

A Word from Your Pilot

I Peter 5:1-10

INTRODUCTION:

If you would open your Bibles this morning, in a few minutes, we will be reading from I Peter Chapter 5 verses 1-10.

All Stand and Read Scripture

1 Peter 5:1-10 (NASB)

5 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, ² shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; ³ nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. ⁵ You younger men, likewise, be subject to *your* elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.

⁶ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷ casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. ⁸ Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ But resist him, firm in *your* faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. ¹⁰ After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you.

As we prepare to look more closely at Peter's passage this morning, let's bow in a word of prayer.

Prayer

ILLUSTRATION:

A story is told of a Continental flight pilot who had obviously grown tired of saying the same stale speech over and over again for weeks on end and just wanted to liven thing up a bit. This is how it went...(In a Pilot's voice)

"Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon and welcome on board Continental flight 428. This is your Captain speaking and I have some information about our flight. We've reached cruising altitude of 35,000 feet and will be turning down the cabin lights.

Turning down the lights is for your comfort and to enhance the appearance of your flight attendants."

"Just a few observations: There may be 50 ways to leave your lover but there are only 4 ways off this airplane. In case of an emergency your flight attendant will assist you on

leaving the plane. In the event of an emergency water landing, your seat cushions can be used for flotation. If that happens please paddle to shore and keep the cushions with our compliments.”

Later, after the plane landed & passengers were about to disembark, the pilot again came on and said:

“As you exit the plane, make sure to gather all of your belongings. Anything left behind will be evenly distributed among the flight attendants. Please... do not leave children or spouses.”

Most of the time pilots and airplane crews are very serious about their instructions. In fact, one webpage had wordings pilots would use in every possible contingency. There were speeches the pilot might give in the event of:

- Turbulence, where the plane was shaken by cross winds of downdrafts.
- Depressurization of the cabin of the plane.
- Aborted takeoffs where the plane was forced to stay on the tarmac.
- Bomb threats.
- Hi-jackings... and so on.

Apparently there are airlines that have instructions on how their pilots should address every and any serious situation.

The one thing I noticed about ALL those instructions was that the Pilot's role was to tell passengers what they needed to know in order to have a safe and comforting trip.

Now, here in I Peter 5 Peter is telling us what WE (as Christians) need to know.

Throughout this letter we've been repeatedly reminded that we are strangers and aliens in this world. We don't belong here. And because we don't belong here...because we're just passing through this world...the Bible repeatedly tells us that we will encounter difficult times. We will suffer. We will be persecuted for our faith.

And so we need to be told how we're going to ride out the storms of life.

We need to be told what's being done to protect us.

And we need to be assured that God –will always be there with us in those difficult times.

The 1st thing Peter does in this 5th chapter is to introduce us to the flight crew. These are the people who are responsible for your well-being and comfort.

These are the ones who on board to watch over you and protect you.

These are the ones who are trained to keep you safe when life gets difficult.

Who are these people?

They're called Elders.

BODY:

I. THE FLIGHT CREW.

1 Peter 5:1-3 (NASB)

5 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, ² shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; ³ nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

The Elders are the first line of defense in the congregation. They are the ones who are shepherds and overseers of all of us.

God has entrusted them with YOU and me. And their job is to be our servants and our examples.

That's why God was so demanding in their qualifications.

Elders are to be good fathers and husbands. They're to be men who KNOW what the Bible says and have the backbone to stand up for good doctrine. They're to be men who are so dedicated to Christ in their daily lives that EVEN the world knows they take their faith seriously and live for Jesus in all that they do.

Women leaders in the church are to serve other women and children as well as to assist the men.

Having strong leaders is critical for our survival. Our safety as a church is in their hands.

ILLUSTRATION:

This is a true story of a man who was on a flight in California that had been delayed for some time in Sacramento. The flight attendant explained that there would be a 45-minute delay, and if they wanted to get off the aircraft, they would reboard in 30 minutes.

Everybody got off the plane except one gentleman who was blind. His Seeing Eye dog lay quietly underneath the seats in front of him the entire flight. He had apparently flown this very flight before because the pilot approached him and, calling him by name. "Keith, we're in Sacramento for almost an hour. Would you like to get off and stretch your legs?"

Keith replied, "No thanks, but maybe my dog would like to stretch his legs."

So the pilot got off the plane to walk the blind man's Seeing Eye dog.

Now picture this: All the people in the gate area stopped where they were. All eyes were focused on this pilot as he walked off the plane with the Seeing Eye Dog! And The pilot was even wearing sunglasses.

When the people saw this pilot with that dog, they all scattered. They not only tried to change planes, they also tried to change airlines!

You see...they thought their pilot was blind and they had no desire to trust their lives to a man who couldn't see to fly their plane.

Elders are called to LEAD the congregation. And as Jesus noted, you don't want the blind leading the blind as you all could fall into a pit together.

Men who don't know how to love their wives and raise their kids; men who don't know their Bible and don't have the backbone to stand up for Christ; and men and don't live out their faith with passion...are blind men.

They have no business flying God's plane filled with God's people. Because they'll just end up crashing the plane.

Our leaders take their role as overseers and protectors and servants seriously. They aren't in this for pride or glory – they're in it to serve Jesus Christ and you are a blessed people because of that.

And God wants you to model yourselves after them. Peter says they are our "examples".

And then he says...

II. **SUBMIT TO ONE ANOTHER.**

1 Peter 5:5-7 (NASB)

⁵ You younger men, likewise, be subject to *your* elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.

⁶ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷ casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

Peter tells us we need to submit to our Elders and leaders.

We should live in such a way that we eventually become like them and model their priorities for Christ in our own lives.

But Peter doesn't stop there.

He says WE ALL are to be submissive to one another.

ILLUSTRATION:

Most of the time, when folks ride on airplanes they are there to be served. They've paid a lot of money for that trip and they want a pillow, they want a meal, they want to watch a movie. Sometimes they don't want something special... they just want to be left alone. The more important they are, the more they want others to serve them.

Now, that is the way some people "DO" church.

They come to the church building and sit in the pews and they intend to be served. Sometimes this is the attitude that they have.....

(Looking bored and frustrated).

“I hate this song. I hate the words. I hate the music. It's hard to sing...and I'M NOT SINGING IT!”

• OR...maybe this is what they are thinking. **(Looking bored again, I slap my wrist and hold it up to my ear as if listening for the ticking in a wristwatch.)**

“Did my watch stop? How long is that guy going to keep on talking. It is **not** supposed to be a sermon. It is a communion meditation for goodness sake!

Let me let you in on a secret. I'm the only person here getting paid to serve. Anyone else who gets up front and speaks does so because they love Jesus and they want to share what's on their heart. Granted, there are times when they could be a little more conscious of time and be more to the point in what they say. But they are up there speaking because they are trying to serve you by their words.

• OR...another attitude. **(Rolling my eyes and looking bored and frustrated again)**

“For pity's sake, Wayne has used that illustration at least 4 or 5 times in the past few months. And that sermon doesn't speak to me at all. I'm just bored out of my head. I just want him to finish this thing up so I can get home and have some roast preacher for lunch!”

These types of attitudes happen every week in churches. Why? Because there are people who come to church to **BE** served...not **TO** serve. And whether it is being offended at music, long winded talks, or a boring sermon they have lost the view of what church is all about. It's all about serving one another.

But Peter writes: “...**clothe yourselves with humility toward one another**”.

What Peter is telling us is... that may be the way things are on other airlines. People may take their seats on a plane with the intention of being served. **BUT IT IS NOT SUPPOSED TO BE THAT WAY AT CHURCH!** God calls us to be servants of one another and you haven't done church until you've ministered to someone in this congregation.

Now, there's a reason for that.

There's a reason why we need to minister to each other.

1 Peter 5:8 (NASB)

⁸ Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

People come to church every week who have been under attack over the past few days. They're hurting and they need someone to reach over and pray for them or listen to them as they tell their troubles.

Now, granted, that is the job of the Elders.

And yes, the preacher needs to be there for folks when they're struggling.

But the Elders and the preacher can't be everywhere, and so God is counting on YOU to make a difference for others. That's why He has saved you to SERVE OTHERS.

Church is all about us submitting and serving one another.

The Elders are supposed to submit to us.
And you are to submit yourselves to the Elders.
And you are to submit yourselves to one another.

We **ALL** do that so that **ALL** of us will be prepared for the second coming of Christ.

But what do we do when that doesn't happen?

What do we do when the Elders and the preacher aren't all that good at their jobs?

What do we do when the Christians around us fail to meet our needs and they're not there to strengthen us and comfort us when we struggle?

What do we do then? Peter tells us to cast your cares on God.

III. CAST YOUR CARES ON GOD.

1 Peter 5:7,10 (NASB)

⁷ casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you...¹⁰ After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you.

Cast all of your anxiety on Him.

When you go through the trials and tribulations of this life, know that there is a GOD. A God Who called you to His eternal glory in Christ and Who will "**Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you**".

Now, here's the deal...

The church is the place God wants us so that we can be sheltered from the struggles and difficulties of this world.

God wants us to be sheltered by the fatherly hand of good Elders.

And God wants us to be protected and nurtured by other Christians who know us and care what happens to us.

God wants them pray for us and hold us when we need comforted.

But the sad truth of life is that mortals often fail.

We all sin and fall short of the glory of God.

We all get busy living our own lives and facing our own problems.

We all get distracted and fail to be there for others on too many occasions.

The problem for a lot of Christians is that when the church fails them...they don't know what to do. They get frustrated and angry and feel abandoned and rejected.

If the Elders don't do their job and the preacher doesn't do his... or the congregation comes off as being unloving and uncaring...they feel lost and betrayed.

But I noticed something here in I Peter 5.

While Peter tells the Elders what they're job is.

While he tells the rest of us what our job is.

NOT ONCE did He say "Cast Your cares on THEM".

NOT ONCE did He say "These folks will make you strong and firm and steadfast".

NOT ONCE did He say "These people will protect you from Satan".

Why not? Because that is not technically our job!

Who's job is it? It's God's job!

"cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you...(God) will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

Let's face it folks: I will fail you now and again.

The Elders will fail you.

Your fellow church members will fail you.

There may come a time when none of us will be able to be there for you.

But God will. God will always be there for you. He'll never leave you and He'll never forsake you. His is the voice you need to listen for when everyone else fails to save you from your troubles.

ILLUSTRATION:

Just outside Miami Doug White, his wife, and two daughters were flying home from a funeral. Around 1:30 in the afternoon on Easter Sunday during the flight, the plane's pilot suffered a heart attack and died.

Now White had just gotten his own pilot's license flying small planes but the King 200 was a far more complicated and difficult plane to fly. It's the type of plane that requires instrument training and special skills to fly safely. White didn't have that. In fact he had no idea what any of the instruments would do. The only thing he knew how to operate in the cockpit was the radio.

Fighting down his panic he realized the pilot's body might (at any time) slump back over the controls and cause the plane to lose control and realizing that (even with help) he might not get the plane down, he nervously keyed the mike he said "Miami. I've got to declare an emergency. My pilot's had a heart attack. I need help up here."

For what seemed an eternity there was no reply.

But then a calm assuring voice from outside of his plane talked him through the next 45 minutes. And because of that calm voice from outside the plane White was able to land the plane safely.

The pilot he had counted on could no longer help him. White needed that voice from the outside to bring his family safely home.

CONCLUSION:

Isaiah 40:28-31 (NASB)

²⁸ Do you not know? Have you not heard?

The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth
Does not become weary or tired.

His understanding is inscrutable.

²⁹ He gives strength to the weary,

And to *him who* lacks might He increases power.

³⁰ Though youths grow weary and tired,

And vigorous young men stumble badly,

³¹ Yet those who wait for the LORD

Will gain new strength;

They will mount up *with* wings like eagles,

They will run and not get tired,

They will walk and not become weary.

Here's the deal. We need each other in this church.

We need strong and Godly leaders, and we need the folks seated around us on Sundays. We need each other in order to handle the daily struggles of life. But ultimately it's God who gives us strength when we're weary. It's God who can renew our lives and make it so that we can run and not grow weary and walk and not faint.

If you have not accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, do it today. Don't wait until you have cleaned up your life. **You don't clean yourself up to come to the Christ; you surrender yourself to Christ, to let Him clean you up!**

God Be with You till We Meet Again

God be with you till we meet again, By His counsels guide uphold you,

With His sheep securely fold you, God be with you till we meet again.

Till we meet...Till we meet, Till we meet at Jesus' feet;

Till we meet...Till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.