

How then shall we live?  
Week 8: Remain Faithful

We are in the middle of our teaching series called, "How then shall we live?" We are going through **the books of 1 & 2 Peter**. Today, we are in the **final chapter** of 1 Peter. We will start with 2 Peter next week. We are using these scripture **journals as a tool** to help you better handle scripture and hear God's voice through it. If you don't have one, we'd like to give you one. They have **1 Peter, 2 Peter, and Jude**, all lumped together. **Jude is only 25 verses**, but it has a very similar theme as 2 Peter. So we will be reading it also.

Today, we are in **chapter 5** of 1 Peter. The **first 5 verses** are most applicable to anyone who is a leader in the church. Later in this sermon there is a **special challenge** to anyone who leads in any way in our church to use these first 5 verses.

**For all of us**, let's pick up at verse 6 of chapter 6. If you have a journal, follow along and mark anything that catches your attention as important. **<sup>6</sup> Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, <sup>7</sup> casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. <sup>8</sup> Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 5:6-11**

**What is the context here?** It's a letter being written by one of **Jesus' inner circle**, one who **followed Jesus** in his time on earth, **denied him** at the end of his life, but was **restored by** the risen Jesus and **commissioned** to continue what he started. Peter is writing a letter to **several churches** in what would be Turkey today. They are mostly **poor, outcasts on the margin**

of **society** because of their status, and even more so because they are Christ followers. They are **resident aliens. not really fitting in or belonging** in the culture around them. Because of this, they are, in some cases, **persecuted and in real danger**.

This last chapter is **Peter's final words before setting down his pen**. This, in some ways, is the **point of the spear**. It's what **they must do in order to be Jesus followers in the situation** that they find themselves in. Peter has been specific about **how they should live in different circumstances**, such as in relationship with the government, slaves, and owners, husbands and wives, within the church fellowship, and in the larger culture.

**Now Peter is drawing it all together**. It's really about two words that they have to live or they will cease to be God's people and Jesus' church. **It all boils down to these two words...Remain faithful.**

**"The central message is clear: You must remain faithful to Jesus Christ, in spite of your social condition and its potential dangers, by living obediently and in community with one another."** The NIV Application Commentary, Scot McKnight, Page 283 **Then Peter gives you how we are to live faithfully to Jesus and his mission.**

**Where does Peter start, as he gets down to what it really takes to remain faithful to God in the difficult dangerous situation that these believers find themselves? It starts with a reality check. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God (God is god, you are not, and so the only posture is humility. There's no, "I got this." Or just look within for the answers, like every Disney cartoon. That's reality and God only deals in reality.) so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 1 Peter 5:6 In the end, only those who have remained faithful will be exalted as his heirs.**

Here's the first phrase **I want you to write in your journals**. If you are using the **note page** you received this a.m., this is already there for you. **Humble submission**. Write this across from verse 6.

**Humility demonstrates patience**, we wait for God to move. This is what the people had to do **when they were toiling under Egyptian slavery**. They had to wait patiently for God to free them. **There was suffering, yes, but God was about to** do some of the most miraculous things ever on their behalf and they were going to be given their own **homeland**.

At the end of the **previous thought**, Peter says these words that lead directly into verse 6. **Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."** 1 Peter 5:5b

**The choice is clear. Either humble yourselves and submit to what God wants, even if it isn't pleasant, or you will find yourself fighting against what God wants.** Did you hear that? **It's not simply that God won't bless you, but he will directly oppose you. That is haunting.** There's no **"I'll ignore God so I won't expect anything from him, but he will leave me alone."** You will find yourself on the wrong side.

**Humble people have staying power.** Proud people tend to **wear out their welcome, or simply get bored.** They eventually figure out that it's all about them.

I remember hearing this **very similar passage from James** being taught when I was a kid. **<sup>6</sup> And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."** **<sup>7</sup> So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you...** **<sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor.** James 4:6-7 & 10 James is speaking about humility **within the church.** Peter is calling those **who are persecuted to be humble and wait for the only one** who can change the dark times they are in and that is God. **It is waiting to be exalted and vindicated by God.**

**To the person who is humble, who is willing to take the lower position, the role of a servant, God is generous with the grace that he gives.** The grace is that **unmerited favor.** I'm going to do good on your behalf, **even though your behavior doesn't warrant any grace.** You haven't even **earned the avoidance of punishment** for your sins, so here's what I'm going to do for you, **I'm going to forgive them and give you my spirit** which enables you to

remain in me to the point that you are treated as a full heir to all that I have. **It's like the worst negotiation ever.**

**Real lasts, it remains; fake doesn't. Fake breaks down under pressure. Humility is real because it sees God and self accurately and then acts accordingly.**

God's mighty hand, back to the **Exodus** where the Israelites walked out of slavery into the desert free. That was the mighty hand of God. **Humility helps us hang in there, not despair, when things aren't good.**

Let's pick back up with verse 7. **7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7**

That brings us **the next thing we need to do to remain faithful.** This one, **just like humble submission, demands trusting God** in even difficult circumstances. **Give your fears to Jesus.** Write this phrase beside verse 7.

**Anxiety comes from fear of what might happen.**

**The fears that made these original readers anxious were more like what is happening to our brothers and sisters in places like Syria, India, and Laos.** This is real persecution that can become **violent**, even life threatening.

**Our fears are different from theirs, but they still can get us off track.**

**Fear is not trust; they are polar opposites. Fear fights against the trust it takes to trust.**

Notice the word **"casting."** **Picture that for a moment. First you have to loosen your grip** on something you want to toss. **Then you decide you definitely want to be rid of it.** You don't just **open your hand and hope** God will take it. **You must let it go, throw it on him. "I can't take this, you carry it for me, I'll trust you with it, believing that you can handle what I can't handle."**

**In order to cast your anxieties, fears, and cares on Him, there must not only be trust, but it takes us right back to humility. Humility says, "I can't handle, fix, put it into order, solve this."**

**After all, he wants them. His motivation is that he cares for you. Once we cast, then he can tell us what our part of moving forward in this scary world is.**

**The problem with holding on to this stuff, refusing to trust, refusing to be humble, we cannot remain faithful to Jesus and his mission. We have another mission and that is to manage our fears and anxieties. That's a full time job.**

**Jesus wanted to use these resident aliens, these poor marginalized and persecuted people, to spread his gospel across the world. He had plans for them, but if they were constantly worried about protecting themselves, then they would have no energy or focus left for moving forward, living holy lives, sharing their faith gently, loving one another, demonstrating a different way to live.**

**What are you fearful about? Keeping up economically, your kids future, the direction of our country, people finding out who you really are, that thing that happened to you long ago that's been chasing you, finally get you, China, a virus, Russia, the liberals, the conservatives, that people will desert you like before, that people will hurt you like before, any kind of authority...**

**Holding on to any of that is a full time job and there will be nothing left for God's mission for you to make disciples, to pour into another person, helping them learn how to follow. There will be no room for you to make the transforming power of the kingdom of God present for others around you. You won't even notice the signs of the kingdom around you.**

**This is probably the scripture that was ringing in Peter's ear as he was writing this section of his letter. Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken. Psalms 55:22 NIV**

**This is not saying that bad stuff like persecution isn't going to happen. This isn't giving us the picture that we are Rain-x, and nothing will stick; all of the bad stuff will just slide right off before causing any damage. No, we won't be shaken from our position as God's children and heirs to his Kingdom. That can't be touched. Stop thinking and acting like a powerless peasant when you are a child of the king.**

Peter says that we need to **humbly submit to God and give your fears to Jesus** in order to remain faithful. **Oh, but there's more.** Let's read a little further. I think **I cut off the first very important phrase** of what is on the screen. "Be sober-minded; be watchful. **Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.** <sup>9</sup> **Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. 1 Peter 5:8-9**

Peter is saying "**pay attention and wake up**"...**Understand your real adversary.** Write this phrase beside verses 8 & 9 in your journal.

**One of the problems with our society is that anything that is not scientifically proven can't really be real. The devil is a cartoon figure in a red jumpsuit with a pitchfork. Nothing to worry about here.**

**Be careful about seeing the devil in everything.** Sometimes it's just our stupidity. **It's much more likely that people will ignore this idea of personified evil as being primitive, unenlightened.** It's like the story of Pinocchio to scare kids into not lying, or other scary nursery rhymes to keep kids from disobeying their parents. **Once you grow up, you understand that there is no boogey man, no Santa Claus, and no devil.**

We talked about **two other forces that Satan uses to keep us from remaining faithful.** We talked about the **flesh and the world.** The flesh is our **desires to get ours, for self-fulfillment, regardless of what God says.** It's that itch that you want to scratch, but when you do, it demands **constant scratching.** It's really poison ivy.

And then there's **the world** that has systems and culture that **encourages you to scratch that poison ivy**. There is **no shortage of messages and directions** from the world telling us to **fulfill ourselves sexually outside of God's plan**. There's always something telling us that **our marriage is restricting our happiness**.

Satan is roaming, looking to devour us, making us first no longer useful to his mortal enemy, Jesus, and he works within our flesh and the world. "Did God really say no? Isn't he holding out on you, keeping something really good from you?"

Here's what Jesus says. <sup>9</sup> **Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures.** I am the gate to what is good, not necessarily easy, but definitely good. <sup>10</sup> **The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.** John 10:9-10

Here's the really difficult part of understanding our real enemy. The attacks they are receiving are from Satan, who is roaming around. **It's not the people who are attacking them.** They are to be treated gently. **These attacks are to get people to walk away from their faith or get sidetracked from his purposes.**

This was persecution in their time, it can take **different forms in attacks for us today.**

- Consumerism.
- Rush.
- Racism.
- A focus on political solutions, if we can just straighten out America and get it more Christian.

Nothing can stop us, or get in the way of the church. But if Satan can get us to stop looking forward, then he will devour what we were going to accomplish for God.

**There is a question that has really been bothering me. Why did God direct us to Sanford and closed doors for what we wanted to do in Beaverton? Think about that for a minute. Is it because we were all fired up again, making big plans like in the past and nothing ever comes of it. No, I don't accept that. God did a miracle in combining two churches into one, preparing us to be effective in this community. He did a miracle in helping us raise about \$100,000 to renovate this facility to make it ready for what is next. But every time we were ready to open up a resource center to help meet people's needs caused by poverty, there was a hard stop. Locations continually fell through. And then God directed us to Sanford to open up another Cultivate Coffee shop.**

**Could it be that we aren't ready? The need is still there. There are still people struggling and hurting who need relationships with God's people, his ambassadors. Is there a feeling that this too shall pass and we can get back to church the way we like it. I believed that without a doubt God wanted us to attack a need in the community where we could move the dial in one small area, make a visible change in this community. Are we committed to this?**

**Is it that there is still some repentance that needs to take place? Are we resisting something that God wants to do in our midst that is causing him to not open up doors in this community? Is there a sense that we survived and now I get to have my needs met by my church?**

We need to pray and seek God. "Am I holding us back?"

**For both campuses, it's time to get on the phone or text people who need to be in church. Come home and be a part of what God is doing. There are people who are struggling in life and they are open to God right now. Invite them to worship or to your bridge group. Help them meet Jesus and his people.**

Let's read a little further. <sup>10</sup> **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.** <sup>11</sup> To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 5:10-11

**Yes, in order to remain faithful, we must humbly submit, give our fears to Jesus, and understand our real enemy.** But that's kind of all our responsibility. It sounds like we are doing a lot. But it's really all about God's grace. Write this phrase next to verse 10... **God's grace sustains,**

This brings us right back to the beginning of Peter's letter. <sup>3</sup> **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,** <sup>4</sup> **to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,** <sup>5</sup> **who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.** 1 Peter 1:3-5

**The grace that God used to call us will also preserve and sustain us.**

**Remain faithful, not just for eternity, but because God is doing something now and he wants you to be a part of it. That's the payoff, even when facing resistance, even persecution.**

**If God's been speaking to you, now it's time to ask what does he wants me to do to be obedient to what he is telling me. That means **Aligning my life** to what God is saying.**

**You probably remember saying the pledge of allegiance at some point, maybe when you were young. That is about saying I'm an American and my allegiance is to no other nation like it is to the USA. Does Jesus demand anything less? No, he demands more because he's a king. We need to...**Decide your allegiance.****

**Let me read this to you and, if it's your desire, you can stand and read these words together. **I pledge my allegiance to my savior and King Jesus and to His Kingdom coming now all around me and in its fullness in eternity, and to His one Church, which is His new creation, His body, the fellowship of the redeemed, established through His blood...therefore I am Jesus'****

ambassador one who makes The Kingdom present for others inviting them to return to God. 2 Cor. 5:20

**Our pledge of allegiance** to Jesus is called **Follow Jesus in Baptism**. I said earlier that we didn't have one scheduled, but we do, on **Palm Sunday**. If God is speaking to you about making this **public statement of allegiance** to Jesus, then talk to someone, or me, on staff.

Leaders do first paragraph.

Commit to 2 Peter...Pictures of my journal