

May 16, 2010

I PETER 5: 5 - 14

First Baptist has been our spiritual home for the last 17 years. For seven of those years Judy and I pastored this church. For the last ten we have functioned as lay people. And, because we have been away so much, we must have seemed as visitors. Judy and I want to thank you for the warm fellowship we have experienced and the wonderful friendships we have enjoyed.

Many of you know that we are in the process of moving to Calgary. Two of our three children and four of our six grandchildren live in Calgary and that is the primary reason for this move. We certainly would appreciate your prayers as we leave this wonderful church and community and seek out new friendships, new associations and a new church.

In the closing verses of I Peter he shares some very practical and extremely insightful comments about how to face some of life's challenging and how to live life in the difficult times. You know, sometimes, when asked how they are doing, people will begin by saying, "Well, under the circumstances..." Listen, Christians are not meant to live under the circumstances - life is intended to be lived above the circumstances and that's what Peter sets out to teach us in I Peter 5: 5 - 14. Let's hear what he has to say:

Read Scripture: I Peter 5: 5 - 14

What do you do when you face tough times, challenging times, difficult times? I have always liked what Robert Schuller wrote:

When faced with a mountain, I will not quit! I will keep on striving until I climb over, find a pass through, tunnel underneath -or simply stay and turn the mountain into a gold mine with God's help!

That's great advice! But this morning I want you to consider Peter's perspective on the subject of facing tough and challenging times. I want you to get his take on the situation. I want you to learn something about his strategy for coping with hard and difficult times.

1. OUR ATTITUDE

You may have heard a story of the baloney sandwich. For the third day in a row, this guy had a baloney sandwich in his lunch pail. Kept saying to his fellow workers, "You know, I hate baloney sandwiches!" One of the fellows he worked with came up with a good solution. He said, "Just tell your wife that you don't like

baloney sandwiches and that you prefer another kind.” And the guy replies, “Yeah, but the problem is that I make my own sandwiches.”

You see, what he needed was not only a change in menu - he needed a change in attitude! When you come right down to it, Attitude is a choice - it's a choice we each make!

Now what we notice in this passage is that Peter suggests three specific attitudes that will enable

each one of us to face whatever life brings us. And what we will observe is that each one of these attitudes goes directly against today's conventional wisdom.

1. Submissiveness:

[5] Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older.

He refers here to “young men”, but if you read his entire letter you realize that **submissiveness** is a reoccurring theme throughout his letter and that it applies to everyone, wives, husbands, church leaders. An attitude of submissiveness - it simply doesn't fly in the day and age in which we live. Who believes in being submissive. The emphasis today is on being assertive!

Now please carefully note that Peter is not advocating that we become doormats where people are constantly taking advantage of us. It doesn't mean that we never expressing our views and ideas and never assert ourselves. He is simply saying that there is a time and place to take a back seat. We need wisdom to know that time and that place.

2. Humility:

[5,6] All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, " God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

Humility is a close relative of submissiveness. Jesus said that ... **The proud will be humbled, but the humble will be honored.** Paul admonished us to have the mind of Christ. He said:

[5-8] Let this mind (this attitude) be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

3. Self-control:

[8] Be self-controlled and alert.

Let me ask you this - in a crisis situation, in an emergency, who would you rather have in charge - A person who is prone to having panic attacks and who flaps around in every direction trying to get a handle on the situation or some one who in a calm, deliberate and determined way takes control of the situation - wouldn't you rather have the person Peter describes in that 8th verse as being **self-controlled and alert**.

The greatest recent example is that pilot, Chester `Sully` Sullenberger who landed his crippled plane on the Hudson.who managed to land that crippled jet liner in the Hudson River.

Attitudes matter when we face the challenges of life. Our attitude, someone wisely remarked – **our attitude determines our altitude**.

2. OUR ACTIONS

Attitudes of submissiveness, humility and self control largely influence how we will react in any given situation, but our attitudes won't necessarily determine what we will do! Look at some of the actions Peter suggests we need to take when facing the difficulties and challenges that life invariably brings. Look at the the actions and observe the consequences.

There are specifically two activities he mentions that can equip us to live life to the fullest - in spite some of the curves that may be thrown our way. One involves something we do with our hands and the other, something we do with our feet. I think the best way we can understand this is by alluding to the game of football - two specific activities

a] First, The Feet

We're all familiar with the term, goal line stands. A picture is of a desperate attempt by our team to keep the opposing team from scoring. What does the team do? It firmly plants its feet on the line and trusts that the line will hold without the other team scoring a touchdown. In a sense, that is the language Peter is using here.

[8,9] Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

Resist him, standing firm in the faith... Plant your feet firmly in the turf and hold on! That's a goal line stand!

And look at verse 12 - it's a different situation but the same admonition.

[12] With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.

b) Then The hands.

And what does a quarterback attempt to do when he's given the ball? He is normally expected to get rid of ball either by handing it off or by passing it. The thing he most wants to avoid is to be sacked.

Peter suggests to each of us that we limber up are throwing arm. That we get ready to either hand off or pass the ball. Listen to him

[7] Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Are you carrying a load of anxiety and care? Peter say to dump it! Get rid of it before you fumble it and get sacked! **[7] Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.**

What a promise! But it can't become a reality until we take the appropriate action. We have to exercise our throwing arm. We have to get rid of the ball!

We have noted first of all the attitude that we must have and we have observed the actions we must take -

3. OUR ASPIRATIONS.

I Peter is a book about hope, about encouragement, about how to live life in the hard times. I Peter teaches us how to make the best of times out of our worst of times. This, in effect, is what Peter says in that 12 verse

[12] With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.

So let us ask ourselves this question. By seeking to have the right kind of attitude, and by endeavouring to take the right kind of actions, what should be the outcome? What do we hope to achieve? What are our aspirations?

Let's take a moment or two to examine some of the aspirations we can aspire to.

[10] And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Let us begin by noticing **the hope to which we're called**. It says we have been called to his eternal Glory in Christ. What a hope! What a future! As Paul said, **Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, the things has prepared for those who love him.**

In facing and confronting life's challenges, we always need to keep our eye on the future.

Also imbedded in that 10th verse is something God can and will do in our lives on a continual basis.

1. There is always the need for restoration in our lives.

[10] And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast

Interestingly enough the word is used here – the word, “restore”, is the same one that is used to describe the disciples mending their nets. There comes a point in our lives spiritually when all of us need mending -not simply so that we can say we've gotten it together spiritually, but restored for service, for that task God has given us to do. Thank God we can find restoration and forgiveness and mending from the good shepherd who restores our souls.

- And he mentions the need for strengthening.

[10] And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast

That old hymn put it so well:

**Stand up, stand up for Jesus! Stand in His strength alone;
The arm of flesh will fail you; Ye dare not trust your own....**

Having experienced restoration and renewal, Peter speaks of an empowering and equipping for service.

- And then there is the need for firmness and steadfastness.

[10] And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast

And the God of all grace, ...will (notice that it's in the future tense - it's what God will do...) **himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.** Without these, the fires of enthusiasm so easily can die down and the zeal that God places in our heart can soon diminish.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Cor 15:58

Let me close with the very last sentence in our passage: **Peace to all of you who are in Christ.**

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