

Well, it is by the providence of God that our text for this morning is focused on the behavior of God’s people on the very same day we have a church business meeting. Now that doesn’t mean that we are expecting any problems tonight - we are instead expecting to have a great night together. But in some churches, business meetings are not about the business of the church but rather about the business of personal agendas and political maneuvering, which start and feed conflict within the congregation – which end up being expressed in the most ungodly ways. Church Colson speaks about what that looked like at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Newton, Massachusetts in his book entitled “The Body.” Colson tells the story of the church calling a new senior pastor - Pastor Donald Waite – to serve the church in Newton. But not long afterwards, dissention rose up between Pastor Waite and some members of his congregation who disagreed with some of the changes he was making in the church. And as oftentimes happens, murmuring began and gossip spread and soon the church was split right down the middle. As tension rose, finally, one Sunday morning, a fist fight broke out, during communion. Colson writes:

“It was the right hook that got him. Pastor Waite might have stood in front of the communion table trading punches with head deacon Ray Bryan all morning, had not Ray’s fist caught him on the chin 2 minutes and 15 seconds into the fight. Waite went down for the count at the altar where most members of Emmanuel Baptist Church had first declared their commitment to Christ. Within an instant, the majority of the congregation converged on the communion table, punching or shoving. The melee soon spilled over to an open space next to the organ. Mary Dahl, the director of the Missions committee, threw a hymnal; the missile sailed high and wide and splashed down in the baptistery behind the choir. When Ray’s right hook finally took the pastor down, someone grabbed the spring flower arrangement from the altar and threw it high in the air in Ray’s direction. Water sprinkled everyone in the first two rows on the right side, and a visiting Presbyterian experienced complete immersion when the vase shattered against the wall next to his seat. The fight finally ended when the police arrived on the scene.” The end result? The pastor had two front teeth knocked loose, the deacon broke his hand in two places, and both men received a notice to appear at the Newton Courthouse for a hearing the next Wednesday. On that day, after hearing both sides, Judge David Goldstein said: “No charges will be pressed at this point, but I urge you to work this out within your own church. Your Jesus Christ may allow this sort of thing in His followers, but the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will not permit fistfights as a regular order of church service.” And so the leaders of Emmanuel Baptist church filed quietly out to their cars and drove off in different directions. On the back of each car was a bumper sticker declaring, “God Is with US at Emmanuel Baptist Church” (chapter heading: “Extending the Right Fist of Fellowship”).

In our text for this morning, Jesus will clearly us what the community of those who truly following him should look like. in the last few chapters we’ve gone through, as we’ve seen Jesus’ earthly ministry draw to a close, we have seen Jesus spend considerable time clarifying his identity and his purpose. And in chapter 16 he told us He is the church and we are to be His physical presence of His church on earth: “*I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven*” (Matthew 16:18-19). It’s there also that Jesus told us that our common unity as followers of Jesus is to live out our lives together that reflect the character of the cross of Jesus Christ: “*If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me*” (Matthew 16:24).

In Matthew 18 Jesus begins to reveal the character of the community of the Kingdom of God, as he instructs his disciples and us about the kind of community life that will characterize our relationships with one another and with the world at large. But the problem is the church is built with people, and so it is natural that most problems in the church are between people. And most problems involving people are the result of one of these 3 things: miscommunication, wounded pride, or spiritual immaturity. Miscommunication is difficult to totally prevent, wounded pride is easy to deal with (unless you are the proud one), and spiritual immaturity is both

easy and difficult - because it takes time and effort. To grow and mature in Christ is a multi-layered task, grounded in sacrificial servant-hood and humility.

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Matt. 18:1

In these questioning words of Jesus' disciples, recorded by apostle Matthew, we hear and see the great *need for humility* for those who are in the community of the Kingdom of God. The question "*Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?*" was spawned by an argument between the disciples. In Mark 9:34 we read "*they had argued with one another about who was the greatest.*" Why were they arguing about who was the greatest? Well, we don't specifically know, but most likely recent events would have aggravated the problem, particularly with reference to Peter. After all, Peter had walked on the water, Peter had affirmed Jesus was the Messiah, Peter had been on the mountaintop with Jesus when he was transfigured, and Peter had even had his taxes paid by means of miracle of money from a fish. But whatever the reason for their argument about who had a greater status before God, it didn't matter. What did matter was the fact that Jesus had been sharing with the disciples the truth about His coming suffering and death – and *it didn't really affect them*. They were thinking only of themselves and what position they would have in His kingdom. So absorbed were the disciples in the matter of who is more important that Luke 9:46 tells us: "*An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest.*"

The selfishness and disunity of God's people is a scandal to the Christian faith. What causes these problems? *Pride* - thinking ourselves more important than we really are. It was pride that led humanity into sin at the beginning (Genesis 3:5). When those who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ are focusing on themselves – rather than God and others, there is bound to be conflict and division. In Philippians 2:1-4 the apostle Paul writes: "*So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*" We saw this last week in Matthew 17:22-27 when God's Word revealed to us that we can be *certain* that when Jesus is the source and focus of our faith - we will be blessed with the miracle of the *freedom* of rejecting our rights and our privileges, so we might sacrificially act out of our love for God and for others - so *we might be the provision* of life in Jesus Christ to those who don't know him, as God himself works in us and with us and for us in ways we would never, ever dream of.

A story is told of a famous football coach who took a vacation with his family in a beautiful log cabin in the woods of northern Maine. When he and his family walked in and sat down in a movie theatre in the small town near to their cabin, the handful of people seated there applauded. The coach thought to himself, "I can't believe it. People recognize me all the way up here." It was then a man came over to him and said, "Thanks for coming. They won't start the movie for less than ten people." In Luke 14:11 Jesus said: "*Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.*" This is not so far from where we live. By nature we are a selfish prideful people. Every time I take an airplane somewhere I am amazed at how fully-grown people will push and shove like little children to be the first ones on and off the plane. We see the same on the streets we drive on, at the stores that we shop at, and in the places where we work. And sadly we also see it often in the churches we attend.

It's been said that the greatest enemy of Christianity is Christians. To those outside the community of faith we are often seen as self-centered and rude. And we are, because we all have a pride problem. Pride is the root of all sin because pride is all about how everything revolves around us. The truth is, Christians are just as often self-centered as the society we live in. This is why we need to constantly and honestly and gracefully and truthfully challenge one another to a more joyful and deeper walk with God. In his book *Gospel-powered Humility* William Farley writes: "Pride . . . is spiritual blindness. Pride is unreality on steroids. And the scary part is this: The thing to which we are most blind *is our pride!* A demonic Catch-22, pride causes us to chase

our spiritual tails. We cannot see pride - even though it is our most grievous, disabling sin - because its very nature *is blindness*, and the first thing to which it is blind *is its own existence*. My contention is that the church is most apt to fulfill its God-given purpose when we preach the gospel in such a way that it produces a faith that humbles sinner and saints alike.”

Everyone in this room and everyone in the whole world desperately needs Jesus because we all suffer from the spiritual blindness of pride. 1 Peter 4:17 tells us this has always been an issue in the church: *“For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?”* And so we who claim Christ must take heed of God’s command in 1 Peter 5:6-7: *“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.”* When we are truly humble, we are not impressed with ourselves nor we do demand to have our own way nor do we seek to advance our own standing. Paul gives us the antidote for the inherent pride of our fallen sinful nature: *“in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”* Paul’s words here are crucial in understanding how to defeat our pride - and so we must properly understand what he *is saying* and what he *is not saying*. *“Humility”* he said, *will enable* us to *“count others more significant”* than ourselves. This doesn’t mean that we are subject to the desires and whims of everyone who makes a demand of us. But it does mean that the interests of others should be higher than our own interests. In other words humility should prompt us to serve others, as our interests should be a lower priority than the needs of those who are around us.

And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.” Matthew 18:2-6

Here Jesus gives us an *example of humility* for those who are in the community of the Kingdom of God. The disciples asked: *“Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”* And Jesus said: *“Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”* When children are born into the world as babies they are born totally dependent upon their mother and father for everything. Jesus is telling us that true humility consists of childlike trust, a dependence, and the inability to advance his or her own cause apart from the help, direction, and resources of a parent. And even that they grow older, children *who are not spoiled* can exhibit the Kingdom of God characteristics of trust in and dependence on Jesus.

Know that Jesus is not speaking just about children in terms of *age*. In these verses, Jesus is blending two concepts, one physical and one spiritual - a human *“child”* as an example of humility, and a *“child”* of God example of humility, no matter what his or her age might be. In the same sense Jesus wants us to understand His *“little ones”* to be anyone who comes to him in the humble faith of a little child. Jesus also tells us we to *“receive”* children of God (welcome them and include them) - and if we do so in His *“name”* (as His representatives, and as He Himself would do), then we are truly *receiving* Jesus. And notice that He says that this is true, even if it is only *“one such child.”* Here we see that our Lord Jesus Christ values each and every one of those who trust in him with a humble, dependent, *“child-like”* faith.

Then Jesus warns us what will happen to us when we do not *“receive”* and care for any of his children. Being thrown into the midst of the deep sea with a large tone tied about one's neck would be a horrible end. But it's temporary compared to the eternal judgment Jesus is speaking of here. Clearly, the Judge of all the earth is putting the people who live in this world on notice to *never mess with any of His humble children in Christ*. No one had better *ever* interfere with their faith, or hinder them from coming to Him; and once they come, no one had better *ever* cause them to stumble in their faith or tempt them into sin. Those who do are warned that they will most certainly answer to the Judge of all the earth.

“Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes! And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.” Matthew 18:7-9

Here Jesus puts before us the *cost of humility* for those who are in the community of the Kingdom of God. This is the battle for humility *against* spiritual immaturity - and the battle *for* humility *to grow in* spiritual maturity. If we are a truly humble people we will help to build up others, not to tear them down. In Christ we are to be stepping-stones, not stumbling blocks. Therefore anything and anyone that makes us stumble must be removed from our lives - and if we don't do that, we will cause others to stumble in their walk of faith in Jesus Christ. Note that Jesus speaks realistically about trying to do so in our fallen world: *“Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes!”* This is what makes the battle for humility *against* spiritual immaturity - and the battle *for* humility *to grow in* spiritual maturity - so difficult.

Jesus tells us the only way we can win the battle for humility is through the *sacrifice of self*: *“If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away.”* True biblical humility begins with self-examination and continues with self-denial. Jesus was not suggesting that we maim our bodies, for harming our physical bodies can never change the spiritual condition of our hearts. Rather, He was instructing us to perform “spiritual surgery” on ourselves, removing anything that causes us to stumble and anything that might cause others to stumble. We may need to cut out a person from our lives. Or an immoral relationship, a bad habit, an evil possession, or a sinful attitude. A good gauge to help us know what to cut off is to ask the question: “Does this move me toward Jesus or away from him?” If the answer is “*away*” then get away, throw it away, walk away and stay away – and head back to Jesus! A truly humble person lives for Jesus first and then for others next - and then lastly, themselves. The truly humble will joyfully deprive themselves of things, even of good things, for the good others. We see humble sacrifice this in Jesus.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Philippians 2:5-8

Here we see the *cost of humility* in the sacrifice of self on the cross of Jesus Christ. Even though Jesus was equal with God, because he was God, he did not claim his right to be God ahead of God's purpose. Equality is a dominant theme in our culture today whether it be race or gender or age or sexual orientation. While it is true that there are some groups of people who have been unfairly oppressed and marginalized - we can rightly rejoice at that unjust inequalities are now being addressed and confronted in our society. *But that shift has now caused our fallen sinful nature from the Garden to rise up and once again claim equal status with God.* And so now – in the midst of the haze of the rights and entitlement culture we live in - we have convinced ourselves that our opinion, our voice carries the same weight as everyone else - and that we have right to be heard and that we are entitled to speak into every decision in life. But while we may now have the right to do so here on earth - it doesn't work that way in the kingdom of God. Followers of Christ are cut from a different cloth. We are not called to claim our rights and entitlements but rather to *deny ourselves*, take up our crosses and follow Jesus.

The cross of Jesus Christ is the great equalizer of humanity. Galatians 3:26-29 tells us: *“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are*

Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.” We are not heirs according to God’s promise because we are entitled to receive God’s promise - we are heirs of God’s promise because of what Jesus did for us on the cross. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says: *“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”* Because we *“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23) we have no basis whatsoever to claim any rights or entitlements or special status before God and before each other. Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*

The ground of the cross is level. None of us is more deserving than another. Equality is the context for humility and submission. We are all *equally* deserving of God’s wrath, yet we have all received an *equal* share of God’s grace. Each one of us desperately needs each other because alone, we are a mess. We are saints who are fallen sinners who live in a fallen world, who constantly and continually tripping and falling over ourselves, each other and the world around us. God knew that would happen and so He created the church so we can help each other get through life on this earth. But we can only do so if we humbly show each other grace - and humbly let Jesus be the Lord and King of our lives and of his church. The church is where the cost of true sacrificial humility can best be discovered and worked out.

In Christ we see that true humility should prompt us to leave our comfort zone for the benefit and blessing of others. As God, Jesus left the comforts of heaven and came to suffer here on earth, in order to obey his Father’s will and to fulfill his Father’s purpose. Because we all still possess a fallen sinful nature we tend to withdraw into the safety and security of our personal comfort zone - rather than venture out into deeper waters of sacrificial service for the benefit of others. And we also tend to hide behind our strengths, while God usually manifests His greatest power in us through our weaknesses (2 Corinthians 12:8-10). But what we see in Jesus’ life is that God may call us out of our comfort and ease *into suffering* for the sake of the gospel on behalf of all of the little ones who are children of God.

“See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven. What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.”

Matthew 18:10-14

Here Jesus tells us how we are to *care for those who wander* from the community of the Kingdom of God. In the context of our battle for true humility, our great need for God and our desperate struggle with sin, Jesus uses the Parable of the Lost Sheep to illustrate how our pride and our lack of humility and our tendency to sin can cause us to wander away from God. But he also tells us, as God’s people, we are responsible to try and rescue those who have gone astray - because Jesus’ *“little ones”* may be weak and vulnerable to the temptations of sin, or because of miscommunication, wounded pride, or spiritual immaturity they have been led astray from their faith in Christ. Jesus speaks of the joy of those who are rescued, he also emphasizes the danger that awaits those who turn away from God and refuse to return.

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

Matthew 18:15-20

Here Jesus tells us how we are to *discipline and restore those who are in conflict* with the community of the Kingdom of God. In the context of our battle for true humility, our great need for God and our desperate struggle with sin could cause us - Jesus tells us how we are to rescue and restore those who have wandered away from God by sinning against a member of the Kingdom of God. Because we don't always practice humility, there are times when, deliberately or unconsciously, we offend and hurt each other. Even the Old Testament Law recognized that there are times we "*sin unintentionally*" (Numbers 15:22) and David prayed: "*Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression*" (Psalm 19:12-13). Jesus gives us instructions on what to do when another Christian has sinned against us or caused us to stumble. Pastor, Bible Teacher Warren Wiersbe explains the instructions this way:

1) *Keep the matter private.* Approach the person who sinned and speak with them alone. It is possible that he does not even realize what he has done. Or, even if they did it deliberately, your own attitude of submission and love will help him to repent and apologize. Above all else, go to them with the idea of winning your brother, not winning an argument. It is possible to win the argument and lose your brother or sister in Christ. We must have a spirit of meekness and gentleness when we seek to restore a brother or sister. Galatians 6:1 says: "*If anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.*" We must not go about condemning the offender, or spreading gossip. We must lovingly seek to help him in the same way we would want him to help us if the situation were reversed. The word *restore* in Galatians 6:1 is a Greek medical word that means "to set a broken bone." Think of the patience and tenderness that requires!

2) *Ask for help from others.* If the offender refuses to make things right, then we may feel free to share the burden with one or two dependable believers. We should share the facts as we see them and ask the brethren for their prayerful counsel. After all, it may be that *we* are wrong. If the brethren feel the cause is right, then together we can go to the offender and try once again to win him. Not only can these men assist in prayer and persuasion, but they can be witnesses to the church of the truth of the conversation. When sin is not dealt with honestly, it always spreads. What was once a matter between two people has now grown to involve four or five people. No wonder Jesus and Paul both compared sin to leaven (yeast), because leaven spreads.

3) *Ask the church for help.* Remember, our goal is not the winning of a case but the winning of a brother. The word *gained* in Matthew 18:15 is used in 1 Corinthians 9:19–22 to refer to winning the lost; but *it is also important to win the saved.* Our Lord's disciples were raised in the Jewish synagogue, so they were familiar with congregational discipline. What started as a private problem between two people is now out in the open for the whole church to see. Church discipline is a neglected ministry these days, yet it is taught here and in the epistles. Just as children in the home need discipline, so God's children in the church need discipline. If by the time the matter comes to the whole church, the offender has not yet changed his mind and repented, then he must be disciplined. He cannot be treated as a spiritual brother, for he has forfeited that position. He can only be treated as one outside the church, not hated, but not held in close fellowship.

4) *Keep the local church spiritual.* "*Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them*" (Matthew 18:18–20). It is important that the local assembly be at its best spiritually before it seeks to discipline a member. When a church disciplines a member, it is actually examining itself and disciplining itself. This is why our Lord added these words about authority, prayer, and fellowship. We cannot discipline others if we ourselves are not disciplined. Whatever we loose (permit) in the assembly must first have been permitted by God.

James 4:6 tells us that, *“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”* What that means is the when we are truly humble, God will give us His grace. Jesus calls all of us to a life filled with grace: *“From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace”* (John 1:16). Nobody likes prideful people – even though we ourselves are prideful. We love seeing people who are pridefully full of themselves get knocked off their pedestals. Yet when pride rises up within us – we want God’s grace. We are such a mixture of motives: some God, some flesh. In our prideful lack of humility we seek to spiritualize our pride as much as we can. I need God to do a work in my life in the area of pride; I see it and I sense it around me and in me. And you need for God to do that work in your lives – I see it and sense it around you and in you too. Oh that God would gently loosen and pull out the roots of the weeds of selfishness and pride and self-exaltation that have infected us. I need the work of God’s grace in me. We all need the work of God’s grace in us. Not a self-serving surface kind of grace, but the deep, Spirit empowered, soul transforming character-of-Jesus kind of grace in our barren, wandering, needy, desperate hearts.

James 4:10 says: *“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.”* Our sinful pride will always cause us to humbly exalt ourselves. But this verse calls us, commands us, to another way. The truth is, we cannot truly exalt ourselves; only God can do that. And God will not *“exalt”* us until we take our proper place before Him. Three different times (Mt. 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14) Jesus said: *“he who humbles himself will be exalted.”* In all of these cases the word *“humble”* is in the passive mood, which means *“humble yourselves”* means *“allow yourselves to be humbled.”* God must be the one who humbles us, but we must surrender and submit to Him first. We will always naturally resist being humbled because we are naturally prideful in our sin. Before a horse can be of any use, that horse must be broken of its self-will and brought to the place of submission. Likewise before we can humbly be of any use to God, we must first be broken of the self-will of our pride. In Psalm 51:17 King David brokenly wrote: *“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”*

Jesus said: *“I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”* (Matthew 16:18). The church of Jesus Christ will prevail because Jesus humbly came into the world to die on a cross in our place for the pride of our sins and then he rose from the dead - so we might be forgiven, redeemed and restored back to God. As his church, Jesus is calling us today to humbly join him in the *sacrifice of self* – so the *“little ones”* and *children of God* can find their way and grow in Christ in the Kingdom of God.

Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in HUMILITY count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he HUMBLISHED himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly EXALTED him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:3-11

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. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. 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. 1 Peter 5:6-11

