

Standing Fast in the Grace of God

“Clothed with Humility”

1 Peter 5:5-7

In the first four verses of chapter 5, Peter addressed those who “*feed the flock of God,*” and reminded them that God’s people are not to be handled carelessly, selfishly, or by force, but with a shepherd’s heart.

The church, however, is not made healthy by faithful leaders alone. There must also be a right spirit among the people, among the flock, themselves. Because of that, Peter now turns from the responsibility of the shepherds to the disposition of the saints. In these verses before us, he shows that the grace needed in the church is the grace of humility — humility toward one another, humility under the hand of God, and humility that casts every care upon Him.

I. THE PRACTICE OF HUMILITY — V. 5

Peter is not calling for weakness or silence in the face of error. He is calling for the renunciation of pride in this verse.

A. Humility accepts God-ordained order

“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder”

1. “*Likewise*” ties this to what came before.
 - a) Peter is continuing the thought of orderly life among God’s people.
 - b) There is a balance here: authority must not be abused by shepherds (v. 3), but neither should it be resisted by those under their care.

2. *"Ye younger"*

- a) Peter is addressing those who are younger and therefore more likely to need exhortation in the matter of submission and teachability.
- b) There may be a literal age application here, but the larger principle is clear: those who are inclined to self-assertion must learn willing submission.

3. *"Submit yourselves unto the elder"*

- a) The verb *"submit yourselves"* (ὑποτάγητε) carries the idea of placing oneself under (1 Pet. 2:13; 3:1, 5). This is a call to willing order, not servitude.
- b) This would certainly include respect for those older and more mature, but in the immediate context — following verses 1–4 — it likely has special reference to the elders as leaders in the congregation.
- c) Peter is saying, then, that healthy church life requires more than faithful shepherds; it also requires humble, submissive sheep.
- d) Pointing back to the previous passage that we studied last week, shepherds must not lord over the flock, but the flock must not become proud, unteachable, and resistant either.

B. Humility shapes all Christian relationships

"Yea, all of you be subject one to another"

- 1. This phrase does not erase distinctions of office or authority — he is calling the entire body to a spirit of mutual humility, teachability, and service.

2. *"Be subject one to another"* should not be forced into meaning that all authority structure disappears. It means that everyone in the body is to relate to others with a humble, deferential, unselfish spirit.

C. Humility wears the garment of a servant

"And be clothed with humility" — this is the heart of the verse.

1. The idea of *"be clothed with"* (ἐγκομβώσασθε) is to tie on or put on humility like a garment or apron. The picture of a servant tying on the outer garment of service is in view in this term.
2. Humility is the visible *"dress"* of a servant-hearted believer.
3. This should remind us of our Savior in John 13, where He took the servant's place and girded Himself to wash the disciples' feet.

John 13:4

⁴ He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

D. Humility lives in the favor of God

"For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble"

Proverbs 3:34

³⁴ Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

1. God resists the proud
 - a) The word *"resisteth"* (ἀντιτάσσεται) suggests that God sets Himself against the proud.

- b) This shows that pride is not a minor personality flaw, but puts a person in opposition to God.
- c) Within the context here, this would be:
 - (1) A proud younger person resisting counsel
 - (2) A proud church member refusing a lowly spirit
 - (3) A proud believer insisting on self-will

2. God gives grace to the humble

- a) The "*humble*" (ταπεινός) are those who take the low place before God and others.

Romans 12:16

¹⁶ Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

James 1:9

⁹ Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

James 4:6

⁶ But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

- b) Humility is not how we earn grace, but it is the posture in which grace is received and enjoyed.

II. THE POSTURE OF HUMILITY — V. 6

The "*therefore*" in this verse is important. If God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble, therefore humble yourselves.

Peter isn't just saying, "Humility is a good trait." He is

saying, "In light of who God is and how God deals with men, humble yourselves.

A. Humility is willingly embraced

"Humble yourselves"

1. He doesn't say to "be humbled," but "humble yourselves." This is a call for voluntary submission of heart before God.
2. Humility is not only being brought low; it is willingly going low before God.

B. Humility bows beneath God's sovereign dealings

"Under the mighty hand of God"

1. This would call to mind by the hearers/readers of this letter the language used of God in relation to Israel, especially the Exodus, where He brought His people out by a mighty hand.

Deuteronomy 26:8

⁸ And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders:

2. Here in 1 Peter, that hand seems to point especially to God's governing hand over the trials, pressures, and humbling circumstances of life.
3. *"Under the mighty hand of God"* suggests:
 - a) God is sovereign over the believer's circumstances.
 - b) God's hand may be heavy, but it is never helpless.

- c) The proper response to God's providence is humility, not prideful resistance.
4. The people to whom Peter wrote were suffering and to counteract any propensity to pride, the Holy Spirit gave him this to encourage the people.

C. Humility waits for God to lift it up

"That he may exalt you"

Matthew 23:12

¹² And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

1. This means that the one who willingly bows before God may leave the matter of lifting up entirely in God's hands.
2. In the immediate context of suffering, this likely has the sense of God's vindicating and raising up His afflicted people after the season of humbling has done its work.

D. Humility trusts God's timing

"In due time"

1. This isn't in our time; it's in His time.
2. That means in God's appointed time (and He always has one); when His purpose in the humbling is accomplished — not before, not after, but exactly when He sees fit.

A song writer put it this way: "He's in time, on time, every time for me."

Psalm 75:6-7

⁶ For promotion *cometh* neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. ⁷ But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

- But Peter knows that humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God is not easy. The heart immediately asks, “What do I do with all the fear, pressure, and inward burden that comes with that?” Verse 7 answers: the humble soul casts its care upon God.

III. THE PEACE OF HUMILITY — V. 7

Peter isn't just saying, “God cares, so don't worry.” He's saying: “Humble yourselves under the might hand of God by casting all your care upon Him.”

A proud heart clutches its burdens, insists on managing everything, and resists the humbling hand of God. A humble heart hands its anxieties over to the Lord.

A. Humility releases its burdens to God

“Casting”

1. Grammatically and contextually, “*casting*” is to be taken as explaining how the command of verse 6 is to be carried out.
2. The word (ἐπιρρίπτω) gives the picture of throwing something upon another. It is very decisive language. The burden is taken off our shoulders and placed upon God, as it were, and is no longer ours to bear.

Luke 19:35 [only other time the word is used]

³⁵ And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.

3. There is something forceful and active in the term. The believer is called to transfer our burden

to the One who is able to bear it.

Psalm 55:22

²² Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

B. Humility withholds nothing from God

"All your care"

1. *"All"* — what a powerful word in this context!

Not some of your care; not the spiritual care but not the practical; not the large burdens but not the repeated daily ones — All of them.

2. *"Care"* (μέριμνα) — this word carries the idea of anxiety, worry, distracting concern or anxiety, or inward burden. Peter is recognizing that those he was writing to were dealing with trials that were causing great internal turmoil and they were struggling with how to cope with them.

Psalm 37:5

⁵ Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass.

C. Humility rests in the heart of God

"Upon him; for he careth for you"

1. *"Upon Him"* — upon God Himself. The One whose hand governs all things is the very One upon whom the believer is invited to cast every burden.
2. *"For He careth for you"*
 - a) *"Careth"* (μέλει) is a different word than that for

"care." This word conveys the idea simply of the care that foresees and provides. "The thought expressed is accordingly that our anxiety is to be swallowed up in our trust in the loving Providence of the Father" (Cambridge Bible).

- b) The Father is personally concerned for you and me. This is what makes the casting reasonable. We do not cast our burdens on God merely because He is strong enough, but because He is loving enough.
3. Too often we are unwilling to leave matters to God — pride gets in the way and that's why this verse is connected with those on humility. We are saying, in essence, when we don't "cast" our burdens on the Lord that we want control, or we want an explanation, or we want immediate resolution, or we want visible outcomes, or we want an answer in our preferred timing.

In other words, anxiety is often the burden pride insists on carrying, while humility lays it down before God.

Conclusion:

I chose for the title of this message, "Clothed in Humility" because of the truths taught about humility in this text.

- That means we do not put ourselves in front of others; we don't resist the order God has ordained in the church (and our lives; or insist on having our own way.
- It also means we bow under the mighty hand of God, even when His purpose and way is hard to understand.
- And it means we do not carry our burdens as though everything depended on us, but cast them upon Him

because He cares for us.

Pride puts a man at odds with God, but humility places him in the path of grace. So, the question is not whether we think humility is a good thing, but whether we are willing to practice it — toward one another, before God, and in the secret place where our cares are either clutched in fear or surrendered in faith.