

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 8/22/93
I Peter 5:5-7 "The Need for Humility"

Intro: Humility. The Bible places a premium on the virtue of humility. Unfortunately, our world does not.

Illust: Humorous story of newly promoted army colonel

The Bible has a lot to say about humility.

Jm 4:10 "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up."

Lk 14:11 "For whosoever exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted."

There is a great need for humility. Humility is a rare quality these days, not just in the world, but in Christian circles, and even in Christian ministries. Humility is seen as a sign of weakness, a kind of anemic quality that might have been OK for some bent-over monk in a 16th century monestary, but is out of style in the dog eat dog world of the 90's.

Illust:

Yet Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are the meek."

Q: Are you a humble person? You say, "How can I tell if I possess humility?"

That's not an easy question to answer, is it? Humility is one of those qualities, that once you think you've got it, you probably don't.

Key: True humility will be seen. There are visible evidences.

Like what? That's what we'll see this morning in I Pt 5.

Proposition: According to I Peter 5:5-7, true humility will be seen in two areas of our lives.

- I. True Humility will be seen in my response to Authority (5-6).
 - A. That includes my response to Delegated Authority (5).
 - B. That includes my response to Divine Authority (6).
- II. True Humility will be seen in my response to Anxiety (7).
 - A. God's antidote for anxiety involves Action.
 - B. God's antidote for anxiety involves Acceptance.

READ vv 5-7

I. True Humility will be seen in my response to Authority (5-6).

V 5 "In like manner"

Instantly we must recognize that we have jumped into the middle of a larger section of teaching. Peter, the human author, is writing to hurting Christians in the 1st century. In fact, the theme of suffering is the backbone of this book, mentioned some 15 times. A wave of persecution instigated by Emperor Nero started just a year before Peter wrote this letter. Society labeled followers of Christ as evildoers (2:12).

What does a persecuted, victimized, blackmailed Church need? It needs Leaders. That's what we saw last week in vv 1-4. Hurting sheep need a shepherd. They need to be fed and led and mended and protected.

Now watch the transition--"In like manner ye younger submit yourselves (5)". This is the same phrase Peter used earlier, in the "submission section" of his letter.

Back in ch 2, we learned that all Christians need to exhibit submission. Where? In our response to government officials (2:13). In our attitude towards our bosses (2:18). In the way we relate to our spouses (3:1, 7). And now in ch 5 Peter says submission is needed in the church.

Here's the point. True Humility will be seen in my response to Authority.

Q: What kind of authority? Peter highlights 2 types of authority in vv 5-6.

A. That includes my response to Delegated Authority (5).

V 5 "ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder"

Q: Who are the younger?

On the heels of his sobering charge to church leaders in vv 1-4, Peter moves to another group in the church--the "younger." The word simply means "new" or "young." Peter may have in mind the young men of the church, the future leaders. More likely, he's talking to those who are "younger" spiritually in the church.

Q: What are the younger to do?

"Submit yourselves unto the elder." The actual greek word is plural. "Submit yourselves unto the "elders." The elders, according to v 1, are the spiritual leaders of the church. The elders are men who have walked with Christ for many years, who possess a sense of spiritual stability, and who have earned the respect of those around them. The elders are those who possess delegated authority from God for oversight in the Church.

Let that sink in. It is a sobering matter to be a leader in a church. That goes for Pastors, for Deacons, for Youth Leaders. God has delegated His authority to church leaders, and God holds church leaders accountable.

See: Heb 13:17 "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit..."

Listen. True humility is seen in the way we respond to delegated authority.

Illust:

But submission is not a one way street in the church.

V 5 "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility"

There's our word. Humility. Be clothed with humilty.

The phrase "be clothed with humility" is picturesque. It's a rare greek word. It was used to describe what a servant would do before beginning his work. He would put on an apron to protect his clothing while working.

No doubt Peter had a vivid scene in mind when he used this word. Some 35 years earlier he had seen his Master wrap Himself with a towel, and stoop before his

feet. He watched with amazement the Lord of the Universe take the role of a lowly servant. He felt the water and the loving affection of His Savior. And he heard these words.

See: Jn 13:13-15 "Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am. If I then...have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet..."

May I remind you that "Be clothed with humility" is a command. It's not an option. We're called to serve one another. ALL of us. Why?

Peter quotes Prov 3:34 to underscore this unchanging truth. Humility is essential for two powerful reasons...

1. God resists the proud. (lit. "God sets Himself against the proud.")
2. God gives grace to the humble.

Think of that. God resists the proud. Do you know why God resists the proud? It's because God hates pride.

Most of us would do well to read Prov 6:16-19 once in awhile, "These 6 things does the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto Him..." Which is listed first on God's most hated list? "A proud look."

Who are the "proud"? By definition the word means "showing oneself above others." God resists the proud. But God gives grace to the humble. Wiersbe says this, "The only antidote to pride is the grace of God, and we receive that grace when we yield ourselves to him." (431)

Illust: What Wesley said of Whitefield...

Let's bring this truth a little closer to home. The basic meaning of the word "humble" is "to make low." Friends, humble people don't walk around with their noses up in the air. Proud people do. Humble people don't love the limelight. Proud people do. Humble people don't have an inflated view of themselves and a deflated view of others. Proud people do. Humble people don't have a problem with authority. Proud people do.

Illust:

True humility will be seen in my response to Delegated authority. Secondly...

B. That includes my response to Divine Authority (6).

Key: We can never be submissive to each other until we are first submissive to God (Wiersbe).

V 6 "Humble yourselves..."

The tense of the verb is significant. It's passive. V 6 lit. says, "Allow yourselves to be humbled." Since God gives grace to the humble (5), willingly allow yourself to be humbled under His mighty hand (6).

How do we do that?

Illust: Suppose I found out I had a tumor. And suppose I met with the surgeon to discuss the dilemma. If he looked me in the eye, and told me he could remove the problem through surgery, what would I have to do? I would have to choose

to be his patient. I would have to consent to his proposal. I would have to submit my life to the care of his hands.

Remember, the men and women who first received Peter's letter were facing some rough times. Peter's counsel was to the point. He taught them that if they were going to survive, they needed to cooperate with their leadership. But most importantly, they needed to cooperate with God.

"the mighty hand of God"

It's a rich OT image referring to God's Sovereign control. Sometimes the "hand of God" refers to God's Discipline, and sometimes to His Deliverance.

Working Definition: Humility is an attitude of accepting whatever takes place in our lives, realizing that nothing can come into our lives without going through the wise hands of Almighty God.

Let's camp on that word "Accepting." It's not easy to accept things. Oh, we don't have a problem accepting the good things. But that's not what I Peter's all about anyway. I Peter's all about accepting the hard things, the trials, the suffering.

See: Rom 5:3-5 "...we glory in tribulations"

Q: What keeps us going?

A: The same hand that allows the suffering now will lift us up later!

V 6 "that He may exalt you in due time"

In due time. This is an age of suffering, of injustice, of pain. But just wait. In due time. Gal 6:9 "In due season we shall reap if we faint not."

That's what humble living is all about. Being humble is not being weak. It's just the opposite. It takes fortitude to be humble. Humble people get mocked and trampled on in our world. But God calls us to be different.

Q: Are you acknowledging God's authority in your life? Are you cooperating with His program for your life?

Illust: Harriet Beecher Stow...humbly gave God the credit

Tran: True humility will be seen in 2 areas of my life--first, my response to Authority.

II. True Humility will be seen in my response to Anxiety (7).

What a hot topic these days! Books about dealing with stress and tension are flooding the market, even the Christian market. People are searching like crazy for counsel on how to deal with anxiety.

Tonight: Begin a 2 week series "God's Prescription for Dealing with Stress"

Look at the word "care" in v 7. The word lit. means "the state of being pulled apart." That's what anxiety's all about. Someone has said that worry is the American sin.

Notice something very important. Anxiety is normal. It's part of life. Life is full of stressors that tend to pull us apart (eg--Lk 8:14).

eg--Paul in II Cor 11:28 "...the care of all the churches."
Anxiety is normal. The real issue is this.

Q: What do you do with anxiety? There are 2 approaches:

#1 "I can handle it. I can take care of myself."

#2 "Without Christ I can do nothing, but with Christ, I can do all things."

In v 7, God gives us an antidote for anxiety. It involves 2 steps.

A. God's antidote for anxiety involves Action.

V 7 "Casting all your care..."

If we're going to deal with anxiety God's way it's going to take action. What kind of action?

"casting"--Notice the word is a participle. It's not a new command, but is connected to the main verb in v 6. We could insert the word "by"--"Humble yourselves by casting all your care on Him."

Warning: There are some unbiblical ideas floating around in the name of Christian counseling. Just because someone calls himself a Christian counselor, or just because a book promotes itself as "Christian" does not mean it's biblical.

Illust: (MacArthur, Anxiety Attacked, p. 10) See what you think this advice from a contemporary Christian book. "We suggest setting aside 15 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes in the evening for active worry..."

Q: Is that what the Bible says to do with worry and anxiety? Does the Bible suggest that we limit worry to 2 sessions a day? No.

Jesus commanded us not to worry at all (Mt 6:25). Peter says to cast ALL our care on Him.

Quote: John MacArthur, Anxiety Attacked, "The suggestion above (about 15 minute sessions for active worry) makes about as much sense as prescribing a time limit for lascivious thoughts or any other sin that comes naturally to sinners!" (10)

Please don't misunderstand me. I'm not against counseling. There is a great need for biblical counseling. There's a great need within the church for qualified, caring people to come alongside those who are gripped by anxiety and guilt.

Q: What does the Bible say we are to do with anxiety and care in v 7?

A: "Cast it on the One who cares."

The word "casting" was used to describe throwing something on someone, like throwing a blanket on an animal. That's what we're to do.

Take all your anxiety and fear and worry and despair and throw it. Throw it where? "Upon Him."

When stress producing events enter my life, quite often I have no control over them. In fact, when we cast our care on the Lord, Peter does NOT say the trial will leave. The problem may still be there. But the anxiety is gone.

Listen. Getting rid of anxiety involves effort and decisive action. It demands a specific decision to toss my worry on the Lord. Sadly, what too often happens is that we deal with the anxiety superficially. We may try to pop a pill to cover up the anxiety. Or maybe we'll turn to alcohol to sedate our inner turmoil.

But if we want to be biblical in dealing with anxiety, if we want to get to the bottom of things, we've got to make a decision. We must consciously cast our care on the Lord.

Objection: "How can I be sure God wants all my anxiety?"

That relates to step #2. In God's antidote for anxiety, the first step involves Action. Now the second...

B. God's antidote for anxiety involves Acceptance.

V 7 "for He careth for you"

If I am to deal with anxiety biblically, I must accept this biblical truth--God cares for me.

I remember the first time I investigated this text to preach it. It was 1982. The lit. Greek order hit me like a ton of bricks. If we were to translate it in a wooden fashion it would read, "Because TO HIM it matters concerning you."

Let that sink in. It matters to God concerning you.

Sometimes we may "feel" like our lives don't matter to God.

eg--The disciples in Mk 4:38 "Master don't you care...?"

Surely people let us down. It hurts greatly when someone that we thought really cared shows their true colors, and leaves us high and dry.

But friends, it matters to God about you.

LB "Let Him have all your worries and cares, for He is always thinking about you and watching everything that concerns you."

Philips Modern English "You can throw the whole weight of your anxieties upon Him, for you are His personal concern."

That's what makes Christianity so unique. We don't have to coax God to notice us, and care for us, like other religions do. He already knows all about us! And He already cares for us!

That's why we can cast our anxiety on Him.

Q: Have you ever heard someone testify, "I was in the pits. I prayed and it was as if God lifted a heavy weight off my back." That's what He did!

We serve a God Who delights in rolling away burdens! When a sinner calls out for forgiveness, God removes the burden of sin. When an anxiety-filled Christian calls out to God, God replaces the worry with peace.

Illust:

Let me ask you again. Are you a humble person? True humility is seen in the way you respond to authority, and in the way you respond to anxiety.