

Canceled
A Roadmap for Living In Exile
Church Leadership You Should Expect
1 Peter 5:1-4

Introduction: Last week's passage focused on how we can experience life and joy in the midst of suffering, specifically suffering for the cause of Christ. However, in the middle of teaching us how to have joy in persecution and suffering, Peter made sure to challenge us to make sure we were not being canceled by society for things we should be exiled for; that is, that we are not suffering for things that deserve it. Peter wrote,

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.”
(1 Peter 4:15)

Fast forward 2,000 years into western civilization; every time you turn around a local church is doing something that deserves ridicule, and in some instances even punishment. When these things happen, the focus is often rightly on the bad leadership of the church, however, in my opinion, the partitioners of those churches are at fault as well. Leaders should be held accountable for where they lead people for sure, but people should be held accountable for where they were willing to follow those leaders.

So as Peter begins to finish up his letter to the churches in “Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1 Peter 1:1) who are suffering persecution for loving Christ, loving others and sharing the Good News of Christ; he makes sure to warn the church to function in a way that doesn't deserve to be canceled by society. Therefore, it is to no surprise then that he publicly addresses the leadership of the church. He doesn't write a separate letter to the church leaders to be read privately, but in this very public letter that would be copied and sent all over the world, Peter wants to make sure the local church understand how they are to be led on local level.

Specifically, Peter answers five important questions about the leadership of the local church, and in doing so, not only gives vitally important clarity to what a local church should look like and be focused on, but also how every follower of Christ should be leading in their sphere of influence. That is, we all need to be on the same page when it comes to how myself and the other pastors lead you, however, it's not just for the sake of the health of the church but also as a model for how we should all be leading in whatever sphere of influence God has placed us in. I'll talk more about that when we wrap this thing up, so for now, let's focus in on the kind of leadership you expect in a local church. Peter writes,

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: 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. (1 Peter 5:1-4)

Proposition: In 1 Peter 5:1-4 Peter answers 5 important questions about how a local church should be led.

The first question Peter answers is who is supposed to lead a local church.

(1) Who? A Biblical local church is led by a team of pastors who are fully part of that local church. - (5:1)

- A. 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:**
- B. Two quick points of clarity before I get into the immediate context of the passage.**
 - 1. Pastor (which is also translated Shepherd), Elder, Overseer (which is also translated Bishop) are all interchangeable terms in the New Testament. I don't have time to visit this. but if you do a word search and read the passages that use these words to describe the leaders of a local church you will quickly realize they are all talking about the same team of leaders. The different titles highlight different aspects or perspectives of their leadership, but nonetheless, they are talking about the same position within the local church.**
 - 2. Second, I need to dispel a misinterpretation and misapplication of Scripture that is frankly dismantled by both Biblical and secular standards of leadership. Stating the local church is led by a team of pastors is in no way suggesting the team of pastors who lead a local church don't themselves have a leader. A leaderless team is a dysfunctional team - period. Therefore, in our church, my primary role on the team of pastors who lead the church is to lead the team; but I do not lead the church, the team does. At the end of the day my job as the Lead Pastor is to make sure the team of pastors I serve alongside of, does an awesome job of leading the church. Now we will talk much more about what that leadership looks like for both me and the rest of the team as we go through this passage, but I first wanted to make sure no one jumped on a band wagon that does nothing but run right off a cliff! The idea a team doesn't need a leader is ridiculous.**
- C. Now, going back to the immediate context of verse one, we see that the elders (plural) are among the people in the churches who are receiving this letter. That is, the elders who are in charge of leading the local church are fully and holistically part of the local church they are leading, and thus receiving their instructions right in front of those they lead! They are not part of the local church in some symbolic way, or simple legal way; but rather, in a real and**

tangible way, they are sheep in a family of sheep who have been given the job leading sheep to follow the Shepherd.

- D. Peter drives this point home subtly. It's contained within the encouragement he gives to the elders of the churches on the perspective he has concerning the instructions he's about to give them. He has in no way hid his apostleship in this letter; it's the very first statement in the letter – "Peter, and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those elect exiles ..."
- E. But here, instead of reminding them of his authority as an Apostle, he instead identifies with them as somebody who is also associated with a local church doing the work of an elder. He not only tells them he can formally attest to the sufferings of Christ but he also makes it clear that he shares in the glories he just told everybody in chapter 4. That is, when Peter writes, "**partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed**" he is taking us back to how that happens. Peter wrote,
- F. **13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. (1 Peter 4:13-14)**
- G. So, Peter is acknowledging that there is a burden and suffering in pastoring a local church, especially in places where the church is being persecuted and exiled! He gets it because He's not just a traveling preaching who flies in and flies out, but he's also a pastor who is suffering for the cause of Christ as well, and as such is confident in the future glories of Christ!!
- H. Why is all this important, well, because one of the most iconic figures in the early church is making it known he is one of them!
 - 1. This dispels the notion in far too many churches that the one pastor they have is nothing more than an employee of the church, and as such, never truly part of the church. The church hires him to serve them, but they are never really allowed to be one of them. It has been my observation, that although it's not frequently stated, this is nonetheless the reality of a majority of churches in the United States. Pastors serve churches but they are never truly among them as one of them!
 - 2. On the other hand, it also dispels the idea that pastors are these super Christians who lead from such a place of superiority that they should be honored and followed as something greater than a sheep! It's where the healthy honor and respect pastors who serve Christ should receive (Hebrews 13:17) get's perverted into celebrity worship! I cannot serve Christ well, and simultaneously allow you to treat me like a celebrity – period. There is only one celebrity in the church and His name is Jesus!

- I. Therefore, Pastors are to be led by a team of pastors who are very much and very obviously a part of the body of believers they are leading. They are sheep within the flock who have been given the task of shepherding!

The second question Peter answers is what the pastors of the church are supposed to do.

(2) What? A Biblical local church is led by pastors who lead the church as Shepherds lead sheep. (2:2a)

- A. **2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight,**
- B. Before I get into this, it is vital for pastors to understand the flock they are leading is not theirs, but God's! Christ said the Father gives Him the Sheep (John 10:29) and therefore it is to no surprise that He lays His life down for the sheep because they belong to the Father. Pastors therefore should have the same concept. Local church pastors have been delegated the task of shepherding from the Chief Shepherd and thus should understand the flock they have is not theirs but God's!
- C. The imagery of being shepherds not only emphasizes the extreme seriousness by which pastors should live out their calling (more on that in a minute) but also provides very important imagery for what they are to do.
- D. K. S. Wuest wrote, **"The word "feed" is the translation of a Greek word which literally means "to shepherd," and includes the duties of a shepherd, tending, feeding, guiding, and guarding the flock of God. The noun form of the word is translated "pastors" in Ephesians 4:11."**¹
- E. Larry Osborne wrote a book called *Lead Like a Shepherd*² and in it he uses Psalm 23 to bring out what it means to do what Peter is commanding here, that is, to shepherd and exercise oversight. To shepherd and exercise oversight not only means to lead, but it also means to take responsibility. Let me flesh this out for you.

The following are the 4 main things pastors are supposed to do in order to shepherd and oversee God's sheep.

First, pastors are supposed to ...

1. Spiritually feed the sheep.

¹ Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 11, p. 124). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

² Osborne, L. (2018). *Lead Like A Shepherd*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

- a. This is something Peter would never forget. One morning after Christ rose from the dead he had breakfast with his disciples. No doubt Peter was eating this breakfast wrestling with the guilt and shame of denying Jesus while Jesus was being beaten and falsely accused, and ultimately sentenced to die. But then this happens,
- b. **15 When they had finished breakfast, 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." (John 21:15-17)**
- c. Later Paul, sensing he was nearing the time of death said this to Timothy,
- d. **1 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. (2 Timothy 4:1-4)**
- e. Now, when it comes to feeding sheep, most of the time it means taking sheep to places they can graze but it can certainly include providing the sheep with grain they picked. Either way, the point is that the shepherds make sure the sheep are eating the spiritual food necessary for them to be spiritually healthy. That spiritual food, that is, the pure spiritual milk (1 Peter 2:2) we are to always long for is only discovered through the knowledge of the Word of God.
- f. However, there's one other point that needs to be clarified here. David, in speaking of how God shepherds him, wrote, "**2 "He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters." (Psalm 23:2)**
- g. Larry Osborne pointed out in his book that sheep are scared to death of running water, so much so that they will dehydrate before they will stick

their head in it to drink. Therefore, when there's only swift water available, shepherds will build a dam to form a pool of still water for the sheep to drink! It's the Shepherds job to get the sheep to water and also to find a way to get them to drink it! Likewise, pastors are not simply to preach the Word but preach it and teach it in a way that the sheep pay attention, understand it and eat it so that they are nourished and changed by it!

Second, pastors are supposed to ...

2. Spiritually protect the sheep.

- a. Again, King David, in reflecting on how God shepherded him wrote,
- b. **4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. (Psalm 23:4)**
- c. Shepherds make sure the sheep are protected from wolves. Wolves come to the body of Christ as false teachers or divisive people.
- d. Paul, in giving Titus instructions on who to appoint as elders in the churches in Crete spoke of this very action. He wrote,
- e. **9 He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. 10 For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. 11 They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. (Titus 1:9-11)**
- f. In Paul's final farewell to the Elders of the church of Ephesus he personally met with them and told them,
- g. **28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; (Acts 20:28-29)**

Third, pastors are supposed to ...

3. Unify the sheep in Christ.

- a. Shepherds make sure the sheep stay together. Last week we talked about how Satan's plan is to single you out from the herd. Satan longs to divide us.
- b. **"... the wolf snatches them and scatters them." (John 10:12)**
- c. But here's the key. It's not simple unity that Christ, wanted but rather unity that is created by the reality that we are all following Him.
- d. **14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. (John 10:14-16)**
- e. Later Jesus prayed,
- f. **20 "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. (John 17:20-21)**
- g. I could read you tons of Scriptures on this subject, but I wanted to share just enough for you to see that there is a clear mandate over what is supposed to bring us together. It is not the me, the Lead Pastor, or any of the other pastors that should be what unites us. It is not a worship style, tradition or denomination that should unify us. It's not even our love and appreciation for one another that should unify us. What should unify us, rather, who should unify us is THE Pastor, THE Shepherd – JESUS!
- h. Practically that means we must agree on who Jesus is and as such agree on the core doctrines of the Gospel which include who God is, what Christ did to save us, etc. In addition, in order agree on the core doctrines of the faith we have to agree on the source of where those doctrines come from – the Bible.
- i. Therefore, the pastors job is to so deeply and so passionately ingrain these decisive doctrines of The Faith within the body that the unifying energy of the church is the unmistakably the love of being loved by Jesus! It is a love that draws the world not just to us, but more importantly to HIM!
- j. This is why pastors have to labor for the heart of the church to be such a deafening love of Christ that it drowns out every other passion in life!

Fourth, pastors are supposed to ...

4. **Equip** the church to do what it's supposed to do – love God, love one another, help each other grow in Christ and lead those far from God to know follow Him!
 - a. Shepherd makes sure the sheep fulfill their purpose – turn a profit for their owner with their wool or slaughter. That metaphor is certainly not intended when it comes to the church, but rather what we saw earlier in 1 Peter.
 - b. **5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ..., that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:5 & 9b)**
 - c. Therefore, Paul wrote,
 - d. **11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (Ephesians 4:11-16)**

The leads us to the third question Peter answers concerning what the pastors of the church are supposed to do.

- (3) **How? A Biblical local church is led by pastors who lead the local church with sincere passion, integrity, and genuineness. (5:2-3)**
 - A. We already talked about the role of preaching, teaching, leading and equipping, which should be rather obvious duties of pastors, but it goes much deeper than that, and the church should require it from their pastors. Peter writes,
 - B. **“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.”

- C. In many churches committees nominate people to be in charge and often times they end up having to persuade somebody to do it that doesn't really want to do it. Peter is saying the local church can't afford to have pastors that do it because they feel obligated.
- D. Rather Peter says, pastors need to take up this calling because God has called them (“as God would have you”) and thus do it “willingly.” If you've been called by God to do something, then nothing should stand in the way of your willingness to do it, that is, if you actually love God!
- E. Remember how excited you were whenever your first employer entrusted you with an important task? It's exhilarating to know somebody needs something important done and they feel you are the person to get it done. So, Peter is saying to those called to Pastor, if you are indeed called by God don't do it out of obligation but rather from a sincere passion to shepherd the flock of God the same way Christ does!
- F. Furthermore, the motive to pastor the body can't be money! Whether you get paid or not should have nothing to do with it! The Bible in no way discourages paying pastors. As a matter of fact it encourages it.
 - 1. **13 Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? 14 In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel. (1 Corinthians 9:13-14)**
 - 2. **17 Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and "The laborer deserves his wages." (1 Timothy 5:17-18)**
 - 3. Interestingly, both of those passages were written by the most influential man in the early church, a true “celebrity” if you will, but one who nonetheless refused to take a penny from any church as a way of payment for himself. So, there is no concept church leaders have to be financially supported by the church, but there is also no concept of the church not looking to truly care for its pastors either.
 - 4. With that stated, the point Peter is making here is that pastors are not to be motivated by money! It's not a career path, it's a calling to shepherd God's people! Being motivated by money in ministry would be like being motivated by money in a marriage. If what brings you into and/or motivates

you to stay in a marriage relationship is the money provided by your spouse, then you have every reason to be ashamed of yourself.

5. Peter is telling pastors they need to launch out into shepherding and overseeing a church with enough passion to charge hell with a water pistol if necessary! Money or no money, career opportunity or no career opportunity; it don't matter, if God called you, then you get after it in the church God has called you to be a part of.
- G. Finally, Peter said don't lead through domineering over people, but rather by demonstrating to them what a real relationship with Christ looks like.
1. First of all, to domineer over someone is to demand that they do for you and as such do what you yourself have excused yourself from doing. To domineer over someone is to bully them around for you glory. To domineer over somebody is to take the life and emotional energy from them for yourself. To domineer over somebody is to demand they serve you rather than serve them.
 2. Therefore, Peter reminds pastors they are not there to lead people to themselves, but rather to be an example of what it means to be led by Christ! Pastors are to model what it means to be examples of suffering for Christ, of obeying Christ, of testifying of their reliance on the grace of Christ, of living for Christ's glory, of loving being loved by Him, and of loving one another. In short, they are not to be examples of what it means to be one of Christ's sheep; of being a genuine follower of Jesus as opposed to the hypocritical, plastic fake version far too many pastors give to others.
 3. Listen to how Paul put it,
 4. **14 I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. 15 For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. 16 I urge you, then, be imitators of me. 17 That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church. (1 Corinthians 4:14-17)**
 5. **9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (1 Corinthians 12:9-10)**

The last question Peter answers concerning what the pastors of the church are supposed to do is why.

(4) **Why? A Biblical local church is led by pastors who are motivated for Christ's glory, not mans. (5:4)**

- A. **4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.**
- B. In chapter four Peter had essentially just told everyone in the church to keep loving and obeying God, loving one another, and sharing the Gospel; that is to press on in the sufferings of Christ, so that they can share in His Glory when He appears! We talked about this last week. Peter wrote,
- C. **13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. (1 Peter 4:13)**
- D. Therefore, there should be a fixation for every pastor on the return of Christ. Every pastor should be shepherding the flock of God in a way that they are fully aware the Chief Shepherd is coming back to get His Sheep! Every Pastor should be equipping the church to accomplish the mission of Christ fully aware that the master is coming back to the house. Jesus said,
- E. **"23 And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.'" (Luke 14:23)**
- F. But here's the deal, the crown of glory Peter is speaking of is not a crown for now, but later. It is not a glory for you and I to share in now but later! The New Testament is clear on that.
- G. Why is that important to understand? Well, the reality is that we all long for earthly glory, all of us, pastors included. So, all too often, even if we know the right words to say, we find ourselves driven by the glory we can receive from others now. Some pastors don't even tried to hide it. They teach their church they are owed glory from the church and that they are supposed to get it now. Furthermore, if the church wants to be blessed then they need to bless him first. There could be nothing more sinful. The glory of the church is Christ's alone to claim, and Christ's alone to share. Christ glory is not channeled through how a pastor is glorified by a local church, but rather its prostituted when Pastors attempt to intersect and redirect it for themselves.

So, to review what we just learned in Peter.

(1) Churches are to be led by a team of pastors who are fully a part of the local gathering of sheep, and as such, they are sheep who lead other sheep!

- (2) Pastors are to lead the sheep like shepherds, meaning they are to feed the sheep, protect the sheep, unify the sheep, and equip the sheep to do what sheep are supposed to do!
- (3) Pastors are to do this with sincere passion, integrity, and genuineness.
- (4) And finally, they are to do it literally for the Glory of Christ, that is that they will be faithful to Him and therefore be glorified by Him at His return!

Now here's the deal, those principles apply to every sphere of influence for every follower of Christ! We have all been commissioned to be disciple makers and as such shepherds. Therefore,

Challenge: Examine how well you are applying the principles of how pastors are to lead the church to your leadership of those God has placed in your sphere of influence. For instance, how are you applying these principles to your marriage, to parenting, to the people you lead in your life group or ministry team, or to the people Christ has placed in your life that don't know Him?