

Bible Study 1 Peter 5:5-11

Passage

Context (Previous Passage)

1 Pt 4:12-5:4, 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.

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.

Today's 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.

Context (Next Passage)

1 Pt 5:12-14, NRSV

Through Silvanus, whom I consider a faithful brother, I have written this short letter to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it. Your sister

church in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings; and so does my son Mark. Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

Study

Today's Reading

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.

1 Pt 5:5-11, ESV

Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. 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. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1 Pt 5:5-11, GNB

In the same way you younger people must submit to your elders. And all of you must put on the apron of humility, to serve one another; for the scripture says, "God resists the proud, but shows favour to the humble." Humble yourselves, then, under God's mighty hand, so that he will lift you up in his own good time. Leave all your worries with him, because he cares for you. Be alert, be on the watch! Your enemy, the Devil, roams round like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Be firm in your faith and resist him, because you know that your fellow-believers in all the world are going through the same kind of sufferings. But after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who calls you to share his eternal glory in union with Christ, will himself perfect you and give you firmness, strength, and a sure foundation. To him be the power for ever! Amen.

1 Pt 5:5-11, LEB

In the same way, younger men, be subject to the elders, and all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because 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 at the right time, casting all your cares on him, because he cares for you. Be sober; be on the alert. Your adversary the devil walks around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, because you know the same kinds of

sufferings are being accomplished by your community of believers in the world. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered for a short time, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

Questions

1. To whom was the first letter of Peter addressed to? (1 Pt 1:1-2) Are they persecuted?

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.” (1 Pt 5:5, NRSV)

2. To whom was this part of the letter addressed to? Why?

The term *neōteroi* is the comparative form of the adjective *νέος* (*neos*, new or young) and was never used to refer to an office of the church. The contrast is not between the older men and the younger men of the church—for which *νεανίας* (*neanias*) or *νεανίσκος* (*neaniskos*) would be expected. Rather it is between those who have the seniority and the commensurate standing that qualifies them to be *presbyteroi* in contrast to those who, for whatever reason, do not. Official elders of the church were naturally chosen from those who held seniority in the faith, which most often also corresponded to physical age. Those not (yet) qualified to be elders were “younger” in standing in the church. The term *neōteroi* therefore refers “to those who were not elders, that is to say all other church members” (R. Campbell 1994: 206).

Reference:

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

3. What does it mean to accept the authority of the elders? Why should they? What does it look like?

4. What should they clothe themselves with? Why?

Peter previously ended his instructions to specific groups in 2:13–3:7 with general instructions to all in 3:8–12, and he does so here as well. Peter instructs that “all” (πάντες, *pantes*) his readers, whether *presbyteroi* or *neōteroi*, are to clothe themselves in humility with regard to one another because “God opposes the arrogant but gives grace to the humble” (5:5). Arrogance, whether by domineering *presbyteroi* or by contemptuous *neōteroi*, evokes God’s opposition. The challenge of mutual humility is especially great in a time of persecution, for the consequences at stake may incite elders to abuse their power or believers to rebel against church leadership. But God gives grace to those who are willing to humble themselves for the sake of Christ and his flock, allowing the church to survive and thrive even in times of persecution.

Reference:

Jobes, K. H., [1 Peter](#), Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI 2005, 308–309.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. (1 Pt 5:6, NRSV)

5. Why should they humble themselves?

6. What does it mean to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God?

7. Is humility valued today?

First Peter 5:5b (cf. James 4:6) is an exact quotation of Prov. 3:34 LXX, other than the substitution of θεός (*theos*, God) for the LXX's κύριος (*kyrios*, Lord): "God opposes the arrogant but gives grace to the humble." Because Peter in his letter consistently uses *kyrios* to refer to Jesus Christ, the substitution of *theos* preserves the sense of the quotation in its original context, where *kyrios* refers to Yahweh. This quotation grounds Peter's exhortation in the authority and normativity of Scripture. His instruction to the Christians of Asia Minor is not ad hoc but reflects the attitude God has instructed his people to have whenever and wherever they have lived. Humility is truly the wise way of life, even though it was taken as a sign of "lowly slave mentality" in Greco-Roman society, unworthy of a free citizen (J. H. Elliott 2000: 847; Goppelt 1993: 253). However, Peter's readers are to regard themselves not as citizens of their society but as visiting strangers and resident aliens (1 Pet. 1:1; 2:11) who live by the standards of a different kingdom. True humility, as opposed to a contrived, self-degrading humiliation, flows from recognizing one's complete dependence on God and is expressed by the acceptance of one's role and position in God's economy. With such humility one is freed from attempts to gain more power or prestige. Instead, humility expresses itself in the willingness to serve others even beyond one's self-interest.

Reference:

Jobes, K. H., [1 Peter](#), Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI 2005, 309.

Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. (1 Pt 5:7, NRSV)

8. Who is "him?"

9. Are we being cared for? Why so?

Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. (1 Pt 5:8, NRSV)

10. What does Peter call his reader to do? Why?

Spiritual sobriety and alertness are necessary *because* the threat of destruction is real and the devil is a true adversary. Fierce animal imagery is also used in Daniel and Revelation to symbolize world systems deformed by the powers of darkness and sin. Peter may be implying with the lion imagery that satanic powers are at work in the sociopolitical system of the Roman Empire, under which his readers are suffering. The roar of a lion would scatter a flock of sheep in panic, so this threatening image coheres well with the shepherd-flock motif in 5:1–5. When a lion is on the prowl, neither the shepherd nor the sheep sleep, but both are alert and watchful. Peter's readers are to understand that the persecution they feel is "not only individual deceit and malice, but also a supra-individual orientation in society, which is called into question by Christians and is, thereby, provoked" (Goppelt 1993: 362). The goal of the devil is to devour, a graphic depiction of his desire to annihilate the Christian and, collectively, the church by assimilating them back to the evil ways of the world.

Reference:

Jobes, K. H., [1 Peter](#), Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI 2005, 313–314.

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. (1 Pt 5:9, NRSV)

11. Why should they be steadfast in the faith?

If the gospel is to survive in Asia Minor, these beleaguered Christians must not allow themselves to be scattered by the threat but must take their stand against the devil by holding fast to the gospel and their place in the Christian community.

Moreover, because the threat they perceive and the persecution they experience are caused by their very presence as Christians in the world, the same type of adversity is suffered by Christians throughout the "world."... Peter wishes his readers to see themselves not as isolated, scattered individuals but as part of God's holy nation wherever they may reside and to draw encouragement and strength from their solidarity with believers around the empire. Resistance to some degree is to be expected wherever a Christian community takes seriously its commitment to God, because the Christian church is the emergence of God's victory over the powers of darkness. Until Christ returns, the battle between good and evil will persist, and suffering for faith in Christ will be the norm for the Christian calling. The believer shares in what is the common experience of all Christians and is not alone in this.

Reference:

Jobes, K. H., [1 Peter](#), Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI 2005, 315.

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. **(1 Pt 5:10, NRSV)**

12. Why should Christians endure persecution (instead of giving up)?

To him be the power forever and ever. Amen. **(1 Pt 5:11, NRSV)**

End of study

Ora et labora