

Loving Shepherds and Grateful Sheep



Bro. Kory Cunningham
1 Peter 5:1-5

Isn't it good that the Lord is our good shepherd? It's really neat sitting on the front row and hearing you guys read that responsively and hear God saying here's what I'm doing, and then we are responding and talking about what God is doing in our lives and how thankful we are that we have a shepherd that watches over us.

We are in 1 Peter chapter 5 this morning.

You know, I don't own a single animal except for a goldendoodle named Grizzy, but this past week I was responsible for 80 cows, 3 horses, 2 goats, 6 chickens, and about 3 cats and that is because my parents went away on a little anniversary three day trip. So I was left with all of their animals. See, I don't own any animals, but my parents do and when they leave that means that I get put in charge of all of the animals.

Now, the reason they put me in charge is because I do know how to care for all of those animals because they've taught me. I'm a farm kid. I was raised on the farm so I know how to do all of those things, but I will just say that this week my routine was a little different than normal. I would

have to wake up and go let the horses out of the stall. Then I'd have to clean it, put feed out, hay out, and then make sure they had water. Then I had to go to the cattle pasture, make sure all of the fences were up, that they were grazing correctly, and all of the different things.

As you know we had some storms. So, Wednesday there were huge downpours of rain and I had to figure out if all of you guys were ok. I was calling different people to make sure that those who had houses that were vulnerable to flooding were ok, but I was also in a mule driving around a farm to make sure the cows were ok. I was checking water and checking fences because I knew that I wasn't just responsible for some sheep, but I was also responsible for a whole lot of cows and they needed to be alive when my parents got home. That was kind of the goal.

But, I want you to see that the reason my parents left me in charge of these animals when they left was because they love their animals. If they didn't love the animals they would have just left and not put anybody in charge of them, but that's not what they did. Instead, when they left they left me in charge because they know I can take care of the animals. I know how to feed cows, take care of chickens, gather the eggs, and do all of the things.

So it was because of love that my parents left me in charge of the farm in their absence. What we are going to see this morning is Peter. He is going to write to the elders, who we are going to see the pastor/shepherds of the flock of God, and he is going to give some exhortation to them and he's going to do it in front of all of the sheep, in front of all of the congregation.

So one of the things that I hope we see is number one, how to shepherd well. I want us to see how shepherds need to love the sheep, but also, as a sheep of God, I want you to see God's love when he left. Think about Jesus, our good Shepherd, he's not with us anymore. He is in heaven. He has promised to come back, but when he left, he didn't just leave you alone. He left you with shepherds. He left you with shepherds to watch

over you, care for you, feed you, lead you, and protect you. I want you to see that it was his love that left shepherds to care over you.

So hopefully what we are going to see is for the shepherds to love the sheep, but also for the sheep to be grateful for the shepherds because the reason my parents left me in charge is because they love their animals. The reason God put pastors over his church is because he loves the sheep. So there shouldn't be a competition. There shouldn't be a butting of heads between sheep and shepherds. It should be a loving relationship- sheep being thankful for their shepherds and shepherds loving their sheep.

So let's go to 1 Peter chapter 5 and let's see how Peter addresses these elders, pastors, or overseers.

Scripture:

1 Peter 5:1-5 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: 2 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; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. 5 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."

So it's a little bit of an awkward message because it's sort of like Peter talking to me to tell you guys what Peter says to me. So it's going to be a little awkward in the conversation because he's writing to elders. He's writing to pastors and he says...*hey, I have a word for those in the congregation who are the pastor leaders.* But I want you to notice that he uses it in the letter that he's writing to the whole church.

So, yes, he's addressing pastors, he's addressing the elders, but he's doing so in front of the whole congregation. He's doing so, so that everybody hears it. In other words, he's talking to the shepherds but he's doing so in front of the sheep. So it's good for you to hear all of the things that Peter says to your leaders.

So it's a little bit of an awkward sermon, but it's one that you should long to hear and want to hear. I don't think Peter wrote a private book just to the pastors and said...*hey, read this, but don't show the congregation*, and the reason I think he told everybody this is because he wants the sheep to also be grateful for their shepherds. He wants them to be grateful that God loved them enough to leave them in someone's care just like when my parents left. They left me in care because they love their animals. God loves you so much that he left you with people to help you in your walk with the Lord and we are going to see that as a good thing.

So, the first thing we are going to talk through is what exactly an elder is. We are going to deal with an elder and we will talk about his work, his motivation, and his reward. Then we will deal with sheep and shepherds together and how they get along.

What is an elder?

First of all, what exactly is an elder? Does Hardin even have those? I've been asked before why Hardin doesn't have elders. Here, Peter is writing to the elders. Do we even have any of those here? Would Peter even be addressing anybody? We are going to see that yes, Hardin has elders and yes, he is addressing people here in this church.

We need to ask, what is an elder? Who exactly is that?

So, I will just read, chapter 5, starting in verse 1, "So I exhort the elders among you..." Here we find our word "elder." So, what is that? Well, if you see in the passage he actually explains what an elder is. If you look down in your Bible to verse 2, he tells the elders to shepherd and oversee.

So hey, elder, here is what you need to do. You need to shepherd and you need to rule. You need to shepherd and oversee the flock of God.

So, what is an elder? An elder is someone in the church with an official position- they are an elder- and what do they do? They shepherd and they oversee the church. That is what an elder is. So, do we have those? Yes! What do we call them? We call them pastors.

So what we think the Bible teaches is not that there are elders, there are pastors, and there are overseers (some call them bishops). We don't see those as three different people doing three different things. We see that from scripture in our view. Now, different people have different views. Different denominations have different views. But, what we see from scripture, and we are going to see it strongly in this passage, is that it's not three different people. There aren't elders and pastors and bishops or overseers, but instead there are elders who shepherd and rule.

In other words, the elders are those who pastor the church. They rule and exercise authority over the church. So we are going to see from our text that it is ONE person who is elder, pastor, and bishop. We are going to see that what we find in scripture is that this is one position that all three of these things are being talked about.

So, I'll just give you a definition. An elder is a man who oversees and shepherds the flock of God. That is what an elder is- a man who oversees and shepherds the flock of God. Now, there are some funky words in this definition because that is showing you what the Greek word for both elder, overseer, and shepherd is in this particular text, verses 1 and 2.

Elder – “presbyteros” – is an official.

Think about in Israel and how they had elders. They had the scribes and the elders. Now, they are usually the bad guys because usually the leaders of Israel at this time before Jesus weren't always the good guys. But, the

elders in Israel are shepherding and overseeing Israel. They are making sure the Israelites are obeying the covenant, going to temple, and doing those things.

So, those are the elders. The ones in charge. The leaders. So it is an official position, but if you read through the story of Acts, after about 14 or 15 chapters all of a sudden that term "elder" is not being used for Israel primarily; it's being used for the church. Those who lead, those who are in leadership, those who are overseeing and shepherding the church are now called elders. So Paul, when he goes to the Ephesus elders in chapter 20 verse 28 and he calls them and says... *hey, to the elders...* Then he tells them to shepherd the flock of God and to exercise oversight.

So we see now the elders are the leaders of the church. So, "presbyteros" think of Presbyterian. They get their denominational name from that word "elder." So this is the official leader of the church. It would be the elder.

Now we get the other term in our text, which is translated shepherd.

Shepherd – "poimen" – to shepherd or translated as pastor.

That is the work of that elder. Who is the elder? The official leader. What does he do? He is going to shepherd. He is going to pastor.

We see in Ephesians 4, verse 11 that Jesus gives gifts to men and one of those gifts is to be a pastor/teacher. Some would say shepherd/ teacher, but the NIV says pastor/teacher. So this would be that person who is pastoring. What does a pastor do? They shepherd the flock of God.

We also see the other word in our definition is overseer.

Overseer – "episkopos" – the overseer, the guardian.

Think Episcopalian. They have that from that root word. The one who is ruling over, organizing, and trying to lead in that leadership role. Some

translations have "bishop," but I think a better translation is "overseer." When we think about bishops we think about people in robes and we don't wear many robes, but you could call me Bishop Kory if you wanted to. That would be an appropriate thing because I am one of the overseers of the church.

What I hope that you see in our passage is that Peter is writing to the elders, the presbyteros, and he's writing to them saying... *here's what you need to do. You need to shepherd; you need to rule. You need to pastor and oversee....*

So, what we find is the elder is that position or that leader. And then here is what that leader does- they both shepherd and they rule. So what we see from scripture is not that there are three different positions within the leadership structure of the church. When it comes to this leadership structure it is one position. The elder is the pastor who is the overseer.

Now, there are more offices. Think about the deacons in the church. That would be those who are caring for more of the physical needs of the body of Christ, but we see that God has left us shepherds and you can call those elders. So, does Hardin have elders? Yes, we just call them pastors because it is speaking about the work not necessarily the position, but if you want to call me Elder Kory that is fine. You can do so if you want to. I prefer Pastor Kory; that is more how we do it here, but hopefully what you've seen from this passage that this is not three different things. This is all of the same just speaking of different parts of what they do. So in this passage they are all working together.

What are the qualifications?

So, the question would be who qualifies for an elder? Are their qualifications? Do you have to go through something to become an elder/pastor/overseer? The answer is: YES! The Bible actually has qualifications for an elder.

If you want to jot these in your notes you can. You can find them in the following scriptures:

- 1 Timothy 3
- Titus 1:5-9

If you look through those lists there are really a few main things. They need to be a person of good reputation. They need to be of good character. They need to be able to manage their own household well. If you are a pastor and your family is going crazy then you're probably not going to do well to oversee the family of God. You have to have some general knowledge in how to rule over your little family before you can rule over the family of God.

So there are different things when it comes to the person who is going to be this overseer. In both of those passages the person must be able to teach. So the question would be why would an elder need to teach? Why is that a qualification? Why do you have to be able to teach in order to be an elder?

Well, because we find in our passage, what does an elder do? They shepherd. That is the main role. They shepherd and they oversee. And what is the main role of the shepherd? I can tell you, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, my main role with the horses was to feed them. My main role with the cows and the chickens was to feed them. If I don't feed them then they die. So, one of the main roles of a shepherd who is shepherding the church is to feed the sheep, to feed the flock of God.

Think about how plain Jesus made this to Peter who is telling us this... *Hey, Peter, do you love me?*

Peter was like... *Yes, I love you.*

...Well, if you love me feed my sheep, care for my sheep. Feed my sheep.

So, one of the roles of the shepherd is to feed the sheep. That is why the shepherd- a pastor/elder-overseer- must be able to teach.

So we see these qualifications, but one of the disqualifications- which is very controversial, but I will just go ahead and tell you what the Bible says- is that the elder is the position for a man only. We see this primarily in 1 Timothy chapter 2, verses 12-15. I will read it. Here is what Paul says, "12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. 15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control."

So what is the context here? Well, 1 Timothy chapter 2 is in the context of corporate worship. They are in a gathering of the saints. This is a church service and he says in that church service, in that gathering of the saints, I don't permit a woman to preach and teach the word of God in that formal pulpit setting. Now, there are other ways that a woman can definitely do those things, but this would be in that church gathering setting that I am not permitting a woman to do that or to exercise authority over a man in that position.

So, what are the qualifications for an elder/pastor/bishop? It is to shepherd and teach and rule over. So those are the things that we are supposed to do and Paul is saying... *hey, I am forbidding a woman to be able to do that...* Then, if you notice the next verse over in chapter 3 says if anyone desires to be an overseer he desires a noble task. So it is in the context of pastoral ministry... *Here is what a pastor is and here are the qualifications of a pastor. They need to teach and rule and I am saying a woman is not permitted to do that in the setting of the local church, in the preaching ministry of the church...*

So, what do we say an elder is? An elder is a pastor. So we say women can't be pastors in the sense that they are ruling, teaching, and preaching in a church setting. Why is that? Well, God said it. So don't look at me

like...*well, you're mean!* No, this is what God said, but there is actually a reason why God said this and it has to do with creation, fall, and redemption.

See, first of all, in creation Adam was created first. So it has to do with creation. Then secondly, Eve was deceived so it has to do with the fall. There are consequences because of the fall. But then lastly there is redemption that a woman is going to be saved through childbearing.

Now, what does that mean? Does that mean that women actually get saved when they have babies? It doesn't mean that at all. What it means is that when it comes to how God has created gender there are gender differences and it is that two people- men and women- would use their gender in the way that God has gifted and God has ordained. And one of the ways that God has not ordained for women is to be pastors; that is reserved for men only. And when we practice those and come under those we are showing that we get the redemption that God has done and that we are listening to God and submitting to God. We are saying...*God, you know and I don't so we are going to do it your way.* So, I know that is controversial and I know that even in SBC we've had some arguments about that, but I think when you read scripture in context it seems very plain that the office of elder, overseer, shepherd, that pastor is reserved for men in the Bible.

Why do we need elders?

Now, we do see that there is a need for elders. Why do we even need elders? Why even have leadership? Why don't we just let everybody do what they want? Well, it didn't work well in Judges, but also in Titus chapter 1, verse 5 says this, "This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—"

So, Paul is saying...*I've planted churches. I've planted a bunch of them. Hey, Titus, I'm going to leave you in charge of appointing elders. You need*

to appoint official leaders of the church who are doing the work of shepherding and overseeing because the church needs leadership.

Because the church is a flock of sheep. This is God's language, right? And what we know about sheep is that they are not always the smartest animals. Sheep get in a whole lot of trouble. And, I don't know about you, but I get that because I'm a shepherd, but I'm also a sheep and I know when I sing songs that say things like, "prone to wander, Lord, I feel it," I feel that. Does anybody else feel that when you sing that song? Man, we just feel that! We are like sheep that do so many sheepish things and what do we need? We need shepherds who help us, who lead us, prod us, and show us the right way to go.

This is God's goodness. He's given us this so that we would have leaders who are shepherding over us. Again, my parents left town, they have animals, and they left me in charge because animals can't care for themselves. They need shepherds. They need someone to shepherd over them.

Who are the elders at Hardin Baptist Church?

So, who exactly would Peter write to at Hardin Baptist Church? Who are the elders at Hardin Baptist Church that fit that elder position? So it is an official position. They are shepherding and ruling over the flock of God. So that would be myself, Brother Ricky, and Chris Lawrence. Those would be the three that we have right now that would fit those qualifications.

Now, we have a whole bunch of other people- staff, support staff, ministers- a whole bunch of people who do a whole bunch of other things to care for you and care for a lot of different needs. We have counselors and a lot of different people that serve you as the church. We also have a deacon body, but those would be the three that Peter would say let me see your elders. I need to have a talk with them. It would be us three at this point.

Now, we also have a guy named Chase Bright. We sent one of our pastors out, his name was Nick Calhoon. He was our youth pastor. We sent him to Nicaragua and he is there to plant churches in Nicaragua. So we are so excited and pumped about what they're doing, but that left us with a void. Now we don't have a youth pastor. Well, Chase Bright was the person that he brought on to serve in the youth ministry to take his place. Chase has done that, but you might have noticed on the website or maybe in how we talk about him that he is our youth director. That has been intentional.

We didn't immediately call him youth pastor because that word "pastor," if we are going to stick to a biblical sense, is an elder, ruler, overseer, shepherd of our church. So we needed them to be some space. We needed there to be some direction so for the last two years Chase has been in the pathway to becoming a pastor. We've read books together, we've scrutinized him, we've put him under the fire, and we've watched him. He has been a young man that has shown outstanding character, a man who can manage his household well, a man who is not greedy for gain, a man who can teach the word of God, and a man who is leading students. He is a man who has shown himself to be a man of good reputation and all of the qualifications of what an elder/pastor/overseer would be.

So, here in about a month or two we are going to have an ordination service. We are going to invite you guys to come and we are going to move Chase from director to youth pastor. That will mean he's one of those guys now that is helping to oversee and shepherd the youth and also the overall flock of God.

You might know Trevor. He is our pastoral intern. What exactly is a pastoral intern? That is a new position that we just created about a year ago. The point of a pastoral intern is to teach young guys how to be pastors. So he is also on that pathway of eventually becoming a pastor whether that is here at our church or if God is stirring in him church planting overseas, then we are all for that, too. But, he is learning how to be a pastor, how to shepherd, how to oversee, and how to rule so we are trying to develop more guys who are going to be pastors here and all over the nations.

So that is who we have now and who we are trying to bring up.

Notice Peter in this text. He is writing as a fellow elder. He exhorts the elders as a fellow elder and I think we see the humility of Peter there because do you know what Peter could have said? *Hey, elders, let's talk and by the way, I'm the apostle. I've got the trump card. You are an elder, that's great, but I'm an apostle. I'm one of the ones that was sent by Jesus. I walked with him, I saw him, so I'm the authority here. You have to listen to me.*

He doesn't use that card. Instead, he says he is a fellow elder. In other words, he is saying he is a fellow shepherd/overseer of the church, too. He wanted to link himself with these guys. He wanted to say...*Hey, I'm right there with you. I'm walking this life with you not as someone above you, but as someone who is right beside you.*

Notice he says...*man, I saw the sufferings of Jesus. I was there. I saw it. I saw the sufferings of Jesus and am a partaker in his glory.* If you read verse 1, it says both of those things. If you notice that he saw his suffering, think about Peter. He is writing for shepherds to love the sheep and he saw the good shepherd love the sheep ultimately. He saw Jesus die on the cross for his sheep. So now he is saying...*hey, shepherds who are under Jesus, you better go love the sheep well because Christ loved them ultimately.*

But also he is sharing in the glory to come. He is sharing in that taste of new birth, new creation, new kingdom, and all that is happening and will forever. He is sharing in those things right now. So it is a beautiful thing that Peter is walking through.

That is what an elder is. An elder is an official leader of the church who is shepherding and overseeing the church. We call those pastors.

What do elders do?

So, what do they do? An elder's work is in verse 2 and it says this, "shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight..." So now we get into his actual work. What does he actual do? He shepherds and he oversees.

So think about shepherd first. See, what sheep need is to be fed, to be led, and to be cared for. So just think about what we just said? We just responsively read Psalm 23. It talks about all of those things... *Lord, you're my shepherd who is leading me into green pastures. You are restoring my soul. When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I'm not going to fear because you are with me.* There is protection that comes with that. So we see a shepherd, when it comes to sheep, they are protecting them, they are feeding them, and they are watching over them. They are shepherding them.

See, we are not cowboys. John Stott points out that a cowboy is someone that gets behind a herd of cows, maybe on a horse, and prods this herd of cows to go in a direction. That is not what shepherds do. No, shepherds walk among the sheep and in front of the sheep and lead them where they need to go. That is what a shepherd does. That is what pastors do. They shepherd the flock of God.

But, notice a few things that we see even in this text. It says, "shepherd the flock of God." That is really important for these shepherds to remember. The sheep are not yours. The people are not yours. Even though they come to your church, they are not yours; they are God's. This is God's flock.

I was very aware of that when I was taking care of 80 cows. They weren't mine so I couldn't do whatever I wanted. I had to do what Mom and Dad would have wanted me to do. I was under their authority. I was treating the horses like they would have treated them. I would have just let them

go, but they don't want that. So I took care of them because they aren't my horses they are THEIR horses.

In the same sense it is the flock of God. God is the one who owns the church and his people. And notice this, "that is among you." That is a good little phrase. Shepherd the flock of God that is among you. He is saying...*hey, pastors. Don't pastor everyone, but instead pastor the people that are entrusted to you- your local church, your local expression- pastor those people well.*

I think it was Paul Tripp that says a shepherd should always smell like the sheep. And that is so true. Every morning when I came back to the house I smelled like a horse. Katie said, "Take a shower."

I said, "I know. I smell like a horse."

Why? Because I was in the midst of it. I was walking them and brushing them. A pastor should smell like the sheep because they are in life together. It's not that the shepherd is above the sheep. The shepherd is right there with the sheep. And the pastor actually needs a shepherd just as much as the sheep do because the pastor is also a sheep. So a shepherd should smell like the sheep- walking among them, loving them, and knowing the people that are under his care.

Then notice after shepherding there is exercising oversight. I think that has to do more with leadership because what sheep need, what people need, and what a church needs is also leadership. Yes, you need pastoral care and you need shepherding, but also you need leadership.

What are we doing? Where are we going? How do we get there? What does discipleship look like? What do I need to do in my daily life?

There is some structure that needs to happen when it comes to the church. Yes, it is an organism, but it is also an organization. So there needs to be some structure to it like Sunday school, small groups, and ministries. It's

like here is what we are doing, sign up for this—this is how you sign up for this. Then here are the discipleship groups, because pastors need to make sure that believers-sheep- are moving in the right direction to glorify God with their life.

So there is leadership. There is oversight. There are decisions that have to be made based on what the church needs and what God would want. So God has given shepherds who are elders to make the decisions together in how God wants the church to move forward.

What is an elder's motivation?

So, an elder works. He is a shepherd who also exercises oversight, but then we see an elder's motive. It says this in verse 2, "...not under compulsion..." So shepherd and rule not under compulsion, picking back up in verse 2, "...but willingly as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock."

Notice, there are three pitfalls here. They are:

- Duty
- Greed
- Power

The first one is duty. He says, "...not under compulsion, but willingly..." In other words, don't pastor because you have to. Pastor the flock because you want to, because it's God's calling on your life, it's what God wants, and you should step into that. You may be a little fearful, it may be a little frightful, but also you will be eager like...*yes, I can't think of doing anything else then shepherding the flock of God and teaching the flock of God. That excites me! I love that!*

So don't do it because you have to; do it because you want to. This is not like...*well, I couldn't do anything else so I just became a pastor.* Or, this

isn't like...*hey, my parents really wanted me to go into pastoral ministry. I knew this would be a good job so I went to do that.*

No, it's not because you have to. It's because God has put it in your heart that it's the thing that you want to do. You are delighting in it and you are loving it because if you do it because you have to you're going to be a bad pastor. If you do it because you want to and you get excited about it and even though it's hard you still love it then you're going to be a good pastor and the sheep are going to be well taken care of if you are doing it willingly.

The second is this is not for greed. Notice it says, "not for shameful gain, but eagerly." Now, it's not wrong to get paid as a pastor, but it's wrong to be a pastor just for the money. That is what he's saying when he says not for shameful gain. It's not because...*hey, if I do this I can make a little extra money and I'll use that for my own gain.*

Now, Paul would be very clear in 1 Timothy chapter 5 that he himself was a tent maker. He didn't take any income. He did it all free of charge, but he makes it very clear that this is not the norm and that elders who pastor, teach, and preach should get paid to do so. He actually quotes the Old Testament about not muzzling an ox and then he quotes Jesus who says the laborer should deserve his wages. He's like....*Look, I'm making tents, but the next guy who is up, don't make him make tents. Pay him enough where he can just pastor, shepherd, rule, and teach over you because it's going to go a lot better if the shepherd can just pay attention to the sheep.*

So, it's not wrong to take money if you're a pastor, but it's wrong to pastor for money.

And I have a feeling when Peter wrote this I can just imagine the pastors being like...*what are you talking about? How are we going to get rich off being a pastor?* I don't know that it was that lucrative of a job, but you could fast forward to our times and you could see there is a temptation to make decisions that would be based on YOU and making you greater. We

can see that even in our own context preachers who have definitely taken that path, who have done it for shameful gain whether it's their own reputation or their own money, and great has been their fall.

So it's a warning. If you're a young guy in here who wants to be a pastor, if you desire to be an overseer that is a noble task, but if you're thinking...*man, I want a jet one day and fly around*, that is not why you get into this. That would not be a good reason. Now, if you have a jet then that's your own deal, but don't do it FOR that. Don't do it for shameful gain.

Then, also power. That is the other pitfall. Notice this, "not domineering...but being examples..."

Not domineering. See, the pastor of the church, if they are to be an overseer and the sheep are looking at the Bible saying...*ok, Hebrews 13 tells me to obey my leaders as those who are watching over my soul. Ok, so I'm supposed to obey the leader.*

Then all of a sudden, the leader is like...*Wait, God told you to obey me? Ok.*

You could see how it is really easy to use power for a wrong reason and to start domineering and to use your position in a wrong way. That is a temptation for pastors and Peter is saying do not do that. Don't use your power for the wrong reason. Don't do it to domineer. Don't do it to get your way. Don't do it to make people do what you want them to do. Instead what does he say? Be an example.

Don't domineer your power. Instead, use your Godly life as a shepherd who is walking among his sheep and walking before his sheep and all the sheep are looking to the shepherd and they are seeing what they should be doing. As Paul says, follow me because I am following Christ. It is that beautiful picture.

And I have to say- he isn't here so I'm going to say it- but we have had a pastor who has walked among us and been an example for us for about 40 years which is a pretty amazing thing. In 40 years something is going to come out if you're not doing this for the right reason, but for 40 years we have had a faithful pastor who has walked with us, showed us the way, been an example, and been there for us in countless times. He has walked with us and he has cared for us all.

See, I am a pastor, but I've also been a pastor's kid so I've been there a lot of the times when the phone would ring and he went to you all in all sorts of needs because he loved you, cared for you, shepherded you, and he wanted to be an example to you. And a lot of you love your pastor because your pastor has loved you.

I was thinking when I was driving in this morning about Dad's fortieth anniversary just a few months ago. As he pulled in a lot of us in the first service got signs and we met him on the road, and as he went in we yelled and held up our signs. Him and Mom were both crying. It was just this picture of a church who loves their pastor and here is a pastor who loves his church. It was just a beautiful picture and a beautiful celebration.

It is a great loving relationship and I think that is what Peter longs for this church. Pastors, love the sheep well. Pastor them, lead them, and be a good elder. Sheep, notice what they are doing and be thankful and grateful that God has left you with shepherds which if you notice, that brings us to the reward.

What is the reward?

So, what is the reward for an elder? It says this in verse 4, "And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory."

I don't know, but that sounds cool. I don't really know what that is, but I'm like... *what? Ok, I get an unfading crown of glory?* That sounds like something off of Marvel, right? That is going to be pretty cool. You

shouldn't do it for that obviously, because he just told us not to do it for shameful gain and that would be shameful gain, but I don't even know what that means or looks like, but he is saying when you shepherd well there is reward to that.

When my parents got home and all 80 cows were alive and everything was alive they said thank you for watching the farm. There was a little reward to that. Now, if all of the cows were dead when they got home I think it would have been a different story, right? There wouldn't be a reward. There would probably have been some punishment. I don't know what would have happened, but it would not have been well with my soul. But, because they were alive they were like...*hey, good job! This is great!*

And I think Peter is saying...*hey, shepherds, remember that the shepherd is coming back and you need to shepherd well because you want reward rather than, "hey, you let all of the sheep die."* That would not be good if you're a pastor and all of your sheep go astray.

But notice, even in this reward, I love this, it says this, "And when the chief Shepherd appears..." That is a beautiful line! When it says, "when the chief Shepherd appears," who is that talking about? It's talking about Jesus. And notice what it says about Jesus- he is the chief Shepherd.

In other words, he is the one who is really in charge. Who is the leader of Hardin Baptist Church? His name is Jesus. He is the chief Shepherd. He is the one that is above all of the others.

But notice the term "chief Shepherd." Spurgeon will point out that to be chief there has to be many. Jesus can be the good shepherd alone. Jesus can be the great shepherd alone. But Jesus can't be the chief Shepherd alone. There has to be other shepherds, and what are those? Those are the pastors/leaders of the church. There are many of those, but Jesus is the CHIEF of those. He is the number one. He is the boss. He is the king. He is THE capital Shepherd who all of the under-shepherds get their marching orders from.

Again, God has loved you enough that when he went away as your good shepherd he sent under-shepherds to care for you and love you in his absence so that when he comes back you are just where you need to be. See, it's God's love that gave you pastors.

Sheep and shepherds together. How do they get along?

And that is going to bring us to our next point. What about the sheep and the shepherds—how do they get along together? It says this in verse 5, "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."

So this is written to the elders, shepherds, overseers to tell them what they are to do- shepherd and rule. Then he says...*ok, to the young you need to submit. Be submissive to the elders.*

Now, I don't think he's meaning just the young only because in other places like Hebrews 13 he says all of you obey your leaders because they take care of your soul. But in here, he addresses the young. Why would that be? I think probably for one because when you're young it's really hard to follow leadership.

I remember when I was in college and I first came to Christ. I had theology and knowledge. I was a bull and I was like...*Let's go. I don't need anybody telling me about wisdom because I've got knowledge.* And what I needed as a young man who was filled with the Spirit and a head full of knowledge was a shepherd to say...*hold up, boy. You need to grow a little bit. You need to mature a little bit.*

See, what the young- both in age and in faith- what they need is a shepherd. They need to come under people who have walked the walk, people who are examples to us and one of those people is your pastor.

They need their elder/shepherd/overseer to come under them so that they can help lead them into where they need to go.

So it is humility that takes this because notice this is to all. Picking back up in verse 5, "Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

He says "all of you." I think that includes the young, the old, everyone in between, and also the pastors and the sheep. This is everybody. This is a blanket statement. Do you know what everybody needs, both sheep and shepherd? Humility.

In other words, how are sheep and shepherds going to get along? It's going to take humility. Do you know why? Because shepherds are going to mess up. Trust me, I know. We are going to mess up. And do you know what I need a lot of? Grace from you. And humility from you.

And, you know what? I've been around you for a little bit and I know that you are going to mess up too. Do you know what you need? Grace and humility.

So he says, "clothe yourselves." I love that idea of clothing. It's the thing you wear. Do you know what you see first when you meet somebody? You see their clothing. It's what they put on. It's what they are showing you. You see clothing right away. It is like he is saying let the very first thing somebody sees is your humility. Let it ooze off of you. When you see someone, let humility be what they see first and foremost about you.

As a sheep, be humble. As a shepherd, be humble because it can take a lot of humility for us to get along. Because sheep don't often like shepherds and shepherds don't often like sheep. It's going to take humble postures in order for love to exist.

Then notice what he says. The reason to do this is because God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. See, God opposes the proud.

When you are proud, when you have a proud heart, when you are prideful you are inviting the opposition of God into your life.

Think about that. If you want the opposition of God in your life here is what you do- be prideful. You are saying you want God as your enemy. That is what you want so you are going to be proud. You are going to be self-righteous. You are going to be all about yourself and what you think. You are going to be proud. You are going to be arrogant, not humble. You are going to be proud, and when you do so, you are inviting the very opposition of God in your life.

But the opposite of that is when you are humble. What does it say? It says God gives grace to the humble. You are inviting the very favor in your life when you are humble.

So think about those two things. When you're prideful, you're inviting the opposition of God into your life. When you're humble, you're inviting the favor of God into your life.

So the question is which one do you want? Do you want God to be your enemy or friend? Do you want God to be on the opposite side, or do you want to have him on your sideline and in your huddle? I don't want him on the other side of the sidelines. That is not going to be good.

So what do we do? We live in humility. We clothe ourselves with humility and in doing so I think that is the secret of how both sheep and shepherds can get along- by both being humble as we see the sheep loving the shepherd and also the shepherd loving the sheep.

See, the truth is I might not be a cowboy, but I do know how to care for cows and horses. That is why my parents left me in charge of the farm. It was because they love their cows and they love their horses so they left them to me. And, yes, I'm not as good, but I can get the job done.

I want you to see that the reason you have elders who are pastoring and overseeing you- we call those pastors here- is because Jesus loves you enough that when he left he left you with people who know how to shepherd and care for you. And, yes, we are not as good, but we can get the job done through Christ in us.

So we need to see, if you are a sheep be grateful that God left you with pastors. It is his way of saying he loves you enough to leave you with people that are going to care and shepherd over you.

If you are a shepherd or aspire to be a shepherd, what is your role? You are to love the sheep, shepherding them and leading over them, not as your own, but as God's good flock.

To the pastors at Hardin, love the sheep.

To the sheep at Hardin, as best as you can, try to love your pastors.

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