

# HOW THEN SHALL WE LIVE?



## WEEK FIVE – IN FAITHFUL SERVICE

### *Read 1 Peter 5*

This chapter gives practical guidance for Christian living, in fact, the whole of 1 Peter is aimed at teaching how to live our Christian faith, whatever the circumstances in which we find ourselves. His letter is twofold: to comfort those who are experiencing persecution, and to encourage them to stay strong in their faith. There is a beautiful gospel song that says, “*The God of the good times is still God in the bad times, the God of the day, is still God in the night.*” It is easy to forget that our God is immutable – he cannot change. I remember seeing the board at Cottingham Road Baptist Church on one occasion saying: “*If God seems a lot further away than he was, who has moved?*”

The first four verses are addressed to the elders. That didn’t necessarily mean old men but those who were spiritually mature. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders to the churches they had founded (Acts 14:23). In Timothy, he talks about the office of pastor, who was essentially, a teaching elder who helped develop leadership in the early church. Many non-conformist churches have elders who work with the pastor to run the church and assist in its growth.

- What qualities would you expect an elder to have?

Peter was able to speak about this because he was a fellow elder. “*Though Peter was clearly the prominent disciple among the twelve, he claimed no special privilege or position... Peter saw himself only as one fellow elder among all the elders in the church.*”

- What commission does he give to those who have this responsibility?
- What is promised to those who are ‘faithful shepherds’ of the flock?
- Where does he say the ultimate authority lies?

### *Read verses 5-7*

*Verse 5* exhorts to believers to have the right attitude of humility to those in authority.

- What do you think this means for us today?
- God always provides a means of help for us. What does he promise us in verse 5?

Verse 7 is one of my favourite verses. You have heard me say before about hearing the great Welsh Evangelist David Shepherd say when preaching in Hull: “*Casting all your cares upon him for he cares about you.*” He said to think of it like this: “*It matters to him about you*”.

- How does it make you feel to know that you matter to God?
- Trust is not always easy. Is that the case with trusting God?

### **Read verses 8-11**

- Do we understand what Peter is saying in verses 8-9?
- Are we aware of the devil wanting to destroy the things of God?

Peter talks about the suffering that “*your family of believers all over the world is going through.*” We looked in Study No.1 at the growing persecution of the believers at this time. However this Epistle intends to comfort believers and encourage them to stay strong. “*He urges them to put all their hope in their perfect future with Christ, and to obey and trust Him in the present, even in their suffering.*”

- No matter what we have been or are, going through, in verse 10 it is described as suffering a little while, then he will restore, support, and strengthen you and place you on a firm foundation!

In the past people used to say Christianity is all pie in the sky when you die. However, God has promised us great blessings in the here and now, but also with the prospect of a wonderful eternity when we share in Christ’s glory. Meanwhile, we acknowledge that all power belongs to him forever.

- How often do remind ourselves of God’s power and dominion?
- We need to think back over the Old Testament as well as the New, to gain a fuller understanding of the powerful God that we serve.
- Think of some of the miracles he performed in delivering the Israelites from the Egyptians. Also, how he was with David through all his struggles. How he was with Daniel and his three friends when they were taken into captivity and faced fire and lions. These are but a fraction of God’s miraculous dealings with his people. Can you recall others?

### **Read verses 12:14**

Verse 12 applies to us just as much to those in Asia Minor. Although Peter would not have known that we would be reading these words some 2000 years later, we should take to heart that we have experienced and, are experiencing God’s grace in our lives.

- How do we stand firm in this grace?
- How might it manifest in us?

The last line is a great encouragement – *Peace be with all of you who are in Christ.* Christ is our peace. How few people in this world experience true peace?

So, what have we learned from this Epistle of Peter about how we should live?

What are the main stand-out things for you in this study?

Has it helped in LIVING OUR LIVES BEFORE GOD?

Do we recognise ourselves AS LIVING STONES?

Are we able to come in SUBMISSION, UNITY, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS to God?

Are we able to LIVE IN GOD'S WILL?

Can we channel all of this into LIVING A LIFE OF SERVICE for God?



### PRAYER

**Father God, help us to live our lives in surrender to you and service others.**

**Amen**