word saying that he also is a “***fellow elder***”. The Greek word defines the word as a designation of a man being advanced in years. It later became an official designation of an office in a local church who in other places is called an overseer or a bishop (Acts20:17, 18 and 1 Tim. 3:2). The difference in these words that refer to the same person is that the use of the word describes the same person but emphasizes different qualities. “***Elder***” refers to the “***maturity***” of the officer, whereas “***Bishop***” emphasizes the “***responsibility***” of the office. The Elders were appointed to office based upon Acts 14:23 and that appointment was based upon what people already noted was active in their lives.
2. ***Vs, 2a Shepherd***: Here is the word means “***to feed***” and includes the duties of a shepherd which includes four responsibilities: ***Tending, feeding, guiding and guarding***! Here ***the key aspect is a calling and not a career***. Going to bible college or wanting to “***get into ministry***” is not what the church should be looking for in this person. This ought to be a person who is like a man who is in love so that the above four responsibilities are not duty’s he performs through the week but acts of love he does daily to the one he loves and adores!
3. ***Vs. 2b Overseers***: The word here refers more to what a “***bishop***” duties are and chiefly they are to provide “***oversight***” and refers to spiritual care of God’s sheep. Such “***oversight***” includes exhortation as well as encouragement with the key being not just sharing the victory but the pathway to it with a strong emphasis upon the “***bishops***” own failing and journey through the faithfulness of Jesus. The “***Overseer***” must possess compassion because of their own transparency thus making their life an example to fellow believers.

***While these three titles can express three different people they should all fit into one person in the local church and that would be the Pastor and as such this section ought to be read regularly by those who have been so called and it is also the standard by which those we are called to serve can inspect our fruit and progress in maturity in our calling***.

1. **Vs. 1 Personal experience with Jesus**

It is clear through the tone of this letter that peter was concerned about the local leadership of the church undergoing severe persecution. The refining process requires maturity and the pastor and leadership need to be at their best. Like children who look too their parents to encourage, guide, direct and protect to too the local church would naturally look to those who are called to lead! Peter offers “***Three qualities that are vital for the church leader***”!

1. Vs. 1 ***Personal experience with Jesus***: “***I who am a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of christ and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed***”: Notice that Peter didn’t introduce himself as a great spiritual leader but instead as a “***fellow elder***”. While Peter’s confession as to his position in the context of this letter seems to be minor in the scope of history it is extremely important on the front of Christianity. Peter’s confession shoots down the Roman Catholics claim that Peter was the first Pope of the Church and does so be the very person whom they have so elevated. Peter NEVER CLAIMED NOR ASSUMED any higher position than that of an ordinary elder in the Church! And while this is remarkable Peter does so by reinforcing his unique qualifications as a “fellow elder” that he had two encounters that those that he was now calling himself a part of didn’t possess:
2. ***Witness of the sufferings***: The word “witness” in the Greek is where we get our English word “martyr” from and what we learn from the use of the word as it relates to Peter is that it doesn’t speak to the act of “***SEEING***” but to the act of “***TESTIFYING***” of what you saw! Peter is NOT merely saying the he SAW the crucifixion but rather that he was called to “SPEAK” as to what he saw. In 2 Peter 1:16 Peter says that he was an “eyewitness” and by that Peter’s testimony is that he had been called to speak of the incidents that he personally witnessed in the Lord Jesus’ life. Here Peter is saying that he is an “official witness” and called by God to testify on His behalf specifically with regards to Jesus “sufferings”. Peter makes mention of several
3. ***Partake of the glory that will be revealed***: Peter makes mention of several things that he personally witnessed:
4. ***The gory that shall be revealed***: This takes the reader **from the Garden of Gethsemane to the cross of Calvary**. Perhaps Peter remembered his experience in Matt 17:1-5 of the mount where he personally witnessed Jesus transfiguring which he again mentions in 2 Peter 1:15-18.
5. Vs. 2 ***Shepherd the flock***: Peter seems to have in mind what is recorded for us in John gospel in the 10th chapter where we are also told in Peter’s restoration in John 21:15-17.
6. Vs. 3 ***Nor as being lords***: This admonishment seems to be a reference to the upper room where Jesus personally demonstrated servant leadership when He washed the disciples feet, John 13:1-17.

***Yet even though Peter had a unique perspective on the life and death of Jesus that only a few shared he never elevated himself to be above those whom he served alongside with and certainly never entertained what the Roman Catholic Church has claimed for him, the papacy***! Peter moved by the Holy Spirit wrote words down that are inspired by God. They grew out of his own personal experience with the Lord of Lord’s, Jesus and such an encounter was not in the **PAST** but continued in the **PRESENT** and was growing and vital to his continual transformation! Peter’s claim wasn’t that he HAD a relationship with Jesus in the **PAST** but that he had maintained a relationship with Jesus in the **PRESENT**! By this testimony Peter sets forth ***a vital quality of a Pastor or leader in the local church: If the leader or pastor doesn’t continue to grow and move forward in the local church than the local church WILL NOT move forward either***! It is imperative that the pastor and church leadership continue to grow and move forward in their own personal relationship with Jesus as their stagnation will mean the local church’s stagnation! This is why often we see the pastor of the local church go through trials and difficulties to drive them closer to Jesus than they would naturally choose on their own. As I have said we are either “driven” to God or “drawn” and my being driven has not only been for my benefit but yours as well to which I can only praise Him for! Far too often the local church suffers through thinking that now that they have a personal relationship with Jesus that they are immune to difficulties because that is what the local pastor believes as they act as if they are immune based upon their calling and service!

1. **Vs. 2-3 A loving care for God’s sheep**

1. Vs. 2-3 ***A loving care for God’s sheep***: As mentioned above the Pastoral duties are ***tending, feeding, guiding and guarding*** but here in this section Peter only mentions three specific ones:
2. ***Vs. 2a Feeding***: As mentioned the phrase “***shepherd the flock***” specifically refers to **the act of feeding the sheep**. The identification of God’s people as sheep is quite revealing as to how God sees His people and how the Pastor needs to feed them in teaching with four emphasizes:
3. ***Sheep flock together***: What this tells the shepherd is that God’s people need to be together and fellowship is an important aspect of church life and a vital part of pastoral care. No pastor is of any good if they aren’t regularly apart of the flock of God. ***There are far too many pastor’s that crank out sermons for people they don’t want to be around***.
4. ***Sheep are prone to wander***: Because of this truth it is imperative that the pastor ***teach the whole council of the word of God*** and not merely sermon-etts to Christian-etts. **Not only are we to teach them but they look to pastors to demonstrate the way to live towards Jesus and will mimic what they see more then imitate what they hear**.
5. ***Sheep are defenseless***: This reminds the pastor that ***there teaching must include protection form lies brought forth form the world system***. The body of Christ needs not only instruction and information but also protection as given in the Word of God about false teaching and philosophies that will destroy them.
6. ***Sheep are useful***: What this tells us is that ***our primary job is equipping them*** not telling them what to do but rather “*reminding them who they are*”. Sheep in biblical times were not primarily used for eating as it would have been very costly to do so. Instead ***they were used for their wool, milk and sacrifice***. The equipping of the sheep is to ***remind them that they aren’t members of the church they don’t just attained church they are the church and as such are there to provide clothing and covering for themselves and those around them, sustenance and food for themselves and others and lastly that they are here to be a living sacrifice or demonstration of what a follower of Jesus looks like***. The pastors job is to speak the truth in love by rightly dividing the word of God in such a way as to challenge the body of Christ to apply the word making themselves more useful for the Kingdom.
7. ***Vs.2b Guiding***: The words “***overseer***” is a Greek word that means to “***look over for the purpose of leading***”. This carries the idea that the “overseer” is both “among” the sheep as well as having been given the responsibility of being “over” the sheep. Any effective pastor will need to have relationships with those God has placed in his care. He will need to be among them to be guide them. There is no contradiction between pastoring and preaching nor between tending and feeding as they are both ministries of a faithful pastor. Far too many pastors have become personalities who weekly pass lectures and information about the bible to nameless faces! A good pastor is one who knows God’s sheep and they know him as he loves them and guides them through the word of God. Another unfortunate reality about sheep is they can at times be a bit rebellious and are in need of guidance. This reminds the pastor that sheep for time to time need some personal attention. Some need to be disciplined but such action must come about through love and concern from a fellow brother and not a complete stranger. Any good shepherd must always start with the realization that those under his care are NOT his sheep but belong to his Master and all have been purchased in the precious blood of Jesus. Both shepherd and sheep have a responsibility towards each other, and both will give an account to God for how they treated each other. ***Being a pastor THAT GUIDES had some dangers in it and Peter mentions two***:
8. ***Laziness***; “**Not by compulsion but willingly**”: Peter reminds the pastors that their duties must NEVER be a job that they perform! They don’t “***GOT TO***” they “***GET TO***”! Ministry can become a good place to be lazy if the servant forgets Whom they work for. Many in the church have no idea what the pastor spends his time doing and rarely asks. I’ve known men who get up four hours before Sunday to prepare the message, men who spend more time on the golf course then they do among God’s people and those who “***study at home or coffee shops***” and instead of the church. I personally believe that we can see if a person is called or has a career by the way in which they use their time and pastoring a church is never going to be a 40-hour work week it is much more than that as you are on call 24/7!
9. ***Covetousness***; “**Not for dishonest gain but eagerly**”: While the bible says that a workman is worthy of his wages and the church has a responsibility to provide for the care that the shepherd is giving them this must NEVER be the motive of the pastor. For the first 9 years of ministry I was bi-vocational, and it wasn’t until my responsibilities at church grew to such a level that I could no longer balance family, church and job effectively that I let go of my job. The pastor must never serve for a paycheck as that would make him a hireling instead he must be one that “eagerly” looks forward to serving God’s people out of love for God and love for those he serves.
10. ***Vs. 3 Tending***: The key word in this section is “but being EXAMPLES to the flock”. Peter is NOT suggesting the pastor become a “DICTATOR” to the flock but a “LEADING EXAMPLE” for the flock. Every shepherd knows the reality that you cannot “DRIVE” sheep you can only “LEAD” sheep and the church needs leaders who serve and servants who lead. ***I’m afraid that today there are far too many celebrities in the pulpit and NOT enough SERVANTS***! It is in service as being an example that the pastor balances being “***among***” the people and being “***over***” the people as they will never be seen as “***above***” the people! People have a better time following shepherds who practice what they teach as they will see not the merely the victory but the process to it! ***Pastors need to realize that they can never led people where they themselves have never gone***! God is the One who assigns the pastor to the flock and as such we have no competition in the work of God among our fellow pastors and neither should we ever be “***lording over others***” we are “***OVERSEERS***” not “***OVERLORDS***”!
11. **Vs. 4 A desire to please only Jesus**
12. Vs. 4 ***A desire to please only Jesus***: The third of the ***Three qualities that are vital for the church leader*** after: ***Personal experience with Jesus and***  ***A loving care for God’s sheep is that they must desire more than anything to please only Jesus!*** I tell every intern the same thing, “***Decide right now whom you serve and seek to please and there is only one right answer***!” Jesus is the “***Good Shepherd***” **who died for the sheep** and the “***Great Shepherd***” **who lives for evermore for the sheep** and the “***Chief Shepherd***” **who comes again for the sheep**! He alone is whom I will give account to what He has entrusted to me as His steward. We are so prone to assess the pastor, or the health of the church based upon how many attend a church and not of the health and maturity of those who attend, Jesus is not interested in how many showed up but the care of those who showed up. Some pastors are ambitus for the temporary popularity and applause that goes with it while others view churches as “stepping stones” for bigger paychecks but these will fade away and all pastors should work only for Jesus so that when we see Him face to face His rewards may be placed back at Hs feet in worship of His greatness! The pastor must ever work at growing their own personal relationship with Jesus even above that of the sheep as they will never be more effective than we they do so!