



**“For to this you were called,
because Christ also suffered for us,
leaving us an example, that you
should follow His steps.”**

1 Peter 2:21

**Old Testament Reading – Psalm 134-135 – New Testament Reading –
Ephesians 4:11-16**

**How Should We Then Live
“The Church Under Persecution”
1 Peter 5:1-14**

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The epistle of 1st Peter was written around 64AD, some 30-years after Christ’s resurrection. Having studied the whole epistle, we can conclude that Peter’s primary goals in writing this letter were:

- To comfort those 1st century Christians who were suffering persecution for their faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah.
- To encourage them to stay strong in their faith in the Lord.
- To exhort them to get their minds off of their suffering and on to the Savior who had suffered and died for their sins.

- To urge them to get their minds off the pain of their present condition, which was temporal, and on to the promise of their future position with Christ, which is eternal.

“May the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 5:1-11

A Brief Review:

- Chapter 1 – Peter assured these believers of their eternal salvation. 1 Peter 1:22-23– *“Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit; having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.”*
 - God has called us to live as His people in the world, but not to live like the people of the world. He has called us to be holy, as He is holy, to display His righteousness in a very unrighteous world.
- Chapter 2-3 – Peter said the evidence of their submission to Christ would be manifested in their submission to everyone in authority over them, including those who were persecuting them. In 1 Peter 2:23, he gave them the example of Jesus, *“Who, when reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but rather committed Himself to the One who judges righteously.”*
 - Every Christian of every age has been called to manifest this kind of submission as proof of our full surrender unto the Lordship of Christ.
- Chapter 4 – Peter reminded them they had been called to suffer for God’s glory. They were to expect it, receive it, rejoice because of it, and allow it to accomplish the purpose for which God ordained it. 1 Peter 4:12-13 – *“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may be glad with exceeding joy.”*
 - This is how Christians should live in the world today!
 - We should take heart in knowing that Jesus said it would be this way just before He called us home.
 - Therefore, rather than fighting against the persecution, we should welcome it as God’s method to purge, purify, and perfect the Church for the rapture.

“For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless

**one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the
breath of His
mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.”
2 Thessalonians 2:7-8**

1. Peter’s Exhortation to the Shepherds – 1 Peter 5:1-4 – “The elders among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that will be revealed.”

- “Elder” – refers to the spiritual maturity and wisdom an older person should have that would qualify them to serve as leaders in the Church.
- “Teaching Elder” – refers to the pastor of a local congregation of Christians.
- “Sheep” – of all the animals God created, sheep are the only ones without the instinct of personal survival. They are totally dependent upon the shepherd for their provision, protection, and direction.
- “Shepherd” – Peter said the work of an elder, especially a teaching elder, is that of a shepherd, to feed, protect, guide, and care for “the flock of God” under his charge, for when they stood at the Judgment Seat of Christ, they would have to give an account of their stewardship of God’s flock.
- They were to serve as “overseers” – discerning the needs of the sheep and what must be done to provide for their provision and protection.
- They were to serve as “examples” – living illustrations of what it meant to be a devoted disciple of Christ.
- They were not to serve by “compulsion” – if they did not sense the call of God to serve in that position, they should not feel compelled to take it.
- They were not to serve for “personal financial gain” – the Apostle Paul said those elders who faithfully preach the Word are worthy of double honor, but to be paid at all should not be the motive of entering the ministry.
- They were not to act as “lords” over those entrusted to them – the only authority a pastor has over the people under his charge is when he is preaching the Word of God. When he is not preaching, he is to become their servant, willing to sacrifice his life to protect and provide for those under his care.
- Those elders who served well will receive the Crown of Glory when they stand before the Lord. The Apostle Paul said the sufferings of this present time were not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us on that day.

2. Peter’s Exhortations to the Sheep – 1 Peter 5:5-14

In these closing verses, Peter defined the behavior of the believer during times of persecution.

- Believers are to submit to those in spiritual authority over them.
 - Younger believers are to follow the example of older believers.

- It is a call to honor, to respect, and to give deference to those who have been through persecution and who are in positions of spiritual leadership.
 - Spiritual maturity requires an attitude of submission.
- Believers are to develop a disciplined mind.
 - We must never forget that we are in constant spiritual warfare with Satan, and we will be until Jesus returns to this earth as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.
 - Spiritual unity is a powerful weapon against Satan and against those who want to attack the Church.
- Believers are to accept persecution as God's method to make us stronger in our faith and more effective in our witness.
 - God's grace is both the desire and the power to do God's will in every area of our lives.
 - The same grace that saved us and assured us of our eternal life can also sustain us during the trials and tribulations of our earthly life.
- Believers are to have a worshipping heart.
 - Those with a worshipping heart can face the difficulties of life without questioning why God allowed them.
 - God is sovereign. God has all authority! God has all power!
 - Job said, *"Though He slay me, yet I will trust in Him."*
- The basic attitudes of a spiritually-mature believer, and therefore of a spiritually-mature church are:
 - Submission, humility, trust, self-denial, vigilance, hope, worship, faithfulness, and love for the brethren.
 - This is how Christians should live, especially in light of the coming persecution, and especially as we see the day of the Lord approaching.
 - Christians are to "be holy," for God is Holy, for *"We are His people and the sheep of His pasture!"* Psalm 100:3