

Lead, Listen, and Lower

1 Peter 5:1-14

Introduction

- Only a few short weeks ago, Americans came out in record numbers to cast their vote for our future president. And if there's anything we saw clearly over the campaign, it's that we all have very strong — and divided — opinions about what leadership looks like in this country.
- But for as much importance as we place on leadership in our nation, I would argue that the leadership over God's church is even more important for us to focus on this morning.
- That's exactly what Peter addresses in the final chapter of his letter of encouragement to believers going through suffering. And many brethren have strong — and also, sadly, divided — feelings about this subject as well.
- But having good leaders, good followers of their leadership, and an overall sense of humility is exactly what the church needs today! So, let's talk about **Leadership, Listening, and Lowliness** as we finish up the series we started back in October on 1st Peter, with chapter 5.

Leadership

"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 Peter 5:1-4).

- **Takeaways**
 - Because believers are held to a high standard of judgment (1 Peter 4:17-19), especially during times of suffering and opposition, we must have leaders in place who watch out for us like shepherds.
 - Explaining the job by what it isn't:
 - "Not under compulsion" — Elders should want the job and not be forced into it.
 - "Not for shameful gain" — Elders are looking for what they can give rather than what they can get from the position.
 - "Not domineering" — Elders aren't "do as I say, not as I do" kinds of leaders, rather they're walking, talking mirrors of Christ within their congregations.
- **Applications**
 - Though Monte Vista has qualified men who serve as elders, are we on the lookout for others? Specifically, are we looking for men who want that responsibility, are eager to serve, and live with integrity as good examples?
 - Maybe turning the table a bit, are *you* that kind of person? Are you qualified in all the ways that Paul speaks about (1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9)? Or are you on a trajectory to fill that role someday? If so, the church needs you! This church needs you! Your willing leadership may be the first line of defense against the harassment and persecution of the world against God's people.

Listening

"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."" (1 Peter 5:5).

- **Takeaways**
 - What good is leadership without those willing to follow?
 - While the elders lead, the younger are called to listen to them with subjection (1 Peter 2:13-3:7).
 - And broadening out to everyone (including the elders), we must avoid pride and self-centeredness at all costs, since God only rewards humility and not arrogance.
- **Applications**
 - Tuning in to the news, a few times I heard people say, "Whoever gets elected will have my support." Are you willing to support the leadership in this church? To honor them, help them, and listen to their direction?
 - While I'm not an elder, I am a father — a leader and overseer in my home. And I'd be the first one to tell you, I'm not a perfect dad! *SPOILER ALERT*, neither are shepherds of the Lord's church! But just because a leader makes mistakes, will you still be willing to follow these imperfect men?

Lowliness

"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 Peter 5:6-11).

- **Takeaways**
 - Rather than fighting mercilessly for respect and honor in life, remember that it's God who will exalt us *at the proper time*.
 - Keep your eyes open to the devil's attacks, since he's constantly looking for your weakness to pull you away. And you're not alone!
 - In the moment, our struggles can feel enormous! But in hindsight, we realize they were only a blip on the radar of our lives. That's what they'll seem like when God restores us someday!
- **Applications**
 - Has pride caused you to demand too much out of life? Are you content with suffering for a short while on this earth, or does one minor setback launch you to defend your happiness?
 - Do you ever throw up your hands with some victim mentality that you're the "only one" experiencing the sufferings of life? And do you truly trust in God to restore, strengthen, and establish you?

Conclusion

- Maybe the best example of this kind of Leadership, Listening, and Lowliness is Jesus on his knees, washing the disciples feet (John 13). He leads them by example, willingly and eagerly washing their feet. They allow him to do this, though at first Peter protests. And his demonstration of humility serves as an example of how they should act toward everyone around them.
- Especially during difficult times, the Lord's church needs **Leadership**.
- And as those leaders protect, feed, and work with the people, we need to be good **Listeners**.
- And finally, all of us, especially in times of persecution and trials, need to remain **Lowly** and avoid the pride that can so easily divide us and cause us to fall.