

1 Peter 5:5

by John Gill

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and submission within the church community, both to elders and to one another, as essential for spiritual growth and harmony.

Scripture: Proverbs 3:34, Matthew 5:3, Ephesians 5:21, Philippians 2:3, Hebrews 13:17, James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5

Topics: "Humility", "Church Community"

Description

John Gill emphasizes the importance of humility and submission within the church community as outlined in 1 Peter 5:5. He explains that younger members should submit to their elders, not only in age but also in spiritual leadership, and that all members should practice mutual submission to one another. Humility is highlighted as essential for this submission, as it fosters a spirit of service and love among believers. Gill warns against pride, noting that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble, encouraging believers to embody humility in all aspects of life. Ultimately, he calls for a community that reflects Christ's love through humble service and respect for one another.

Transcript

Ver. 5. Likewise ye younger,.... Not in office, as if inferior officers to bishops were here intended, who ought to be subject to them; for elders and pastors are the same with them, nor is there any other office but that of deacons; nor younger pastors and overseers, such an one as Timothy was; not but that a deference is to be paid, and proper respect had to such who are of greater age, and longer standing and experience, by younger brethren in the ministry; nor such as are only younger in years, who ought to rise up unto, and honour hoary hairs, which may be done where subjection is not required, as here; nor such as are young in grace and experience, since there are little children, young men, and fathers in the church; but all the members of churches in common are here intended, as distinguished from their officers; for as pastors and overseers were, for the most part, chosen from among those that were senior in age, so the members generally consisted of the younger sort; and besides, as it was usual to call chief men and rulers, whether in church or state, fathers, so those that were subjects, the younger; see Lu 21:26. These the apostle exhorts as follows,

submit yourselves unto the elder; not merely in age, but in office, as before; for as he had exhorted the elders to a discharge of their work and office, he proceeds, in the next place, and which is signified by the word "likewise", to stir up the members of the churches to their duty to their elders, or pastors, who had the oversight of them; and that is to "submit" themselves to them, as in

Heb 13:17, which is done by attending constantly on the word preached by them, and receiving it, so far as it agrees with the Scriptures of truth; and by joining with them in all the ordinances of Christ, and their administrations of them; by being subject to the laws of Christ's house, as put in execution by them; by taking their counsel and advice, regarding and hearkening to their admonitions and reproofs, and taking them in good part, looking upon them, and behaving towards them, as their spiritual guides and governors. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "to your elders"; such as were particularly set over them in the Lord, and had taken the care of them, for to no others are they obliged to submit themselves.

Yea, all [of you] be subject one to another; that is, all the members of the churches should not only submit themselves to their pastors, but to their fellow members, as in Eph 5:21, they should submit to the superior judgments of one another, esteeming each other better than themselves, and not be tenacious of their own way of thinking and judging of things; yea, condescend to men of low estates and weaker minds, bear the infirmities of the weak, and take all admonitions and reproofs given in a friendly manner kindly; and cheerfully perform all offices of love, and by it serve one another in things temporal and spiritual; doing the meanest services for the good of each other, such as washing the feet of one another, in imitation of their Lord and master.

And be clothed with humility; without which there will be no subjection, either to the elders, or one another. This is a grace which shows itself in a man's thinking and speaking the best of others, and the worst of himself; in not affecting places and titles of eminence; in being content with the lowest place, and patiently bearing the greatest contempt; in not aspiring to things too high for him, always acknowledging his own meanness, baseness, and unworthiness, ascribing all he is, and has, to the grace and goodness of God, whether it be gifts of nature, providence, or grace: and this is a believer's clothing, not the robe of his justifying righteousness before God, but is a considerable part of his inward garment of sanctification, which is in the sight of God of great price; and makes a large show in his outward conversation garments before men, and renders him lovely and amiable: it is an ornament to him, which is precious with God, and recommends him to the esteem of men, and the religion and Gospel he professes, and his profession of it. Some think there is a metaphor in the words, taken from knots of ribbons, and such like things, wore by women on their heads, or breasts, for ornament; and that the apostle's advice to the saints is, that their breast knot, or ornament, should be humility. Others think it is taken from a sort of badge which servants wore over their garments, by which they were distinguished; and so saints are directed to put on this badge, by which they may be known to be the servants of Christ: the former seems more agreeable: but as the word signifies to bind, or fasten anything, by tying of knots, it may denote the retaining of this grace in constant exercise, so as never to be without it; and to be clothed or covered with it, is always to have it on, and in exercise, in every action of life, in all our deportment before God and men, in all public and religious worship, and throughout the whole of our conversation, in the family, in the world, or in the church. The phrase seems to be Jewish, and is to be met with in the writings of the Jews. It is said {a},

"he that has fear, hwneb vbltnw, "and is clothed with humility"; humility is the most excellent, and is comprehended in all, as it is said, Pr 22:4. He who has the fear of God is worthy of humility, and everyone that hath humility is worthy of kindness or holiness."

And it is a saying of R. Meir {b},

"he that loves God loves men; he that makes God glad makes men glad; and it (the law) hwne wtvblm, "clothes him with humility and fear"."

For he resisteth the proud; or "scorneth the scorers", as it is in Pr 3:34, from whence these words are taken: the Lord treats them as they treat others; as they despise all other men and things, he despises them; he is above them, in that they have dealt proudly, and has them in derision; he eludes all their artifices, and frustrates their schemes, and disappoints their ambitious views, and scatters them in the imagination of their hearts, and brings their counsels to confusion, and opposes himself to them, and as their adversary; and a dreadful thing it is for persons to have God stand up against them, and resist them. This is a reason dissuading from pride, and exciting to humility, as is also what follows: and giveth grace to the humble; that is, more grace; see Jas 4:6. The first grace cannot be intended, for no man is truly humble before he has received the grace of God, it is that which makes him so; or it may design larger gifts of grace, which God bestows on those who acknowledge him to be the author and giver of what they have, and who make a proper use of them to his glory; when he takes away from the vain and ostentatious that which to themselves and others they seemed to have. Moreover, God grants his gracious presence to such as are of an humble, and of a contrite spirit; and at last he gives them glory, which is a free grace gift, and the perfection of grace; the poor in spirit, or humble souls, have both a right and meetness for, and shall enjoy the kingdom of heaven.

{a} Zohar in Numb. fol. 60. 3. {b} Pirke Abot, c. 6. sect. 1.

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