

THE LEADER'S “REWARD”

(GOING THE DISTANCE WITH A HEALTHY HEART)

I Peter 5:1-4



LONG DISTANCE LEADERS

- ◆ Remember God's Grace
- ◆ Avoid Taking Credit
- ◆ Lead By Example
- ◆ Maintain Eternal Perspective

“You will receive a crown of glory that fades not away.” (V.4)

Bill Kirk

“THE LEADER’S REWARD”

Text: I Peter 5:1-4

Subject: What Healthy Leaders Remember As They Lead And Bleed At The Same Time

Introduction

- ◆ Someone once said, “It’s not **what** you go through that matters, but **how** you go through it that really counts.

In Other Words

- ◆ What happens **in** you is far more important than what happens **to** you.

(And that’s where I Peter comes in)

Question: Who wrote I Peter?

Answer: Peter, the Apostle (around 64 A.D.)

Question: Who did Peter write to?

Answer: Believers who were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, now living in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, now modern Turkey).

Question: Why did Peter write his letter?

Answer: To encourage believers who go through suffering, affliction, and disappointments.

- ◆ Peter mentions suffering 16 times by using 8 different Greek terms.
- ◆ He writes just before the first of 9 persecutions that took place under the Roman Empire during the next 250 years.
- ◆ In Chapter 1 – How to suffer with **joy!**
- ◆ In Chapter 2 – How to suffer with **patience!**
- ◆ In Chapter 3 – How to suffer with **forgiveness!**
- ◆ In Chapter 4 – How to suffer with **power!**
- ◆ In Chapter 5 – How to suffer with **reward!**

And in the Midst of Peter’s Epistles

- ◆ The Lord speaks to leaders!

Question: Why does the Lord speak to leaders?

Answer: Because of what Jesus said in Mark 13:32-35.

“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It’s like a man going away; **he leaves his house and puts his servants in charge**, (*leadership*) each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.”

In Mark’s Parable

1. Jesus was identifying Himself as the “man going away.”
2. The “house” is His church. (And)
3. You and I are the servants in charge and the watchpersons at the door.

In Other Words

- ◆ On one hand it’s the Holy Spirit that empowers and fills us to do God’s will.
- ◆ On the other hand, what happens in the Lord’s church is largely left to us (leadership).

In Other Words

- ◆ **Bad leadership** (with lack of vision, laziness, strife) means the “house” falls into disrepair and declines.
- ◆ **Good leadership** (with vision, kindness, passion and pure motives) means the “house” prospers and moves forward.

In Other Words

- ◆ Leaders are more in charge (as influencers) than we think.

And Jesus said in Mark 13:35

- ◆ The house (or church) is His house!
- ◆ And Jesus is returning to His house!
- ◆ So, the house is not our house – it’s His house, His church!

In Other Words

- ◆ Our task is not just to settle down in the house and decorate it and keep it clean.
- ◆ Our task is to keep it in tip-top shape, missional, intentional and forward moving as leaders.

Why?

- ◆ So when He returns He will be delighted in the condition he finds his house in.

And that’s where you and I come in:

Question: So what’s a healthy leader look like in the local church?

Question: What motivates, encourages and guides a healthy leader in your local church?

(Things Healthy Leaders Remember – From I Peter 5)

I. You Remember God’s Grace!

“I exhort you as a fellow leader, who witnessed the sufferings of Christ myself.” (V. 1)

- ◆ Peter calls himself a “fellow laborer” and doesn’t separate himself from the other laborers (he knows we are better together).
- ◆ He knows one snowflake isn’t much by itself, but it takes a bulldozer to move them when they cooperate!
- ◆ He knows all the trees in the forest are different, but when the wind blows, they all lean in the same direction!
- ◆ Peter also says that he remembers something:

Question: What does Peter remember?

Answer: He has memories of his part in Christ's suffering.

- ◆ It was the most painful episode in Peter's life.
- ◆ Peter followed Jesus into the courtyard of the High Priest's house (in the final hours).
- ◆ And in a time of weakness, three times he denied that he even knew the Lord. (Matt. 26:69-75)
- ◆ Luke said, "And the Lord turned and looked at Peter, and Peter went out and wept bitterly." (Luke 22:61, 62)

And now Peter is recalling it.

- ◆ How his courage failed him and he messed up.
- ◆ How his sin was so grievous and painful.

Question: Why does Peter recall it (right up front)?

Answer: To remind the leaders of God's grace in his own life:

- ◆ How Christ forgave him and restored him.
- ◆ How Christ continued to change him.
- ◆ How Jesus doesn't use perfect people to get the job done.
- ◆ How it's okay to admit it when we're wrong.
- ◆ How humility overcomes hypocritical pride.
- ◆ How it's important to remember why God called Moses:

Now get this:

- ◆ When God called Moses to leadership, He brought Moses to the burning bush (and God said two things):
 1. "I've seen their affliction." (and)
 2. "I've heard their cry."

What's the Take-A-Way?

- ◆ The call to leadership is a call to address the needs of others and bring them where God wants them to go. (That's what leaders do.)

In Other Words

- ◆ It's not about our strengths or weaknesses.
- ◆ It's about focusing on **two things**:
 1. The needs and hurts of the people (and)
 2. The potential of where God wants the people to go (The Promised Land)

(That's Why)

- ◆ The enemy comes along to focus on our weaknesses (to neutralize us).
- ◆ When the reality is – God doesn't use us because we are great, or smart, or cool, or perfect!
- ◆ He uses us because He is great and smart and powerful and perfect!

Fact: Everywhere Paul went he boasted about two things: 1 – Jesus, 2 – His own weakness.

II. You Think Like A Shepherd!

“Feed the flock of God which is among you.” (V. 2a)

Question: Who do we exist for?

Answer: The “flock”

Question: Whose flock is it?

Answer: The “flock of God”

Question: What’s a leader do?

Answer: “Feed” the flock of God.

- ◆ The word “**feed**” is the Greek word **POIMANTE**.
- ◆ It doesn’t mean to just teach or preach.
- ◆ It means to tend and shepherd and care for people.
- ◆ It means to guide, protect, restore, feed and go after those who stray.
- ◆ It means to be willing to sacrifice your very life for the sheep.

Question: What’s the take-a-way here?

1. It’s all about the sheep, it’s not about us!
2. We don’t use people for our vision, we resource them for their potential!
3. We are even willing to be misunderstood because sheep can be careless, anxious, distracted, foolish, wandering and even bite back.
4. We avoid the danger of looking for appreciation and “**thank you**” from the people (sheep) we serve.

Remember: If ever we feel cheated in serving God, we’ve served Him for the wrong reasons.

(And)

- ◆ Not everybody that you start with will you end with!

(And)

- ◆ The root cause of all complaints is when a person feels like they’re not getting what they deserve (and the truth is – we don’t want what we deserve!)

III. You Serve With Privilege!

“Not by constraint, but willingly...with a ready mind.” (V. 2b)

Question: What’s the root (or motivation) of a leader?

1. “**Not by constraint**” – or out of pressure and obligation.
2. “**But willingly**” – or an emotional desire that is eager to serve.

3. **“With a ready mind”** – means “not for personal profit” but for the profit of the one being served (for their advantage not my advantage).

In Other Words

- ◆ It’s an honor (a privilege) that God has called us to eternal work.

In Other Words

- ◆ We don’t honor God by our service; He honors us by allowing us to participate in something eternal.

Question: What is a New Testament servant? Someone who...

- ◆ Advances others at the expense of **themselves**,
- ◆ Cares less who gets the **credit**,
- ◆ Doesn’t need to be **“thanked”** for their service,
- ◆ Takes up their cross **without complaint**.

Remember:

- ◆ We don’t **have** to do this, we **get** to do this!

IV. You Lead By Example!

“Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock.” (V. 3)

The Negative Is...

- ◆ “Not domineering those who are under our care.”

The Positive Is...

- ◆ “But being examples to the flock.”

In Other Words

1. Healthy leaders aren’t arrogant, pushy, intimidating and dictatorial (my way or the highway).
2. Healthy leaders are examples (or **we do** before **we teach**).

In Other Words

- ◆ On the inside we humble ourselves under the gospel.
- ◆ On the outside, we model the gospel to followers.

“Neither as being lords over” means:

1. Humility lessens stress in my life. (I don’t feel the need to dress or drive to be noticed.)
2. Humility leaves my ego at the door.(I feel no need to talk about myself.)
3. Humility defers credit to the others.
4. Humility welcomes correction and instruction.
5. Humility submits without an attitude.
6. Humility needs no attention or recognition to be joyful.
7. Humility submits my agenda to the team agenda.

Question: Why is this so important?

Answer: Because the heart of the leader sets the **tone** for those who follow and those we serve!

Question: Attitudes are contagious – is yours worth catching?

V. You Maintain Long Term Perspective!

"And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, you will receive a crown of glory that fades not away." (V. 4)

Question: What is God (through Peter) telling every leader and worker in His church?

Answer: We are not temporal driven!

In Other Words

- ◆ Our reward is when the Lord returns!

In Other Words

- ◆ We can under-estimate the payday that is coming!

In Other Words

- ◆ It's better to be awed by the grace of God and coming glory...
- ◆ Than thinking God is awed by having us on the team!

The Bottom Line Is

- ◆ Nothing will stop the return of the Lord, and
- ◆ Nothing will prevent the reward for every effort you've made in serving, and,
- ◆ The reward will be glorious – beyond comprehension!

Question: How does this help servant leaders?

Answer: It keeps us moving forward with joy.

- ◆ Whether we are praised or cursed, appreciated or disdained, loved or ignored!

Illustration

On a leader's retreat a lady said to me, "I work my fingers to the bone and what thanks do I get?" I said to her, "You serve for thanks?"

It's a Reality Check Here:

- ◆ On earth we'll be offended, forgotten, exhausted at times and experience pain (and heartbreaks) – and that's okay.

Never Forget This:

- ◆ Jesus didn't suffer so that Christians wouldn't have to; He suffered to show us how to go through it!
- ◆ And going through it carries great reward!

Nuf Sed!
Bill Kirk