

# Exhortations for Elders

## 1 Peter 5:1-4

### Intro

It is safe to say that most people in this room are not Law Enforcement Officers and most will never become Law Enforcement Officers...

- And though this is true, it is still good to know what is expected of Law Enforcement Officers so that we might recognize faithful Law Enforcement Officers when we see them...

Likewise, most people in this room are not church elders — and most will never become elders...

- But is still helpful to know what is expected of elders so that you might recognize faithful elders when you see them...

*And what we have in our passage this morning is Peter's **Exhortations for Elders...***

- For those who are elders, this passage is of vital importance because it gives us clear instruction on how we are to carry out the ministry that God has called us to...

For those who are not elders, this passage still carries great importance because it gives you a template by which to judge the faithfulness of those who carry the title of elder...

*With this in mind, would you please follow along as I read the passage that we will be studying this morning...*

### **1 Peter 5:1-4 (NKJV)**

**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:**

**2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;**

**3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;**

**4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.**

*I've divided this passage into two simple sections...*

**1) Requirements for Elders**

**2) Reward for Elders**

*Let's move into our first section...*

### **1) Requirements for Elders (vs 1-3)**

*Before we move into vs 1, it is helpful to remind us of the last verse of chapter 4...*

## 1 Peter 4:19 (NKJV)

**Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.**

- [Reminder — trials and suffering are a normal part of life in this fallen world — believers are not exempt from these difficulties...]

*With this as our context, we move into vs 1 of chapter 5...*

### **1 The elders who are among you I exhort,**

As Peter nears the end of his letter, he writes a few lines specifically addressing **elders**...

- And it is important that we understand who Peter is referring to when he writes to **elders**...

In this context, the word **elder** does not mean simply someone who is older but instead refers to a specific role within the church...

- In fact, if you do an in-depth study of the New Testament you will find that there are a few different terms for the role of **elder**...

**Elder, overseer, bishop, and shepherd** (*Latin — pastor*) all seem to refer to the same general role — and this role essentially involves the oversight of the local church fellowship...

- How the leadership of elders functions within an individual fellowship is dependent on *calling, gifting and the leading of the Holy Spirit*...

With that said, I believe that the Lord called Brandi and me to move to Midland and plant this church...

- And I believe that the Lord has called me to be the Lead Elder or Pastor of this fellowship as well as the primary Bible teacher...

Even so, important decisions are made in conjunction with Rick, Sammy and Pablito who are also elders...

- Each of those men have specific giftings and ministry leadership roles within this fellowship and as a *team* we are seeking to fulfill our callings within this church body...

*With this in mind, please look again at vs 1...*

### **The elders who are among you I exhort,**

**exhort** — *to ask to come and be present where the speaker is; to urge strongly; to make a strong request for something...*

- [ex. picture of a coach calling a team over during a timeout...]

Essentially, Peter is calling all the elders who are reading this letter to come over to him and listen to his exhortation...

*Peter continues in verse 1...*

### **The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder**

*This is a very surprising statement...*

So Peter is not so much the **coach** as he is the **quarterback** — he is definitely in a leadership position but he is *in the game* and *not on the sidelines* — he refers to himself as **a fellow elder...**

- This is especially striking as we understand that Peter is always listed first when the 12 Apostles are referred to...

It is clear that Peter had the lead role among the 12 both *before* and *after* the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus...

- And though God gave Peter had that role, Peter didn't consider himself above the others — he considered himself to be **a fellow elder...**

This is a very important truth, especially in light of false doctrine that claims that Peter was the first Pope and that all of the Church was under his authority...

- The Church was birthed in the book of Acts and neither the book of Acts nor any New Testament epistle teaches that Peter or any other apostle was the head of the Church...

*The Lord Jesus Christ — and He alone — is the Head of the Church...*

**Colossians 1:18 (NKJV)**

**And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.**

Now, as we consider the role of elder it seems clear that elders have differing levels of authority within individual fellowships but I would argue that their authority does not extend to other fellowships...[expand]

- Peter was able to give these instructions because he was an elder *and* an Apostle — and as an Apostle he was able to share Holy Spirit-inspired instruction with fellow elders...

*Continuing on in vs 1 we read...*

**I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ,**

*It seems that Peter is using the word **witness** in at least two ways...*

***First of all, Peter was a witness of the sufferings of Christ in the sense of being an observer...***

- [expand — Garden of Gethsemane / arrest & interrogation / beating / crucifixion...]

***Secondly, Peter was a witness of the sufferings of Christ in the sense that Peter suffered physically for the cause of Christ...***

- [expand on witness being the Greek word translated *martyr*...]

***APPLICATION — You and I can witness the sufferings of Christ in the first sense through the accounts of scripture — but we cannot witness them first-hand...***

***However, as we are willing to suffer for the sake of Christ — whether the suffering is small or great — we can witness the sufferings of Christ in the second sense...***

And there is a bonding that takes place among those who suffer together...[expand]

- So, if you want to grow *closer to Christ and to fellow believers*, don't *run from suffering — walk through suffering* and see what the Lord will do...

With that said, we must always remind ourselves that ***for believers no pain is permanent...***

- Our suffering for the cause of Christ will inevitably lead to future glory...

*This is what Peter writes about in vs 1 when he says that he is...*

**a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:**

Please notice Peter's ***proper focus*** — he is willing to *suffer in the present* to receive *glory in the future*...[expand]

- [ex. this is the mindset of elite athletes...]

*For more on this subject, will you look back to...*

## **1 Peter 4:12-14 (NKJV)**

**12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;**

**13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.**

**14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.**

It is vital that we continually remind ourselves that suffering for the cause of Christ will lead to future glory...[expand]

*With this in mind let's look again at...*

## **Romans 8:16-18 (NKJV)**

**16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,**

**17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.**

**18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.**

*Please turn back to 1 Peter 5 as we move into vs...*



## 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you,

**shepherd** — *care for sheep, lead them to pasture, watch out for them, protect them, care for them, nurture them...*

*To see why this idea of shepherding was so important to Peter, please turn to...*

### John 21:15-17 (NKJV)

15 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs."

16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep."

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."

- [expand — the sheep belong to the Lord Jesus / elders are **under-shepherds** and the Lord Jesus is the **Chief Shepherd** / all the sheep belong to Him...]

*Please turn back to 1 Peter 5:2...*

**Shepherd the flock of God which is among you,**

Please notice once again who the sheep belong to — they are the **flock of God...**

*The Apostle Paul exhorted the Ephesian elders with these words in...*

**Acts 20:28 (NKJV)**

**“...take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”**

*For more on this subject, would you please turn to...*

**John 10:11-16 (NKJV)**

**11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.**

**12 But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.**

**13 The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.**

**14 I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.**

**15 As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.**

**16 And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.”**

*Now please move down to...*

**John 10:24-30 (NKJV)**

**24 Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."**

**25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me.**

**26 But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.**

**27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.**

**28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.**

**29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.**

**30 I and My Father are one."**

*Now, as we turn back to 1 Peter 5:2, we must remember that the flock of God is made up of those sheep who were purchased by the blood of Jesus — they belong to Him!...*

**Shepherd the flock of God which is among you,**

I understand this to mean that elders are only to shepherd the sheep that God has placed under their care...

- [ex. All of the sheep belong to the Chief Shepherd / He has separated them out into smaller groups and then entrusted those smaller groups to different elders...]

Because this is my understanding of the Scriptures, I do not presume to shepherd believers who are not a part of this fellowship...[expand]

- [ex. I only teach my classes at school / I don't go into another teacher's classroom and seek to teach their class...]

But I will seek to shepherd anyone who believes that this is the fellowship that God has called them to...[expand]

*Now as we move on in vs 2, Peter exhorts elders to shepherd properly...*

**serving as overseers,**

**overseer** — *one who accepts responsibility for the care of someone...*

- [expand — this oversight is *primarily spiritual care* although physical care is a secondary consideration...]

*And I believe that this was the example of the Lord Jesus...*

The ***spiritual needs*** of the people that He ministered to was always the ***primary concern***...

- Healing, feeding and deliverance were of no permanent value without trusting in the Lord Jesus for salvation...[expand]

*Next Peter writes that elders are to serve as overseers...*

**not by compulsion but willingly,**

In other words, if a man is not entering into the position of an elder because he is choosing it then he should not do it at all...[expand]

**not for dishonest gain but eagerly;**

**dishonest gain** — *KJV - “filthy lucre” — entering into the ministry for selfish purposes rather than a desire to be of service...*

*For an example of this, please turn to...*

## **2 Peter 2:1-3 (NKJV)**

**1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.**

**2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.**

**3 By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.**

The phrase **exploit you** is translated “*make merchandise of you*” in the KJV...[expand]

- [expand — treating people as **objects** instead of as **persons**...]

**HEART CHECK — Do I want something from you or do I want something for you?...[expand]**

*Please turn back to 1 Peter 5:2...*

**not for dishonest gain but eagerly;**

**eagerly** — *ready and willing to be of service...*

- Elders are to be ***eager*** to ***meet the needs of others*** rather than ***seeking gain for themselves...***

*And this attitude is possible if elders trust that God will provide for them and that He will reward them for their service...*

**Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)**

**But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**

- [recap healing of Naaman in the Jordan River and Naaman's desire to give riches to Elisha...]

**2 Kings 5:16 (NKJV)** *[Elisha responding to Naaman]*

**"As the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will receive nothing." And he urged him to take it, but he refused.**

**2 Kings 5:20 (NKJV)**

**But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, "Look, my master has spared Naaman this Syrian, while not receiving from his hands what he brought; but as the LORD lives, I will run after him and take something from him."**

## 2 Kings 5:25-26 (NKJV)

25 Now [Gehazi] went in and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, "Where did you go, Gehazi?" And he said, "Your servant did not go anywhere."

26 Then he said to him, "Did not my heart go with you when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants?"

- This is the question for elders to answer — and the answer is *no* — it is not the time to receive our reward at our own hands...

Gehazi was cursed with leprosy as a punishment — and I think it is fair to say that greedy and selfish elders have a form of spiritual leprosy...

- And we would be wise to keep our distance from these self-inflicted spiritual lepers...[expand]

*I love the attitude of the Apostle Paul as revealed in...*

## 2 Timothy 1:12 (NKJV)

...I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

If we trust that the Lord sees all and that He will reward according to His perfect judgment on that Day then we will not be compelled to seek out reward here on earth...[expand]

*Moving on in 1 Peter 5 to vs 3...*

**3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you,**

**being lords over** — *become master, gain dominion over, subdue...*

*For wonderful instruction on this issue, please turn to...*

**Matthew 20:25-28 (NKJV)**

**25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them.**

**26 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.**

**27 And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—**

**28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."**

*Please turn back to 1 Peter 5:3...*

**nor as being lords over those entrusted to you,**

**those entrusted to you** — *a portion or share...*

- [expand — certain sheep are entrusted to the oversight of certain under-shepherds...]

This is another reminder that *all of the sheep* — including the *under-shepherds* — belong to the Lord Jesus...[expand]

*Notice the last part of vs 3...*



**but being examples to the flock;**

- [ex. Charles Barkley — “I’m not a role model”...]

No elder can say this — every elder should be able to say with the Apostle Paul, *“Imitate me as I imitate Christ”*...

*Or as the Apostle John wrote in...*

**1 John 2:6 (NKJV)**

**He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.**

*Let’s move now from Requirements for Elders to...*

## **2) Reward for Elders (vs 4)**

**4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears,**

*This is a reminder of two things:*

***#1 — The Lord Jesus is the Chief Shepherd...[expand]***

***#2 — The Chief Shepherd will return and hold his under-shepherds accountable...[expand]***

*To remind ourselves of what the Apostle Paul wrote about this, please turn to...*

## **1 Corinthians 4:1-5 (NKJV)**

**1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.**

**2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.**

**3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.**

**4 For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.**

**5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.**

*Let's turn back to 1 Peter 5 as we look at the last part of vs 4...*

**and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.**

- First of all, it seems that this **crown of glory** is only available to elders...

*And I would argue that this is fair because elders will receive a more exacting judgment as well...*

## **James 3:1 (NKJV)**

**My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.**

## Hebrews 13:17 (NKJV)

**Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.**

The second thing to consider is that we don't know what the **crown of glory** is...

*But that is not a concern because we know **who the Lord Jesus is** — and **He knows what is best...***

- [ex. my grandmother used to give me ugly sweaters because she didn't know what I would like / but the Lord Jesus knows what is best for us and will reward us accordingly...]

### **Jim Elliot**

*"God always gives His best to those who leave the choice to Him."*

*Finally, we see in the last part of vs 4 that this **crown of glory...***

**does not fade away** — *unfading, imperishable, never withering, never becoming old or worn...*

What a beautiful picture of the permanence of the reward that the Lord will give to faithful elders...[expand]

## **Conclusion**

*This brings us to the end of our study — and before we move into our time of communion — I would encourage you to...*

***Familiarize yourself with the requirements for elders so that you might recognize faithful elders when you see them...***

- ***Faithful elders should recognize that the Lord Jesus is the Chief Shepherd and that all of the sheep belong to Him...***
- ***Faithful elders should willingly care for the souls of those in their care, giving to the people instead of taking from the people...***
- ***Finally, faithful elders should not lord their authority over the people but instead should be examples of self-sacrificial service...***

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (NKJV)

23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;

24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.