

On Clothing and Casting

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Date: 27 April 2025

Preacher: Jeremy Martinson

[0 : 00] And you can take out your Bible and get on over to 1 Peter chapter 5. You will recall that we were picking up one sermon from each of the five chapters of 1 Peter! to prepare us to take a look at 2 Peter.

And so today we're going to finish that up with 1 Peter chapter 5 and just pick up a couple of verses from the middle part of this lovely chapter. And Kara will serve us this morning.

She's going to read 1 Peter chapter 5 starting at verse number 5 and down through verse number 7. Likewise, 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. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him because he cares for you.

Thank you, Kara. Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to give us life.

[1 : 16] Thank you for gathering us together for worship. Thank you for receiving our worship. Not because we came here this morning with some sort of an animal sacrifice, but because the sacrifice of your Son, our Savior, the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, because his sacrifice remains sufficient for all of our sin, all of our weakness, all of our failure.

And because of our Savior Jesus, we have confidence to enter your presence and to bring our worship and to lift our voices and our hands and our hearts to you in praise and in adoration, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for all that you have done for us.

Where would we be without you? Hopeless, helpless, godless. Thank you for your great kindness to us.

Would you please help us, Father, as we continue in our time of worship now by turning our attention to the preaching of your word? We would sure love to hear those things that you would say to us today from your word.

And we would sure love to have our ears stopped up and just ignore and overlook anything that I say that is unhelpful or distracting. Blessed Holy Spirit, would you please do this kind of a work in our hearts?

[2 : 55] We ask that you would do some amazing thing among us as we commit ourselves to the preaching and the hearing and the believing and the obeying of your word.

We ask this in the name of our Savior, the Lord Jesus, for your glory and our good, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we pray.

Amen. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve enjoyed such intimacy with God and with one another.

That clothing was unnecessary. But when they rebelled, when they sinned, everything changed. Suddenly, they felt shame. They hid from God. And you'll recall that they tried covering themselves up with fig leaves. In his mercy, as we had the privilege of singing about this morning, in his mercy, God came looking for the guilty couple.

[4 : 03] And when he found them, he provided a better covering. The very first animal sacrifice and the first clothing to cover their nakedness.

And humans have been wearing clothing ever since then. Clothing is necessary. And depending on the type of job, different clothing is necessary.

Think about it. Wouldn't it be silly and really unhelpful if Jenny was in the hospital visiting patients wearing firefighter gear?

It would be so cumbersome, right? And just obnoxious and impossible for her to try to relate to her parent, to her patients, all covered in all of that protective gear that firefighters have to wear.

What if I went to work at High Point Networks tomorrow morning and as I'm walking into the office, I strap on a big leather tool belt. I got my hammer hanging off, right?

[5 : 10] And I've got a pouch full of nails. They would look at me and they would think, what has happened here? He has lost his mind. Would you want to do your schoolwork while you are wearing a really fancy dress or maybe a tuxedo if you happen to be a gentleman with a bow tie and one of those cummerbund things, real restrictive?

Do you want to do your schoolwork when you're wearing something like that? I don't think so. I wonder if you would get in a boat and go fishing wearing snow pants and mittens. That would be really silly, wouldn't it? Clothing is necessary and the right clothing matters. Now, before you get too disappointed, this message is not about modesty and it is also not about fishing despite the title that I have chosen here.

But in our text for today, Peter does tell us exactly what followers of Jesus are meant to wear and he does talk about casting.

So let's see what the scripture has to say to us. We've noticed over the past several weeks that Peter talks to various groups of people. You'll recall there were citizens and there were slaves and there were wives and there were husbands and then finally he addresses the church as a whole and in chapter 5, Peter continues this theme addressing the elders.

[6 : 48] These are not older people. These are church leaders. Even though they are exiles, as we know from chapter 1 and verse 1, even though they are exiles, Peter exhorts the elders to resume or maybe begin for the first time their ministry among God's people.

Perhaps there is a leadership vacuum because of persecution or because of Christians being murdered for their faith. Perhaps they have neglected their responsibilities because after all they are displaced from their homes and you know how that is when you're not at home and you get out of your routine and you forget to do the things that need to be done sometimes because you're on vacation or whatever.

Well, in this case, they're not on vacation but they are also not at home. Peter wants them to get back to work serving God's people.

God wants his people to be cared for by shepherds, elders who give oversight willingly, not begrudgingly.

Elders who serve eagerly and not selfishly. Elders who set an example for the flock and stubbornly refuse to be domineering over them.

[8 : 10] This is God's will for the elders. Look at verse number 2. Shepherd the flock of God that is among you exercising oversight not under compulsion notice this next phrase but willingly as God would have you.

As God would have you. Not for shameful gain but eagerly not domineering over those in your charge but being examples for the flock.

this is how God commands elders to act towards the church that they serve. And those who are under the care of faithful elders should submit to them.

Why? Because this is God's will for the church. Do you see that there? The next phrase? Look at verse 5. Likewise.

Do you remember hearing about this over the past few weeks? Likewise. What did Peter say to the elders? This is how God would have you to serve. In other words, this is God's will for you.

[9 : 19] Likewise, church, this is God's will for you. Likewise. Verse 5. 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.

Be subject. This means to submit. What is submission? Submission is the inclination inclination to obey legitimate authority in ordinary circumstances.

Don't submit to elders who have squandered their legitimate authority by domineering the church. Don't submit to elders who are taking advantage of the flock for their own personal gain.

Submit to imperfect but godly leaders who are trying to act like Jesus. Submit to humble shepherds who echo Paul's words.

[10 : 35] Follow me as I follow Christ. If I stop following Christ, stop following me. Follow me as I follow Christ.

What makes this type of relationship possible? what makes this type of relationship between elders and a church body possible?

Because we are not always going to agree, are we? Sometimes things aren't going to go our way and we're going to need love that covers a multitude of sins like we looked at.

What do we do when there are disagreements? What will prevent abuse of authority? what would motivate a church to submit to faithful elders who make choices that sometimes I maybe wouldn't make?

Look what Peter says next, right in the middle of verse five. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility.

[11 : 38] humility. I'm so grateful for the Holy Spirit's words to us through Peter. I love this metaphor of humility as clothing.

Do you see that there? Clothe yourselves with humility. What does this metaphor teach us? Well, this metaphor teaches us that humility is as necessary as clothing.

Just as you would not leave the house without clothes, don't leave your house without humility. Clothe yourself with humility because arrogance, the opposite of humility, is as obvious as nakedness.

Humility is necessary and the right clothing matters. Just like you wouldn't wear a baseball catcher's mask and glove to perform brain surgery. You need something else for that kind of job.

We need humility. Notice the phrase all of you. Do you see that there? All of you? You can circle that in your Bible if you're doing that kind of thing.

[12 : 55] There are no exceptions, there are no exclusions, no hall passes, no get out of jail free cards. Humility is required for every follower of Jesus.

Don't leave home without it. We really shouldn't be surprised, I think. I think we really shouldn't be surprised by Peter's command to put on humility. Humility has always been God's will for his people and we know this because Peter grounds this New Testament exhortation in an Old Testament piece of wisdom literature.

It's very likely that this next phrase comes directly to us from Proverbs chapter 3 and verse 34.

Here, Peter answers the question, why?

Why? Why should every Christian be clothed with humility? The answer? God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

have you ever wanted to climb up the down escalator just to see if you can do it?

[14 : 10] I kind of would like to do that too. But those steps, they just keep moving down underneath you. They are keeping you from making progress towards your goal of getting to the top.

God opposes the proud like that. Like an escalator that's constantly moving away.

Think about a running back. Maybe a guy like Derrick Henry. He's sort of famous for this. He's running down the sideline. He's going to score a touchdown.

But a defender takes a really great angle and manages to cut him off. But as soon as he gets close enough to even think about tackling him, Derrick Henry stretches out his hand and just deflects that defender away from him and continues running towards the end zone.

God opposes the proud like that. Imagine picking up an end of a rope in order to play tug of war.

[15 : 24] You know what I'm talking about? Tug of war. And you look over on the other side of the rope and you see Dwayne the Rock Johnson. He's the bald guy who plays Maui in the movie, right?

Dwayne the Rock Johnson is over there. Shaquille O'Neal is over there. A giant of a man and Superman just to make sure that everybody understands one of the three people over there.

Superman. these are your opponents in the tug of war. What are you going to do? You are not going to win.

There is no chance that you are going to move them at all. God opposes the proud like that.

but God gives grace to the humble. Would you like God to oppose you or would you like to receive God's grace?

[16 : 28] Would you like a mud pie or would you like a chocolate silk pie? This is not a complicated decision, is it? I hope not. Peter doesn't think it's complicated either.

Notice the word therefore in what he says next. Since God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble, verse six, humble yourselves therefore.

Maybe the most intuitively obvious use of the word therefore ever. If God is going to oppose me for being proud but show me grace if I'm humble, humble yourself therefore.

Peter thinks this is obvious as well. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him because he cares for you. Notice three motivations for humbling yourself. Three answers to the question why should I humble myself? Like if you're not convinced by the mud pie versus the chocolate silk pie, right?

[17 : 51] If that didn't convince you, here are three motivations for why you ought to humble yourself. First, because God is in control. Do you see that in the phrase God's mighty hand?

since God's hand is mighty, we know this. He could change your circumstances. He could change your circumstances.

He could expose injustice. He could right every wrong. He could bring all of the hidden things into the light right now. And when he doesn't, do what we know that he could do, then humility accepts difficult circumstances as part of God's plan for me.

This is the example that Jesus set for us, isn't it? Didn't Jesus pray in the garden? If there is some other way, then let's do it another way.

But if not, Father, not my will, but yours be done. He acknowledges that God's hand is mighty.

[19 : 13] He asks that if there was another way, let's do it that way. But when he receives silence from the Father and understands there is no other way, then Jesus prays, Father, not my will, but yours be done.

humility avoids shaking your fist at God and crying out, why? Why did this happen to me?

What did I ever do to deserve this? Maybe like Jesus, you don't deserve it. And though God is in control and could change your circumstances, he doesn't.

then humility accepts suffering and hardship and trial and persecution as God's plan for me for now. And that leads to the second motivation to humble yourself. Humility now means glory then. Look at verse 6. Notice the phrase, at the proper time he may exalt you.

[20 : 22] Now, some people would argue that this means that seasons of suffering in this life, if you can just sort of fight your way through them, you know, grit your teeth and get through them, that you're going to have a better day tomorrow.

That this season of suffering is going to definitely get better and turn around. But I'm just not sure that this is terribly, a terribly helpful way of thinking about this text because sometimes our circumstances do not change for the better.

And then what? If you grit your teeth hoping that tomorrow is going to be better than today, that tomorrow is somehow the proper time, then I expect that you will be regularly disappointed with life. I think at the proper time means at the end. When Jesus returns. see, for God's people, there is no guarantee of glory on this side of eternity.

There is no promise of relief from our suffering in a world that is still full of sin. But, make no mistake, the proper time is coming.

[21 : 40] Skip down in your Bible just a little bit and look at verse number 10. and after you have suffered a little while. The God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. Humble yourself now because humility now means glory then.

And there's a final motivation at the very end of verse number seven. Even though our glory is yet to come in the future when Jesus returns, God cares for me right now.

This is our third motivation. God cares for me right now. Child of God, your Father in heaven is not indifferent to your suffering. He is not cruel or apathetic or distant.

He is neither unaware nor unconcerned about the things, the very real concerns that trouble you. God sees you and you matter to him.

[23 : 01] Do you believe this? Do you believe that God cares for you? Do you believe that he is able to strengthen you, to sustain you?

Do you believe that God's grace is sufficient, never more than you need? Of course not, but also never less than you need.

You can be brave enough to humble yourself before God because he cares for you. I love this particular text because in addition to these three motivations that answer the question why, why should we humble ourselves, Peter also answers the question how.

How should we humble ourselves? And the answer to this is in verse number seven. casting all your anxieties on him.

Isaac, I sure wish this was about fishing, but it is not about fishing. In Luke 19, Jesus' followers borrow a donkey and they bring this donkey to Jesus so that he can ride on this donkey into Jerusalem, but before Jesus gets on the donkey, his followers do something very interesting. [24 : 34] They take off their outer garments, you recall this, right? And they cast their garments onto this donkey. This is how you humble yourself.

By casting your anxieties on God. This sounds simple, doesn't it? It sounds so simple. All I have to do is just cast my anxieties on God, but I know that this is not always easy.

Sometimes we think that we have casted our anxieties on God when in reality we are still very much clutching our anxieties in fear, in frustration, in a need for control.

Here are some ways clutching anxiety can show up in everyday life. Do you obsessively try to figure out how to stop every possible bad outcome from happening?

Do you have overbearing, unrealistic expectations of others? Do you treat small offenses like epic sins and then overreact when your plans aren't followed?

[26 : 03] Is it difficult for you to have hard conversations without emotional outbursts? can you still have conflict without drama?

When you are asked to be flexible, does your attitude sink like your iPhone in the lake? Do you resort to giving the silent treatment or guilt tripping others or other passive aggressive behaviors when you don't get your way?

Do you recruit others to put pressure on the one who is refusing to cooperate and follow your agenda? Do you refuse to be vulnerable in order to maintain the illusion of being better than others?

Do you need to know every detail and every possible outcome before taking a step of faith? Dear one, if you hear your tendencies in that list, I am not trying to shame you.

Some of those behaviors in proper proportion are good and right and wise, but these behaviors taken in their extreme reveal something deeper.

[27 : 29] They reveal our natural human tendency, a natural human desire for control. behaviors like these may be evidence that you are clutching rather than casting your anxieties.

And since casting is how we humble ourselves, then clutching our anxieties means we are being proud.

proud. And God opposes the proud. Does it feel like you're climbing up the down escalator?

does it feel like you're playing tug of war with God? Dear one, no wonder you're exhausted.

No wonder you're exhausted. Pride denies God's care. Pride causes us to act as though everything depends on me.

[28 : 52] pride doubts God's power as if he cannot work all things for my good. Pride doubts God's promise as if Jesus will not return and make everything sad untrue.

Pride clutches anxieties. But humility rests in God's goodness. Humility trusts in God's sovereign control.

Even when decisions are made and things don't turn out the way you thought and new decisions have to be made. Humility hopes in our resurrected praying for me right now and returning someday savior.

Humility casts anxieties on God like a coat being thrown over on a donkey and rather than begrudging you for giving him all of your mess God gives you grace in return.

Do you see the logic of this text? Do you see how it all comes together? What an exchange is this?

What an upside down unfair trade. Humble yourself by casting all your anxieties on God and in return after giving up all of the things that are stressing you out God will give you grace.

[30 : 27] What an upside down unfair trade. And God is willing to make that exchange that trade with you every day all day. Humility trades anxiety for grace.

My brother and my sister you may have anxieties! beyond what I can ever imagine but you do not need to hold your anxieties.

Clothe yourself with humility because humility is as necessary as clothing and then having clothed yourself with humility cast every fear every frustration every worry every concern every outcome every decision on God by the Holy Spirit's power stop clutching all of that anxiety and start casting it give your anxieties to God you can trust him he has a mighty hand and he cares for you and then walk step by step day by day by faith trusting God's sufficient grace to carry you until Jesus returns

what an exchange humility trades anxiety for grace followers of Jesus we live where life is hard and we experience all kinds of trials with varying degrees of suffering it is tempting to doubt God's promises isn't it it's tempting to doubt God's promises especially when we are criticized and slandered discriminated against persecuted but we remember this truth from first Peter trial tested faith glorifies Jesus and we believe this because of Jesus resurrection we have living hope to joyfully persevere in a new way of life and so in loving community with our brothers and sisters and even when our circumstances don't improve God sustains us by his sufficient grace and for his eternal glory and for that we should give him thanks let's pray father we are so grateful for your word and we are well I am just just stunned again thinking about this great exchange that you are willing to make with us that we give up the things that stress us out handed over to you to take care of trust you with the outcomes trust you with uncertainty trust you with the things that make us nervous and insecure and cause us to clutch and to try to control we give up those things and you give us grace in return you are so kind and so good to us thank you father as we have spent this time together in your word we recognize that there may be things that the spirit of god has now pointed out to us we've become aware of some clutching perhaps some desire for control maybe we've thought about it before but we've kind of shoved it off to the side of our brain because we don't want to think about it and yet now here it is again and holy spirit you are touching a particular part of our heart and shining the light of this good truth in a place that we would rather keep in the dark would you please give us the courage and the grace to confess our sins as we prepare to celebrate the lord's supper and would you encourage us to repent of the ways that we clutch rather than cast our anxieties please help us as we take a few moments right now to prepare to celebrate the lord's supper together father we recall your word that your kindness is meant to lead us to repentance and certainly we see that here in this text your great kindness to make this kind of an exchange with us and we recognize this is because of the wonderful amazing miraculous powerful atoning work of our savior the lord jesus christ and so we plead the blood of our savior jesus again as covering sufficient for all of our sins we trust in you we are grateful for your mercy we love you thank you for making us your people thank you for calling us to faith would you please draw someone this morning to deeper faith in jesus repentance and perhaps for the very first time would you grant someone life and faith and repentance so that they respond by repenting and believing this gospel we ask this all of this for your glory and our good in jesus name amen