“How to Live as Suffering Saints”

1 Peter 5:5-7

The younger people Peter references are to humbly submit themselves to the church elders

This is not a broad command for generational submission

“The church members, especially the younger people, are to give honor, deference, and respect to the spiritual leadership. Submission is a fundamental attitude of spiritual maturity.” (The MacArthur Study Bible, p. 1949)

Peter also extends this requirement to everyone

Ephesians 5:21: “Submitting to one another in the fear of God.”

Submission is the voluntary giving in to a higher authority with full cooperation, and is therefore characterized by total obedience

This, of course, puts one in a place of real vulnerability

This is why, Peter challenged the elders first as to how they should act as elders

Biblical submission is not a popular or affirmed concept within our present society

Furthermore, what it conveys isn’t properly understood by most people

 2

Interesting enough, similarly, humble submission was also not esteemed as a virtue back in the ancient world of the New Testament

This especially holds true with regard to what the Bible teaches about marriage and wives submitting to their husbands

However, Christians are called to live counterculture

Scripture always remains authoritative and relevant for every new generation of believers

Remember, God’s ways are the very best ways, the most healthy, fulfilling and rewarding personally and relationally

Humility is essentially foundational within the Christian faith

Without the practice of humility, Christ would not have come to this earth or died upon the cross of Calvary

"For the Christian, humility is absolutely indispensable. Without it there can be no self-knowledge, no repentance, no faith and no salvation." ~ Aiden Wilson Tozer

To be humble is not to have no mind of our own or be absent of personal opinions

It is to have a proper recognition of true reality

Where humility is present, demandingness is absent

 3

Romans 12:3: “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.”

According to Peter, humility is so important we’re to clothe ourselves with it in our daily life

This kind of imagery is also prevalent within Paul’s writings, e.g. Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:12-14

We think purposefully about what material clothes we’ll put on each morning

Do we do the same spiritually with regard to humility?

“This was the white scarf or apron of slaves, which was fastened to the belt of the vest and distinguished slaves from freemen…this could also refer to the overalls which slaves wore to keep clean while working—an exceedingly humble garment.” (Strong’s Concordance, BLB)

On the most powerful examples of this is when Jesus washed His disciple’s feet, John 13:1-5

Perhaps this was what Peter was recalling when he wrote this

Peter next points out a really good reason why we should be very intentional to clothe ourselves with humility

 4

He quotes Proverbs 3:34: “Surely He scorns the scornful, but gives grace to the humble.”

To resist or oppose is to arrange oneself against a foe in battle

Can you imagine lining up against Goliath?

In this instance, the proud person is lining up against God

That’s a no-win situation, a truly frightening reality

Pride is the one sin which is abhorrently intolerant to God

When we are not humble we have lost perception of who God truly is and how much pride incites His divine indignation

The apostle James has a similar call to humility in chapter four, verses seven through ten of his epistle

Let’s make a greater commitment right now to see pride from God’s point of view

On the other hand, God grants grace to those who are humble

Grace is God freely granting to us what we do not deserve

We can put every single blessing into this category

There is not true safety outside the grace of God

We need the grace of God more than anything else in this universe

 5

The practice of humility is connected to one’s belief in God’s sovereign plan

Jesus often communicated how those who are first will be last and those who are last will be first, c.f. Matthew 19:30; Mark 10:31; Luke 13:30

He also said in Matthew 23:12: “And who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

There’s also a tie into Romans 8:28

God has the power to make all things work together for our good and His glory

So, in practicality, what is to be our response?

We are to cast our cares upon God

This is an incredibly, amazing privilege that God gives us when we recognize our smallness in comparison to God’s universe

Psalm 8:3-4: When I look at the night sky and see the work of Your fingers – the moon and the stars You set in place – what are mere mortals that You should think about them, human beings that You should care for them?” (NLT)

David was filled with absolute astonishment that the great God of creation gave Him any thought, let alone intimately cared about him

 6

But there’s no question how God cares about us even more than we realize

The issue is we more frequently grasp than cast our anxieties

What I truly cast I leave permanently in my past

Psalm 55:22: “Cast your burden on the LORD, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.”

Philippians 4:6-7: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

To obey this is to trust completely in God’s sovereignty

Let’s honestly answer some concluding questions

Am I consciously beginning each new day by clothing myself spiritually with humility?

Am I trying to legitimize actions and attitudes of proud behaviour?

Am I truly trusting in God’s sovereign plan for my life?

Am I giving over my anxieties to God?