

Women's Bible Study
1Peter 5:1
October 18th, 2023 Sharyn Balogh

In this last chapter of 1Peter, the Apostle concludes with instructions given to the elders of the church to shepherd the flock in verses 1-4. Then Peter gives specific instructions to those who are younger, and also addresses the group as a whole – encouraging them, praying for them, praising God, and reminding them to stand firm in their faith.

1Peter 5:1 Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, **'Therefore'** resumes the exhortation from 1Peter 4:19, Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right. Peter's message of 'keep on keeping on with your focus on your heavenly future' continues. It's as if he is saying, '**since** you have entrusted your souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right', **then** here is your calling.

The Apostle addresses those in charge – **the elders among you**. Peter includes himself in this group of those he is exhorting; he refers to himself as a **fellow elder**. These are the individuals who care for the church – the shepherds of the flock, the teachers, pastors, elders, and deacons. They may have also been elders in age considering that Peter addresses the younger men in verse 5, but this does not change the exhortation to the ministers of the church. We learn something about Peter's humility in this verse as he includes himself in the same role as the elders of the church. He was one of the twelve disciples and a witness of Jesus' life and death, yet he does not place himself in any position except that of serving together with those he is writing to. He also spent time with Jesus under His direct teaching but notice that the direction Peter gives to these men who lead the church is for himself also.

To **exhort** in this verse means to invite, to call for, to (be of good) comfort, to desire. It seems that this is not so much a command as it is an encouragement to come alongside one another in their endeavors to lead the flock. Read this as an earnest request from the Apostle to the ministers of the church to press on.

Note, Peter describes himself as a **witness of the sufferings of Christ**. Imagine, walking with Christ physically, in His footsteps literally. This was Peter's experience.

Acts 1:21-22 "Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us – beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us – one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection."

Acts 2:32 "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.

The Apostle well understood the sufferings of Jesus.

Acts 3:5 but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses.

Acts 10:39 "We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross.

"He was with Christ in the garden; he was with him when he was apprehended. and he was with him in the high priest's hall. Whether he followed him to the cross we know not; ... He could, however, with the strictest propriety, say, from the above circumstances, that he was a witness of the sufferings of Christ. We are all to be a witness for Christ", Adam Clarke's Commentary.

The word witness, *martus*, is literal or figurative, by analogy, a martyr, someone who gives his life. A witness is also someone who can give an account or record of what they have seen or heard. Read what Jesus said to the Apostles:

Luke 24:44-48 Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ***You are witnesses of these things.***

Acts 1:8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and ***you shall be My witnesses*** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Pause for a moment and consider the Apostle who wrote this epistle. He walked with Jesus, he was friends with Jesus, shared meals with Him, and listened to His teachings. But Peter also knew what it meant to be pulled by fear, selfishness, and sin in the world. He denied the Teacher and Friend whom he loved and suffered the regret and shame of his weakness. Yet God still used him mightily. Our faithfulness may falter as we fight sin but God's faithfulness to His children is always certain. Peter had witnessed the suffering of Jesus, he experienced His faithfulness and forgiveness, and now he was willing to suffer for Him.

Think of the conversion of the Apostle Paul. Known by the name of Saul and a great persecutor of Christians, he was called by God to be a witness and his life was dramatically changed. God is faithful to His children even when they are not, His forgiveness and blessings abound. This is a good reminder to move forward in our

serving and walk with God despite our failures, because He is the One holding us up, providing His strength that we might continue to glorify His name. It is also an important reminder that we should never give up on praying for those who haven't followed Jesus. God is working in hearts even though we may not see it. There is no one He cannot save if they genuinely seek Him.

Acts 22:14-15 "And he said, 'The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth. 'For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard.

Consider what it means personally for you to be a witness of Jesus Christ. To speak truth from God's word, we must endeavor to know it; if we are to witness by our life, we must seek to understand what God desires from us so that we can be obedient and faithful to His call.

Think! God has entrusted you, as His child, with His Truths. This is enormous! It is the most valuable possession we can have – to be purchased by our Savior's blood, to be called by God, to be an heir of His promises.

- ***Do you seek to be a faithful witness of God's word in your speech and in your serving?***
- ***Is the desire of your life to be an ambassador of the Truth?***
- ***When others look at your life, do they 'see' Jesus; do they know there is something different about you?***

More than once, after sharing the Gospel with someone, I have heard their response of, 'I know I need to do this but I'm not ready'. There are examples written for us of those who were called by Jesus and *immediately* left what they were doing and followed Him. There is an urgency to respond to Him, tomorrow is not guaranteed.

Everything else in our lives is secondary to our walk with Jesus. We are to be striving to become more and more like Him, to give glory to God through our testimony of His truths. ***Being a Christian, a follower of Christ, is not something we add to our life – it becomes our purpose for living, our mode for serving, and our focus for the future.***

Along with being a witness of the sufferings of Christ, the Apostle associates himself with ***being a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed.*** He shares in the praise and worship of Christ for the hope that is promised to those who follow Him. A believer's inheritance is Heaven!

Do you anticipate your home in Heaven where you will be in the presence of God's glory?

I have sweet memories of spending time with my Dad in the weeks before he passed away. He wanted to hear about heaven. He was not afraid of death, instead he looked forward to his future. I remember his eyes lighting up when we read the description of the holy city, Jerusalem, found in Revelation Chapter 21.

Imagine. The hope we have of heaven is absolutely certain. Those who have placed their trust in Christ alone for forgiveness of sins become heirs in God's Kingdom.

1Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1Peter 4:13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

John 17:19-24 "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

Romans 8:17-18 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Our purpose is to be a witness for Christ.

Our promise is Heaven.

Psalm 73:24-5 With Your counsel You will guide me, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth.

Some questions for application –

Are you willing to check your priorities? Specifically, what causes you to neglect reading your Bible and praying?

If you are in a Growth Group, are you truly committed to attending and serving in your group or do you make excuses to not attend each week?

Think – when we are committed to something, we are faithful. This means if we attend a Growth Group, or Bible study, or go to church on Sunday, then we hold those commitments as a priority, not purposefully making other plans at those times, or only attending when we feel like it or when it fits into our busy schedule.

Do you attend church services or go to a GG or Bible Study or church event to be served or to serve?

We are encouraged when we encourage others. We can easily take for granted our ability to meet publicly, let's remember this is an incredible blessing – one which many believers in parts of the world do not have. Lord, increase our understanding of Your blessings!