

## *Exiles of the Dispersion Pt 5*

Right now, the Vineyard as a whole is going through a process of trying to come up with a process for a national ordination. Up to now, it has been the local church that ordains and not the Vineyard. While seeking to keep the local church as the body that oversees ordination, the Vineyard is looking to establish some standards of what a Vineyard pastor is and what should be required as a minimum standard to be recognized as a national ordination.

Peter was facing some of the same issues. Local leaders were doing things that were not in line with the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles. Especially in Asia Minor, they were adopting some of the things that the priests in the pagan temples did, as well as some of their attitudes.

### **1. Apostles and Elders**

***1 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed:***

Peter closes his letter by talking to the leaders of the churches this letter is going to reach.

Peter wants to make sure that he establishes a standard, while at the same time not coming off as someone who was above them. To this end he addresses them as fellow elders. At the same time, without coming off arrogant, he cites the reason for his authority as having come from being an eyewitness of the ministry of Jesus.

Peter was an Apostle.

(apostolos, literally, "one sent forth," an envoy, missionary): For the meaning of this name as it meets us in the New Testament, reference is sometimes made to classical and Jewish parallels. In earlier classical Greek there was a distinction between an angelos or messenger and an apostolos, who was not a mere messenger, but a delegate or representative of the person who sent him.

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The Bible tells us that God has called some to be apostles and others evangelists, etc.

What separates an apostle with a capital "A" with an apostle with a lower case "a" is having been called personally by Jesus to be His ambassador. Because Paul was called to ministry by Jesus on the road to Damascus, he considers himself an Apostle with a capital "A" even though he wasn't around as a disciple during Jesus' ministry.

Apostles with an "a", are also a people who are called to be envoys of the Gospel in a missionary sense by planting and overseeing multiple churches. The difference, like in the case of Barnabas is that they are called and commissioned by men and not by Jesus himself.

Here he addressing what in the Greek are the **presbuteros**, Presbyters or Bishops. However, in the description of the job and in the title for Jesus giving us our reward the Greek word is **poimenes**, or shepherds. By the way, the title, "pastor" comes from the Latin word for shepherd.

## 2. How should a Shepherd do his job?

**2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.**

Here Peter is passing along the instructions given to him by Jesus. Peter had denied Jesus 3 times. After His resurrection, Jesus talks to Peter in order to restore him:

### **John 21:15-17**

**Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." 16 He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep.**

In order to tend to the flock an elder should exercise oversight. He should be aware of what is going on with his flock and he should take care of them, provide for them, lead them, supervise them, protect them, discipline them, and instruct them.

- a) He should do it for the right reason, the right spirit; not because it's his job or it's required of him, but because it is his calling. Because they want to serve God by serving the body.

My father tried to talk me out of going into the ministry: and he was a pastor! He told me, "If you can do anything else, do that, because doing ministry will be a chore and will chew you up and spit you out. It is the most thankless job you will ever do. However, if you are truly called by God to minister, you will never be happy doing anything else."

- b) He should do it with the right motive, not for material gain, but finding satisfaction in the job itself rather than what they get out of it. God has called Elders to a life of service and sacrifice. We are to follow the example of Jesus who didn't even own a pillow to lay His head on. He didn't do it to get rich. Yes, Paul makes it clear that the laborer is worthy of his wages and that the body should support a minister financially. However, when ministers are becoming millionaires from their ministry, something is drastically wrong.
- c) He should do it in the right manner, not driving but leading, not domineering but setting an example. We are called to be servant leaders; not dictators or autocrats. People should follow us not because of our title, but because they see Jesus in us, and they know that we are completely submitted to Him. Paul could say, "Do what I do", because he heard from God and was obedient to Him.

If a shepherd does this, when the "yet" of the "here and not yet" happens then the chief shepherd Himself will reward us. Our rewards are NOT in the here and now.

### 3. How then should the congregation live?

**5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. 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, 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. 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.**

Peter makes us aware that, "your adversary the devil" is on the prowl. In the original language, "adversary" **antidikos** means an opponent in a lawsuit. Combine that with **diabolos**, the devil and he is the false accuser, the slanderer. After his own failure giving in to the enemy by denying Jesus, Peter seeks to build up the body. With this in mind, not only elders, but all of us need to live:

- By acknowledging the calling and God's charge to the elders and submitting to them. Be humble and, here Peter continues his previous theme, submit to one another. Be humble and put each other ahead of yourselves.
- By trusting Him to come through for us and therefore trusting Him with our anxieties. Worry is a form of pride because it involves taking concerns upon oneself instead of entrusting them to God.
- By not getting intoxicated with the distractions of this world and being aware of and avoiding the traps and lies of the enemy.
- Stand firm against the enemy whose goal is to destroy us and our witness. Realize that you are not alone or unique in your suffering. Christians world-wide are going through the same or worse than you are.
- Realize that, even though it seems like you have been suffering for an eternity, it is but a blip on the radar of an eternity spent with Him.

#### **2 Cor 4:17-18**

**For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.**

**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.**

- By being aware that God Himself will restore, (give back all you've lost), confirm (call you His own in front of the whole world), strengthen (give you the power to overcome), and establish you (make it so that nothing or no one can stand against you).
- By letting your very lives attest to God's sovereignty and dominion. Live like you truly believe He's in charge of everything.

## 4. Final Greetings

**12-14**

***By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.***

I have sent Silvanus, also called Silas as my messenger to hand deliver this letter as a testament to you that what is written in this letter comes from me and that you can take it as Gospel, these words represent God's true grace. Believe it, take hold of it; stand firm in it.

***13 She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. 14 Greet one another with the kiss of love.***

In the past, the "she" in this verse had been conveniently interpreted as the church in Rome and not a person. Even some translations say, "the church who is at Babylon". However, this is not what the Greek says. While it is likely that when he refers to Babylon, he is referring to Rome, as Babylon lay in ruins and Rome was the center of earthly power that is opposed to God. However, the phrase "who is likewise chosen" tends to point to the fact that this is a person who has been chosen as an elder, like the ones he is referring to in this chapter. By context it would point to a woman who was an elder and was known as well as John Mark, to whom he also refers to, who travelled with Paul and Barnabas. Some have even thought that it was actually Peter's wife who had taken a leadership role in the church in Rome.

***Peace to all of you who are in Christ.***

### **Conclusion**

Peter is writing to the church at large.

He is reminding them and us how they should live.

While this section is mostly aimed at Elders, Pastors, and Apostles, all of us have been called according to His grace. As the priesthood of believers, we all have a ministry and we all have been given gifts to enhance that ministry.

As disciples of Christ, we have been called to not only share in His suffering, but also to share in His glory. There are no spectators in the kingdom. We are all team members, and we are all charged with expanding the Kingdom of God.