

Studies in First Peter

I Peter 5:1-4

Exhortation to the Elders

June 14, 2020

INTRO: As we move into the final chapter of First Peter, we receive some general exhortation to the church. Peter begins with the leaders, the elders, and points out their responsibilities both in action and in attitude. While these exhortations apply to the church in all places and at all times, they are especially important when the church is going through trying times.

I. The Nature, Role, and Calling of the Elder

- A. Peter identifies with his fellow elders, and yet he is an apostle. This gives us insight into the local and global distinction of the elders.
 - 1. In Ephesians 5 Paul names the offices appointed by Christ—they are given to the Church Universal and their calling and appointment is solely up to Christ Himself, whereas,
 - 2. In Acts 14:23 it describes the Apostles appointing elders in each congregation they had established. From this we may draw several conclusions:
 - a. Elders are appointed in the church by those who hold the global offices that Christ has named (Apostles appoint the local Elders), whereas Deacons are elected by the congregations they serve (see Acts 6)
 - b. All offices appointed by Christ are Elders in whatever congregation they happen to be, but local Elders are not Universal Church officers
 - c. Local Elders fall under the authority and leadership of Christ appointed officials; hence Peter's exhortation to these elders to whom he writes
- B. The Elder is a Shepherd of God's Local Flock
 - 1. Note that the Church, local and universal, is God's flock—it belongs to no human being; at best, the leaders are stewards of a divine trust
 - 2. To be a shepherd is to exercise oversight, or to watch over. This includes
 - a. Protecting the local flock from wolves
 - b. Searching out and seeking to restore those who have wandered
 - c. Caring for the needy and administering healing to the sick
 - d. Leading in teaching and discipleship of believers

II. The Attitude of the Elder

- A. In essence, he is to love the flock of God whom he serves
- B. Exercising his oversight not because he has to, but because he wants to do well
- C. Not because he receives compensation (if he does) but with the motivation to care for the flock eagerly
- D. And not asserting his authority, but demonstrating and modeling the life of Christ by his behavior

III. There is a Great Reward for the Devoted Elder

From the Chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, they will receive the unfading crown of glory