

1Pet 5.5—The Humble Submission of Christ's Sheep

Submission toward your elders

- I. The NT epistles reveal that reciprocal duties, for Christ's sake, are one main key to a holy and happy Christian life, Rom 12-13; 1Cor 12; Eph 5-6; Col 3-4; 1Pet 2-3, 5.
 - A. In regard to the church's leadership, Peter says elders are to shepherd their flock and the flock is to submit to their elders. Christians enjoy freedom in Christ, Gal 5.1, and yet that freedom is a freedom in which every Christian is to honor God in his station by submitting to the authorities placed over him, 1Pet 2.13.
 - B. In other words, we submit to our authorities because, in doing so, we show our submission to God Himself, Col 3.22-24.
- II. The word submission usually carries the idea of weakness. "Only the weak submit to being governed. The strong don't need it."
 - A. But this nonsense is exposed for the pride that it is when we remember that the Almighty Son of God humbled Himself to the point of death and submitted Himself to the Father's will.
- III. Christ, then, is not only our pattern for humility and submission but also our Fountain, from whom we draw out the grace of humility.
 - A. The call to submit to your elders, then, is not a call to be less, but rather a call to love and honor God by respecting your station as well as your elders' stations, since both are God's will.
 - B. The call to submit is the call to yield to the manner chosen by Christ to arrange and govern His church, Heb 13.17.
 - C. If they're to shepherd with a sense of accountability to God for you, then you're to submit with a sense of gratitude to God for them, Heb 13.17.
 - D. God does you no wrong by placing elders over you, but has in fact done your soul a tremendous good, Acts 20.28; Js 5.14; Ezk 34.23-24. Be thankful for them and praise God for them.

Humility toward one another

- I. *Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another*, Rom 12.10; Phil 2.3-4.
 - A. The church is to be a family of God marked by mutual respect, mutual regard, and a habit of conduct which counts others more significant than yourself. And the key to a church functioning this way is the presence and vitality of the grace of humility.

- B. Humility is the grace needed to serve the church, Gal 5.13; 1Pet 4.10. And humility is the grace needed to dwell together in harmony and unity as the church of Christ, Eph 4.1-3.
 - C. The church can't function properly without the grace of humility toward one another: humility that honors another's station, rejoices in another's preference, and praises God for both.
- II. Because of the importance and necessity of the continual exercise of this grace, Peter says we're to be clothed with it, as with a robe.
 - A. We should be wrapped up all over with this grace. It should be the most conspicuous thing about our relationships with each other.
 - B. In all our service to Christ's church and in all our conduct toward each other, we're to be marked by humility.
 - C. And where do we find the rule for such a life of humility in Christ's church? In no other place than in the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, Phil 2.5-8; Mt 21.5; Mt 14.31; 1Cor 4.9-13; Heb 2.10-13; Jn 18.8; Rom 5.6-10; Jn 13.3-15.

A powerful motive to humility in God's house

- I. *God opposes the proud*, Ps 18.27; Isa 2.12; Jer 50.32; Lk 14.11.
 - A. God sets Himself in battle array against the proud. He singles them out for battle and stands squarely in their way.
 - B. It's the epitome of the utter irrationality of sin that a man would give way to pride in his opposition against GOD, Dan 4.37.
- II. *God gives grace to the humble*, Pr 18.12; Ps 25.9; 149.4; Lk 14.11.
 - A. God is bountiful toward the humble. Humility is the grace that attracts more grace because the Lord richly rewards it.
 - B. Humility is also the qualification for greatness, because it's the humble that God raises up.

Applications

- I. Be convinced of the cost of pride in the Christian life.
 - A. Pride in our hearts keeps us from the bounty the Lord has for us.
 - B. God will not ignore our pride. He'll humble us for it, 2Chr 28.19.
- II. Be encouraged to cultivate the grace of humility:
 - A. Sit often before the Lord with the prayer of Ps 139.23-24.
 - B. Look for Christ and His graces in others and thank God for His goodness to them.
 - C. Pray often for the grace of humility, being encouraged that what God calls you to do, He promises to work in you, Phil 2.13.