

1 Peter Chapter 5B

In the early days of GPS travel, the Parsons' family planned a Winter vacation to the Sunday River Ski Resort in Maine. We packed the family up in two cars and hit the road. I loaded our destination in the GPS and off we went.

- We affectionately named our GPS Lucy (female voice) and with that calming British accent Lucy began directing us to our anticipated destination.
- As a good wife, Sharon had previously map-quested our journey just in case something happened to Lucy.
- Crossing from N.J. into N.Y. our sweet little British friend began directing us to every side road, every back road, every hill and valley imaginable in the state.
- Conversations between the cars became frantic for two reasons.
 - First, I didn't really know where we were and Lucy kept on recalculating.
 - Second, Elliott was just a baby and didn't like traveling in the car so he screamed the entire time.
 - A trip that would normally take about 9 hours, thanks to Lucy took about 11 hours.
 - The entire day was like a scene from a Christmas Vacation Movie.

It seemed so easy, all you need to do is enter your starting point and your ending point and Lucy would make sure that you enjoyed a trouble free journey.

- I have taken numerous road-trips in my lifetime and I don't believe there is such a thing as a trouble free journey.
- And friends, having walked with the Lord for 45 years, I don't think there is such a thing as a trouble free pilgrimage.
- And Peter, well He would certainly agree with me.

Like a G.P.S. this Epistle of Peter contains the Starting Point of our Journey of faith as well as its glorious destination.

- Each of us began our Pilgrimage of faith through the New Birth and every one of us who is truly Born of God will complete our journey in Heaven where we will receive a great reward.
- Peter beautifully describes the beginning, middle and end of this pilgrimage in the first chapter of his Epistle.

1 Peter 1: 3 **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith — more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire — may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Now, I have shared this with you before, but let me repeat it: Our life in Christ begins with an event, that is followed by a process, and that process comes to completion in another glorious final event.

- We are Born of God in an event that Theologians call “Regeneration” Justified
- After having been born of God we enter into a lifelong process which is called Sanctification
- That sanctification is completed in the grand crescendo of our salvation, which is our glorification. This is when we receive **an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading,**

I believe the Apostle Peter would be a fitting Poster Child for this process of Sanctification. Not because he lived a perfect life, quite the contrary, because of the dramatic transformation that God brought about in his life.

Observing Peter’s life from the effective call that came by the lips of the Lord Jesus when he said: (Matt. 4:19) **"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."**

- To his confession of Christ as Lord at Ceserea Philippi. When Jesus asked, **“Who do men say that I am?”** Peter responded, **“You are the Christ, the Son, (flesh and blood have not revealed this to you but my Father in heaven....)**
- And then throughout the Gospels, We have a record of all of the ups and downs, the victories and trials that God used in the process of sanctifying Peter.
- One minute he is gloriously proclaiming the revelation of the Father, and the next he is reprimanded as an offence, an obstacle, a satanic hindrance to the saving plan of God.
- One moment he is walking on the water and the next he is dropping like a rock.

This morning as we return to the First Epistle of Peter I would like to draw your attention to the faithfulness of God as He patiently graciously completes that good work that He begins within His chosen people.

As Peter writes to the churches who are enduring yet another round of suffering and persecution, stirred up by the enemy of our soul, he exhorts his brothers in a series of commands that will help them in their own Journey of Sanctification.

I have titled our outline today: **“ATTRIBUTES OF CHRISTIAN MATURITY.**

- We will take these attributes in order of their appearance in the text.
- Submission, Humility, Trust, Vigilance, Hope

Submission:

1 Peter 5: 5a **Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders.**

- The first thing we need to determine here in Vs 5 is who are the “Younger?”
- I believe the word “**younger**” in this particular context should be viewed as a contrast to the Elders whom Peter addressed in Verses 1-4. (1-4 to elders / 5-11 to younger)
- So in this case I believe that Peter is addressing the whole congregation, regardless of age in his command to submit to the elders.

You may remember that submission to authority is an essential attribute of Christian maturity and one that dramatically sets us apart from the rebellious society around us

- Peter’s call for believers to submit to the elders of the church is actually the 4th and final mention of submission in this Epistle.
- Because God is a God of order, for the good of man, He structured society in a manner that would reflect his authority, and believers are commanded to live in submission to every form of divinely delegated authority.

In Chapter 2 we were commanded to submit to Governmental Authorities.

1 Peter 2: 13 **Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, 14a or to governors.**

Again in Chapter 2 Peter spoke of submission IN a vocational environment.

1Peter 2: 18 **Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.**

And then in Chapter 3 Peter addressed submission to the authority that God has established in the home.

1 Peter 3:1 **Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands,**

- The process of Spiritual growth flourishes among those who have an attitude of submission. On the other hand, I can tell you from experience that rebellious sheep cause the shepherds of the flock to endure undue stress. They lose their sleep as well as their hair when the sheep are unruly. The writer of Hebrews puts it this way:

Hebrews 13: 17 **Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.**

- The next attribute of Christian maturity on Peter’s list is inseparably linked to the submission that we just reviewed. Those who walk in submission to their elders will do so in an attitude of humility.

Humility

1 Peter 5:5b **Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."** 6 **Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,**

- The Word "Clothe" literally means to "tie something on oneself" like the apron that was worn by a servant.
- Peter is commanding all Believers to cover themselves with the lowliness of mind that comes from a humble attitude.
- As I read this, I began to wonder; when Peter was writing this portion of Scripture, was he thinking about that night in Jerusalem, when the disciples were gathered together in the upper room?
- That night when they were arguing with one another over which of them was the greatest and Jesus simply, quietly picked up a towel, and wrapping it around himself proceeded to wash the disciple's feet. It was there that Jesus clothed himself with humility as an example to all of us.

John 13: 12 **When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you?"** 13 **You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.** 14 **If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.**

15 **For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.**

16 **Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.**

- Reflecting on the life of Christ Peter reminds us that the path to exaltation runs directly through the valley of humility.

1 Peter 5: **Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you**

- There is NO greater example of the kind of humility that leads to exaltation than the example established by Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:6 **...though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,** 7 **but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.**

8 **And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.** 9 **Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,**

Moving from Peter's command to humble ourselves, under the mighty hand of God we immediately come upon a participle. A participle is a descriptive phrase, in this case it describes HOW we are to humble ourselves, (That's important information!)

According to Peter, We humble ourselves by “Casting all our anxieties on Him.”

- In essence Peter is saying that there is a vital connection between humility and trust.

Trust.

1 Peter 5: 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

- This fleshly life can be riddled with debilitating fears and anxieties.
 - Fear of the future (Will that crazy dictator in N. Korea Nuke us?)
 - Stress in School, at work, in your marriage can create anxiety.
 - I fear what kind of world will my kids, grandkids face?
 - I wonder, will the market crash before I get the chance to retire?

Peter commands us to cast (literally throw) all of our anxieties, all of our worries and those ever present fears on the Lord, only then do we walk in true humility.

Tomas Schreiner writes: “Worry is a form of pride because when believers are filled with anxiety, they are convinced that they must solve the problems in their lives in their own strength..... When believers throw their worries upon God, they express their trust in His mighty hand, acknowledging that He is Lord and Sovereign over all of life.”

You may remember that Peter had a crash course in humility and trust one evening on the Sea of Galilee.

- By vocation Peter was a fisherman. He fished the waters of the Galilee since he was a little boy. I have no doubt, he knew that lake like the back of his hand.
- BUT there was a night when an especially wicked storm arose that was so treacherous, so fearful that the Big Fisherman literally felt he was going to die.

Mark 4: 35 On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." 36 And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him.

37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. 38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

39 And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" 41 And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

- Mark doesn't tell us how long the disciples struggled in their own strength against the wind and the sea, before they decided to petition the Lord Jesus who was fast asleep in the back of the boat?
- After all, they were the fishermen, he is just a preacher. What does He know about boats and currents and winds? SO they didn't bother him till too late.

- In the sovereignty of God these disciples were given over to struggle, to panic, to fear for their lives, WHY? So that the Loving Care and the immeasurable power of the Savior would be indelibly imprinted upon their minds forever.
- Remember what the disciples said at the height of their anxiety? "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"
- How many times has that same question come from our lips?
- Here in the book of 1 Peter, at the end of his life after experiencing the loving care of the Lord for many years, Peter writes to his brothers who are suffering hardship and persecution: cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.
- OK we have covered submission, humility and trust let's move on to Vigilance:

Vigilance

1 Peter 5: 8 **Be sober-minded; be watchful.**

- I find it interesting that this command for watchfulness comes from Peter, the very one who was unable to watch and pray with the Lord Jesus on the night that He was betrayed.

Remember in the Garden, Jesus said to Peter: Matthew 26:41 **Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."**

- Spiritual watchfulness, like discernment is something that grows through the sanctifying grace of God.
- Continual exposure to the Word of God builds that faith which serves as a shield against the fiery darts of the wicked one.

1 Peter 5: 8 **Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.**

- As believers we must not be caught off guard, we are not to indulge in activities or behaviors that would dull our senses and distort our minds.
- Sobriety, Clarity, spiritual and mental acuteness are distinguishing marks of maturity in the Lives of God's Children.

1 Thessalonians 5: 5 **You are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness 6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.**

- Peter's command to vigilance comes in light of the spiritual battle that all believers face during the time of their pilgrimage.
- A number of the manuscripts contain the word "Because" (Hoti) which serves to clarify the reason for our watchfulness. Why must we remain sober?
- Vigilance is necessary BECAUSE the Devil is on the prowl.

In general there are two errors that many Christians tend to make:

- Some stick their head in the sand, ignore the enemy, pretending that he doesn't exist. (Pastor Joe used to say, when you stick your head in the sand consider the target you give to the enemy)
- Others become obsessed with the Devil, ascribing to him the same omniscience and omnipresence that belongs to God alone. (*He can only be in 1 place at a time*)
- From his own experience Peter encourages us to be sober and watchful: Remember Jesus said to Peter, “**Satan desires to sift you like wheat.**”

Our adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

- The enemy of our soul is like a vicious hunter who doesn't sleep but constantly pursues His prey. And his final objective is not merely to wound the sheep of God's fold but to utterly destroy them.

Jesus called him the ruler of this world (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11)

- As such, he brings his destructive work to bear upon the People of God through human agents. We see this clearly in Revelation 12:

Revelation 12: 3 **And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. 4 His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.**

- With brilliant imagery John describes the predatorily roaring of the Devil as he seeks to devour Christ immediately upon his incarnation.
- The great red dragon is the Devil, the woman is Israel and the child is Christ, the promised seed of the Woman.
- Satan inspired Herod to destroy Christ by killing all of the children under the age of two who were living near the town of Bethlehem.
- As Believers we must be alert at all times and put on the full armor of God.

Ephesians 6: 13 **Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.**

By grace God has saved us, By grace HE will Sanctify us. By grace He provides the armor in which we stand against the wiles of the Devil. By grace He supplies the unction of His Spirit for obedience so that we can live in Submission, Humility, Trust, Vigilance and finally Hope

Hope

1 Peter 5: 10 And after you have suffered 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. 11 To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

- Once again Peter is speaking of the Sanctifying grace that he, himself experienced as he walked with the Lord Jesus.
- He wants us to know that suffering is a temporary condition; The sifting that sometimes comes as a result of our own sin and the guilt and condemnation that accompany it are removed by the grace of God through Jesus Christ alone.
- The same God who called us, the God who chose us before the foundation of the world will HIMSELF, restore, confirm, strengthen and establish us, after we have endured the sifting of sorrow. This was Peter's experience:

When Jesus rose from the grave, after the sifting of the Enemy was completed, when Peter's Pride had been broken and repentance had taken hold of his heart, Jesus came to him personally, privately by the shore of the Galilee to restore, confirm, strengthen and to establish him.

- Peter, do you love me? Feed my sheep!

My Friends, whatever sifting you are presently enduring, whatever suffering has gripped your life, if you are living under a weight of guilt and condemnation brought on by the Accuser of the Brethren, I am here to remind you that

1 John 1: 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

- "Restore" he will finish or complete his work within us.
- "Confirm" to make us steadfast, immovable,
- "Strengthen" to make us fit and strong for His Service.
- "Establish" firm up that lasting foundation that He has established in us.