

1 Peter 5:5-7 'Humility And Anxiety; Or Worry!'

In our last message from 1 Peter we looked at chapter 5:1-5 in a sermon I called 'Humble Authority'. I explained that, though he had all the authority of an apostle, Peter addresses his brethren as "fellow elders." He could have placed the pressure of an apostle upon them but he didn't. He seeks to guide them with that humility, which we will look at more closely today. And in his approach he shows by example what he is instructing the elders to do. V3: "Not lord it over their flocks but be examples." So, yes, address each and every problem that arises, but do it as Jesus did. Lead "by example" and speak with that humble authority which comes from God! Yes Peter speaks as Christ's servant to his fellow servants. Though he could have "lorded it over them," he speaks with a gentle voice and leads with a tender hand. He seeks to guide and to build up, not be a god over them, which men by nature are want to do!

V2: "Be shepherds of God's flock." The flock belongs to God. Not pastors, not ministers, or even apostles. He continues "not because you must." All ministry must be a calling of God from within. Not because of pressures applied by others. And certainly not for pride and vanity's sake! God is not dependent upon us; He doesn't *need* us. He chooses to use us and we are totally dependent upon Him for all things. Even each breath that we take. Let alone in our service to Him!

And of course, the key to any ministry is, "not because you must but because you are willing," as God wants you to be. "Not greedy for money but eager to serve." Yes "eager to serve." A genuine, humble heart for Christ to serve, is the key ingredient. Not labouring for accolades, position, power or "deceitful gain." But v4 "the crown of glory that will never fade away," placed upon our head by the "Chief Shepherd," the King. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself at the resurrection!

And so we pick up the text in 1 Peter 5:5-7 "Humility And Anxiety; Or Worry!"

From the Greek we read V5 "Likewise younger men, (or women may I add) submit yourselves (or be subject to) older men," or the elders! So having instructed the elders about the way they are to lead, with humble authority, "not lording it over the people" "but by example," Peter now moves on to address "young men" (young people) about being subject, or "submitting to the elders."

Now, yes, this was specifically to the church elders, and yet I believe may also be correctly applied in a broader sense to older brethren in general. Friends, I touched upon humility last time, and really, that is what Peter is again referring to. "Submit yourselves" or be subject to. And this can also be applied to those who are young in the faith! You know, if there is one teaching, one attribute, one characteristic which goes 100% totally in opposition to the nature of fallen humanity, it is humility! And in many ways, it is that characteristic or attribute that is so despised and has all but disappeared, in the modern day world! In the same way that loyalty is an old-fashioned concept or idea, so too is humility.

Sadly, gone are the days that when someone committed themselves to a job or a sports club as a player for example for life that loyalty would then in turn be rewarded, and they be taken care of out of mutual respect and appreciation. The football player Adam Reynolds of South Sydney for example, for his whole playing career, played for Souths. And yet last year his contract would not be renewed. He was cast aside, because he was getting older, even though in reality he was the Most Valuable Player on the team!

Yes in the same way that those days are gone and that contracts are made to be broken, as the saying goes; in the same way that loyalty is an old-fashioned concept, so too is humility on the whole, an attribute or characteristic from the past! When Darlene and I were in America and Canada some years ago, I was taken aback and impressed by two simple things which if Australia embraced, we would be far the richer for it today.

The first, I often heard people say to veterans, "Thank you for your service." Simply to show an appreciation for their sacrifice and for their service for their country. And now, when I get Providence from God to use these words in Australia I do so. Whether it be to the firemen, or the police, or the armed forces etc. It's a simple but tangible way of showing our respect and our support and our appreciation for what they do. And it costs us nothing!

The other thing that impressed me so much, was the way that other men, (even older men) addressed others as 'Sir'. Again, it is an old-fashioned sign of respect and humility! Friends like me, you are most likely horrified and appalled at the absolute opposite behaviour in Australia, by many people today. Young people, old people, men, women, and even children. The appalling way that they speak to the police, the teachers and other authorities today. Things which in the past they would have been arrested for, and still should be, go unchallenged and unpunished. In this world of 'Me, Myself, I', and 'assert yourself so that you get to the top, regardless of who you betray or crawl over on your way there'; in such a world true humility, if not dead is definitely on the endangered species list!

Whereas Jesus said in Matthew 5:5 "Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth." He first says in v3 of Matthew 5 "Blessed are poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven." Those who confess that there is nothing in themselves by which they can be saved, and that they are totally and absolutely dependent upon the cross of Christ, are "blessed," and they are owners by Grace of the Kingdom of Jesus. Then in v4 he says, "Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted." Meaning that knowing the reality of their sin placing the Redeemer upon that accursed Cross causes them to "mourn" over that sin, and in that confession "they are comforted" by the blessed God sent Comforter, the Promised Holy Spirit.

And then He says, "Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth." Can you see? That each of these Be-Attitudes, pours forth into the next. The first two must bring us to our knees, overwhelmed in humble gratitude!

Beloved, it has been said by many over the years that "meekness" is not weakness. And also we learn in Psalm 37 from whence Jesus draws this teaching, that the inheritance which He speaks of is not an earthly one but ultimately an eternal one! Psalm 37:11 "But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace." V29 "The righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever." Humility in the sight of God speaks of the strength of our faith in Him. No, "meekness" is not weakness. It confesses that 'all things are in Your Hands O God. Indeed I am in Your Hands O God'. 1 Peter 4:19 "I commit myself to you my faithful Creator."

Again Beloved, can you see? That elders are simply shepherds under the authority of the "Chief Shepherd." And even Jesus speaks of being under the authority of God in effect. "I came not to do my will but the will of him who sent me." Yes though He be equal with God He does God's will!

When appealing to the Corinthians concerning his own ministry to them Paul writes 2 Corinthians 10:1 "By the meekness and gentleness of Christ I appeal to you." So if such attributes speak of the Lord's Own perfect humanity, (knowing that there is no weakness in Him) then for each of us to seek, to embrace, and to even put on as a garment those things that are attributed to Christ Himself,

must be at the very core of our innermost desires. That is if our genuine desire is to be like Him, in our behaviour to those around us and particularly so to our fellow believers of Christ! Yes he writes, "likewise young men (young people) be subject to the Elders" And I'm adding those who are older in general, as a sign of humility on their part and respect for those who are older! It is proper you see. It speaks of propriety and honours the Lord. And friends as I mentioned, this is also applicable to those who may not be young in years, but young in the faith.

Brothers and sisters, one of the things that we must all be ever on guard against and which is also a powerful tool in Satan's hand, is having an unteachable spirit. It is dangerous to those who are new in the faith, and in some ways even more so to those of us who have walked with the Lord for many decades! There are none of us who are exempt. If we ever believe that we can sit before a preacher or a teacher, and know-it-all we are standing on dangerous ground. And if we do, perhaps like Moses when standing before God in the Burning Bush, we need "to take off our shoes" and cast our pride and vanity aside and pray that we truly hear, when God's servants speak!

Look where Peter is going here. As he has addressed the Elders, the young and the young in the faith and now he says: "All of you, clothe yourselves in humility toward one another." The Greek actually says "Gird Ye on." And I want you to notice that this is something that we actually are to DO! "Clothe yourselves." "Gird Ye on." He does not say pray that God will give you humility, (even though we know it comes from Him as He "transforms us by the renewing of our minds" Romans 12:2, it is "clothe yourself." Go looking in your wardrobe of Christian attributes and select the coat that says "humility" and "Gird Ye on" and don't take it off. Peter is teaching us that "humility" is not something which happens to us by accident. We must actually seek it out, put it on, and then apply it to every aspect of our life. Yes "the meekness and gentleness of Christ."

Brethren, as I mentioned earlier, these things are 100% totally opposed to the fallen nature of humanity. That is why we need to put this coat on, and prayerfully seek to keep it on, when we are dealing with one another! Yes "all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another." And why? Well "because God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble." Peter is telling us that our pride and vanity are actually opposed to God. God is the enemy of our vanity and pride.

Have you ever thought about this? That when any given situation arises, whether it's in your marriage or between brethren or family or friends, or at Bible study, or standing in the line at Aldi or Woollies, that when our pride or our vanity becomes part of the equation, we are not doing battle for God, but we are doing battle with God! "All of you." Not 'you, you and perhaps you', no. It is "all of you," because we all struggle with this same problem at times. "All of you clothe yourselves in humility toward one another."

Again why? Because when we don't, we are in opposition to God. He "opposes the proud." We have to cast our pride, arrogance and vanity aside "because God opposes the proud" and we will be His enemies in that sense!

And now he gives us a positive reason to be humble. "But God gives grace to the humble." Peter is not talking about that free and unmerited gift of forgiveness that through Jesus we receive eternal life here, no. We need to apply this instruction within the context of the church when differences and difficulties arise. So if we are bloody minded, and arrogant and proud when differences arise between us. If we are in a sense unreachable and unteachable, refusing to see where each other is coming from. Again, "God opposes" that. But if we "clothe ourselves in humility," within those situations He "gives us grace," meaning that he gives us the ability to deal with such things in an

upright and honourable manner. Yes He gives us the strength to deal with these things in a Christlike manner and even if needs be, “turn the other cheek.” “Trusting in our faithful Creator.”

Dear friends, I've said it many times before, that if vindication is what we are seeking in this life we will be sorely disappointed. Because that is not what has been promised to us. What we are promised is A Cross. But with an eternal inheritance that “can never perish, spoil or fade” away.

Praise God! Yes He gives us His favour as it were, as we seek to honour Him in what we do and say! The line “gives grace to the humble,” actually comes from Proverbs 3 Where all throughout it speaks of Wisdom. What it looks like. What benefits ensure from seeking it. So clearly, in Peter's use of this verse in this context he is showing us that God's favour, His grace, His wisdom, He gives to that person who has sought to “clothe themselves with humility” in these difficult situations. Indeed in every situation, as we seek to deal with each other in Christ's love! V6 “Be Ye humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God in order that he may exalt you in due time.” But what is he saying? Well it's that in the Body of Christ, the church, the key to harmony, is that we all deal with each other in the humility of Jesus. We “do unto others as we would have them do unto us.” We pray, “forgive us our trespasses as we have forgiven those who trespass against us.” With the emphasis being placed upon the “as we have forgiven.” Not allowing our pride and vanity to become a tool in Satan's hand to tear the body of the Lord apart. And we reject that inherent need for vindication and to be right all the time!

During the Reformation, one of the great prayers of the Saints of the day was, ‘Lord, deliver us from the need to be vindicated.’ It is that inherent need to “exalt” ourselves, you see. Yes, “be Ye humbled under the mighty hand of God in order that HE, will exalt you in due time.” Beloved, the day of our exaltation is coming. The “due time” of God is coming. Let us all seek to “clothe ourselves with humility,” and not seek to “exalt” ourselves, but prayerfully wait for God's “due time!”

Verse 7: “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” The word which Peter uses here for “anxiety” in Greek is “merimnan” and it means, to divide. To occupy intensely. Alistair Begg explains its meaning as ‘a foreboding dread that occupies our mind’. And of course it walks hand in hand with the word worry. Worry is actually the fruit of “anxiety.” One definition of the word worry is to choke. And I'm sure that we can all appreciate this sentiment. When we are “anxious” when we are “worrying,” when our thoughts are taken all over the place and we can't find any peace of mind, any rest, it is as though we were choking the very life out of ourselves. Even the life that God has given us through Jesus!

This is no doubt the fear and the dread of the unknown that seems to hang heavy upon us. And when we break it down, it is all about fear, isn't it. That fear of the unknown. Even our faith! Is it all true? Is God real? If He is, does He really care about me as flawed as I am? “Cast all your anxieties upon him because he cares for you.”

Begg explains that the word “worry” in relation to fear occurs 365 times throughout the Bible. How fitting, that there is one for each day of the year. In Matthew 6:19-24, (which I referred to last week in the sermon on Ruth) in His sermon on the Mount, when speaking of the impossibility of being able to serve two masters, and about us “Storing up for ourselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is there will your heart be also.” (v 20-21)

He says in v22: “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good your whole body will be full of light.” The word which is used for good is “aploose” It is the opposite of that definition of the word “anxiety” that dividing of the mind. That foreboding dread of the unknown. Yes, the word “aploose”

is the opposite of that. It means single or simple eyes. Like the supporter of a sports team that hardly ever wins but it doesn't matter, they remain one eyed. They have a clear and definite focus. Even on the back of yet another loss again, it matters not to them. 'We will get them next time', they say. Their vision, (though perhaps misguided) remains firm. Well that is what Jesus explains that we need to have in regard to the things of His Kingdom. Simple eyes, single eyes, and with an undivided focus. One Master, One Goal and One Destination. "Cast all of your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

Now friends, I say these following things very carefully, and am in no way commenting on anyone's medical condition here. But at the base of all of the dividing of the mind of the believer is the Evil One. Genesis 3:1b: "Did God really say?" 'Though he exists can we trust Him? Will He really do what He has said He will do? Will He really take me from this life to the next to be with Him? How can I know? What guarantee do I have?' Genesis 3:4: "You will surely not die", the serpent said to the woman."

Verse 6: "When the woman saw." Can you see? She has begun to have bad eyes. Matthew 6:22: "The eyes are the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good your whole body will be full of light." That single focus upon Christ and His Kingdom will bring light to our soul and indeed our whole lives. V23, "but if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness." "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God" Jesus said. But as in the garden, our divided focus with divided loyalties will lead to disaster!

Notice Jesus` next words: "If then the light within you is darkness how great is that darkness." You see, through Satan's twisting's, the "light" that man had of God had become "darkness." Beloved, (and I again say these things with all sensitivity and choose my words very carefully), at the core of all of our "anxieties" and our "worries," and that fear and dread of the unknown, that can weigh so heavily upon us at times, even choking the very life of the assurance that we have from God out of us, are the whisperings of the Evil One. "Did God really say?" 'Can I trust Him? Is at all real? Even if it is all real does it really include me? How can I know? What assurance, what guarantee do I have?'

Matthew 11:28-29: "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls." "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." "It is finished." And finally, Matthew 28:5-8 "the Angel said to the woman, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, he is risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he laid. Then go quickly and tell his disciples. He has risen from the dead and he's going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him. Now I have told you." So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples." Here is our assurance: HE IS RISEN! Yes "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

Brothers and sisters, in essence, what we have seen this morning has simply been how as the Body of Christ we are to deal with one another. "All of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble." Yes we are to "clothe ourselves" with the character of Jesus toward each other! And also, how tenderly God deals with our insecurities and anxious uncertainties. That fear, that dread of the unknown. "Cast all your anxieties on him because he cares for you." Yes come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest."

Blessed assurance Jesus is mine; O what a foretaste of glory divine!

Let's pray!