

1 Peter 5

Elders what the heck are they? Are they just the old people at church, you know respect your elders, or is there a different meaning to it.

Well, there is something different to it.

The passage says:

**1 Peter 5:1-14 (NIV2011)**

<sup>1</sup> To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed:

Let me quote from a commentary here.

*Elders (Gk. presbyteroi) were appointed from earliest times to take spiritual charge of the infant churches which came into being with the spread of the gospel (Acts 14:23; 20:17). Acts 15:2 shows that the Jerusalem church had elders at an early date. The role probably derived from Jewish precedent (Nu. 11:16-25). Their task was primarily a pastoral one. In the early days of the church they were called elders, indicating their status, and also episkopoi ('bishops, overseers') to describe their function. New Bible Commentary: 21st century edition.*

So we gather that these elder type people didn't get the job because they were old but because they had skills to be used. There apparently is an old Jewish statement "Wise as elders".

But the passage doesn't talk about their job so much as how they do it. Look at the next 2 verses.

<sup>2</sup> Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve;

<sup>3</sup> not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

Note a couple of things.

They had to be a shepherd.

Watching over the people

Not because it's a job but because it's a passion.

Don't do it for personal gain – financially nor politically

It's about serving.

Not being bossy

But being examples or role models.

Notice it doesn't give a descriptive job listing. It is broad, it allows people to be themselves in the job. But it is about Spiritual care.

Let me add one thing to that list.

It is about doing it for God.

Notice the next verse.

<sup>4</sup> And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Now that has put pressure on the elders, and just before a church election too! This passage is interesting in that it sets up that set of distinctives as something to aim for.

Notice the next verses give us a way to follow. These days so much of the material for churches is written for the church leader and we have forgotten how to be followers. And all of us are followers, first of Christ then of our leadership,

Look what it say:

<sup>5</sup> In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."

<sup>6</sup> Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

<sup>7</sup> Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

<sup>8</sup> Be alert and of sober mind.

**Submitting** (Hey we talked about that earlier in 1 Peter)

**Being humble** (Notice it says humble yourselves.)

**Cast your anxiety on God.** (Hey we've talked about this in 1 Peter too)

**Be alert and sober** (Crikey more stuff we have talked about before)

After this kind of advice, Peter throws up a warning.

**8b Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.**

The devil is trying to make things hard for Christians. Yep. The devil is trying to discredit Christians. Yep, the devil wants to destroy Christians faith, effectiveness and passion. Yep.

But where do we put this? How does the devil do it?

He will try any way to cause dissension, and angst.

He will try to cause disharmony.

He will use other Christians to criticise, be little argue with.

He uses good people, with honourable intentions to cause issues over insignificant details.

How does he get away with it? We let him.

Peter says:

<sup>9</sup> Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

Stand firm, resist. IN other words don't fall for his tricks, don't listen to the things he wants you to.

And remember, the devil is doing this to ALL Christians. We are all his targets.

Why do churches have so many issues? Satan gets in.

Why has this church in the past had so many issues? Satan got in.

Sop what are we to do? Resist.

Maybe resisting the devil needs to be a conscious part of our church vision.

And notice the next bit.

<sup>10</sup> And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

We are not alone. God is with us. God will restore, make us strong firm and steadfast.

In other words God will give us the tools to deal with it.

I love this minimalist benediction.

<sup>11</sup> To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Its just purely glorifying God. Simple and straight forward. Credit to God.

The funny thing is here that Peter realises that there is a bit more parchment to write on.

<sup>12</sup> With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.

Interesting. It is again about God's grace. Notice it is testifying about God's grace. We need to be doing it. We need to be recognizing it. We need to be applying it. Notice: Stand fast in it.

Then there is this funny verse.

<sup>13</sup> She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark.

Now from my recollection being in Babylon means being in the place of persecution or exile. So this person he talks about is either in exile or having a tough time.

Sometimes we feel like we are in Babylon. But notice, she sends greetings, she is part of the encouragement process.

This last verse is tricky.

<sup>14</sup> Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

Do we really have to run around kissing everyone.

Arrh, Let's think of the culture. The kiss was the sign of family or close friendship, it is a cultural thing. We shake hands. We pat on the back etc.

Sometimes, a kiss is appropriate. But lets not abuse this concept.