

SERIES: "CHOSEN AND EXILED" - - 7/7/24 (#11) PASTOR ROB

PRELUDE READING: 1 PETER: 1-5 - - 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. (5) Like wise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

- Let's pause....this Scripture amazingly, are the words of God! Equally amazing, we all have access to these words.....with the Lord coaching us in the various aspects of life. In 1 Peter, as we've been studying, He has guided us on a number of issues with His wisdom around the notions of 'suffering' and 'submission' to authorities' being two threads/focal points. Today and through Peter, we receive wisdom/direction/clarity relating to 'leadership'.
- The 'leadership' principles that Peter exhorts to the Church elders are also applicable to 'leadership' in general. He also gives clarity to the qualifications of leaders.
- Of course, the best example of powerful 'leadership' is displayed by Jesus, Himself!.....who changed the whole world without sword or army.
- Firstly, Peter affirms the importance of 'leadership'.....especially in the midst of the suffering/persecution that he already addressed. Secondly, the qualities/principles of good leadership and the last section of the passage serves to guide 'followers'
- We are exposed to so many different 'leaders' in our culturestarting with spiritual/church leaders but other examples might include leaders in business, government, school, social media, and including coaches of all sorts (sports, etc).
- Pastor Rob describes his favorite coach (wrestling).....possessed great experience and understanding... could also recognize each individual's strengths and weaknesses....was also a great motivator. Similarly, Peter offers coaching about leading and following.

- In V-1, Peter is addressing elders (Church leaders) and, in 'exhorting' them, he is strongly encouraging them. He does so with the authority that naturally connects with being a key disciple of Jesus. (Pastor Rob side-note/clarification: We, as believers, are all priests with equal access to God)
- In this spirit of authority, amidst the suffering of his people (and in whatever form, us today), Peter is reminding of the fact that JESUS SUFFERED FIRST AND FOREMOST. In this verse, then, and with reference to Jesus, Peter is appealing to their (and our) emotions. He's also saying that there is PURPOSE IN SUFFERING.....and JESUS UNDERSTANDS YOUR SUFFERING. So don't get stuck there.....there is eternity at stake! You can be sad about suffering but keep moving/working harder...AND keep the bigger picture in your mind/heart. GLORIOUS ETERNITY IS REAL!

- In V-2 and 3, Peter enunciates some of the principles of good leadership ('shepherd-ship'). le....step back and oversee, with motivation/energy extending beyond self-gain, not dictating but serving as an influential and instructive model. While there are certainly excellent and formulaic books/lesson plans on leadership, it is noteworthy that Scripture offers such related wisdom. Pastor Rob uses a Johnny Carson analogy in terms of how Johnny (and we) should always make it about others, not ourselves.....putting them first.
- In the case of Christ First Church, leadership is aptly guided by Scripture....(making revisions to historical practices whenever such do not line up with the Word). Firstly and as it relates to Elders and just as Paul addressed related issues, see below:

Titus 1 ; 5-9 - - This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— (6) If anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. (7) For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, (8) but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. (9) He must hold firm to the trustworthy words taught, so that he may be able to give instructions, sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

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- Note: Per V-5, we at CF *appoint* our Church Elders. So our Elders appoint new elders....3 year terms....six Elders in total. Pastor Lee serves duly as both Lead Pastor and Elder....Pastor Rob attends in an adjunct role. Note the elder minimum qualifications adhered to by our Church and spelled out in V 6-9. (eg. male, married, non-divorced, family of believers, well-behaved/controlled, integrous, compliant, humble, patient, righteous, holy, disciplined, resolute in faith, good, patient, able instructor and rebuker)

1 Timothy 5: 17-18- - Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. (18) for Scripture says, " You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain" and, "The laborer deserves his wages."

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- So, "some elders are paid...we call them pastors....but, there's not much difference otherwise". Our Elder team works together cooperatively and in cohesion. Our Church is "PASTOR LEAD ELDER PROTECTED."
 - Back to 1 Peter 1:5- - Note: We are subject to our leaders (elders, pastors, husbands, and anyone in leadership); that is so even if the person is not a wonderful leader...and even if the leader's (bad) command(s) would be to your detriment....as a sign of faith, you are still subject. (eg. David being subject to Saul). Lastly, it is good, logical and scripturally sound that youth be subject to their elders (see Judgement on Judea...Is 3: 4-5)
 - Uses Elders' initial rejection of Great Valley Church expansion.....and Pastors' acceptance as an example. Remember, THE TEACHER/COACH OF THIS PRINCIPLE IS GOD!!!!
 - "...IT IS GOD WHO OPPOSES THE PROUD BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE"!!!!

