

1st Peter #9 - How to Survive the Coming Crisis

- All right, we're in 1 Peter 5. And we've spent nine weeks in 1 Peter. This is the last sermon. Next week, we'll jump into 2 Peter. And the big idea today is about leadership and that is this, that as crisis increases, leadership must increase. As things get harder, leaders need to lead better. And that's the world that we live in. And that's the world that Peter is writing to. And one thing I just wanna share with you, we're all leaders. Some of you, you are parents, you lead kids. Some of you are big brothers, big sisters, you lead the little ones. Some of you are grandparents, you've got whole generations of your family. Some of you are business leaders, maybe managers, or small business owners. Some of you are ministry leaders. Some of you are coaches. Some of you are teachers. We're all leading someone. Someone is looking to us to set an example and help them make decisions for their flourishing. And what God does to prepare us to help others is he allows leaders to go through experiences first. And through that, we learn lessons, both through our successes and our failures, that then we turn around and use to help others who are following us. This is modeled in the life of the man who writes 1 Peter, his name is Peter. He had a three-year masterclass with Jesus Christ on leadership. Jesus is the greatest leader in the history of the world. And Peter spent three years in a very intimate class, only 12 students called disciples. Not only did they hear Jesus teach, they also watched him lead. So, they were eye witnesses to his life and ministry, the greatest leadership training opportunity in the history of the world. And then there was a crisis that was looming and coming for Jesus, where he would be denied, where he would be betrayed, where he would be put to death. And so, to prepare Peter as his right-hand man, his second in command, he told him, "Peter, there's a test coming. "Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. "There's going to be a spiritual attack on you "and you're gonna fail. "You're gonna fail and when you fail, "you're gonna learn some lessons. "And after learning some lessons, "I want you to come back and use those lessons "to love and lead others, to strengthen your brothers." And of course Peter, like we would, "Jesus, you can count on me, I will never fail. "I'm rock solid." That's not true. Anytime you're telling Jesus he's wrong, you're probably not right. What happens then is, Jesus is facing his greatest crisis. He's arrested, he's beaten, he's betrayed. And then Peter denies Jesus. Imagine this, Jesus is the leader. He is now facing his greatest crisis, heading toward death. Peter now needs to step up to lead and what does he do? He denies that he even knows Jesus. One of the great leadership failures in the history of the world. You would think it would be over for Peter, but after Jesus dies and rises and comes back, he reunites with Peter and he reinstates Peter. This is, what's so hopeful for you and I. We can all look at our past and say, "In leading myself, my family, my ministry, my business," whatever the case may be, we can all look back and say, "I have failed. "There are times that I needed to lead "that I failed to lead. "Is there any hope for me?" Yes, there is. Because if Peter is the one teaching us about leadership, he's one of the greatest leadership failures in the history of the world. But meeting with Jesus, set him up for future success. And the same is true for you and I. If we will bring our failures to Jesus, he will train us to have a different future. That's the hope. It doesn't matter what failed decisions you've made in the past, there is hope for your future, if you will meet with Jesus today, as Peter did. And in their reunion conversation, Jesus looked at him three times and asked, "Do you love me,

do you love me, do you love me?" Because Peter denied him three times. The issue is, do you love Jesus? And Peter did. So he said, "Feed my sheep, feed my sheep, feed my lambs." The essence of leadership, according to the Bible, is to have the heart of a shepherd. We tend not to have a lot of sheep and shepherds. This imagery is gonna come up in 1 Peter 5. Jesus is the chief shepherd and then other leaders are shepherds. And the people that we care for are like a flock collectively, and sheep individually. And the goal is to lead and to feed, to provide and protect for those whom we are responsible for. And so, what Peter is dealing with as well is he is dealing with a cultural problem that is going to become a cultural crisis. Tell me if this doesn't sound familiar. They had a bad government. It was about to get much worse. They had a bad economy. It was about to get much worse. People were suffering and it was about to get much worse. Between 1 and 2 Peter, it goes from bad to worse. In 1 Peter 1, he talked about various trials. In 1 Peter 4:12, he talked about coming fiery trials. The reason he writes 2 Peter. It got worse. Here's my discouraging word to you. If you came here for an uplifting, hopeful message, you're here on the wrong day. Things are going to get worse. How many of you in your heart know this? And if you don't, you just need to not be scared, but prepared for reality in the future. What Peter doesn't tell them is, in 1 Peter, things are bad and here's what you can do, and then the future will be great. He said, "Things are bad and they're gonna get worse." "How are you going to navigate it? "How will you deal with it?" The question is, you may not be able to control the future, but you can control who you are when that future comes. And what they're experiencing, tell me if this doesn't sound familiar, political upheaval, economic disaster, rioting in the streets, protesting, everyone is upset, governmental social, cultural, relational, and racial upheaval. Sound familiar? So, when that happens and it happened for them and we're in the process of experiencing the same, he gives us four things, four things on how to survive the coming crisis. Number one, select your shepherd. Who are you gonna listen to? Who are you gonna follow? Leadership is crucial, especially in seasons of crisis. 1 Peter 5:1-4. "So, I exhort, I encourage the elders," he has different words for different leaders, "among you as a fellow elder "and a witness of the sufferings of Christ." Here's what Peter says, "I saw Jesus lead through suffering." "So now, I wanna lead you through suffering." The key to leadership is following Jesus. "As well as a partaker in the glory "that is going to be revealed." At the very end, we know that it's going to go well. Jesus is gonna return and the dead are gonna rise. God's gonna be revealed in glory. You're gonna be glorified forever. It's gonna be awesome! We're not there. It's a ways down the road. So, how do we continue in faith until we get to the eternal state that God intends for us? "Shepherd, care for, lead and feed, protect and provide "the flock of God that is among you. "Exercising oversight," we'll deal with each of these character qualities, "not under compulsion, but willingly as God would have you; "not for shameful gain, but eagerly, "not domineering over those in your charge. "But being examples to the flock. "When the chief shepherd," that's Jesus, "appears, you'll receive the unfading crown of glory." That's what they would put on a king or somebody who won the equivalent of an Olympic event. It was the grand prize. And so ultimately, what he's talking about here in leadership is a principle that I wanna give you, and it applies to all areas of leadership. Singular headship, plural leadership. In the Trinity, one God, three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, who's the head? The Father, the plural leaders, Father, Son, and Spirit. God institutes the government, a family. A husband is the head. The husband and the wife are the plural leaders. That's why it tells the kids, "Honor and obey

your mother and father." They are to lead the family together. Then ultimately, this principal needs to work out into churches, ministries and other spheres of governance, oversight and influence. The problem becomes, if all you have is singular headship, you get a dictatorship. If all you have is plural leadership, you get a conflicted political democracy called America. No one gets to be in charge or lead. We just argue and fight and self-destruct. And so, what you need is leadership that is accountable because we're all sinners, we have faults, flaws and failures. And one person left to themselves, will make a mess of things. But everyone left to themselves will also make a mess of things in a different way. So, you need singular headship, plural leadership. In this instance, Peter is exercising, what I would call, apostolic authority. He told us in chapter one, verse one that he is an apostle. What that means is that, he is a pastor of pastors, he is a leader of leaders. He is writing to a network of churches in what is modern-day Turkey. Those locations are mentioned early in the letter in chapter one. Their geographic region is similar to the size of our State of Arizona. He's the singular head so, he can write to multiple churches and leaders and he's doing so as a leader of leaders. Today, we would call that, wise counsel or overseers. Sometimes we call these, bishops or we would call these, denominational heads; various levels of oversight. In each of the local churches, there would have been a leader that was the head and then a team of leaders who would together, help lead the church. And he gives two kinds of leaders here, elders and shepherds. Elders are organizational leaders. Shepherds are relational leaders. Think of it this way. The organizational leaders will build the house. The relational leaders will build the family that lives in the house. In the same way, our home was built by an architect and an engineer and a construction crew. And then, Grace and I, live there with our kids to be a family. But ultimately, we were not the best ones to build the house and those crews were not the best ones to build the family that lives in the house. In every organization, there has to be those who work on it, and those who work in it, those who steward the money, the time, the energy, and those who care for the relationships, the people and the needs. And what he's saying is, these are like a right hand and a left hand, and they work together in every organization. And ultimately, what matters, whatever your leadership role is, is character. So, he gives us a list of, do this, don't do that. It's kind of like the nice and naughty list from Santa. And so, here's what he says to do. So, looking at these in succession. Exercise oversight. You know what that is? Leadership. Somebody takes responsibility to lead. To lead. In your family, somebody needs to exercise oversight. In every organization, somebody needs to exercise oversight, meaning, I'm gonna get all of the facts, I'm gonna listen to the opinions and I'm gonna make a decision and I'm gonna proceed forward. Any of you ever seen an unparented child? You ever seen that? How does that go? Not well, not well. What happens is, sometimes parents will just let their children do whatever they want. And that leads to their self-destruction. They need oversight. They need leadership. They need to be informed and instructed and led and corrected. That's what it means to exercise oversight. And this is ultimately, an act of love, because if you don't exercise oversight, you're allowing people to self-destruct. And somebody of you are like, "Well, they get to make their own decisions." No, exercise oversight, because if they're going to harm themselves, the most loving thing is to help them. He also talks about, "Serve willingly as God would have you." This means that, particularly in church or ministry like this, it's willingly, you want to. "God, you made me to do this. I'm excited about this." "As God would have you." And this is the difference between

compulsion and calling. Compulsion is where you sort of felt pushed into a position. Calling is where God has invited you into that position. One of our pastors that we love very much, he pointed out some things that I'd done wrong in my life that had contributed to pain that Grace and I were experiencing. And he said, "You're overextended, you're doing too much." And I said, "Yeah, because there was a need here. "There was an opportunity there. "And that was kind of something that I wanted to do." And he said, "Well, did you only do the things "that God has asked you to do?" I was like, "No," he's like, "that's why you're in trouble." God only gives us the energy, grace and time to do the things that He's called us to do. And if we add anything to that, we're overextending ourselves or we're neglecting our first priorities. He said, "Don't do anything out of need. "Somebody else can meet the need. "Don't do anything out of want. It may not be good for you. "And don't just chase an opportunity. "Figure out what God's will is." So, my question to you would be, if you're feeling a little overwhelmed, a little exhausted, little overextended, are you doing the things only that God has asked you to do? And many people, their answer is what? If you're honest, your answer is what? I have no idea. This is where you gotta pray, fast, get time with the Lord, seek wise counsel. What are my priorities and if I'm going to put other things on my plate of responsibility, I need to take some things off of that same plate of responsibility so that I can willingly serve as the Lord has asked me. And just so you know, friends, what that mean is, what that means is, rather, that sometimes God will say, "Serve in this way in this season, but not in that season." So what you were doing is not necessarily what you are doing because the season has shifted. And it's not that what you were doing was wrong, but you just can't keep adding to your responsibilities 'cause God has some specific assignments for you. And if you're trying to do everything, you won't do the one thing that he's assigned for you to do. He goes on to talk about as well, another character trait. Eagerly. This is self motivated. You can this because people who are eager, show up early. They stay late and they say crazy things, like, "I finished all my work, what else can I do?" Crazy. How many of you are employers and you're looking for those people, but they're like unicorns, they're mythical creatures. You've heard of them, but you can't find them. How many people, when they finish their work, ask for more work; that's eagerly. How can I help? What do you need? Please, just tell me what else I can do. That's eagerly. If we are serving the Lord, the heart should be eagerly. The heart should be eagerly. And he goes on to say, additionally, "As examples to the flock." There is nothing worse than someone who is teaching something that they're not doing. What that can lead to is either hypocrisy or sort of a theological environment, where as long as you have the right answers, you're godly, whether or not you live the right way. Life is a test, but it's not on paper, it's in your character. You may pass the test on the paper, but if you fail it in the character, you do not pass the test. I'll give you a painful example. I read a great book on marriage some years ago. Great books. Actually really insightful, super helpful. And there was someone who was teaching a class on marriage, the author of the book, I thought, "This'll be amazing." So, I signed up for the graduate level class and I'm taking the class, the lectures were good, the book was good. And then I started noticing that one of the young women in the class was rather friendly with the older male professor. This was many years ago. And I'm watching this, I'm thinking, "This just feels awkward, odd, weird." So, we ended up, her and I, just visiting casually, like between lectures or something and I was like, "It seems like you're really good friends with the prof." She's like, "Oh yeah, "I'm really good friends with the prof." I was like, I

was like, "Well, like how close?" She's like, "Well, we're kind of dating." I was like, "I thought he was married." "Yeah." "You're not his wife." "Yeah." Wrote a book on marriage, taught a class on marriage, had a wife and a girlfriend. So, I met with him 'cause I'm shy and I hate conflict. So, I met with him and I was like, I was like, "Good lecture, nice book. "Are you dating, sleeping with, running around with, "a much younger gal in the class?" Here's what he said, "That's none of your business." Then I know the answer. Okay, so, men, let's just do a little case study. If you were innocent, what do you say? No. Quickly. Maybe a few times. No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. What you don't say is, none of your business. I said, "Okay," I said, I said, "You wrote a great book on marriage, "but I'm going to be dropping the class "because I would rather learn from someone "who has a great marriage "than someone who just wrote a great book on marriage. "This man may not be famous, but if he is faithful, "then I wanna learn from someone else." Setting an example to the flock. Setting an example. And let me say, for those of you that have failure in your past, so do I. This doesn't mean perfection, but this means progress through imperfection. It doesn't mean that you got... 'Cause Peter's writing this, this is why it's so encouraging. Like, "Oh gosh, the good people need to lead." Peter's like, "I denied Christ. "So, you know, there's hope for you." This would literally be like years ago, Billy Graham is like, "I'm an atheist today." And then he's back, he's like, "Change my mind." Okay, well, if there's grace for that, there's grace for you, amen? So, setting an example is not always doing it perfectly, but when you do it imperfect, also demonstrating humility and change; by the grace of God. He goes on to talk about as well, serving the eternal reward of the chief shepherd. What he says is, "When Jesus comes back, "you're gonna get your crown, until then, you won't." Whatever sphere of leadership and influence that God has given you, you're not going to get all of your compensation or credit in this life. People aren't gonna say, "You did amazing. "That was incredible. Couldn't do it without you. "That was fantastic. Here's a raise, here's a promotion. "You served so well at work, "I think you should be the president so, I'm resigning. "And I cleaned my desk for you." You're going to need to wait for the performance review at the end. One day, you'll stand before Jesus, the goal is to hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant." And have him give you your eternal reward. You know that you are not just serving Jesus when you get angry or upset because you do not get the credit or compensation that you had coming in this life. Ultimately, the Bible says elsewhere, "It is the Lord Christ whom you are serving." So, he goes on to talk about, "Don't, don't serve under a compulsion." What this means is, you got pressured into it or manipulated. How many of you, how many of you have a hard time saying no. How many of you? Be honest. Say yes. 'Cause I know that's what you say. That's a problem. So, agree with me. Can you do this? Yes, yes, yes. That's under compulsion. That's under compulsion, not calling. Calling comes from God. Compulsion comes from others. Calling comes from God. Compulsion comes from others. Not out of compulsion. "And don't do it," he says, "for shameful gain." What he doesn't say, that any compensation is shameful, but there is compensation that is shameful. And this is one of two ways. And I'll use a case study. So, there was someone who was part of Jesus' ministry that Peter knew very intimately, and he ended very painfully. What was his name? Judas Iscariot. He would be the classic case study of shameful gain. And it is in two ways. Number one. Not only did he receive the salary that was due him, he stole more. We can do this when we use an organizational credit card, when we steal money, when we steal time from our employer, when there's employee theft of items in the

organization or business. In addition to what we've earned, we're taking what is not due us. And also the second part of Judas's gain that was shameful, he never agreed with the mission and message and ministry of Jesus, yet, he worked for it. This happens all the time. People think that it is a job that pays their bills, not a calling that honors their God. This happens all the time, even in churches and ministries, as it did with the ministry of Jesus. For three years, Jesus is teaching and leading and Judas is completely disagreeing. He doesn't agree, but he doesn't say anything, he's very covert. Here's Peter, sitting next to Judas. They're both hearing the same teaching, following the same leader. Judas is using Jesus, Peter is loving Jesus, though, admittedly, imperfectly. Ultimately, Judas betrays Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, because all he sees Jesus as, as an income stream, a source of revenue. If you can't agree with the organization, don't take a salary, it's why I don't work for Planned Parenthood. Don't be covert if you don't agree. Be overt and go somewhere where you can agree. And this happens all the time in all kinds of organizations, but especially in churches and ministries. Shameful gain. And then the third way that we can have shameful gain today is by taking what the Lord gives us and not giving back to the Lord. How many of you are employers and you wish your employees had to give 10% back to the company? That would help, especially right now. Church is the only place where we expect those who are serving to also be giving, to be giving. And I just wanna publicly thank the Lord. When we started this church, we were in a position God provided for us that for the first 18 months, I served as an unpaid volunteer. I had a guy come up to me early on, he was like, "Are you in it for the money?" And I was like, "If I am, I'm terrible at math." Because I felt called to this church and I feel called to this city and I feel called to be your shepherd, and I feel called to teach the Word of God. And God provided so that I could do so. And I'm very, very grateful to that and I wanna publicly honor and thank him. And what he's talking about here is that, sometimes, it's a heart check, what the ultimate motivation is 'cause Jesus says, "You can't love God and money. You will love one and hate the other." In the end, Judas loved money and hated God. In the end, Peter loved God and as a result, he did not use or abuse the money. And then lastly, he talks about not being domineering. Overbearing. Overbearing. How many of you are like me, you're alphas? How many of you are strong leaders? How many of you are like me, you have a lot of opinions? Just a secret, if you're new. I do. Okay. I do. And sometimes, a leader to get something done, they need to exert some pressure to push things forward, but we need to be careful that we're not valuing the results over the people, since Jesus died for people, they must be the priority. How many of you, even as parents, you can't get your kids to do what they're supposed to do, so you become domineering, overbearing? Raise your voice, threaten, manipulate. This is not the leadership of the Lord. He's a good shepherd and a good shepherd does lead, but he leads through love. So, for all of us who are leaders, starting with myself, I'm not exempt from this in any way, it's checking and evaluating. Am I leading or am I leading in a way that is domineering versus loving? And let me just say this. There is a percentage of our culture that thinks that leadership is by definition, domineering. You can't tell me what to do. Well, somebody does. You can't be in charge. Well, somebody needs to be. The Bible believes in leadership that is loving, not domineering, but the result in our culture is that the overreaction is sometimes the rejection of leadership altogether. And what that leads to is wholesale anarchy, and that's what we're seeing culturally. In this, Peter is talking about various trials, chapter one, fire trials chapter four. And

then, what he's preparing them for is 2 Peter, where things are going to get even more difficult. So, let me just give you one simple leadership lesson. I believe that there are two primary kinds of leaders, process leaders and pivot leaders. Let me see who here is a process leader. You love research, calendars, budgets, forecasting, sequencing. You've accepted Excel into your heart. How many of you that's you? Raise your hand, okay? Raise your hand. How many of you are pivot leaders? You're like, "I'm just gonna go with my gut. "I'll try this, if it doesn't work, I'll try that. "I'll just figure it out as I go." How many of you that's you? How many of you are married and we've just landed at the pain of your life? Right? Here's how you know this when you're married, by the way. Vacation. Vacation. If you're married to the process leader, you go on vacation, first day they're like, "Okay, here's our manual for vacation manual." Manual. Here's what I have. I will get up whenever and I will eat whatever and I will do whatever and then I'll go to bed whenever. That's what I have. That's what I plan. No, we're gonna have Eggs Benedict at 7:58 and then we're gonna go for a jog and then we're gonna do devotions and then we're gonna kayak and then we're gonna read a Steinbeck novel at 3:11, and then we're gonna do Pilates. And you're like, "Is there anywhere in there where we leave each other "and do a different vacation?" Some of you who are process leaders, you're having a very hard time with the world right now. How many of you keep redoing your calendar? "Let go, the kids start school. No school. "Okay, well we'll go on vacation. No vacation. "Okay, well that's okay, we'll go to Spring Tree." Ah. It's hard to plan anything. When crisis happens, process leaders really struggle. That's why process leaders tend to find government jobs. It's the only place you can always be a process leader because you're spending someone else's money, okay? Little insight. Okay. Pivot leaders tend to dominate in business, meaning, you need to make adjustments as you go. The world we're in right now, and I believe that's what Peter is preparing them for. As they were doing life, as they were doing ministry, as they were doing church, everything's about ready to go crazy, you're gonna need to pivot. Can't just do what you've always been doing. I'll give you a simple analogy. I played football in high school. Went to a big high school. My freshman year I tried out for the football team. I'd never played before. I had decent arm, I was a baseball player, so, they made me a quarterback. Some of you might ask, "Pastor Mark, were you a good quarterback?" No, that's why I have this job on Sunday. I'm free every Sunday, okay? I'm not that great. So, what would happen in football, the first thing they said is, "Yeah, this big guy is gonna go like this "and you need to go get the ball." I was like, "No, no, no, no, no. "Six feet we're all very clear on this. "I believe in social distancing, "I will be the shotgun quarterback." So, I came back here and the first quarter that I ran our offense, we got killed because I was a process leader. They would call the play and I would run the play. The problem was, the defense would stop the play. So, I go over to the sideline, I'm like, "Coach, this isn't working." He's like, "Yeah, I know, I know. "We're dying, you're killing us." I was like, "Well, what do you need me to do?" He's like, "You need to call audibles at the line." If the play is called and the defense adjusts and the play isn't going to work, you're going to need to pivot and call an audible. We are in a season right now that is requiring more pivot leadership than probably any of us have experienced in our life. If your business is like, "Well, this is how we do it." But not now. If your ministry is like, "This is how we do it." Not now, not now. You're going to need to make adjustments. This is true for you personally. Those of you who are just saying, "I'll wait till it gets back to normal "and I'll run my playbook." It probably isn't. And if it is, not soon.

For your family, for our ministry, for your church, business, whatever area of oversight God has given you, you're going to need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. You're going to need to pay attention. You're going to need to make the best decisions that you can and you will make mistakes, and when you do, you'll need to make additional decisions to compensate for those mistakes. This is what it means when he says, he'll say it in a little bit, that God is the God of all grace. He gives us grace to adjust and when that doesn't work, he gives us grace to adjust again. So, number one, select your shepherd. Who are you gonna follow? Number two, find your flock. Who are you gonna do life with? Who are you gonna do relationship with? Because here's what I know, isolation causes desolation. I know that sheep are not safe alone, they have to be in a flock. I know that before the world actually had sin enter it, God said there was one thing that was not good, it's not good to be alone. I know that our God is a relational God, Father, Son, and Spirit. One God, three persons, we're made in his image and likeness. It means we're made by relationship, we're made for relationship. That you and I, in this season of isolation and separation, it leads to desolation, it's not good for people. So, you gotta select your shepherd and you gotta find your flock. "Likewise," 1 Peter 5:5-7, "you who are younger." Okay, so, let me just talk to younger folks. When crisis happens, young people get louder, but not wiser. Nobody said anything. That was interesting. Like, "I was gonna say something, "but I didn't wanna raise my voice." That's good, okay, so, what happens is, when crisis happens, younger people become louder people, but not wiser people. What's about to happen for them, the city of Rome is gonna burn to the ground. Nero is gonna be in power. He is going to persecute the Christians. There's gonna be economic, social, cultural, political, moral, racial upheaval, rioting in the streets and rebelling against soldiers and police authorities trying to quell the riot. And he says, "When this happens, "younger people, find some older people." 'Cause here's what happens. One young person, plus one young person does not equal more wisdom. It may equal more volume or more passion, but not more wisdom. And this was before social media so, it's proven fact today. So, what he says is, "You who are younger, "find those who are older, mature and wiser, "who have been through a few battles "and led themselves through a few crises, "and see if you can't learn from them. "You who are younger, be subject to the elders." That's godly older people. "Clothe ourselves," every day we clothe ourselves. We make a decision, "What am I going to wear?" "In addition to your body," Peter is saying, "you need to also clothe your soul." Am I gonna put on pride or am I gonna put on humility? Because those two decisions are going to determine the rest of my entire day. "With humility toward one another." He's talking here about the relationships. And then, he quotes the Old Testament, "For God opposes the proud," but he gives grace to who? The humble. So you say, "I need grace." Great, humility, humility is the key to receiving additional grace. "Humble yourselves therefore, under the mighty hand of God, "so that at the proper time, he may exalt you." Some of the greatest mistakes I've made in my life. I knew God's will, but I didn't wait for God's timing. You see this all the time. We all do this. We're supposed to get married so, we went to Vegas. Maybe that was the Lord's will. That was not the Lord's timing. God called me into ministry. So, I'm gonna start preaching in 15 minutes. Okay, that might be God's will, but this may not be God's timing. God called me to find a new job so, I quit mine. And I'm not sure what I'm gonna do. That may have been God's will, but that was not God's timing. Not only do we need God's will, we need God's timing? And what he says is, "Humble yourselves "and at the right time, he will lift

you up." It's not just enough to know the Lord's will, but His timing, His timing. "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God "so that at the proper time, He may exalt you, "casting all your anxieties on Him," we will come back to that at the end, because He what? He cares for you. But when there is crisis and you are struggling, you can wonder if God cares for you. You can wonder if God cares for you. And what he's talking about here as the key to navigating crisis in the future, is choosing humility in the present. And so, each of us lives on a continuum from humility to pride. And I know when I say this, some of you immediately, you're thinking, "Why is Mark teaching on this?" Because God's hilarious, okay? That's why. I do not pretend to be humble. I do not have a webpage showing you all of my humble accomplishments. I do not have a LinkedIn page where you can discover all the ways I've been humble. That would be very proud of me. All I can say is that, I'm a proud person who seeks to pursue humility by the power of the Holy Spirit. And that's what we all need to just say, "I'm not humble, "but I'm choosing to pursue it by the grace of God." So, over on the bookend of, who is only and always consistently humble, perfectly? Jesus. On the other end of the spectrum, who is only and always perfectly, consistently proud? Satan. Satan has no humility. God has no pride. You and I, we live somewhere in the middle. You and I determine where we're gonna live in the middle. The further we move toward pride, the further away we move from God. That's why God opposes the proud, because they're moving in the direction of Satan, the enemy. And he gives grace to the humble, because that means that you're pursuing a deeper intimacy with the humble Jesus. Couple of things on humility. Humility is not thinking less of yourself like a low self-esteem or self-image. "Humility is not thinking less of yourself. "It's thinking of yourself less." That quote has been attributed to C. S. Lewis. We're not exactly sure who penned it, but it is a truthful statement. It's not that you need to hate yourself. It's the, you need to consider others, not just yourself. In addition, when it comes to this issue of humility, pride makes you the center of the universe and God and others are supposed to orbit around you. Humility says that God is the center of the universe and that you orbit around God, and that there is room for others to join you. So, you're not alone. This is what is key. If you are humble, you can have relationships because you leave room for others to join you around God. So, when it comes to this issue of humility, the key to humility is not focusing on your humility, but on Jesus' humility. Because if you fix your eyes on Jesus and you follow Jesus, you'll become more like Jesus. People who make humility their aim actually become proud because they're still thinking about themselves and whether or not they are humble; which is the problem. So, the key is not to think, how can I be more humble, but how is Jesus humble and if I follow him, I will become like him by the grace of God. Here's what it says regarding Jesus' humility in Philippians 2:5-11. "Your attitude should be the same as Jesus," this is a conscious decision of the mind and the will, who did not consider equality with God, something to be grasped. He's not fighting for his position or his title or his place on the org chart. He humbled himself, taking on the nature of a servant. And he was obedient to death, even death on a cross. That's how he served us in humility. He said, "If you love Jesus, you gotta love humility "because without humility, "Jesus would've never come to serve us." They come to Jesus, I think it's in Mark 10:45 and they ask them this crazy question, the disciples do. "How do we be the greatest? "Which one is the best?" It's kind of a weird question to ask Jesus. Amen. If you're off to the side, you'd be like, "His mom's a Virgin. "I saw him water ski without a boat. "Cast demons out of people, heals people. "Took a sack lunch, fed a stadium. "I'm gonna

go with that guy. He's the greatest." What Jesus doesn't do is rebuke their desire for greatness, He redirects it. "You wanna be the greatest?" "Yes." "Okay, get a pen, get a paper." "Okay, Jesus, tell us, how do we be the greatest?" He says, "Serve." You can only serve and be served if you're humble. Jesus doesn't wanna rebuke the seeking of greatness, but he wants to redirect it toward humility and service. And that's what he does for them, and that's what he does for you and I, and that's exactly what Peter is quoting here. Humility is mentioned some 900 times in the scriptures. God keeps reminding us about humility because we keep forgetting about humility. Pride is demonic. Humility is godly. Pride pulls hell up into your life and relationships. Humility invites heaven down into your life and relationships. Pride is natural. How many of you have a child and they're proud and you didn't teach them to be proud? Selfish, that's in our nature. That's why we need a new nature. Pride is natural. Humility is supernatural. The Holy Spirit is gonna need to get involved to move you in that direction. Same with me. Pride is like a demon. Humility is like the spirit of God that casts out that demon. Pride is how we war with God. He says, "God opposes the proud." Humility is how we worship God, "He gives grace to the humble." That's why we come to church and we don't sing songs about ourselves. ♪ How great I art ♪ No, thou art. I know I can't sing. It was very humble of you to endure my singing. Thank you. When we worship and we sing, what we are doing is, we are ascribing glory and majesty to someone who is greater than ourselves. Pride is how we war with God. Humility is how we worship God. Pride can humiliate you, but only you humble you. He says, humble who? Yourselves. There are things that I've said and done in my life that have caused me a tremendous amount of pain, including my wife, Grace. Some people will say, "Boy, circumstances really humbled them." No, actually, circumstances can humiliate you, but only you can humble you. And hear me in this. Does it say, "Humble others?" It says, "Humble yourself." This is where we get into a lot of problems. Sometimes we read about humility in the Bible like, "They're not humble. I will humble them." Well, that's very proud of you. You're not helping. How many of you are married and you're like, "This is a really good sermon for my spouse. "I'm so glad they're here." You first, you first, you first. We can't humble another person and they can't humble us. Circumstances can't humble another person and circumstances can't humble us. We need to humble ourselves. We need to humble ourselves. In addition, pride is a destination. You can live there, unpack and move in. Humility is a direction, you'll never quite arrive. It's like perfection. It's a constant pursuit. Pride is the cause for most of our relational problems and humility is the cure for most of our relational problems. He says, "Select your shepherd, find your flock." The key to being healthy is being humble and being in a healthy flock is finding people who value humility. So, I want to share this briefly with you in summation. Next slide, please. There are three kinds of relationships. A proud person with a proud person is a battle. Some of you, this explains your marriage. I love ya, but that's why it's so much conflict. A proud person with a proud person, it's a battle. Number two, a proud person with a humble person is abuse. The proud person uses and abuses the humble person. They take advantage of them. They don't consider them. They hurt them. Three, the humble and the humble. That's a blessing. That's where the grace of God is poured out. That's where the spirit of God is present. That's where God gives grace to the humble. Meaning, in your marriage, in your family, whatever relationships or spheres of influence or leadership that God would appoint to you, if there is a genuine desire to pursue humility by the grace of God, through the power of the Holy

Spirit, God says, "I'm gonna give grace, "and as a result, they will be blessed." They will be blessed. He then transitions to say, "Look out for the lion." Not only does he have positive expectation, but he also has warning. I'll give you an example. When we first moved to Arizona, we got those alerts on our phone. Maybe you've got the neighborhood alerts or the ring that say, "Warning, warning, warning!" We started getting these warnings for bobcats out in our neighborhood. And I thought, "No, no." And then we had a bobcat at our house. I pulled up and our youngest son was gonna jump in the truck and I was gonna take him to baseball. He jumped in the truck, as soon as he does, walking out from the front of our neighbor's house, right where my son was just standing, a bobcat, a bobcat. And now every once in a while, on my phone, I'll get the notification, bobcat in the neighborhood and they'll put a photo up. Bobcat's usually sitting on like the cinder block wall of someone's home or eating their dog or something like that. And you're like, "Ah, bobcat!" What is the warning for? When you go outside, when you open the door, look around, pay attention, don't just, "Hey Johnny, go outside and play. "Don't pet the kitty. "Warn everybody." What Peter's doing here as a good shepherd, he's saying, "There's lions out there. "They're gonna devour you. "You need to be aware of them." These are spiritual beings, demonic opposition to God and you. Be sober-minded. We talked about that. A couple of times in 1 Peter, it's a recurring theme. It's the opposite of drunk minded. Be watchful, pay attention. This world is not a safe place. Nobody gets out alive. There's a lot of problems. Your adversary, you have an enemy if you love God. If Satan hates God and you love God, you are on the side of the war that is opposed to him. He is on the enemy team. Your adversary, the devil, he's talking here about a conscious, personal, spiritual source of evil. It's where the Bible says elsewhere that our war is not against flesh and blood, people, but powers, principalities and spirits, demonic forces that work behind them. Let me just say this. You may be looking at everything that's going on in the world right now, and I'm talking all of the craziness and you may be asking "What is happening." Well, I'll just tell you what, the lion is walking around in the street. He's devouring people. He's destroying people. He's devastating people. And this is Peter saying, "Warning, warning, warning! "Pay attention, pay attention." He's seeking someone to devour. Shepherds feed sheep, lions eat sheep. We're all sheep. We gotta look out for the lion. "Resist him," that's temptation. He wants you to self-destruct under pressure. "Firm in in your faith." He's gonna want you to deny essentials of Christian faith to become apostate heretical. 2 Peter gets into false teaching and when pressure and crisis increases, false teaching becomes more popular. It's like, can I do a little bit of the lion? And could I do a little bit of the Lord? No, it's all or nothing. We'll get into that starting next week. "Resist him, firm in your faith, "knowing that the same kinds of suffering, "and I know you're suffering and I love you." And part of what Peter is trying to do is prepare God's people to suffer well, "They're experienced by your brotherhood "throughout the entire world," throughout the entire world. Now, what he's talking about here is that when crisis is looming, the lion is lurking. What this means is, when you're tired, when you're hungry, when you're depressed, when you're uncertain, when the future is unknown, when there is political upheaval when there is economic crisis, when there is physical suffering, you are more vulnerable. We're all feeling that, amen? Most of us are not feeling really confident about the future or really strong right now. Couple of ways that I see this happening. Number one, some people are self-destructing. When he says to resist, they're not resisting self-destructive temptations. We're seeing an increase in alcohol

abuse, drug abuse, self-medicating, self-destructing, spousal abuse, child abuse, an uptick, they're predicting, in suicides and divorces. This is not resisting the temptation to self-destruction. For some people as well, they're very shortsighted. They're making very pressured, emotional, short-term decisions that will cause long-term pain. I know of people who are deciding to end their marriage in the middle of tremendous, overwhelming crisis, which is usually not the best time to make the biggest decisions. I know of people that are selling all of their retirement and cashing in everything. And that may not be the wisest thing to do in a season of crisis. Some people, under pressure and crisis, they panic and their anxiety presses them to bad decisions that they later regret. In addition, some people in the name of faith, are denying reality and pretending that everything is going to be okay. And some of you are like, "Oh, I just trust the Lord." I trust the Lord to tell me the future, to get ready for it. Trusting the Lord is not pretending that we're in heaven because we're not. There are problems, perils and pains on the horizon, and you need to be prepared for them. I tell you this, and Peter tells them this, not to cause you to be scared, but to help you be prepared. If you know that it's going to get worse, and here's what I'm telling you, between now and the end of the year, it's gonna get worse. Now, how many of you in your heart, you know that? Do you think between now and the election, this is gonna be a better place to be? Economically, politically, morally, spiritually, physically. It's going to get worse. It's going to get worse. And what he is telling them, 1 Peter was bad, 2 Peter is worse, today is bad. In three, four, five, six months, these will be the good old days. Remember the good old days, six months ago. It's an awkward chuckle, people. But for the child of God who accepts reality, humbles themselves, finds a flock, follows wise leadership, welcomes the grace of God, there is tremendous opportunity to pivot and to be healthy, even if the world is not healthy and for things in here to get better, even if things out there do not get better. So, he closes then with this, and somebody of you are like, "Where's the hope? Where's the joy. "Please give me some good news," His name is Jesus. The chief shepherd is coming for you and he is for you. 1 Peter 5: 10-14, he ends by bringing us back to Jesus. We always need to get back to Jesus. We just need to find Jesus in the middle of it, 'cause he's the chief shepherd. If you're sheep, most importantly, find your shepherd. "And after you've suffered a little while, "the God of all grace," whatever grace you need, he has it for you, "who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ," when all is said and done, Jesus is coming back, we're on the winning team, it's gonna be good in the end, it's gonna be a mess in the middle, "will himself restore, confirm, strengthen "and establish you." Let me just hit those real briefly. Those words, restore. It's to put back in alignment. Any of you ever have woken up and just been totally out of alignment? You're like, "Oh, oh, oh, oh." I had this recently, I woke up, I got out of bed I was like, "Oh," my back froze, I froze. I'm like, "Oh, oh." Grace's like, "How are you doing?" "Not good, not good." Everything's wrong? Okay? What do I need to do now? I need to go to a chiropractor. Which is paying a grown man to assault you; which is weird. When I was growing up, you could get this for free, but now, you gotta pay for it. And he was like, "Okay, lay here and I'm gonna do this, "I'm gonna do this, I'm gonna do this." And I'm like, "Man, you must listen to a sermon, "you're very angry at me." But then, what happens is, you hear this, box of Rice Krispies, snap, crackle, pop, and you're like, "Whew, all better, realigned." That's what that word means. That restore is to set you back in alignment. Some of you right now, literally, your soul feels out of alignment. Jesus is going to restore. "He'll confirm." What this

means is that, if you make a decision to walk in the spirit of God and to follow the chief shepherd and to walk in humility and to learn through the struggle, you won't immediately see your return on investment, because you're gonna walk by faith. And then eventually, at some point, God will confirm your decision. He will bless you. He will provide for you. He will encourage you. And all of a sudden you realize, okay, God did have wisdom for me and as I pursued it, he confirmed it with the blessing that he provided for me. Goes on to talk about strengthen. And this is internal fortitude. You know what? God's gonna have grace for me tomorrow, just like he had manna for the children of God. Every morning, if I wake up every day and meet with God, he's gonna give me the grace that I need to sustain me through this day. And then tomorrow, I'm gonna meet with him and he's gonna have grace for me tomorrow because his mercies are new every morning, great is his faithfulness. I do not need to know everything in the future. I just need to do the best that I can with today, and he will strengthen me on the inside so that I can endure whatever I need to endure on the outside. "And establish you." This is providing a place for you to be rooted and flourish. For some of you, you're gonna move to a new city. For some of you, you're gonna get a new job. For some of you, you're gonna start a new company. For some of you, you're gonna join a new church. God is gonna dig you up through the painful circumstances of crisis, but then he will ultimately and eventually, establish you in a place where you can root and flourish. That's what all of that means. "To him, be the dominion forever and ever. Amen." And that's God's people agreeing. And then he talks about relationships because when you find your flock, that's where you perhaps can also find your friends. You're like, "Ah, you're a friend in the battle." So, he talks about, Silvanus, "A faithful brother as I regard him. "I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring "that this is the true grace of God, stand in it." Keep going, love Jesus. Don't give up, don't give in, don't go back. "She who is at Babylon," that's an Old Testament nation and city in the book of Daniel. And there is a demonic spirit that was at work in Babylon, that here is at work in Rome, and so, this is referring to the Roman Empire. "Who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, "as does Mark, my son." When you find your flock, in that flock, sometimes you find your friends. Sometimes you actually find family. You have a family by birth and new birth. What he says is, "Mark's like a son to me. "I love that guy. "We're that close." Guys, we need each other. This is not a good time to be alone. This is not a time to just self-medicate or self-instruct. This is a time for the family of God to love one another, to find your shepherd, find your flock, look out for the lion, follow the chief shepherd. And in the flock, see if you can find some friends and maybe some people that even feel like family. "Greet one another with the kiss of love." That's an ancient way of greeting with affection. Today, the equivalent would be the knuckles. So, don't kiss me unless your name is Grace. "Peace to all of you who are in Christ." Jesus said, "Peace, I leave you, peace I give you, "not as the world gives you." What that means, that there is a peace in relationship with Christ that is impossible in relationship with this world. So, I wanna go back and he said something briefly and here's where I wanna close. He said to cast all your anxieties on Him because he cares for you. 1 Peter is saying, "I know it's hard." And then he says, "It's going to get worse," and he's going to send a second letter to lead them as a good shepherd, to lead the flock through the coming crisis. And what he says is, "You're going to have anxiety. "It's what you do with it." How do you know that you have anxiety? For some of you, it's self-medicating. Drugs, alcohol, reckless behavior, self-destructive behavior. For some of you,

it's anger, you're just grumpy. Just grumpy. For some of you, your body gives you clues and indications. There was a season in my life where I was really anxious and I got a nervous eye twitch. Everybody's like, "Why is he flirting with me?" "He's not, he's freaking out." Some of you, you get canker sores. Some of you, you get rashes. Some of you, you get headaches. Some of you, you get intestinal or digestive problems. Some of you drive aggressively. Gotcha. It's all indications that you're anxious. Some of you can't sleep. Some of you are not well. There are things that come as we look into the future that give us great anxiety or things that we're experiencing in the present that contribute to that great anxiety. And what he says is, cast all your anxiety on Him because He does care for you. So, for me, I'll be honest with you. I even had a day this week that I was overwhelmed with anxiety. And I'll share something with you that has been a great help to me cause I love you. So, this is what I do. First, I feel humility. Just, if there's a battle, the key is, just get low. If there's a battle and you're a soldier, get low. And so, when I feel overwhelmed by anxiety, responsibility, burden, uncertainty, things that are too heavy for me to carry, I literally try to get a posture of humility, just, "Okay God, here's where I'm at. "I'm not strong and standing tall. "I'm struggling and kneeling low." And then what I do is I actually name the anxieties. And what I do is I pray and I did this this week and I'd not done it for a while, which is probably why I was struggling with anxiety on this day. It probably, sort of compounded over time. So, I will name it. And then I will literally, cast all my anxiety on Him. And I will trust that he cares for me. What anxieties are you carrying? Flock, friends, family? What are the anxieties that you're carrying? Permission to speak freely?

- Marriage.

- Marriage. Marriage is under tremendous strain and stress right now. I mean, marriage is hard enough. Throw in, homeschooling, unemployment, pandemic, racial conflict, election. God forbid, one's a Democrat, one's a Republican right now. That's a real rough, nightly news time together on the couch. There's a lot of pressure on marriage right now. Some of you have anxiety for your marriage. What other anxieties are you carrying?

- Education.

- Education. Some of you are anxious because your kids are not going to school. Some of you are anxious 'cause your kids are going to school. I talk to single moms, they're like, "I work a job, I got kids. "If I send the kids to daycare and I go to work, "daycare costs as much as I make, I don't know what to do." Like, that's anxiety and it's coming very quickly. Like, school's supposed to start. What's gonna happen? And even for teachers, there's anxiety. "Do we wear a mask? Can we hug the kids? "Do I need to make six-year olds, social distance? "Oh my gosh." What else are you anxious about?

- Uncertainty.

- What's that?

- [Man] Uncertainty.

- Just complete uncertainty in the future? Where are we going? What are we doing? How many of you are even bearing some level of anxiety for your children or your grandchildren? Like, where are we going? What are we doing? I mean, how many trillions can we just hand to them to where eventually, it completely buries them? What other anxieties are you carrying?

- [Man 2] Freedom of movement.

- Yeah, some people are really worried that we're giving up certain freedoms. There's an app on your phone that traces wherever you go in the name of health. But if those things become normative, many of you have real concerns about civil liberties and freedoms. A lot of anxiety. Father, God, we come to you now in prayer. And God, as we invite the band up, and as we come to worship in a world that is at war, we come to worship and worship is one way that we war. We invite the God who knows us and loves us and cares for us into the battle. And God right now, I just, I sense, I love these people and I, I thank you for the opportunity to be a shepherd. I wanna be a good shepherd like the good shepherd. Lord, you say to cast all our anxieties onto you, because you care for us. God, for those who are carrying anxiety about their marriage, we cast that anxiety on you. For those who are carrying anxiety for their children or grandchildren, we cast that anxiety on you. For those who are carrying anxiety about the political state of our nation and the election in the future, we cast that anxiety on you. God, for those who are carrying anxiety about physical wellbeing and safety and health, and those that are on the front lines, medically seeking to serve, or putting themselves in harm's way, and there's lots of anxiety for those and those we love, we cast that anxiety on you. Or God, for those who are leading businesses that are struggling or closed, for those who are wondering how they're gonna pay the bills and feed their family or keep their employees, God, we ask that right now, you would send the Holy Spirit to lift that burden, as we cast that anxiety on you. God, for us who are concerned about the world that we're gonna leave for our kids, for those that are concerned about the eradication of freedom or the injustice that can come to those who are in power, God, we cast that anxiety on you. God, you are the God of all grace. We invite the Holy Spirit to bring us that grace. And God, we claim that promise, that you care for us. Not just us as a flock but each individual sheep in the flock. Holy Spirit, as we come to worship, would you come to meet with us, to unburden us, to lighten us. And God, in addition to these requests, I pray for those who have specific requests. I know that there are saints that are at home that can't come to church, that's a burden for them. I know that there are loved ones in the hospital that we cannot visit. I know of people who have loved ones who are dying and they can't even go to say goodbye. God, we live in a time that is filled with lots of anxiety globally, nationally, locally, and personally. We cast that anxiety on you because you care for us. God, I pray as we come to worship now, that the Holy Spirit will come to us. That He would lift the burdens we cannot carry, that He would give the grace that we cannot manufacture, that He would provide a peace that surpasses all understanding and that He would cause this flock to be a healthy, holy, happy people. And so God, we now come to give our burdens to you and to receive grace from you in the name of Jesus, our good shepherd, amen. Love you. Thank you.