**BE SHEPHERDS OF GOD’S FLOCK**

1 Peter 4:12-5:14

Key Verses 4:13

**“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;not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”**

**Introduction**



 In this passage, Peter encourages believers to suffer for Christ with joy because of the future glory that they would receive. Participating in Jesus’ suffering is God’s blessing. In this passage, elders are encouraged to be shepherds of God’s flock, having the right attitude while engaging in this work. Young believers are encouraged to be humble before God.

1. Read verses 4:12-19. Why does Peter encourage believers to participate in the sufferings of Christ joyfully? (12-13) What are the blessings or benefits of suffering for God? (14-16) Why should we commit ourselves to our faithful Creator all the more, and continue to do good? (17-19)

1-1. Read verses 4:12-19.

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. **13** But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. **14** If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. **15** If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. **16** However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. **17** For it is time for judgment to begin with God’s household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? **18** And, “If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”**19** So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

1-2. Why does Peter encourage believers to participate in the sufferings of Christ joyfully? (12-13)

 ***But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.***

- Suffering of Christ: suffering for Christ, Suffering that we have because we believe Him.

- When we suffer for Christ, we are participating in his suffering.

- Our suffering will turn to great joy when Jesus comes again.

- Our joy will surpass any suffering that we could receive in this world.

- When our hope is in Jesus’ coming we can experience joy even while participating in Jesus’ suffering.

- The more we suffer for Jesus, the greater our joy would be.

Romans 8:18 reads,

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

1-3. What are the blessings or benefits of suffering for God? (14-16)

 ***If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.***

· for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you

- “The Spirit of glory and of God” is the Holy Spirit.

- When we suffer for the names of Jesus, the Holy Spirit rests on us.

- When we suffer, we are not alone. The Holy Spirit is with us, enabling us to go through suffering.

- Having the Holy Spirit in us is the best blessing.

- God reveals his glory through the power of the Holy Spirit. His Spirit rests on those who suffer for Jesus.

- God reveals his glory to those who suffer for the name of Christ.

***15 If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. 16 However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.***

· We should not suffer because of wrongdoing. This kind suffering is meaningless and brings shame.

· do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.

- We should not be ashamed while we are suffering for Jesus.

- Rather we should praise God that we bear his name through suffering.

- It is a great honor to suffer for Christ, not a source of shame.

- By suffering for Jesus, we can demonstrate that we are His children and His people.

1-4. Why should we commit ourselves to our faithful Creator all the more, and continue to do good? (17-19)

 ***For it is time for judgment to begin with God’s household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?***

· For it is time for judgment to begin with God’s household

- God’s household - Jesus’ church, the church is God’s family and his people.

- The judgment of God is coming.

- God’s household (His people) will also be judged by God according to what they have done.

- God’s judgment on unbelievers, who don’t obey the gospel of Jesus, would be even more severe.

- Obeying the gospel means to believe the gospel and live according to the gospel.

***18 And, “If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”***

- Even for the righteous it is hard to be saved. Believers must overcome many temptations and make effort to serve God’s will in the corrupted world.

- For those who don’t believe in God it would be much harder to be saved. It is impossible for them to be saved.

***19 So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.***

- In the time of suffering we should put our trust in God fully believing in his faithfulness. We have to commit our life in his hands.

- Being aware of God’s judgment and waiting for Jesus’ coming, we should commit ourselves to God all the more.

- Also we should continue to do good despite of any challenges considering the day of God’s judgment.

- God is faithful and he never changes. We should be faithful in serving God’s will, trusting in the faithful God.

- It’s not easy to continue in doing good, having a lot of problems and challenges.

- But when we believe in God’s faithfulness, we can overcome challenges and problems and continue to do God’s good work.

2. Read verses 5:1-4. On what basis did Peter appeal to the elders? (1) What does it mean to be a shepherd of God’s flock? (2, 3) What is a shepherds’ reward when the Chief Shepherd appears? (4)

2-1. Read verses 5:1-4.

 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: **2** 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; **3** not lording it 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 will never fade away.

2-2. On what basis did Peter appeal to the elders? (1)

  ***I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ’s sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed***

- Now Peter identified himself as a fellow elder, for he had witnessed Jesus’ sufferings.

- Peter saw himself only as one fellow elder among all the elders of the church although he could have said that he is the top leader as the first disciple of Jesus Christ. Instead he humbled himself as a fellow coworker.

- Peter was qualified to speak because he was an eyewitness to Jesus’ sufferings. He saw firsthand, Jesus' torture and perhaps his crucifixion. He was also a partaker of Jesus' glory, probably referring to when he saw the transfiguration of Jesus.

- By now Peter must have known the meaning of suffering, in particular the reason why Jesus had to suffer.

- **Elders** are shepherds who takes care of God’s flock.

- Peter appeals to the elders by reminding them of Jesus’ suffering and the glory that would be revealed in the future.

- The hope for future glory is what strengthens and enables us to suffer for Christ.

2-3. What does it mean to be a shepherd of God’s flock? (2, 3)

 ***2 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; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.***

* They are God’s sheep and flock. We have to serve them with deep humility, showing a good example.
* Being a shepherd of God’s flock is the practical way to participate in Jesus’ suffering.
* Jesus suffered to take care of God’s flock and to save them.
* Now Jesus entrusted his flock to us. Taking care of his flock is participating in his remaining suffering.



 Here let us remind of what Jesus, our Chief Shepherd, helped Peter in an amazing love story!

John 21:15-23 reads,

 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” **16** Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” **17** The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. **18** Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” **19** Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!” **20** Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is going to betray you?”) **21** When Peter saw him, he asked, “Lord, what about him?” **22** Jesus answered, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.” **23** Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?”

2-4. What is a shepherds’ reward when the Chief Shepherd appears? (4)

 ***And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.***

- ***Jesus is the Chief Shepherd.*** Ultimately He is the one who takes care of his sheep.

- Jesus entrusted us with His sheep. We should take care of His sheep with a trembling heart, remembering the Chief Shepherd.

- The Chief Shepherd will give the crown of glory to those who take care of his flock faithfully.

- It is very natural for the Chief Shepherd to give reward to those who work for his flock. God never fails rewarding his servants.

- The glory God gives will never fade away. It will remain eternally. All those who take care of his flock will receive eternal glory.

3. Read verses 5:5-14. What exhortation did Peter give to young people and why? (5-7) What warning did Peter give in regard to the devil? (8, 9) What will God do for suffering believers? (10, 11) What was Peter’s final greeting? (12-14)

3-1. Read verses 5:5-14.

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.” **6** Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. **7** Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. **8** Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. **9** 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. **10** 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. **11** To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen. **12** With the help of Silas,[b] 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. **13** She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark. **14** Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

3-2. What exhortation did Peter give to young people and why? (5-7)

 ***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.”***

* It is God’s order for young ones to submit to their elders.
* God can’t bless those who don’t follow God’s Word.
* Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,“God opposes the proud
* Some marks of humility might be as follows;
* The willingness to perform the lowest and littlest services for Jesus' sake.
* Consciousness of our own inability to do anything apart from God.
* The willingness to be ignored by men.
* Not so much self-hating or depreciation as self-forgetfulness, and being truly others-centered instead of self-centered.

***6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.***

* It is God who can lift us up with his mighty hand at His due time. The only thing that we need to do is to serve others with humility.
* True humility is shown by our ability to cast our care upon God. It is a proud presumption to take things into our own hands and worry constantly.
* Worries will disappear under the command to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God who is ultimately in charge.
* Casting is an action-filled word which means to "throw it away from you." Here we are exhorted to throw all worries on Jesus.
* In reality, we need prayer and faith (trust) in God. "Prayer tells God what the care is, and asks God to help, while faith believes that God can and will do it, for God is really there and cares us. Amen!

3-3. What warning did Peter give in regard to the devil? (8, 9)

 ***Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 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.***

* Satan’s temptation is strong like a lion.
* When we have strong faith in God, we can resist Satan and overcome his temptation. When our faith stands on Jesus, our faith could be strong and powerful.
* All believers will suffer in different ways. But through suffering we can go forward fulfilling the true purpose of our life.
* We are not lone soldiers, for throughout the world our believing family members are undergoing the same kinds of sufferings.

3-4. What will God do for suffering believers? (10, 11)

 ***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. 11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.***

* Peter prayed for them to keep their faith despite sufferings. His prayer might have come from his own experience of faith in denying Jesus due to his lack of personal prayer.
* We wish we were called to His eternal glory on the "no suffering" plan. But God uses suffering to perfect, establish, strengthen, and establish us.
* God is the one who restores believers who suffer for Christ. He makes them strong, firm and steadfast.
* Because of the grace that God gives, believers can overcome all sufferings and continue to work for God.
* who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while,
* To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen. - The God who can do this great work in our lives is certainly worthy of our praise.

3-5. What was Peter’s final greeting? (12-14)

 ***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. 13 She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.***

* The true grace is that God strengthens his people to go through all sufferings and hardships.
* Greet one another with a kiss of love.
* Peter concludes with a command to greet and display God's love to one another, by pronouncing a blessing of peace.
* These two things **- love and peace** - are especially necessary for those who suffer and live in dangerous times.

**Conclusion**

 Suffering for Christ is the greatest blessing. The Holy Spirit rests on those who suffer and empower them to overcome their sufferings. We can rejoice, even going through sufferings because of the glory that is awaiting us. God wants us to take care of his sheep and suffer to serve them. We can suffer for Christ with the living hope that we have in Jesus Christ.

**One word: When our Chief Shepherd comes!**