

# Round Top Church Christian Fellowship

## Sermon Series in 1 Peter

### *1 Peter 5*

#### *Christ Our Faithful Focus*

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(All Scripture is from the New American Standard Bible, unless otherwise noted.)

Peter writes the letter that God called him to write. He identified a number of things that the recipients of the letter are to pay attention. In fact, the recipients are to change some things that they are doing in life. They are not to live like the pagan world around them. They are continuing to grow in the Lord, and they anticipate His return. Judgment for the evil spirits, believers and the non-believers are presented in 1 Peter. The section of 1 Peter identified as chapter five begins with “Therefore.” Thus, all things said previously are to be kept in mind as the letter comes to a close. The leaders in the Believer communities are known as Elders. This is the highest office with the local assembly. In the 1st Century, each individual assembly was led by Elders with Deacons assisting with the functional demands like we see in Acts six.

Peter is considered one of the leading Apostles due to his personal relationship with Jesus Christ during His ministry time and during the Resurrection time. Think about it, Peter, and some others, actually walked with Jesus during the Resurrection time. Would your life be different if you had a relationship with a man who was publicly executed as the Messiah? Mine has. In fact, every Believer’s life has made a change. This is the difference in being a person of God. We are different, because we have the

power in us to overcome the fallen world. Do we exercise that overcoming-power on a daily basis? No! We seem to be partially blind, deaf and dumb at times. Blind to the Gospel, deaf to the voice of God and dumb in reference to God's Word. Peter is writing to reach people who are partially blind, deaf and dumb. I say, this is the condition of mankind. This is why God incarnated himself as Jesus Christ.

Luke 4:16-20 Jesus declares that He came so the blind could see.

<sup>16</sup> And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up;  
and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath,  
and stood up to read.

<sup>17</sup> And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him.  
And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written,

<sup>18</sup> "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,  
Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor.

He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives,

And recovery of sight to the blind,

To set free those who are downtrodden,

<sup>19</sup> To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord."

<sup>20</sup> And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant,  
and sat down;

and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him.

Why does God have Peter write this letter?

We have talked in the past of the basic need for man to be saved by God. The often-used theological term “totally depraved” is used to describe the condition of man with God. It is understood that most people do not understand the term “totally depraved or total-depravity.” They most likely do not appreciate being categorized as such. People, by-in-large, think of themselves as basically good. However, separate and apart from God, man is no more civilized than a primate. Human history witnesses to this realization. Man, is blind, poor and captivated by every wind of notion without God governing his heart. Cain rejected God’s governance and committed the first murder. The world has followed suite since that time. Man, constantly diminishes himself. From Cain to Noah, God determined that all of mankind had failed to live up to His original design and He decided to scrub the whole mission. Then there was the consideration for Noah and his family. There is always a remnant in the biblical account of God’s relationship with man. God really wants us to be free. Free from sin and death and live the life God intended for us from the beginning. Jesus came to demonstrate how we can be free, how we can see the kingdom of God and how we can enter the kingdom of God (John 3).

I was listening to X-M radio this past week to one of the comic channels. This comedian said that he was a Christian. One of his intended-to-be humorous jokes concerned the comparison of human and primate DNA. He said scientists have determined that some primate DNA is 98 percent the same as ours. He then went on to say that when he saw a chimpanzee he thought that there was no way anyone was going to take the 2% percent he had away from him that made him different from the chimp. He said, “Just look at the chimp; he has problems. . .no way do I want to be like that.”

Here is a reference from Scientific America.

In 1871, Charles Darwin surmised that humans were evolutionarily closer to the African apes than to any other species alive. The recent sequencing of the gorilla, chimpanzee and

bonobo genomes confirms that supposition and provides a clearer view of how we are connected: chimps and bonobos in particular take pride of place as our nearest living relatives, sharing approximately 99 percent of our DNA, with gorillas trailing at 98 percent.

Yet that tiny portion of unshared DNA makes a world of difference: it gives us, for instance, our bipedal stance and the ability to plan missions to Mars. Scientists do not yet know how most of the DNA that is uniquely ours affects gene function. But they can conduct whole-genome analyses—with intriguing results. For example, comparing the 33 percent of our genome that codes for proteins with our relatives' genomes reveals that although the sum total of our genetic differences is small, the individual differences pervade the genome, affecting each of our chromosomes in numerous ways. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/tiny-genetic-differences-between-humans-and-other-primates-pervade-the-genome/>

Genesis one and two reveals that God created us to manage His creation and not be like animals. God gave us a family structure and purpose. Life is a gift from God, and we are to enjoy life as God has determined what is good in our lives. Even though, in the past, God has revealed himself to individuals (Adam, Eve, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses and more), in our time, we have the addition of His written Word. The Bible is a gift that details how our conduct should be. The Bible details God's plan of salvation and His plan for our eternal life. Peter writes this letter that we are studying as part of God's reaching out to us.

Keeping the focus on God's plan for family, we see here in 1st Peter God's plan for the Assembly. Peter exhorts three groups: **Elders, younger men and all the rest**. It is of note that Peter presents himself as a fellow Elder and does not write "from the Pope in Rome" or "from the Chief Elder." This self-designation negates any claim that Peter was the overseer of the entire followers of Jesus Christ.

<sup>NAS</sup> **1 Peter 5:1-14**

<sup>1</sup> Therefore,

I exhort the **elders** among you,

**as your fellow elder** and witness of the sufferings of Christ,

and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed,

<sup>2</sup> shepherd the flock of God among you,

exercising oversight not under compulsion,

but voluntarily,

according to *the will of God*;

and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

<sup>3</sup> nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge,

but proving to be examples to the flock.

<sup>4</sup> And when the Chief Shepherd appears,

you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

**The first group are Elders.** Evidently there must have been Elders who had overstepped their bounds. God's Gospel does not intent to replace one group of oppressive spiritual master (Pharisees, Sadducees and Scribes) for another list of titles (Elders, Deacon, Pope, Cardinal, Bishop, Priest)? Nowhere in the Gospel of Christ do we see this hierarchical rule with rules and regulations governing salvation. In fact, when the lawyer (Luke 10:25-28) asked Jesus how to inherited eternal life, Jesus' responds bring clarity and brevity to salvation.

<sup>25</sup> And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

<sup>26</sup> And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?"

<sup>27</sup> And he answered and said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."

<sup>28</sup> And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

Jesus' response did not detail a long list of things to do officiated by overseers. There was nothing about water-baptism and religious rituals to go through. Jesus' response left organized religion out. Jesus did not require that anyone oversee a person's salvation. How can one man or organization make another person love God and his neighbor? They cannot. This love is a condition of the heart that cannot be bought or earned. There is no religious rite that will place the love for God and your neighbor in your heart. This is a spiritual condition that only God can qualify.

Reading Matthew 23:13-36, we see that Christ disdained and judged the oppressors. Read all to receive the full weight of Jesus' rebuke.

Verse 13 starts Jesus' rebuke . . .

"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from men; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in." He came to set the captives free. If you ever find yourself in a group whose leaders are claiming to control access to forgiveness and presence to God, then you need to run! Flee from these pretenders and worshipers of themselves!

Regarding Elders

Elders have the task of protecting the Assembly. This includes the responsibility of taking an account of a person's action and statements that are contrary to Scripture for the purpose of restoring them. Judgement has the first purpose of restoration. Yes, after judgement is not received, then judgement separates the unrepentant person from the assembly. The eternal perspective is that God separates the unrepentant person from His Heaven.

**The second group are younger men.** As we seniors know, youth has know-it-all energy that needs to be cooled-off with time and our patience. We see Peter is addressing the same concern. The text here is short and to the point. As if nothing else needs to be said.

<sup>5</sup> You **younger men**, likewise,

be subject to your elders;

The rest of the congregation is addressed in the second part of verse five. However, it can be said that these instructions apply to all, for everyone is a member of the assembly.

and **all of you**,

clothe yourselves with **humility** toward one another,

for God is opposed to the proud, [**1<sup>st</sup> Beatitude**]

but gives grace to the humble.

[Grace is used to start most Gospel letters]

<sup>6</sup> **Humble** yourselves,

therefore, under the mighty hand of God,

that He may exalt you at the proper time,

[Jesus exhibited this when He told the disciples not to reveal some of the things He had done. He did not want to bring the wrong kind of attention to himself. This was done to accomplish His mission.]

**Mat 16:20, Luk 9:21, Mat 8:4, Mar 9:9, Mat 9:30, Mat 12:16 ,  
Mat 17:9, Mar 1:44, Mar 3:12, Mar 5:43, Mar 7:36**

<sup>7</sup> **casting all your anxiety upon Him,**

because He cares for you.

<sup>8</sup> Be of *sober spirit*,

be on the *alert*.

Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion,  
seeking someone to devour.

<sup>9</sup> But *resist* him, *firm in your faith*, [Peter learned from his sinking-faith]

knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being  
accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

<sup>10</sup> And after you have suffered for a little while,

the God of all grace,

who called you to His eternal glory in Christ,

will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you.

<sup>11</sup> To Him *be* dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Peter was the disciple whom Jesus told that Satan would *sift him like wheat* (Luke 22:31). My experience in life is that Satan seeks to sift all of our lives like wheat. Peter learned many lessons from Jesus that are passed onto us in God's Word. Focusing on (do not take your eyes off) Jesus is one of those lessons.

A few months ago, I test drove a car that had a heads-up display. This feature places a projected digital image onto the windshield above the steering wheel of the car's speedometer and a few other instrumentations of your choice. Again, the display is projected just above the driver's wheel and is reflected back to you from the glass windshield of the car. The idea is for



the driver not to take their eyes off the road and a constant reminder of their speed. The safety engineers believe that people have a hard time staying focused on driving their car appropriately. People, as a whole, are not good multi-taskers; especially when it comes to driving a projectile at high speed, talking on their cell phone with three screaming kids in the back seat and their pet monkey in the front seat reminding them they are just two percentage points away from swinging from trees and performing in the circus. We need to stay focused on Jesus at the same time the fallen world screams at us to forget God.

We have heard the phrases, “Don’t take your eyes off the road” and “Keep focused”. These phrases can apply to many situations in life. Peter needed to keep FAITH-FOCUSED on his heads-up-display (that is Jesus) when he left the boat to walk on water to reach Jesus. Peter allowed fear of his surroundings to engulf him, and he began to sink. Now, the good thing for Peter (and for the rest of us) is that Jesus reached out and saved Peter as Peter called to Jesus, “save me”, even though he had failed.

### Matthew 14:21-33

<sup>21</sup> And there were about five thousand men who ate, aside from women and children.

<sup>22</sup> And immediately He made the disciples get into the boat, and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

<sup>23</sup> And after He had sent the multitudes away, He went up to the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone.

<sup>24</sup> But the boat was already many stadia away from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary.

<sup>25</sup> And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea.

<sup>26</sup> And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were frightened, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

<sup>27</sup> But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."

<sup>28</sup> And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

<sup>29</sup> And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

<sup>30</sup> But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

<sup>31</sup> And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

<sup>32</sup> And when they got into the boat, the wind stopped.

<sup>33</sup> And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "You are certainly God's Son!"

Those of us who have served our country in the military or those who have served here as civil servants have been called to perform difficult tasks, and, at times, life-threatening functions. At those times, my personal experience is that we stay focused on the mission at hand and carried through the assignment relying on our experience and training. Above all, we believed in the mission. Without a belief in the mission, we could fail. We needed to have faith in our mission above all the experience and training. Peter sank, because he became more worried about his physical surroundings than the calling to accomplish the mission God had placed in his life. At that point, Peter demonstrated **sinking-faith**. As Peter was sinking, he called out to Jesus to save him. We do not want to demonstrate **sinking-faith**; we are called to live life with **walk-on-water-faith**. Challenging indeed! This does not mean we are to test God and pray for the ability to walk on water. We are to pray for God to direct our lives. Then walk in that direction, that is, on the path God has called us with the 24/7 awareness that we are in God's hands carrying out His will in our lives. We know at times that this will cost us. But, then, we only have one life to live for the Lord.

When we are that focused on the mission of which the Lord has called us we cannot always look for the fallen world to see or agree with the direction in life the Lord has placed us. In addition, at times, we cannot always depend on other Believers to see the calling or mission the Lord has called us to. **Paul distanced himself from Mark and disagreed with Barnabas** (Acts 15:36-41). Despite people failing to see the same direction God has called you, God gives those people a chance to redirect their focus or God keeps working through you but with people and a setting that is consistent with God plans for your life. God may move you (or others) to accomplish His goals in your life. Peter knows this. Paul even addressed Peter to change his witness in Galatians 2:11. Paul believed they were not to teach or participate in the legal life of Judaism. Many years after Peter's encounter with Paul, Peter writes God's message to Believers who are struggling through life just as he did and we are. However, compared to Believer's lives here in America, we do not have the same level of rebuke by government and culture that they had in the first century.

Chapter five closes with . . .

<sup>12</sup> Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard *him*),

**I have written to you briefly,**

**exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God.**

**Stand firm in it!**

<sup>13</sup> She who is in Babylon,

chosen together with you,

sends you greetings,

and *so does* my son, Mark.

<sup>14</sup> Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Peace be to you all who are in Christ.