

## "How to Get Through these Last Days" - 1 Peter 5

Once again, I did some research – I Googled it – and I found some good life advice for you. Are you ready? Trust dogs. They always know who to stay away from. If you hear weird noises in the night, simply make weirder noises to assert dominance. If you find a toilet in your dream, don't use it. Don't yell at your kids, lean in close and whisper, it's much scarier. If you attempt to rob a bank, you will have no trouble with rent or bills for the next ten years, whether you are successful or not. Ladies, if a man says he'll fix something, he will. There's no point in telling him about it every six months. And lastly, if you swim with a friend, your chances of being eaten by a shark will drop by 50%. So, there you go. I hope that helps.

If you could go back in time and give yourself some advice, what would it be? Or maybe you would like to get some advice from somebody who is wise, somebody who has been there and done that, whatever “that” is.

If you will turn to **1 Peter chapter 5**, the last chapter of 1 Peter, you will read what some might call good advice. And it is. But it is also the very words of God. If you remember from last week, we read **chapter 4 of 1 Peter** and in **verse 11** he says that if you speak, you should do it as one speaking the very words of God. And here Peter is speaking the very words of God in holy scripture and it is good advice but also what God wants you to know.

This being the last chapter, Peter is just summing it all up. He has warned us to live holy lives and has warned us that the world is going to persecute us. And in the chapter we read last week, Peter said we are living in the last days. So, with all that in mind, let's read **1 Peter 5:1-10**. Here, Peter has wise words for every member of the church and we need to remember that it's not just good advice but commands from God Himself.

**1 Peter 5:1-10** says, *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: <sup>2</sup>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; <sup>3</sup>not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. <sup>4</sup>And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.*

*<sup>5</sup>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.”<sup>6</sup> Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. <sup>7</sup>Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. <sup>8</sup>Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>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.*

The age in which we are living today is called the church age. It is the period of time between Pentecost, described in **Acts chapter 2**, and it goes all the way until the rapture of the church talked about in **1 Thessalonians 4**. This period of world history has been difficult for believers. We who live in The United States in 2026 have it pretty easy. But it won’t always be that way. Peter lived in an era when being persecuted just for being a Christian was very common. And we can expect it to be that way again, if not in our lifetimes then probably soon after.

So, Peter is giving us as a church some words of wisdom to help us get through these last days. His first words are for the pastors of the local churches. The Bible uses the words pastor, elder, shepherd, overseer and bishop in talking about the same position in the church. The word “elder” could simply mean “older” but you can tell in the context of the passage he is talking about what we usually call the pastor.

I was in a pastor’s training meeting one day years ago that lasted most of the day and when it came time for lunch, we all sat around a bunch of round tables to eat. We were given the instruction that while we ate we should introduce ourselves and tell about our position in the church.

The young guy next to me started and said he was the youth pastor at so and so church. The next guy was the senior pastor at his church. The next guy was the teaching pastor. It went on and on. The administrative pastor, the parking lot pastor, the pastor to young marrieds, the pastor to old marrieds, the pastor to everything not covered by the other pastors. Then it came to me and I said I was the pastor at Christ Fellowship. The guy next to me said, “Uh, what kind of pastor?” And I said, “**The pastor pastor. The guy that opens the door in the morning and sweeps up when it’s over pastor.**” And the young fellow looked like he had never heard of such.

Peter's words are for every kind of pastor and church leader that we have in churches today. And the word Peter uses is "shepherd". That would have been familiar imagery to the people of Peter's day. I doubt we have anybody here that makes their living as a shepherd but it was quite common back in the day. They would know that the job of a shepherd included feeding, leading and protecting the sheep. And it's the same for pastors today.

In **John 21**, Peter was instructed three times by Jesus Himself to "Feed my sheep." And Peter understands that the sheep are not his own sheep but they are God's sheep as it says in **verse 2**. I think that is an important distinction that will help with the rest of Peter's instructions. When a man understands he is a shepherd of God's sheep, he will understand the importance of doing it like Peter says in **verses 2-3**. *watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; <sup>3</sup> not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.*

**1 Timothy chapter 3** gives some more qualifications for being a pastor. I'll read just a sample. *"Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, <sup>3</sup> not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money."*

**Titus 1** also gives some qualifications. Here are a few of those. *"Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. <sup>8</sup> Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined."*

I'll tell you what I have come to understand after doing this for a few years. What I understand is that I can't do what Peter says a pastor is supposed to do. I cannot do what Paul says to do and the stuff Titus says to do is impossible. Just letting you know. Let's move on to the rest of the church, shall we?

Peter goes on to address the young men in **verse 5**. This may have been because the young men are the most aggressive and headstrong members of any group but it applies to the entire church. He says to be submissive to your elders. I say it applies to everybody because the Apostle Paul has it as his theme in several letters. He says in **1 Corinthians 16**, *"You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the Lord's people. I urge you, brothers and sisters, <sup>16</sup> to submit to such people and to everyone who joins in the work and labors at it."*

Then again in **1 Thessalonians 5**, Paul says, *“Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. <sup>13</sup> Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.”*

Peter talked about submission earlier in this book. In **chapter 2** he said that we should all be submissive to the ruling authorities that we have in government. In **chapter 3**, he says women should submit to their husbands. You might remember that word “submit” means to voluntarily line oneself up under another. It’s a military term. The private is under the corporal. The corporal is under the sergeant, the sergeant is under the general, etc. It’s not because one is more valuable than the other. It just has to do with order. Being a Christian is about being submissive to those above us to keep order. Jesus Himself is submissive to the Father. And I hear what you are saying. That is impossible! And you are right. You can’t do it. But that’s what it says to do.

Let’s continue with what Peter says in the rest of **verse 5**. He says we should all clothe ourselves with humility toward one another. Now, this is interesting to me because the word humility means “lowliness of mind” and the word clothe means literally to “tie something on oneself” like an apron. Does that make you think of something that Jesus did?

In **John 13** it says, *“Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; <sup>4</sup> so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. <sup>5</sup> After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.”*

Years ago, I preached from this passage in John and to illustrate what Jesus did, I washed Cody Martin’s feet. Some of you remember Cody. I asked him beforehand and he said he wouldn’t do it. I asked him again and he just insisted that he couldn’t do it. But I really wanted him to and I figured all he had to do was sit there, right? And so he did it. What I found out afterwards was that Cody had a real phobia against anybody touching his feet. It weirded him out pretty bad. And I realized that while I was showing what Jesus did by being submissive, Cody was living it out. He was submissive and allowed me to do something that was really hard for him.

Peter says that we are to clothe ourselves with humility – tie it on like an apron. It is a conscious choice and we are to do it to everybody in the church. Do you see that? *“All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another...”*

If you want to know why we should humble ourselves to each other, Peter gives a pretty good reason here. He quotes from **Proverbs 3** when he says that *“God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”* Your version may say “show grace” or “show favor” but either way, I want it. The problem is that it is so hard to do! It’s really just impossible to always be humble to everybody, right? Some people just make it hard to be humble. But that’s what Peter says to do.

Then look at **verse 7**. This is good stuff. Some of us need to print this verse out and tape it to the fridge or the bathroom mirror. *7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.* I heard a preacher say one time that it wasn’t right for the upright to be uptight. And that is true.

I heard the story about a man who was driving his horse and buggy into town and he saw a man walking down the road carrying a huge pack on his shoulders. It was obviously weighing the man down and causing him a lot of discomfort. So, the guy with the buggy asked him if he wanted a ride and the man got in the buggy but kept the pack on his shoulder. The man told him to just put the pack in the back of the buggy. He didn’t have to keep holding it. But the other man said, *“Oh, no. You’ve shown me enough kindness by picking me up. I couldn’t ask you to carry this weight in your buggy as well.”* (Adrian Rogers, Maturity, March 9, 1997)

Sounds ridiculous, doesn’t it? And yet is it any more ridiculous that we say, *“Oh, Lord, thank you for saving me from Hell but I’ll carry this burden. I got it.”* No! Turn that over to the Lord and leave it there. Our God is greater and bigger and able to deliver you from that burden. Now just allow Him to. But I hear ya. *“Oh Todd, that’s just impossible. You don’t know the burden I’m carrying.”* You’re right. I don’t know and it is impossible.

Let’s move on to **verses 8 and 9**. *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.*

Do you want to get through this difficult life? Do you want to get through these dangerous last days? Peter has given us the way to live all through this book because he knows that

Satan doesn't want you to make it. Satan has a plan for your life just like God has a plan for your life. They just want different things. God wants you to have peace and joy in this life and for you to tell others why you have peace and joy. Satan wants to kill you dead. Peter had probably never seen a lion chilling out in a zoo like so many of us have but he may have seen the gory spectacle of lions slaughtering Christians for the entertainment of the Romans. I'm sure he knew of such things at least. And that is the picture here.

But how can we be self-controlled and alert, as Peter says we should, against Satan who Jesus called the "ruler of this world"? (John 12:31, 14:30 and 16:11) Satan is not just more powerful than we are. He also has thousands of years of experience and he knows how to devour the best of us Christians. That sounds impossible to do as well. Good grief, this whole book is impossible to follow.

Peter says in the earlier chapters that we are to be holy as God is holy. How many of you are able to do that? How many of you are able to submit to each other like Peter says to do in **chapters 2 and 3**? How many of you are able to submit to the worldly and corrupt political officials we have in the US today? No problem, right? In **chapter 3** he says to always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have. Are you always prepared? Good luck with that.

What about in **chapter 4** where he says to love each other deeply? Well, that's pretty easy for a lot of you but some people make it impossible to love deeply. Some people are just impossible to love. It's not our fault, right? And don't get me started about **chapter 4, verse 11** that says if anyone speaks he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. Oh sure! Then I'll leap tall church buildings in a single bound because I'm Super Christian! Right?

So, how do we do it? Well, you are right. We can't do it. In our natural, mortal bodies that are spiritually dead, it is impossible. But **Romans 8:11** says, "*And if the **Spirit** of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his **Spirit** who lives in you.*" Jesus Himself said in **Acts 1:8**, "*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.*"

How about some illustrations from the Old Testament? "*So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power.*" ([1 Samuel 16:13](#)) God took a young, inexperienced shepherd boy and made him the greatest king Israel has ever known. I wonder what He could do for you.

Or how about another of my favorites, Samson? **Judges 14:6** says, *“The Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat.”* In **verse 19** it says, *“Then the **Spirit of the Lord** came powerfully upon him. He went down to Ashkelon, struck down thirty of their men, stripped them of everything and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle.”* And one more. **Judges 15:14**, *“As he approached Lehi, the Philistines came toward him shouting. The **Spirit of the Lord** came powerfully upon him. The ropes on his arms became like charred flax, and the bindings dropped from his hands.”*

If the Spirit of God can do that for Samson, do you think He can help you be holy? If the Holy Spirit can reveal what is truth (John 16:13) and give you your spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12) and come alongside you and give you comfort and direction as Jesus promised He would (John 14:16) then He can help you be holy. He can help you submit. He can help you have love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Gal. 5:22) That’s His job and He wants to help you with all of this.

If those aren’t characteristics of your life, ask God to help you with it. Do you think that’s a prayer He wants to answer? *“Lord, I’m not feeling very loving today. Please help.”* *“God, this guy is getting on my last nerve and I am finding it hard to submit but I know I should. Please help me.”* *“Lord, I’m afraid my life doesn’t look very holy these days but I want it to. Would you please help me with that?”* Then let the Holy Spirit work on you and in your life like only He can.

**\*Music\***

If you have believed in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you have the Holy Spirit living inside of you. Don’t hinder Him. Don’t grieve Him. Just allow Him to speak to you in that still small voice and just obey.

If you don’t have the Holy Spirit, you can. All you have to do is believe that Jesus is the only way to Heaven. Repent of your sins and ask God to forgive you of those sins and when you do, the Spirit begins to live in your life making all that He says to do possible. Then He rewards you for it. Is that what you want? Say yes today as the music plays.