

1 Peter 5:1-11

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 02 January 2022

Preacher: Arthur Keefer

[0 : 00] We do have a new year, but we have the same God. And so we come to God's word expecting many of the same things as we have in the past.

I wonder if you know what outsiders need. They need solidarity. Sometimes they need encouragement. I wonder if you know what wanderers need. Well, wanderers need guidance. And what do the vulnerable need? The vulnerable needs protection. And it's all of these things that the audience of 1 Peter needs.

Peter is writing to Christians who are in exile of a sort. They're out of the Holy Land. They're away from the place they've gotten used to knowing about God's promises. If you can imagine the earliest Christians still hanging on to quite a bit of the Jewish traditions.

That the Temple or the Holy Land would have had significance. And being located elsewhere could be a problem. And indeed they did. They faced trials.

[1 : 05] They faced problems of that sort. They were in the diaspora. Peter addresses the letter to those who are elect exiles of the dispersion. And Pontus, Galatia, and so on. He names all these different places that are outside of Israel.

These people are expats. And they need to hear from their own country. The difficulties that they were facing were really sufferings.

Hardships of various types. But particularly the type of hardship that a Christian faces in a society that does not share its beliefs. The government.

Different social relationships. People's reputation. All of this stuff was critical for how the Christians would live. And how they were experiencing life as God's people.

And so Peter wants to reassure them. You can live in this society and respond in godly ways. Don't give up hope. You can live and respond in godly ways.

[2 : 08] And so we come to the end of the book here actually in chapter 5. And this little passage is addressed to the elders. As you would have heard, I exhort the elders among you. But it's also addressed to the wider congregation.

Its message is quite straightforward. Elders should lead the church like Christ the great shepherd. Everyone should remain humble before God. Because God will restore them in the end.

As you can see in verse 6. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God. And in verse 10. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ.

Will himself restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you. This is the great promise that is upheld in this letter. What appears several times though is the theme of glory.

And I don't know if you caught it when we read the passage. Glory is laced throughout the entire passage. And it comes in two forms. First is the glory of God. And second is the glory of oneself.

[3 : 15] As many of you will know, I really do like America. It is my favorite country. So we'll just get that out of the way for the record.

But what I'd like to talk about this morning is the senator from Nevada. Someone who has recently passed away. Maybe you saw this in the news. Harry Reid was a senator from Nevada.

And he of course received all sorts of tributes. All sorts of words of kindness from people who knew him. Senator Reid was one of a kind.

He was honest. He was tough as nails. He ran a tight ship. He was a caring friend. What one politician said really caught my attention.

Above all, in everything that he did, Senator Reid was a consummate American. A consummate American. That's the kind of tribute that someone would give to a senator in the U.S.

[4 : 15] Americans love America. Most of the time. That is a nation that is among other things a source of pride, importance, and even glory. Now it's not always a source of those sorts of things. But it can be. You may know the star-spangled banner. Now it, that is the flag, catches the gleam of the morning's first beam. And full glory reflected now shines in the stream. 'Tis the star-spangled banner. O long may it wave over the land of the free and the home of the brave. In full glory reflected now, it shines. I'm not going to rattle on about America, however great or not so great it might be.

But it should come as no surprise that the Bible is going to give a stern warning about our own self-importance. It's going to give a stern warning about our own self-importance and the sources of that self-importance and glory.

[5 : 16] The warning comes through very clearly in the first four verses of today's passage. Now remember, these are instructions mainly for the elders of the church.

It will have a broader application than that, but that is the initial target. So I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed.

Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you. Not for shameful gain, but eagerly.

Not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

Notice how glory occurs in verses 1 and 4. As a witness of the sufferings of Christ, we also partake in the glory that is going to be revealed. And then in verse 4, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

[6 : 24] What these instructions show, and it's not particularly evident at first, is that elders can be particularly prone to glorify themselves.

And there are really three ways that leadership might go wrong. The glorification part will become clear later on. Three ways that leadership might go wrong. Leadership can go wrong when an elder feels obligated to serve, rather than delighted to serve.

Obligated to serve, rather than delighted to serve. Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you.

Leadership might go wrong when an elder pastors for gain, rather than for the people. When an elder seeks to build a bank account, instead of building up the good of the people of God.

The passage goes on to say, not for shameful gain, but eagerly. Not for shameful gain, but eagerly. That is, eager for the people of God.

[7 : 30] Thirdly, leadership might go wrong when an elder bullies the congregation, rather than serving as a worthy example. Verse 3 says, not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

Not domineering over those in your charge, but examples to the flock. These might be framed as three thoughts of problematic pastoring. Pastors might be in trouble if they're thinking, well, it's what I have to do.

You know, I signed a contract. Or it pays the bills, and for what it is, you know, it's decent money. Or, people just need to do what I say.

Things would go a lot smoother around here if you all just listened to me. Three thoughts of problematic pastoring. Sometimes, we might be able to say some of those things about other jobs. But God's chosen leaders must tend after the sheep. This is a holy calling, and a special calling. And so, what about glory?

[8 : 38] What about glory? I said this passage has something, or a lot to do with glory. And it's framed. Those instructions we just read are framed by this reference to glory. And I don't think the problem is simply that those mottos, the thoughts I just gave you, are ways of glorifying ourselves.

It doesn't seem that straightforward. They don't big up the pastor, necessarily. I mean, they do, in a way. But the problem is, really, that those methods of leadership have lost sight of the glory of God. They've lost sight of the glory of God, and put the pastor first, and the people second. It's a failure to recall that God has made us a participant in his very own glory, and that he's promised an inheritance that will not fade.

It's a matter of losing sight, of taking our eye off the prize, of not watching the point of focus. And so, what I'd like to do this morning is focus.

Let's all focus, elders and congregation alike, on that glory, the glory of God. And we're going to see three things. God reveals his glory, God gives his glory, and God draws us to his glory.

[9 : 53] God reveals his glory, he gives his glory over to us, and he draws us, or invites us, into his own glory. As I said, Christians, and especially elders, are partakers in the glory that is going to be revealed.

That is the first verse. The language here clearly designates a type of glory. This is a to-be-revealed glory. It's the glory that is going to be revealed.

It might be soon, it's about to be revealed, or it might be some unspecified point in the future. But it's not the glory that you now see, or that we've now experienced through scripture, or through experience.

It's not the glory that's been fully realized. It is yet to come. Now, we know full well that God reveals himself through creation.

He reveals his glory in creation. Many of you could quote to me, Psalm 19, 1. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. So, Peter can't be thinking about that kind of glory, the kind of creation glory, the glory that you experience when you go on a trip through the mountains in Scotland or watch a National Geographic program.

[11 : 10] Right? This isn't blue planet glory. But we have, I think, had a taste of this to-be-revealed glory. We have had a taste of it. It's not the same as the glory we see when we look out the window.

But we have had a little bit of a taste, even if it's going to be revealed. Who is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature?

Who became flesh and dwelt among us? Whose glory we have seen. Glory is of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. This is Christ, obviously.

God reveals his glory in Christ. And dare I say, through the incarnation, he has given us a meager revelation of the glory that will be revealed when Christ comes in full glory in his second coming.

We're told that every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. There was a huge mismatch between the revelation that came in Christ and the revelation to come in Christ.

[12 : 16] But we have nonetheless had the revelation in Christ and gotten a taste of the glory of God. But this is not just the to be revealed type of glory.

Peter says we're partakers in that glory. Partakers in that glory. Now, how can we be partakers in that glory when Paul says, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God? When I think of the glory of God, I often think of that's something that we fall short of.

The majesty of God. The expectations of God. The Christ-likeness of God. The very image of God. We have not attained these things and yet we are partakers of it.

This is a classic case of God's work being already started but not yet complete. It's God's work being already started and not yet complete. a real, real feature of the Christian life.

And this is why Paul can also say, and we all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. We have fallen short but God is in the process of restoring us.

[13 : 32] And his own glory and our beholding of that glory has a big role to play. So you are a participant in the glory of God that is and will be revealed.

And God first reveals his glory. Second, God gives his glory. Verse 4 says, when Christ appears, we will receive the unfading crown of glory.

The unfading crown of glory. Or the crown that doesn't fade. That is the crown of glory. Now, crowns in those days were usually made of wreaths.

You'd be familiar with that. A Roman or a Greek soldier kind of celebrating a victory. Or someone in a contest, an Olympian or something like that would have a wreath of leaves.

Right? So take your advent wreath, take the candles off and put it on your head. That's what they did. Okay? But you can also think of a golden crown because a leafy crown will obviously fade.

[14 : 36] It's fading. It's a fading crown. Right? Those leaves will eventually droop and the thing will kind of fall apart and so on. So let's imagine still a golden crown, a metal crown. Something that's suitable for royalty.

Even those crowns will fade. And a lot of jewelry fades, doesn't it? Right? If I'm lifting something metallic, I try to take my ring off.

Right? So if I'm fixing a bicycle or using gym equipment or something like that, I'll take my ring off because it's going to scratch up the gold. I still remember buying this wedding ring actually and the sales person left me with an invitation to what?

Come back any time and get that thing shined. You can come back any time and I'll put it in the machine and we'll shine it up. And sure enough, a few months later, I found myself walking by the store and I thought, why not?

Let's shine it up. And I stopped him. Jewelry fades. And so we polish the silver. We get our ring shined.

[15:42] We have diamonds cleaned up. We rub our watches. We rub our watches. But the crown of glory will not fade.

And that crown of glory refers to our future inheritance. Our future inheritance in Christ. If we go back to the first chapter of 1 Peter, it's just one page to the left.

And look in verse 4. Peter says, we've been born again to a living hope. And verse 4 says, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.

In that passage, and back here in chapter 5, Peter's referring to our salvation. That's the inheritance. The inheritance of our fully restored humanity.

Salvation is not just being, in a kind of simple way, taken out of sin and into heaven, or out of a destiny to hell and into a destiny of heaven. It is that. But salvation refers to the full-orbed blessings of God in Christ.

[16:53] And that includes a fully restored people. This is when we will worship God and love one another without stain or blemish. The day when we will say, holy is the Lamb and worthy is the Lord to be worshipped forever and ever.

It is the day we say that without reservation. That is our inheritance. Holy and fully committed to God. That is the unfading crown that will be ours.

This glory will be revealed. It will be a gift that does not fade. And this glory, lastly, also belongs to God.

It is his eternal glory. Have a look at verse 10. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

This is God's eternal glory. And he has called us to it. There are two points I'd like us to see here.

[18:06] The first is the more obvious one that I've already said, sort of. That glory belongs to God. You may know the hymn, To God be the glory, great things he has done.

And that's the first thing that this phrase brought to mind for me. I found that the lyrics and tune for this hymn were written by two Americans in the 1870s, but that the hymn gained large popularity in Britain, actually.

It was recommended to Billy Graham for his London crusade in 1954 and was a great success.

There's a very good version of this hymn, also, recorded at the Royal Albert Hall.

It took me right back to summer of 2019, or 2020, and being there in the living room with one of the IPC Psalms picked on YouTube and singing along with the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra.

And how do you think that version begins? What instrument do you think starts that version, To God be the glory, in the Royal Albert Hall? Clarinet? Flute? Percussion?

[19:11] Trombone? It's a trumpet. It's a trumpet, of course. Trumpets are the sound of glory. And that's not just a choice of musical arrangement.

That's really a biblical musical preference. The Lord will descend from heaven with a cry of command and with the sound of the trumpet of God. 1 Thessalonians.

The trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised, imperishable. That's 1 Corinthians. 2 Corinthians. The trumpet signals a glory that belongs to God.

To God be the glory. One consequence of this glory belonging to God is that he doesn't share it with anyone else, at least parts of it.

Isaiah says, I am the Lord, that is my name. My glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols. God's warning his people. Don't go making little gods and giving glory to them.

[20:14] Don't package my majesty in some wooden figure. In John's gospel, when Lazarus has died, Jesus is standing at the tomb with Lazarus' sister Mary.

Excuse me, Martha. And Jesus and Martha are standing there, and you know what happens.

Martha says, let's roll away, no, Jesus says, let's roll away the tomb. Let's roll away the tomb. And

Martha says, oh, Jesus, I don't think I would do that.

I just think, maybe give him a few days, right? Why? Because it's going to smell. And Jesus says, no, no, let's roll the stone away. And he adds this to Martha.

Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God? If you believed, you will see the glory of God. Jesus is referring to God's glory that belongs to him, that shows up again and again in his mighty works.

Who else's glory is Martha going to see when it comes to raising her brother from the dead? She doesn't know it's coming. But indeed, it comes. And that's the corollary of glory belonging to God.

[21 : 30] It's not our glory. We are participants in the revealed glory that God has promised to grant us in Christ. But there is a level of glory that the people saw in the life of Christ and that we witness in the scriptures that belongs wholly to God.

Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead belongs to that category. And it's not something that we will know from Jesus' side of things.

Jesus miraculously feeds people. He raises men from the dead. He knows the thoughts of his dinner guests. He outwits the intelligentsia of his day. He's in a different category. He's in a different category.

Jesus does things that we don't do to get the glory. The kind of things that we do that get sort of importance and honor and praise and so on are not like that. Jesus is in a different category because he has the glory that belongs to God.

So this glory belongs to God. And secondly, glory has a special relationship to suffering. This comes through in the beginning of verse 10. And after you have suffered for a little while the God of all grace who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you after you have suffered for a little while.

[22 : 55] Paul says in Romans, for I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us. This is what a lot of the letter of Peter has to do with.

This is what a lot of it is what it's about. As I said at the beginning, people are undergoing trial, hardship. What do they look to? They get encouragement from God, looking to the glory that is going to be revealed and that is promised to them.

And there's all these comparisons. The suffering that you suffer for a little while compared to what type of glory? Eternal glory of God.

God's glory is revealed. He gives it to us and then He invites us to it. We need to behold it. We need to put it before our eyes.

We need to read about the glory of God. We need to remind one another of it. We need to hang it on the wall and look at it every time we walk through the room. It's a part of God's very being and something we need to encounter again and again.

[24 : 06] And yet we must also respond to that glory, that glory of the Lord with humility. If we go back to verse 6, this is really the kind of crux of the passage.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time He may exalt you. Cast all your anxieties on Him because He cares for you.

Peter says to give your sufferings and your worries over to God. Trust that He will care for you. Resist the devil and know that God will protect you.

Hardship, anxiety, and even Satan himself can take so much from us. Those things can take so much from us. Happiness, they take the people we love, they take our security, they take our health, just to name a few things.

But none of those things, no hardship, no worry, no activity of Satan can compromise the inheritance of glory that God will give to those who know Jesus Christ.

[25 : 10] They cannot touch it. This is the inheritance that God now invites us to. Let me conclude with some promises of Scripture.

The prophet Habakkuk said, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. And John in the book of Revelation picks up on this and says, when the congregation is gathered around the Lamb in heaven, they will say, worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive honor and power and glory.

For you created all things and by your will they existed and were created. the new heavens and the new earth will have a new city, the new Jerusalem. And that city, we are told, has no need of sun or

moon.

For the glory of God will give it its light and its lamp will be the Lamb, Jesus Christ. And this is why we say, glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost as it was in the beginning is now and never shall be world without end.

Amen. Amen.