

First Peter – Women’s Bible Study (April-May, 2020)
Pastor David Steffenson (507-206-3048; pastordavesteffenson@gmail.com)

Format: Each Thursday afternoon (April 23-May 28), from 1:00-2:30pm, Pastor Dave will be available on his computer and phone to receive questions and comments from women of Emmanuel. Some women will not have access to a computer, or email. If however some of our Bible Study participants with internet access would team up with another woman without internet access, and give them a phone call on Thursday afternoons, then women in pairs could study the Bible together. Comments and questions could also be sent/phoned to Pastor Dave for feedback and response. It’s a new way of doing Bible Study during the Coronavirus pandemic. The format Pastor Dave is suggesting will allow interested women to study the Bible and to do so in community, while maintaining physical distancing. We hope you are willing to give it a try. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Thanks for staying in the WORD!

Session One: April 23, 2020

- I. Prayer: Open the eyes of my heart Lord, I want to see you. May your WORD be a lamp to my feet and a light to my path! In Jesus name. Amen.
- II. Let’s begin our study by getting to know the author of First Peter. What do we know about Peter?
 - A. In First Peter, Peter identifies himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ. An apostle is a “SENT ONE.” Tradition says that Peter and Paul were both martyred for the faith of Jesus during the reign of Emperor Nero (54-68 AD). Apparently, when Peter was crucified (martyred) he asked to be crucified upside down because he didn’t consider himself worthy of being executed as Jesus was.
 - B. Let’s see what the Bible tells us about Peter. Read the following passages!
 1. John 1:40-44. Notice who it is that brings Peter to Jesus. It’s not always easy sharing the faith of Jesus with family. Jesus gives Simon son of John a new name. In Aramaic the name is Cephas, which in Greek is Peter. Both Cephas and Peter derive from the word for ROCK. So I guess one might even call Simon Peter, ROCKY. Why do you think Jesus gave Simon a new name?
 2. Luke 5:1-11. Jesus borrows Simon Peter’s boat and uses it as a pulpit for preaching. When the sermon is done, Jesus orchestrates a miraculous catch of fish. Peter knows that he is a sinner. Nevertheless, Jesus calls Peter & the others to go fishing for people. How does Peter respond? Matthew 4:18-22.
 3. Matthew 8:14-15. What do we learn about Peter in these verses?
 4. Matthew 10:1-4. Simon Peter is both a disciple and an apostle. What’s the difference? What does Jesus give his 12 disciples?
 5. Matthew 14:28-33. Jesus walks on water and Peter asks Jesus for permission to do the same. What happens when Peter takes his eyes off of Jesus?
 6. Matthew 16:13-23. Who is Jesus? Peter gives an amazing confession, but it’s nothing he can take credit for. What is Peter’s Confession and what promises does Jesus give to Peter? Following this confession, Jesus offers his first

- passion prediction and resurrection announcement. Peter does a “No-No.” What new name does Jesus give Peter?
7. Matthew 17:1-9. Sometimes Peter gets it right and sometimes Peter gets it terribly wrong. Peter is present for the Transfiguration of Jesus. What does Peter suggest that they do on the Mountain?
 8. Matthew 17:24-27. The two-drachma tax was required of every adult Jewish male. It was an annual tax to support the Jerusalem Temple. How does Jesus get the money to pay the tax?
 9. Matthew 18:21-22. Jesus tells the parable of the Unforgiving Servant. Peter precedes with a question about forgiveness. Peter is being generous. The requirement was 3 times. What does Peter suggest? What does Jesus say?
 10. John 13:6-10, and 36-38. What do we learn about Peter in the Foot Washing Story? Talk is cheap. What will happen before the cock crows?
 11. Matthew 26:36-46. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus asks Peter to watch and pray, but instead he falls asleep.
 12. John 18:10, and 15-18, and 25-27. When Jesus is arrested, what does Peter do? Hint: a sword. Courage soon turns to cowardice. Cock-a-doodle-do.
 13. John 20:1-10. On Easter morning we discover that Simon Peter is a runner. Does an empty tomb convince Peter that the Third Day has arrived?
 14. John 21:1-19. Peter goes back to fishing. The disciples catch 153 fish. The stranger on the shore is none other than the resurrected Jesus. Peter does a strange thing. He puts his garments on and then jumps into the sea and swims for shore. After breakfast, Jesus has a one-on-one with Peter. Why does Jesus ask Peter 3 times, “Do you love me?” Peter’s call is confirmed. He will shepherd God’s sheep. Jesus also prophesies Peter’s death (verses 18-19).
 15. Book of Acts: Peter is a leader among the disciples. The Holy Spirit empowers him to preach at Pentecost. Peter is a vessel of God’s healing power; everything is done in the name of Jesus. Peter boldly proclaims Messiah Jesus before the Jewish Leaders. He counts it all joy to suffer for the name of Jesus. He tells the High Priest and the Jewish Council that he must obey God rather than human institutions. In Acts 10, Peter learns that God has place for Gentiles in His Kingdom also. Jerusalem Council (Acts 15).
- C. Final Thoughts: We learned that Simon was the son of John, and that he had a brother named Andrew, and that he was in a fishing partnership with his brother and also James & John the sons of Zebedee. Peter was a sinner, but he left everything to follow Jesus. We learned that Peter was married and had a house in Capernaum. Peter was a disciple (learner/student) and an apostle (sent out one). Jesus gave him authority to cast out demons and to forgive sins. Peter walked on water, and also worshipped Jesus as the Son of God. Peter confessed Jesus to be Messiah, but he also reprimanded Jesus for talk about the cross. Jesus called him Satan. Peter helped to prepare the Passover meal, disagreed with Jesus’ display of servanthood, and boasted that he would never abandon Jesus.

Session Two: April 30, 2020

- I. Thanks for joining us today for Bible Study. **Let's begin with a prayer:** “Holy Spirit, awaken my faith. Open my ears to hear God’s WORD, and my heart to receive God’s mercy. In the Season of Easter, grant that I may daily walk in the good news of the resurrection, and sing alleluia with every breath I take. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen.

- II. **Read I Peter 1:1-25.** This letter is dated around 62-63 AD. References to Baptism appear throughout this letter. Some scholars have concluded that I Peter is actually based on an Eastertide Liturgy, or perhaps presented as a sermon to recently baptized Christians. It is fitting that we read I Peter during the 50 Days of Easter in our weekly worship. Tradition says that Peter and Paul were both martyred for the faith of Jesus during the reign of Emperor Nero (54-68 AD).

- III. **Some questions for reflection:**
 1. Peter writes his letter to “scattered seeds;” elect exiles of the dispersion. Why is important that Peter begins his baptismal homily in the name of the Triune God? We are chosen by the Father, & sanctified by the Holy Spirit, for what purpose? How are we sprinkled with the blood of Jesus? If we are exiles here on earth, then what is our true home? Peter’s hope for you and me is that God’s grace and peace may be multiplied in our life

 2. Verse 3: the first order of business is BLESSING. Who gets the blessing? Jesus spoke about being born again with Nicodemus in John 3. What do we learn about being born again in I Peter 1? Baptism, means daily dying and rising with Jesus. In Christ we receive an imperishable hope. Notice that the inheritance we (the elect) receive is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. Notice also the role suffering plays in baptism. Unlike our imperishable inheritance, suffering is just for “a little while.” Define hope! (I for sure Hope so!) If we participate in the suffering of Jesus, we shall also participate in the glory of Jesus.

 3. What does Peter say about seeing and believing (verses 8-9)? How does this relate to John 20—the story of Doubting Thomas? The source and content of our JOY is saving faith in Jesus! God’s Goal: Eternal salvation in the name of Jesus!

4. What did the prophets long for? What others long for, we have seen. Notice that the Holy Spirit is the one who empowers preaching.

5. Verses 13-16: Peter reminds the called and chosen ones, who are suffering for the name of Jesus, that **ACTIONS MATTER**. Why does the Holy Spirit make us holy (sanctify us)? Peter quotes Leviticus 11:44 and 19:2. Why do the promises of God matter? God isn't just blowing smoke.

6. Judgment is coming. The good news is that the judge is our Father, and he judges impartially. If we are saved by faith alone, do our deeds matter? Why is it impossible for ransomed people to live in futile ways; to sin all the more that grace may abound? There is nothing cheap about the price God paid for our ransom & salvation.

7. Verse 23: Peter wraps up chapter one by referencing being "born again." The Holy Spirit works saving faith through the proclamation of God's Word—**THE GOSPEL**. The **WORD** has been preached to us! Peter quotes Isaiah 40:6-8. What do we know about the temporary and the eternal? Do we need to doubt the trustworthiness of God's promises? Is it true, that if one doesn't eternal security in Christ alone, then one is left only with eternal insecurity? What does Peter have to say about the **NOW** & the **THEN**? All flesh is grass, but God's **WORD** is forever.

IV. Final Thoughts:

- A. We are alien residents here on earth. Heaven is our home. The perishable must put on imperishability. Good news! Hope does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Our hope is not wishful thinking; it is guaranteed through the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.
- B. Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit. We are scattered seeds. We are marked with the cross of Christ when we are born again. Don't be surprised when suffering come our way.
- C. A holy God makes us holy for holy living. Good works are the evidence that our faith in Christ is real. Actions matter. What God requires, God also gives!

Session Three: May 7, 2020

- I. **Welcome! Let's begin with a prayer:** "Holy Spirit, awaken my faith. Open my ears to hear God's WORD, and my heart to receive God's mercy. In the Season of Easter, grant that I may daily walk in the good news of the resurrection, and sing alleluia with every breath I take. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen.

- II. This week we are looking at **I Peter, Chapter 2**. Let's begin by remembering that St. Peter wrote this sermon to newly baptized Christians, with his eyes on Easter, who were suffering for the faith. You will notice that the word "SUFFERING" is found **17 times in the five chapters** of First Peter. The word HOPE also plays a significant place in this sermon. Our HOPE is not naïve, wishful thinking. Our HOPE is not a perhaps or a maybe. Our HOPE is anchored in the Word of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are chosen for sprinkling with the blood of the Lamb. Our living hope is an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled and unfading; kept in heaven for us. "SUFFERING" brackets this letter/sermon (1:6 and 5:10). Notice also that our suffering for the name of Jesus is only for "a little while." Meanwhile our inheritance is forever!

- III. In Acts 3, Peter and John go to the Temple to pray. They meet a man who is 40+ years old and lame from birth. They heal this man and the healing provides an opportunity for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. Read Acts 4. No good deed goes unpunished. Peter and John testify before the Jewish Council and are commanded to speak no more in, or of, the name of Jesus. The church is growing by leaps and bounds. The Gospel cannot be silenced. In Acts 5, the Apostles are arrested, beaten and told to SHUT UP. **Read Acts 5:40-43**. How do Peter and the other Apostles respond?

- IV. Read I Peter 2:1-12. What's your craving? Chapter 2 begins with an appeal for spiritual growth. Those who have tasted the Lord's goodness long for the pure spiritual milk (The Gospel) so that they may grow up into salvation. Jesus is the ROCK of our salvation. He is the rejected Stone which has become the Cornerstone upon which living stones are built into a spiritual house. What does Peter say is our God-given destiny (2:10)? Why is it so important and necessary for God's people (sojourners and exiles) to abstain from the passions of the flesh? What is "conduct becoming of a Christian?" What is "conduct unbecoming of a Christian?" Correct beliefs and appropriate behavior both matter. We are already saved, but we must grow up into salvation.

- V. Read I Peter 2:13-25. This section, and continuing into Chapter 3, is all about **subjection**. God established the church, and civil authorities, for the proclamation of the Gospel and for the sake of good order in the world. God's people are free, but we dare not misuse our freedom for the sake of the flesh. Servants are supposed to be subject to their masters (2:18), and husbands and wives are supposed to be subject to each other (3:1, 7). How might Peter's words about fearing God and honoring the Emperor speak to our troublesome days of COVID-19?
- VI. Righteous living in the face of injustice demonstrates reliance on God's grace. What is the difference between deserved and undeserved suffering? **Verse 21**: "For to this you all have been called." It's your call! What is our call? The suffering of Jesus is more than just an example for us to follow. In baptism, "we are sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever." Why was the death of Jesus on the TREE absolutely necessary? Through the Gospel, the Chief Shepherd calls his straying sheep back into the fold. Why is it important that Peter references Isaiah 53:4, 11? What will we do with our suffering? Will we waste our suffering or will we use it for the glory of God?
- VII. **Final Thoughts**:
- A. We are being saved. The Rejected Stone is now the Cornerstone (Jesus) by which those who drink spiritual milk (The Gospel) are being built into a spiritual house. We are living stones; dead and alive in Christ. Don't forget that our spiritual house is a TEMPLE of the HOLY SPIRIT; we are portable worship places.
 - B. With COVID-19 on the attack, honoring the emperor means not using our God-given freedom as an opportunity for the flesh. We shelter in place because it is good for us and our neighbors. BUT we don't let the Gospel take a backseat during this crisis. Instead, the Word of God is front and center. God makes us priests for a holy purpose. So that we may proclaim the wonderful deeds of Him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.
 - C. The Chief Shepherd is also the Good Shepherd and the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Jesus is the Overseer (Bishop/Pastor) of our souls.
 - D. Read Psalms 23. Notice how David's Psalm begins (23:1) and ends (23:6). We walk through the middle of it with our LORD and Savior; bracketed by promise. The cross awaits us all. And on the Third Day, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Alleluia!

Session Four: May 14, 2020

- I. **Let's begin with a prayer:** "Holy Spirit, awaken my faith. Open my ears to hear God's WORD, and my heart to receive God's mercy. In the Season of Easter, grant that I may daily walk in the good news of the resurrection, and sing alleluia with every breath I take. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen."

- II. **Opening Thoughts:** This week we are looking at **I Peter, Chapter 3**. We begin by remembering that Chapter 2 ended with a conversation about submission and Chapter 3 continues this conversation. What does it mean to submit? How is Christ-like submission a fruit of being born again through the living and abiding Word of God? Let's look at a few Bible references to submission.
 - A. To submit is to bow before (humble—down to earth) or to be subject to another. Read Philippians 2:1-11. The day is coming when "Every knee will bow before Jesus and every tongue confess that Jesus is LORD to the glory of God the Father." Submission is all about recognizing who is our master and LORD. We're all slaves, but to WHOM or to WHAT?
 - B. Read Romans 13:1-3, 5. Human authorities are God-given. Whether it be in the political realm, social realm or in the household, submission is necessary. But authority can be abused or misused. When a choice must be made, we must obey God rather than human authorities. We're not talking about blind obedience.
 - C. Read Ephesians 5:21-33. Mutual submission between husbands and wives. How does mutual submission to Jesus change the way we use our freedom in daily life?
 - D. The Lutheran reformer **Philip Melancthon** wrote in The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, "*We neither obey the law, nor can obey it, before we have been reconciled to God, justified, and then reborn.*" Left to our own devices, sinful human beings will always be lawless. This disregard for God's law explains our need for a Savior. Only the Savior (Jesus) can transform disobedient, lawless creatures into obedient, submissive citizens of heaven and earth. A sinner desires to satisfy their corrupt nature by indulging lawlessness; i.e. desires of the flesh. He or she rebels against God and His commandments.

- III. **Read I Peter 3:1-7.**
 - A. How does Godly conduct help win an unbeliever to Christ? Why are people often preoccupied with what is visible and only surface (e.g. physical appearance of another), rather than what is hidden (imperishable beauty)? Peter uses the example of Sarah as an illustration of Godly submission. You may recall that Abraham did not always honor his wife's submission well. (**Hint:** He pawned her off as his sister; & had surrogate sexual relations with Hagar).

- B. What counterbalance does Peter provide in verse 7? “Likewise” husbands.... What would it mean for husbands to live with their wives in **an understandable way**? How does a Godly husband **honor** his wife? Marriage is not about quid-pro-quo. Does it bother you that St. Peter refers to the wife as **the weaker vessel**? Try this analogy on for size: A weaker vessel does not mean that the wife is of less value than the husband. Imagine the husband being a coffee mug made out of indestructible plastic, and the wife being a piece of fragile china; like a teacup. The teacup is actually more valuable, and it is also more fragile, requiring more tender care. Does this analogy help?
- C. Submission: A big 18-wheeler-semi submits (yields) to a child serving as a crossing guard at a school intersection. The submission does not mean “less value,” but rather proper care & regard for the safety of another. Remember those who submit are **mutually heirs of the grace of life** in Christ Jesus.

IV. **Read I Peter 3:8-22.** Peter begins with the word, “FINALLY.” Why? Because he is still talking about submission/subjection/service to another. But he is bringing this conversation to a close (wrapping it up) as to what it means to “be born again and to walk in the footsteps of Jesus” (2:21). Peter’s appeal is reminiscent of Paul’s words to the **Philippians 2:1-13**. We’ve got the mind of Christ. It’s one of God’s christening gifts. In 1:3, Peter began his sermon with a Blessing of God. Now in 3:9, Peter reminds that blessings come with being called by God; what we give and get (Matthew 5:44). God calls us to act uprightly. What is the good conscience which God has given us in baptism? Peter returns to his discussion of suffering. Remember, not all suffering is for righteousness’ sake. Obviously it is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. Take for example **the suffering of Jesus** (one for all—the righteous for the unrighteous). Why did Jesus descend into hell? To declare His victory over sin, death and the devil. What is an appeal for a good conscience?

V. **Baptism now saves you!** The Flood (Noah) is a figure of Baptism. Noah’s Flood was a flood of wrath. Baptism is a flood of God’s grace. In each case water saves. BUT do not forget, as Luther reminds us in his Small Catechism, “It is not the water, but the water with the promising Word of God and our trust in God’s WORD” Baptism is not a hocus-pocus piece of magic that saves us. Baptism is our daily dying and rising in the Good Friday and Easter of Jesus Christ. Luther: “There is enough in baptism to study and practice our whole life long.” **The RIGHT HAND OF GOD**—is not a place or a location, but rather a reference to God’s power and authority. We’ve been talking about submission and subjection. Notice who is subject to Jesus (3:22).

Session Five: May 21, 2020

- I. **Let's begin with a prayer:** "Holy Spirit, awaken my faith. Open my ears to hear God's WORD, and my heart to receive God's mercy. In the Season of Easter, grant that I may daily walk in the good news of the resurrection, and sing alleluia with every breath I take. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen."

- II. **Opening Thoughts: Blessed Ascension Day!** This week we are looking at I Peter, Chapter 4. We begin by remembering that Chapter 2 ended with a conversation about submission and Chapter 3 continued this conversation. **To submit means to bow before, to be subject to another person or authority.** In all stations of life Christians are called to be submissive (governing rulers, workplace, home place), in the manner of Christ. Read Philippians 2:1-11. Peter reminds us at the end of Chapter 3, "Jesus has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of the Father (place of power and authority) and EVERYTHING is subject to Him. Christ-like submission a fruit of being born again through the living & abiding Word of God! Remember, "Suffering" is mentioned 17 times, in I Peter. Not all suffering is for righteousness sake.

- III. **Read I Peter 4:1-11.**
 - A. Jesus Christ was TRUE GOD and TRUE MAN; united as ONE. In the **flesh of Jesus** (John 1:14) God's death takes place even though God in His own nature cannot die. In the flesh, Jesus died once for sins, the unrighteous for the righteous, that He might bring us to God (I Peter 3:18ff). Holy Christian Baptism daily unites us with the saving act of God's grace. Peter says that we are to ARM OURSELVES with the mind of Christ, the thinking of Jesus. Putting on the full armor of God means that we seek the will of God, not the appetites of the human flesh.

 - B. In what sense do we no longer sin? Why are the Gentles (pagans) surprised by our refusal to join them in willful sinning? What kind of treatment can faithful followers of Jesus expect? Jesus preached to those in prison (the dead) so that they might be saved, but some refuse **the baptismal flood and choose a different flood instead.** Judgment is coming; inescapable.

 - C. Verses 7-11. Because the END is at hand (death is always knocking on our doors), what kind of life ought we to be living? How might we be good stewards of God's varied grace? Did you notice how St. Peter ends Chapter 4? Peter is not just talking about glorifying God, he is actually worshipping God. That is what "born again believers, with an imperishable hope do in daily life.

IV. **Read I Peter 4:12-19.**

- A. Christ suffered in the flesh and became sin for us (II Corinthians 5:21—Martin Luther called this the happy exchange). Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should “follow in His steps” (I Peter 2:21). This is our calling. We are scattered seeds, having been chosen for sprinkling with His blood. Why should the “fiery trial” that we are experiencing not come as a surprise to us? What is the purpose of our sufferings? What is our rejoicing, gladness, and our blessing in the midst of our trials? **Read I Peter 1:6-9.** What lasts for just a little while? What lasts forever?
- B. What kind of insults, taunts, persecution, or mockery have you suffered for the name of Jesus Christ? Peter reminds us yet again that not all suffering is for the glory of God and the good of our neighbor. What kinds of sufferings and trials do we bring upon ourselves and others that are not for the glory of God? Never be ashamed of suffering as a Christian!
- C. Jesus is the Judge of the Living and the Dead. With whom will judgment begin? Why should God’s judgment not frighten the “household of God?” Why should the judgment of God cause alarm and fear in the hearts of those who do not obey the Gospel? Why does St. Peter quote Proverbs 11:31?
- D. St. Peter concludes with a **THEREFORE!** To suffer according to God’s will means that we suffer not because of a specific sin, but for the sake of the Gospel. What will it look like to entrust our souls to a faithful Creator while doing good?
- V. Final Thoughts: God permits suffering in our lives for a variety of reasons. There is much mystery in our suffering. Suffering should never surprise us. Why? Because **God is not a sadistic deity** who finds delight in the pains and sorrows of those whom He has formed with His own hands. Suffering has a root cause and source, namely, the ancient serpent, who though defeated, daily exploits our sin. Sometimes suffering comes as a direct result of our own sin in order to discipline us. Other times it is the effect of being God’s child in a world that wants to crush His church. With our eyes on the cross, we can endure the trials that come our way, trusting that in everything God works for good with those who love Him and are called according to His purposes. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus! Nothing! Heaven is our home. Earth is not our permanent citizenship.

Session Six: May 28, 2020 – Final Session

- I. **Let's begin with a prayer:** "Holy Spirit, awaken my faith. Open my ears to hear God's WORD, and my heart to receive God's mercy. In the Season of Easter, grant that I may daily walk in the good news of the resurrection, and sing alleluia with every breath I take. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen."

- II. **Opening Thoughts:** This week we are looking at **I Peter, Chapter 5**. As we conclude our study on I Peter, we remember that **"Suffering" is mentioned 17 times**, in this Book/sermon/baptismal homily for Easter People. What does baptism mean for daily living? Baptism means daily dying and rising with Jesus. "We are sealed by the Holy Spirit & marked with the cross of Christ forever." **A centerpiece in this letter is 2:21** – "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps." There is a direct link between **"Therefore & Because,"** in the Scriptures. Peter wants to make sure that his listeners do not miss an important fact about suffering. Our suffering, in the present, is for *"a little while"* (1:6; 5:10) compared to the inheritance that waits us in heaven. **Describe the inheritance that awaits you (I Peter 1:3-5)**. The certainty of this inheritance is why we BLESS the Holy Trinity.

- III. **Read I Peter 5:1-5.** Peter begins with an exhortation.
 - A. What is **an exhortation**? To whom & for what is Peter making his appeal? Notice the *church offices* mentioned in Chapter 5. Various terms are used interchangeably in reference to the pastoral office (elder, shepherd, overseer, bishop). Peter cites three of his credentials: 1) Peter is *a fellow pastor*. He is one of them. 2) He *witnessed* the sufferings of Jesus with his own eyes. 3) Peter will also be *a partaker* in a future glory that awaits him. There is a time reference to the present, the past and the future in Peter's exhortation.

 - B. Describe the characteristics and qualities of a good pastor. Have you known some pastors or church leaders with mixed motivations? How can we tell when a pastor (shepherd) is looking for career track, instead of answering a genuine call from God? **Bottom line: BE AN EXAMPLE** to the flock, as Christ (the Chief Shepherd) is an example to you (his under-shepherds).

 - C. **Verse 4:** The APPEARANCE! We live with an irrevocable promise. The question is not IF, but rather WHEN. Jesus is indeed coming back again. Athletes competed for a perishable laurel wreath. But, we receive an unfading crown of glory! **Read II Timothy 4:1-8**. What words of encouragement and exhortation does St. Paul add to our conversation regarding the crown of glory (righteousness)?

- D. **Verse 5: Likewise.** St. Peter returns to his conversation about “subjection”. Peter has a word for seasoned pastors, but also for the recently ordained. The pastoral office is not a competition. We should respect those who have many miles under their ministry belts, but years of service does not automatically produce “tried and true, Christ-centered” pastors. **Humility** is a key ingredient (article of clothing) whether one is “a self-assuming, know-it-all, young whippersnapper,” or a veteran pastor. What does God do to the PROUD, and to the HUMBLE (down-to-earth)?
- IV. **Read I Peter 5:6-11.** We sometimes make humility into one of our own “good works.” How so? Peter’s exhortation is actually a “passive verb” (Be humbled!).
- A. When the proper time comes, what does God intend to do to His humbled ones? Why is it more than okay to “cast all your anxieties on Jesus?”
- B. As we wait for Christ’s return, we pray. We are always on “the watch,” because our adversary (the devil) is on the prowl. If you’ve read **C.S. Lewis’ “The Chronicles of Narnia”** then you are familiar with the “fake Aslan”. The devil is an imposter. The devil is the father of all lies and liars. What is his END GAME? The devil isn’t looking for a bite or a nibble. How do we resist the devil? The closer we get to Jesus, the bigger the target the devil places on us. Don’t be surprised by the fiery ordeal (4:12). Suffering is a common denominator of the baptized.
- C. **God’s got this!** We have been called into Christ’s eternal glory. We need to keep TIME in perspective. What does God guarantee to do for you (5:11). Last word before final greeting: **Doxology with an LOUD AMEN**. Amen means, “YES Lord, may it be so!” Faith leads to doxology (praise) throughout this letter/sermon.
- V. **Read I Peter 5:12-14.** Silvanus (**a.k.a. Silas**—Acts 15:22-18:5) is the scribe who wrote what Peter dictated; perhaps the letter carrier also. If there is TRUE GRACE, then there must be fake grace as well. Where one stands makes all the difference. Final greetings come from the Christian Church in Rome (code word is **Babylon**); and from **Mark** (Peter’s spiritual child and disciple). Only one thing is truly trustworthy & reliable: the pure spiritual milk of the gospel of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen for the forgiveness of sins. In the Household of God, the kiss of love and Father’s peace is shared with all who are IN CHRIST!
- VI. **Final Thoughts: God’s got this!** “This is My Father’s World. O let me ne’er forget, that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet. This is my Father's world: Why should my heart be sad? The Lord is King: let the heavens ring! God reigns; let earth be glad!” AMEN!