

Bible Study: 1 Peter 5:1-4

Passage

Context (Previous)

1 Pt 4:12-19 (NRSV)

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker. Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this name. For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God; if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinners?" Therefore, let those suffering in accordance with God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good.

Today's Passage

1 Pt 5:1-4 (NRSV)

Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away.

Context (Next Passage)

1 Pt 5:5-11 (NRSV)

In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

Study

1 Pt 5:1-4 (NRSV)

Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away.

1 Pt 5:1-4 (ESV)

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: 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; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

1 Pt 5:1-4 (GNB)

I, who am an elder myself, appeal to the church elders among you. I am a witness of Christ's sufferings, and I will share in the glory that will be revealed. I appeal to you to be shepherds of the flock that God gave you and to take care of it willingly, as God wants you to, and not unwillingly. Do your work, not for mere pay, but from a real desire to serve. Do not try to rule over those who have been put in your care, but be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the glorious crown which will never lose its brightness.

Questions

1. Let us remind ourselves, to whom was this letter addressed? (1 Pt 1:1-2)

Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you (1 Pt 5:1)

2. How did Peter identify himself?

At first it may seem that the term μάρτυς (martyr, witness) refers to an eyewitness, alluding to Peter's personal experience with Jesus. Against this understanding, some interpreters point out that Peter himself was not actually present to see Jesus die on the cross (Best 1971: 168; Davids 1990: 177; J. H. Elliott 2000: 819). However, that observation unnecessarily presses the precision of the phrase. From the time that Peter recognized Jesus as the Messiah and heard him predict his own rejection and death in Jerusalem, he was a witness of the sufferings of Jesus (Matt. 16:13–23; Mark 8:27–33; Luke 9:18–22). Peter witnessed the tide of popular support turn against Jesus. He saw how Jesus' ministry alienated him from his earthly family. Peter witnessed how the Jewish leaders rejected Jesus' claims, and he knew of the plots against Jesus, ate the last Passover meal with him, and observed his agony in the garden of Gethsemane, the betrayal of Judas, the arrest, and the questioning before the high priest, which led to his execution. The penetration of the nails was the final, lethal blow, but whether Peter witnessed the precise moment of crucifixion or not, he could legitimately claim to be a witness to the sufferings of the Messiah.

Reference:

Jobes, K. H., [1 Peter](#), Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI 2005, 301.

3. What is this “glory to be revealed?”
4. To whom was this part of the letter is addressed to? Why them?

to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. (1 Pt 5:2)

5. What did Peter ask them to do? Why?
6. What would this look like now?

Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. (1 Pt 5:3).

7. What does “the flock” refer to?

The genitive object of κατακυριεύοντες (*katakyrrieuontes*, lord it over) is the peculiar word κλήρων (*klērōn*, those allotted). In context *klērōn* corresponds to *poimnion* (flock) in 5:2, and both words refer to the people who have been allotted in God’s providence to the *presbyteroi*. The noun *klēros* was used to refer to a marked object, similar to dice, that was cast to make decisions as well as to the assignment that resulted from casting the die, or lot (e.g., Matt. 27:35; Acts 1:26). It is often translated “share” or “portion” and is found frequently in the Greek translation of the [Old Testament] to refer to what God had ordained, apportioned, and distributed (e.g., Num. 33:54; Josh. 14:2; 18:6). The use of this peculiar word is possibly a metaphor suggesting the idea of divine appointment of these particular people to the care of these particular elders. The *presbyteroi* need to recognize the Christian believers “among them” (5:2) as the sheep assigned by God to their care, and similarly the believers need to acknowledge the *presbyteroi* as their allotted leaders.

Reference:

Jobes, K. H., [1 Peter](#), Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI 2005, 306.

8. Did anyone else in the Bible teach not to lord over others? (Mt 20:25) How this look like today?

And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away. (1 Pt 5:4)

9. Who is this “chief shepherd?” (Jn 10:11; 21:15-19)
10. What does this “crown of glory that never fades away” mean?

The reward of faithfully shepherding the flock of God will be a crown of glory that never fades (5:4). Literally, the Greek expression is τὸν ἀμαράντινον τῆς δόξης στέφανον (*ton amarantinon tēs doxēs stephanon*, the amaranth crown of glory), where the adjective *amarantinon* refers to the quality of the amaranth flower, a red blossom whose color was unfading. The crown is an image well known to the first-century Greco-Roman world, for a wreath of leaves worn on the head was commonly awarded to those who won athletic competitions. A similar wreath, but made of gold, was frequently given as the reward for civic benefactors (Llewelyn 1994: 240). In using this imagery, Peter encourages the *presbyteroi* to faithful service in trying times. But their victory is sure, for it depends on the appearing of Christ, not on their own efforts. The victory they attain through perseverance is

an unfading (everlasting) glory. This image of a crown of unfading flowers contrasts with the withering and falling flowers of all human glory acquired apart from Christ (1:24).

Reference:

Jobes, K. H., [1 Peter](#), Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI 2005, 306–307.

End of study

Ora et labora