



Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 2:1-13

New Testament Reading: Philippians 4:8-13

## **A Living Hope – Preparing for Persecution “How To Shepherd the Flock of God”**

### **1 Peter 5:1-4**

**Wayne J. Edwards, Pastor**

At the time of this writing, (A.D. 62-64) the Apostle Peter was in prison, awaiting his crucifixion for preaching the gospel, and thousands of Christians throughout the Roman Empire were being persecuted for their faith in the gospel.

- Rather than writing a compassionate letter sympathizing with their suffering, Peter challenged his fellow believers to **“rejoice”** for God had called them to suffer!
- Rather than considering their suffering a sign of God’s abandonment, Peter said they should see it as evidence of God’s adornment, for He had **“rested His glory”** upon them.
- Then Peter exhorted the **“elders”** who served as Pastors to those who were being persecuted to **“shepherd the flock of God.”**

- **God's sheep were under assault** – they needed Biblical truth – not religious rhetoric.
- **God's sheep were under attack** – they needed God's wisdom and understanding, not pious phrases and empty promises.

Sheep are utterly dependent upon their shepherds for:

- **Their direction** – if they wander too far from the fold, they cannot find their way back.
- **Their provision** – they are constantly hungry for food but they cannot distinguish good food from bad. They are also continually thirsty but have no sense of smell to find water.
- **Their protection** – they have no defense against predators – they don't bite, scratch, or kick.

When He was on earth, Jesus said He was the ***“good Shepherd who cared for His sheep.”***

- In Ephesians 4:11-12, Paul said before Christ ascended, He gave the church: ***“Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ!”***
- God calls ***under-shepherds*** to oversee a portion of ***God's flock***, until the ***Chief-Shepherd*** returns.

## **1. Peter's Exhortation – Vs. 2 “Feed (Shepherd) the flock of God which is among you.”**

- The primary duty of a Pastor is to ***“feed the flock of God!”***
- Just as a shepherd must find the proper pasture where his sheep can eat without fear of being poisoned, so a pastor limits his preaching to the Word of God, which is absolute truth with no mixture of error in its content or its intent, so God's people can ***“grow in the grace and knowledge of God.”***
- Just as a shepherd must find the right watering place so his sheep can satisfy their thirst, so a pastor preach the pure Word of God, where God's people can be cleansed from their sins by the ***“washing of water through the Word.”***
- Just as a shepherd protects his sheep day and night, so a pastor teaches his people to ***“Trust in the Lord with all [their] heart, and lean not on [their] own understanding; In all [their] ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct [their] paths.”***
- Therefore, they could cast their cares upon Him, for He cares for them!

## **2. Peter's Authorization – Vs. 1 – “I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed!”**

- Peter listed his credentials, authorizing him to give these pastors such a strong exhortation:
  - **His Common Experience** – ***“I am a fellow elder.”***
    - Peter admonished these men as men who had learned from his failures and whose only goal was to be an influential gospel minister.
  - **His Apostolic Authority** – ***“I am a witness of the sufferings of Christ!”***
    - Peter was there when they arrested Jesus.

- Even though he hid in the shadows, Peter saw them beat and flog Jesus, and then crucify Him.
  - Peter was there when they buried Him and he had seen the resurrected Lord with his own eyes.
- **His Revelation – “*I am a partaker of the glory that will be revealed!*”**
    - In God’s sovereignty, God allowed Peter, James, and John to see a “preview” of the glorious return of Jesus Christ.
    - On the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus removed the veil of His humanity and revealed the Shekinah glory of God within Him, and they fell dead at His feet as they recognized His deity.
    - When Peter spoke of the glory of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Jesus Christ, it was not a fable, nor was it a “*pie-in-the-sky in the sweet-by-and-by*” dream to give them something to encourage them during those dark days.
    - Peter had seen the majesty and glory of the King of Kings, and he had heard the voice of God the Father speaking to Jesus as God the Son.
    - God’s glory was revealed to him on that day on that mountain, and it would be revealed to everyone on that day, which is soon to come.

### **3. Peter’s Explanation – Vs. 2-4 – “*Serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*”**

- **“*Serving as overseers*” –**

- Pastors are to have a genuine concern for the whole flock of God, but they are to take full responsibility for the part of God’s flock that He assigns unto them.

- **“*Not by compulsion but willingly*” –**

- Men should not enter the pastorate out of intimidation, inspiration, or fleshly motivation but out of a sincere “call” of the Lord.

- **“*Not for dishonest gain, but eagerly*” –**

- Those who preach the gospel should live by the gospel, and those who are faithful to preach the Word are worthy of double pay and honor. But the pastorate is not the place for personal wealth.

- **“*Nor as being lords...but examples to the flock*” –**

- The only authority a Pastor has over his people is when he preaches the Word of God. When the sermon is over, he has no more authority, but he should mingle among his people and serve as an example to them of everything he has preached.

- ***“For a crown of glory that does not fade away” –***

- Earthly awards and rewards are all left behind.
- A pastor’s reward is deferred until he stands before the “Chief Shepherd” and receives that “crown of glory that does not fade away.”

