



KIAMA ANGLICAN  
CHURCHES

# **Under God's Mighty Hand**

Sermon: 1 Peter 5: 1-14

Greg Holmes - 22 Nov 2020

# 1 Peter 5: 1-14

**1** To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: **2** Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; **3** not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. **4** And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

**5** In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."

**6** Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. **7** Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

**8** Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. **9** Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

**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. **11** To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

**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.

**13** She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark. **14** Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

## Introduction

Today we conclude our series on the Apostle Peter's first letter but to start ....

I recently read a book by a very different Peter...Peter Fitzsimons' book on the battle of Tobruk, North Africa, in the Second World war. In it he tells this story:

*There was a strapping Australian soldier stripped to the waist digging a defensive trench outside Tobruk.*

*Onto this scene comes a British Captain of Artillery all dressed up in his best uniform, creases in his trousers, brightly polished shoes, baton under his arm, his Batman in tow. As he walks past this soldier digging his trench he hems and haws expecting some reaction, doesn't get any. Next he turns to the soldier and says, "I heard you Australians are a bit undisciplined but you should at least know that you have to salute a superior officer."*

*The soldier pauses from digging the trench raises himself up, reaches over to his uniform shirt pulls it on, buttons it up, stands to his full height revealing the Major's epaulettes on his shirt and he says, "Rather, Captain, you need to salute me and as the commanding officer in this area - buzz off."*

What represents humility and what represents pride here?

It's an imperfect illustration of humility but I'd like you to keep that idea in your mind as we go through this sermon.

The second thing I'd like you to keep in mind is those amazing pictures you often see of lighthouses standing on their rocky outcrop with absolutely unbelievably huge waves crashing right around them. Standing there firm, still strong and immovable, still doing what they are meant to do – standing firm - shining a light.

I want to look at this chapter of 1 Peter through the lens of these two themes, each expressed three times:

### Humility and Standing Firm

Ready for the end – doing good now.

Verses 5-6 focus our attention on the idea of  
HUMILITY

**5 .... All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,**

**“God opposes the proud  
but shows favor to the humble.”**

**6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.**

We are told to clothe ourselves with humility.

The word used here for clothing yourself seems to have the sense of tying up or tying on a garment - apron like - in order to perform some service.

This story has to have been in the back of Peter’s mind:

**John 13:2 *The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon***

***Iscairiot, to betray Jesus. <sup>3</sup> Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; <sup>4</sup> so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. <sup>5</sup> After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.***

So what is humility?

It is not being a doormat; it is not being timid as a mouse or someone who is always putting yourself down, a person who doesn't stand up for himself or what he believes in.

Humility is having a correct, proper, well considered view of yourself, not just from your own point of view but from realising who you are in relation to all others and, in particular, in relation to God - to understand that we are people of the great and mighty God, that we are under as this passage will say God's mighty hand 'ready to do the things that he would have us do'.

It is having a right view of yourself.

*The Christian knows that he did not make himself or save himself. His humility springs from his total dependence on the grace of God. Added to that is the calling and example of his Saviour, who had everything to boast of, but 'humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross.'*

*Humility in Scripture means, not pretending to be worthless and refusing positions of responsibility, but knowing and keeping the place God has appointed for one. Being humble is a matter of holding on to God's arrangement, whether it means the high exposure of leadership (Moses was humble as a leader, Num. 12:3) or the obscurity of subservience. When Jesus stated matter-of-factly that he was "humble in heart" (Matt. 11:29), he meant that he was conscientiously following the Father's plan for his earthly life. PACKER*

*"In his Institutes of the Christian Religion (Calvin) wrote '[I]f you ask me concerning the precepts of the Christian religion, first, second, third...always I would answer "humility"."*

Let's now turn to the flow of the passage as we look at this idea of humility.

Peter first addresses the elders.

The first thing we need to understand is that the elders in the congregation are not merely the old ones, the grey-haired ones, the walking stick lot. They are in fact those who lead in the congregation

That does not mean that we can just ignore this or just leave it for the leaders of our church.

We too need to consider these words for in all sorts of situations we can well and truly be the elders or leaders, in our Growth Groups, our families in more informal

situations. So this advice is for us and, I take it, that here is how you do that leadership humbly.

Let's look at the first few verses of one Peter 5.

**1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—**

Note first of all the Apostle Peter's humility. He appeals to them as a fellow elder. He speaks of being a witness to Christ sufferings. That might mean he was there when Jesus died and was a witness though he was at that point hiding or that he is a witness in the sense that he gives witness to Jesus in his ministry.

Peter refers to the elders as shepherds which brings starkly to mind the scene at the end of the beach breakfast in John 21 where Peter, who has betrayed Jesus in the High Priest's courtyard, is called aside by Jesus himself and this conversation ensues:

**John 21:15      *When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"***

***"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."***

***Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."***

And then repeats this charge three times altogether.

And that is what Peter has been doing ever since - in Jerusalem, in travels around the Mediterranean and now,

as he writes, it would seem in Rome he is being a Shepherd to the sheep.

He is a fellow elder. His instruction to the elders is that they should serve God's church. This is not the elders' church, the pastors' church, the wardens' church or the people's church, or your own little group's church.

It IS God's church – we are God's sheep placed under his shepherds...

**not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be;**

Peter and Jesus want the elders, the leaders, the shepherds to do the task willingly not because it's a chore but because they serve the risen Lord; that is what God wants them to be.

There is a word for us here that we should be careful to help them in doing this and not to make the task a chore or really something they must do under some obligation...

**not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve;**

Secondly this is not a task for dishonest gain, for lining your pockets, establishing a privileged lifestyle – eager service is the thing – wages are the enabler.

Again it brings to my mind the picture of Jesus the creator of the world, the Lord of All, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, kneeling wrapped in a towel and washing, dirty, muddy, dusty feet.



**3** not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

Then the elders are not to be lording it over the flock but rather to be examples of living, doing good as Peter has called it though this letter.

Again, Jesus' words to the disciples when they were arguing about who was the greatest:

***Mark 10<sup>42</sup> Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup> Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup> and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.***

**1 Peter 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.**

These, including Peter, are but under-shepherds and, of course the ultimate 'reward' is that crown of glory that will never 'perish, spoil or fade' kept in heaven for them.

**5 In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders.**

Now Peter addresses the younger. I think that is all those who are not elders – age is not the only criteria. I think it actually addresses all the church members.

We/ they are younger and we are to submit in humility to those God has set over us. Paul Barnett makes the point:

*“to ‘be subject’ (or submit) does not mean ‘be obedient’ in a servile sense but implies a willing acceptance of God-given authority.”*

and so

**All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,**

**“God opposes the proud  
but shows favor to the humble.”**

We are ALL to be humble.

We are ALL to put on the apron of a servant.

We are ALL to understand that even those things that we think we can be proud of - our gifts and abilities, our roles and responsibilities - are things that are GOD given.

**6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.**

Therefore, we are to see ourselves as humble servants under God's mighty hand and to recognise that he is the one who will lift us up in the end.

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

This verse also reflects a humble approach. If we keep our anxieties to ourselves, if we think we can solve the problems then it seems to me that that is proud.

Note at the end where Peter includes, humbly, both Silas and Mark and indeed the church in Rome in his letter and his greetings.

## **STAND FIRM.**

Our second theme is standing fast or standing firm.

**9. standing firm in the faith**

**10. will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.**

**12 Stand fast in it.**

The first challenge to standing firm is the devil

**8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.**

We are engaged in a spiritual war.

Behind all those little ‘persecutions’ the snide remarks, the pointed jokes, the exclusion from conversation, and for many of our brothers and sister the real physical danger ... lies the Devil

*C.S. Lewis says “There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves (the devils) are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight. “*

He is the Accuser – he wants not that you worship him – though he probably wouldn’t mind that – he wants to turn

you from God.

Remember...

*"Satan's masterpiece is not the prostitute or the skid-row bum. It is the self-sufficient person who has made life comfortable, who is adjusting well to the world and truly likes living here, a person who dreams of no better place to live, who longs only to be a little better - and a little better off - than he already is." Larry Crabb*

But God has the victory so we are encouraged to stand firm...firm as true servant shepherds...firm as true humble participants in of God's church in this place...firm in our true and rightly considered humility...firm in being alert and sober...firm in our solidarity with our sovereign Lord Jesus and with our sister and brother Christians.

Stand firm in humble fellowship!

The God of all grace, even when we stumble and fall and fail, still acts for us.

**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. 11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.**

Humble

You want to grow in humility – C.S. Lewis can help!

*If anyone would like to acquire humility, I can, I think tell him the first step. The first step is to realise that*

*one is proud. A biggish step too. At least, nothing whatever can be done before it. If you think you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited indeed.*

The opposite of humility is pride. Pride is one of the besetting sins of humanity. We are naturally proud, sinfully proud. We often see pride as an obvious trait that we recognise in others.

But to conquer pride we need to look in the mirror – to see it in ourselves, to recognise that we seem never to be rid of it. Having seen it in the mirror we look to Jesus and see in him what we truly are and we beg God to ‘clothe’ us in humility.

I see constantly the effects of pride in myself and I'm sure, if we are truthful, we all see it too.

God opposes the proud.

*“Any honours that come our way are only stolen from him to whom alone they really belong, the Lord who sent us.”*

— **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

*“True humility does not know that it is humble. If it did, it would be proud from the contemplation of so fine a virtue.”*

— **Martin Luther**

We must clothe ourselves in humility- putting on the apron of the servant. This is a conscious act.

Stand Firm

First recognise we cannot do it ourselves. Humility is the key here too. It is pride that tells us that we are right, that we can stand firm in ourselves, that we have enough faith, enough gifts, enough of anything to satisfy or please God. God provides the firm foundation -

**All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,**

**“God opposes the proud**

**but shows favor to the humble.”**

**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. 11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.**

## A COUPLE OF APPENDICES

HUMILITY Packer – Concise theology (A GREAT LITTLE BOOK)

**Humility** in Scripture means, not pretending to be worthless and refusing positions of responsibility, but knowing and keeping the place God has appointed for one. Being humble is a matter of holding on to God’s arrangement, whether it means the high exposure of leadership (Moses was humble as a leader, Num. 12:3) or the obscurity of subservience. When Jesus stated matter-of-factly that he was “humble in heart” (Matt. 11:29), he meant that he was conscientiously following the Father’s plan for his earthly life.

In all of this the Son is obeying the Father in true **humility**, living out a natural, voluntary, and joyful subordination. Meanwhile, the Father’s

aim of having the Son worshiped and glorified equally with himself is steadily being fulfilled (John 5:19–23).

The standard to which God's work of sanctifying his saints is directed is his own revealed moral law, as expounded and modeled by Christ himself. Christ's love, **humility**, and patience under pressure are to be consciously imitated (Eph. 5:2; Phil. 2:5–11; 1 Pet. 2:21), for a Christlike spirit and attitude are part of what law-keeping involves.

The world is at present Satan's kingdom (John 14:30; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 John 5:19; cf. Luke 4:5–7), and the outlook and mind-set of human societies reflect more of the pride seen in Satan than the **humility** seen in Christ.

## Sanchez – Summary thoughts on Stand Firm

From - Sanchez, J.R, 1 Peter for You (USA, The Good Book Company, 2016)

**1Peter 5:** .... I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God.

### **Stand fast in it.**

Peter is concerned that in the face of unjust suffering his readers will stand firm in God's grace, and remain in and display God's love. This is reflected in the way he closes his letter reminding them to “greet one another with the kiss of love” and wishing on them “peace to all of you who are in Christ”. (*1 Peter 5:14*)

- *We stand firm* in the true grace of God as we suffer simply because we are Christians
- *We stand firm* knowing that while the world may take everything away from us it cannot take our glorious identity or our imperishable future because we are elect exiles set apart by the Holy Spirit for the Salvation accomplished by Christ and now on our way home (*1 Peter 1:1-2*)
- *We stand firm* knowing that even though the world may kill us we have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of

Jesus Christ to an imperative imperishable inheritance. (*1 Peter 1:3-5*)

- *We stand firm* knowing that God does not waste our suffering; he intends for it to purify our faith in order that we may obtain our future salvation when Christ is revealed. (*1 Peter 1:6-9*)
- *We stand firm* knowing that our Lord Jesus Christ travelled the road marked with righteous suffering and blazed the path for us to follow. (*1 Peter 2:21-25*)
- *We stand firm* knowing that if we suffer for doing good we will be blessed (*1 Peter 3:8-17*) and will be exalted to glorious Christ was. (*1 Peter 3:18-22*)
- *We stand firm* knowing that as we share in Christ sufferings we are proven to be Christians (*1 Peter 4:12-19*)
- *We stand firm* by humbling ourselves under God's mighty hand knowing that he will exalt us. (*1 Peter 5:6-11*)

We-you-can, and must, stand firm in the true grace of God until we breathe no more or Christ is revealed. Might it be so!