

Session 6

July 12, 2020

THE CULMINATION OF OUR HOPE

1 Peter 5:5-11

As the apostle Peter concluded his letter, he reminded believers to be faithful to their calling. Leaders are to set a proper example (v. 4) and followers are to willingly submit to godly leadership, especially in times of suffering and persecution. The final verses suggest how Christ-followers—regardless of their position—are to relate to one another, to the enemy, and to God.

With others: humility (vv. 5-7). The verb *to clothe* here is unique. Some have said it means simply “to adorn one’s self,” or to be “draped” with humility. But the term (used only here in Scripture) comes from the word for “binding.” This is not a loose-fitting humility tossed across a shoulder, but a strapping-on and tightening-up of humility that keeps all the loose ends tucked in tight. Some suggest that a particular garment suggested by the term was in view as well, an apron or girdle that only servants wore, thus distinguishing their lowly status. Curiously, this humility is to be especially worn around other believers (v. 5). Since facing suffering and persecution is a main theme of the epistle, Peter may have been warning brothers in Christ not to allow their suffering to (ironically) become a source of pride. In addition, the apostle offers three motivations to maintain humility. First, “God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble” (v. 5). This comes from Proverbs 3:34 and was quoted by James as well (James 4:6). The motivation is a measure of God’s grace. Beyond that, is God’s promise of ultimate exaltation “there,” of those most humble “here” (v. 6). Third, is the simple motivation of God’s compassion. Selfish concerns have no place among God’s elect (v. 7).

With the devil: diligence (vv. 8-9). The second admonition regards the adversary. Peter’s description of the devil as a roaring lion is both vivid and brilliant. This always reminds me of a conversation I had with a Maasai pastor from Kenya. The Maasai herd cattle, and their biggest threat is lions. He spoke of how cunning the lions are. While one lion runs a blatant diversion drawing away young Maasai warriors with their weapons and dogs, other members of the pride quietly circle around back to attack the helpless cows. This pastor said when he preaches this text, every Maasai tribesman knows exactly what Peter meant! The devil is not to be feared, per se, but respected for his cunning. He is a lion on the prowl whose goal is utter destruction. The diligent believer needs to be both *serious* (sober; conscientious; focused) as well as *alert* (awake and on guard) (v. 8). The verbs of verse 9 are actually a single action: *resist* (stand against; oppose) *while standing firm* in the faith. As well, believers need to understand that we are not alone in the struggle (v. 9). Like Elijah, we like to claim we are the only one left on God’s side! But God reminded him there were 7,000 others just like him (see 1 Kings 19:13-15). So be encouraged...we are not alone.

With God: hope (vv. 10-11). Now that Peter has instructed Christ-followers in their duties and obligations, he reminds us of God’s obligations to us. The Greek construction emphasizes the grace of God on the front end, and His promises to us on the back end. In other words, the suffering we will endure as part of this earthly sojourn are nestled in the middle of God’s great attributes (His grace, divine purpose, eternal glory displayed in Christ) and His promises to complete us. The terms *restore*, *establish*, *strengthen*, and *support* are construction terms

signifying the renovation process. Remember, He is the cornerstone and we are living stones in this project (see 1 Peter 2). And while our suffering sojourn is temporary, His dominion is forever (v. 11).