

GLENWOOD COMMUNITY CHURCH

January 24, 2021

Rest for the Weary

*I Peter 5:5-7*

Pastor Paul Jackson

[music: "Holy, Holy, Holy"]

*Brandon Dickson:*

Good morning. Y'all, I have to apologize because I forgot to shave because I didn't remember that I could take off my mask, so I'm sorry. But, it's good to see you all this morning. For those of you who are live streaming or coming in on a livestream, welcome. We are so glad to have you this morning.

I have just one thing for you today. We believe here at Glenwood that the gospel leads us to transform the communities that we're in and be part of transformative communities. So, if you are looking to get plugged into a small group to grow more in your faith, you can visit our website at [glenwoodcc.org/lifegroups](http://glenwoodcc.org/lifegroups) or you can talk to Ben Cunningham. So, that's all I have for you this morning.

*Ben Rico:*

Let us rejoice in worship as we go to God's word.

Reading from Matthew 5:2-12. *"And He opened His mouth and taught them, saying, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you, and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely at My account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven; for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.'"*

This is the word of the Lord.

*Ben Cunningham:*

Let's pray together.

Heavenly Father, we praise You for being our refuge and strength, our present help in the time of this trouble. For generations You have sheltered Your people through famine, plague, persecution, and plenty. You carefully listen to and answer every prayer of Your children. You carefully correct and guide the will of not only Your people, but also of kings and the mighty. You, God, are our great and majestic Shepherd. This morning, we pray for humility. We confess that we're often deceived about where true rest is found. When You tell us to come, we shy away and keep our distance. When You diagnose us as laboring and heavy laden, we pretend that our burden is

light. We try to create rest for ourselves. Our self-sufficiency and pride are crushing, and they separate us from You. Help us to learn that rest is given by You, not manufactured by us. We pray for those who are heavy-laden with grief. We pray that they would return again and again to You as unexpected waves of grief come. We pray for those who are lonely and weary, that Your presence would be felt and Your people would pursue it. We pray for those who are frustrated. Help us to focus on what's commendable and to leverage all that's wrong to help us to hope in all that You will make right. Help us all to trust Your timing. We pray for our nation, Lord. We pray for the new wave of governing officials, from the president to county officials. We pray that humility would begin to close the gaps of division within our government and society. We pray for wisdom from above that's pure and peaceable, gentle and open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, and sincere. We are weary of turmoil, Lord. Till the ground so that the seeds of peace can be sown and take root. Lord, help us to take up Your easy yoke and to admit our need of You. Though You have ascended and are reigning, You remain gentle and lowly in heart. Make our hearts like Yours. We thank You for the cross. It is indisputable proof of Your care for us. It is our sure shelter. It is the basis of Your invitation to come. Lord. You have taken our sin; help us to give You our cares as well. In Christ's name and for His sake, amen.

[music: "To the Cross I Come"]

*Pastor Paul:*

Please open your Bibles to the book of Matthew. We're going to start in Matthew 6 on our way to I Peter 5.

If you haven't already, before much more time passes this morning, you're going to trust someone. And if you trust someone, that person probably earned your trust, and you trusted without thinking. You trusted because of this internal calculus that you didn't even think about. You just chose to trust that person. And this morning, we want to talk about the person to whom we give our ultimate trust, and what that looks like, and why He earned our trust, and why it makes so much sense to trust in the God who loves us.

I once read an adventure story about two ice-climbing partners that were 21,000 feet up in the Andes Mountains. One guy was named Simpson; the other guy was named Yates. And they're roped together, and they slipped, and they began to slide down the mountain. And Yates managed to stop the slide for both of them just before they were headed over a crevasse. Well, Yates stopped the slide, but then Simpson slipped again, and he went over the edge of the crevasse. And Yates was getting pulled over the cliff, and he cut the rope. And he made his way back to his base camp. And later he would say of that moment, quote, "If I hadn't cut the rope, I would certainly have died. Yet, having saved myself, I was now going to return home and tell people a story that few would ever believe. No one cuts the rope." Simpson landed at the bottom of the crevasse. He lived. He constructed a splint for his broken leg. He inched his way out of the crevasse. And three days later, he made base camp just as Yates was getting ready to leave. They both lived to tell the story, and for his part, Simpson says that he would never again trust the person on the other end of a rope.

And some of you know what that's like. You know what it's like for someone to cut the rope. Sometimes it's a child who was not blessed or privileged with the parents who love and who care and who are faithful and nurture.

Sometimes it's a spouse who has a heart deeply wounded by the other. Or sometimes it turns out that people we thought were friends were not really our friends.

And so we take matters into our own hands, and now we turn our trust inward, and we provide for ourselves. And sometimes we can take ultimate trust in the moment, and in ourself. And when we trust ourself as ultimate trust, then we distort God's vision for us and for our life.

God alone deserves our ultimate trust, and that makes all the sense in the world. But as much sense as it makes, it totally cuts against our instinct, against the grain of our fleshly pride. In the garden, we rested. We were truly at rest. God provided all that we need; we had no worries, no anxieties; provided a place of abundance and blessing where He put His goodness on full display for Adam and Eve. It wasn't enough. They didn't trust fully. They wanted more, so they disobeyed God. And we ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in an attempt to be as God. So, in a sense we reached out and up to be as God and we were caught in the act. And we introduced sin into the world. And that's been our instinct ever since. Our pattern is we reach to be as God, to control our world, to call the shots, to get our way, and it is the way of fleshly pride.

We reached up to become like God, but God reached down to become like us. He sent His Son. His Son relinquished His divine prerogatives. He let go of His heavenly rights. The Creator became part of His creation. He lived among us, and He taught us what it looks like to truly trust the Father.

Matthew 6. We find the Creator who became part of His creation talking to the people that He created. We find our Creator describing a life free from

worry and anxiety. And in Matthew 6:25, our Creator says to His creation, *"For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"* And then He says, "look up and look around." First He says, "look at the birds." And then He turns to botany. "Look at the plants." Look at the beauty of creation. The one who created this, He is the one who provides for you, and He absolutely delights when you trust ultimately, fully in Him.

Jesus our Creator gets practical in verse 27, *"Who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?"* And then He drives home what it looks like to fully trust, in verses 31-34, *"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we wear for clothing.' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things."* I mean, that's the native impulse of humanity. But He says, *"Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things."*

So, how do we trust? We *"seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."*

Jesus does not promise a trouble-free life. What He does invite us to do is to seek His kingdom. Our king, seek His kingdom, His ways, His will above our own and above anyone or anything else, so that we can trust God with our heart. Our life won't be trouble free, but we can trust God right now, this day, for all of our tomorrows.

Jesus says, "Trust Me." Now, anybody else says that, you say, "I'll give you a qualified trust. I will qualify my trust in you with the wisdom and intuition I have of who you are and the current circumstances." But Jesus says, "trust

Me.” And we ask, “Why should I trust you, Jesus?” And the answer is, Jesus didn’t cut the rope to save His own hide. Jesus gave His life becoming like us, dying our death. He gave, God did, so that you and I can know God in this way and we can trust Him in and through and with everything.

Now, let’s make our way to I Peter 5. We can trust God with all we are and all that we have. It makes all the sense in the world, but it is one of the most challenging and difficult things for most of us to do in difficult and challenging circumstances or in times of great blessing.

When we think we have so much and we earned this, we got it, and then we take security in these things that we have. And they can be good things. They can be a family or children or friends. They can be material blessings that God gives. And then we turn and we put our trust in those things and our ultimate trust gives us this sense of confidence. And then those things are stripped away and we’re ambushed and we’re surprised, and this isn’t how it was supposed to be.

We can trust God with all we are and all we have and what’s that look like? I Peter 5:5,6, and 7. *“You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your cares on Him, for He cares for you.”*

There are three commands that lead us to fully trusting God as the ultimate trust, the ultimate One we trust. The first is, submit to leaders appointed to the church.

That's the first part of I Peter 5. Submit yourselves, younger men, to the elders and authority over you. We've seen the command submit a couple of times already. Check out I Peter 2:21. It's where we first encounter the word. Verse 13, I'm sorry. 2:13 *"Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake."* So, make no mistake, the submission is to the Lord for His sake and for His name. And then he describes the local and national forces of government.

So, Peter says, "Submit." And then he presents Jesus Christ as the supreme ultimate model of submission. Now look at Jesus in 2:21. *"You have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example to follow in His steps."* So, as Jesus Christ submitted to the Father, and as Jesus Christ suffered, so we are called for the Lord's sake to submit and to follow in His footsteps when we experience any circumstances, hardships that God would define as suffering.

We've been called by God for this purpose. When we suffer, we can trust the One who suffered. And we can follow after Him in His steps.

And then Peter uses the same word again in I Peter 3:1, a wife is to submit to her husband. And then he exhorts, in verse 7, husbands to nourish and treasure their wives.

And then he turns his attention to the local church, to God's people, and he says this sober warning in I Peter 4:17 about His church and His people. And I Peter 4:17, *"For it is time for judgement to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the Gospel of God?"* And God entrusted His church to His gospel. And it is His gospel that addresses the greatest needs of humanity. It's His gospel, the cross of Christ and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that gives us

salvation right now, forgiven forever in Christ. And so, watch out! Judgement is going to begin here on the inside, God's church, God's household. And that's a warning to those who are leaders, who are in trusted positions of authority.

And so then he describes what those leaders, those shepherd leaders, look like in verse 1-4 of chapter 5. *"Therefore, I exhort the elders among you."* So, right after this judgement scene beginning inside the household of God, he says, *"I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God among you."* As a servant leader, giving of yourself for the good of others and for the glory of God.

And then, he says in verse 5, *"You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders."* Why younger? And does elder mean older? Well, in verse 5, elder means just what it did in the first four verses and he describes the characteristics of a humble shepherd. But when he says, "younger people, be subject," Why? Well, we didn't invent the generation gap. There are Boomers, and Gen X, and Gen Y, and Gen Z. Why are younger ones to submit to elders?

Well, Mark Twain, the 19th century writer and humorist said of his father, "When I was a boy fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years." That's supposed to be funny, you guys. Youthful optimism and strength, it is refreshing. But youthful optimism and strength can also be impatient with those who've gone before us even in dismissive and cutting ways, like the "Okay, boomer" memes and other things that circulate. We think that we

know something, and they need to get out of the way so that we can step into the gap.

And Peter says, "submit." And submission is something that sometimes we don't want to do and we may not agree. And humility is the heartbeat of submission.

Which brings up the second, the next command, what it looks like to trust God. First by submitting to elders, and secondly, by dressing for success. Secondly, "*Clothe yourselves with humility toward each other.*"

I Peter 5, the last part of the verse, "*All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*" Humility is this winsome virtue. You can't fake it. People can spot the fraud. Humility is the practical and intentional consideration of others. It's the simply considering them, valuing who they are, they're significance, assessing how can I help? How can I encourage this person in Christ?

The example that God gives to us in the putting our interest of others above our own is the example of Jesus Christ. In that familiar passage-- go to Phillipans 3, Philippians 2 I mean-- Philippians 2, beginning in verse 3. It shows us this pattern of humbling for the good and the gain of another, and loss to self. It shows us what God delights in: when we trust Him, like the Son trusts.

So we read in 2:3, "*Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit*"-- that's the opposite of humility – "*with humility of mind, regard one another as more important than yourselves.*" Doesn't mean that we don't have our own

interests; it just means that our own interests don't dominate our mind, our ambition or desires, our actions in the moment. *"Do not merely look out for your own personal interest, but also the interests of others."* Verse 5, *"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus."*

And then we see this extraordinary, incomparable humbling, where Jesus released His divine prerogatives, left the throne-room of heaven, entered His creation and became like us without sin, willingly went to the cross, and then God raised Him from the dead, and then God highly exalts Him. And the day is coming, yet future, when every eye will see and everyone will see how majestic and great He is, and everyone will see how small and little we are.

*"Clothe yourselves with humility toward each other."* 1 Peter 5:5 comes right out of Proverbs 3:34. It's one of the big ideas of the Bible. Jesus echoes it in Luke 18:14. He said, *"Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but whoever humbles himself will be exalted."*

God loves genuine humility. When we are really, truly, no-faking-it humble, we are more like Christ. But when pride hijacks us, we are more unlike Christ. God invites us to trust Him. By considering the legit needs and concerns of others, not in a codependent, 'will you love me' sort of a way; but in a robust, muscular, sacrificial way, like Jesus Christ. And when we resist God's interests, then God opposes our interest.

It's what He says, God is opposed to the proud. So when we put ourself above others, then God resists our interest. But, He provides grace for the humble. And that grace, for the humble, includes the daily sustenance of the soul that breathes life into relationships, and it also includes that grace that we'll experience when we're in His presence.

But as we experience His grace and as we consider the interests of others, and we humble ourself with each other, and we wear it as a garment, as clothing, as apparel that is characteristic of a person who is following hard after Jesus Christ, it absolutely delights God! And then, amazingly, other people begin to trust us, knowing that we're not going to 'cut the rope!' Because, we have their interest. And they see it in our speech and in our actions and in our history, and that incurs trust.

What does it look like to trust? Thirdly, "*Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God.*" Verse 6 and 7. "*Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.*"

Peter borrows this 'mighty hand of God' imagery from the Old Testament. You see it throughout the Old Testament; you see it in God's redemption of Israel from Egypt where they were set free from slavery and the mighty hand of God led them to a place of blessing and goodness. Later we see the mighty hand of God in God's judgment of His people in sending them into exile. And then again we see the good hand of God leading His people back to Israel, back to Jerusalem. Nehemiah describes his success, "*The good hand of my God was on me.*"

The mighty hand of God – His sovereign greatness and power. When we humble ourselves before Him, we consider His will above our own. His ways above our own stubborn resistance of Him. That we would seek to build His kingdom instead of our own kingdom, to rest in His wisdom, in His leadership, to trust His word to be true and right, and that His promises never fail. That we can trust Him in hard times, knowing that our

circumstances are not beyond His love and grace for the day. We humble ourselves under His mighty hand. We trust His hand to lead us.

His hand can lead us to the valley. His hand can lead us to the mountaintop. His hand can lead us to a wedding, or to a graveside, to the crib side bed of a newborn, or to a hospice bed. We want to consider our interests greater than God's interest. It's time to humble ourselves before God does it for us, because He will humble the proud.

So that our job in the moment is to humble ourselves, and exaltation is God's job, and God will exalt at the proper time. The ultimate exaltation is when we see Jesus Christ, but God also exalts in this earth, this world, in real time. And God knows how to tell time. He knows the right time to exalt, whether in times of loss or abundance. God gives grace to the humble. God will exalt the humble. We can trust Him with all we are and all that we have.

And what does that trust look like?

Verse 7, as I prepped the sermon, I got out one of my grandfather's Bibles, because I wanted to see if he engaged these words. And sure enough, they're underlined in red. "*Casting all your cares*" – in the King James – "*all your cares on him, because He cares for you.*" New American Standard, "*Casting all your anxieties on Him.*" To cast is to toss, to throw something on something else, like throwing a saddle on a horse, or clothes on a horse for riding. What are we to throw? We're going to throw it on God; we throw our anxieties on God.

Anxiety is a common affliction. Some people are more biologically vulnerable to excessive worry. And if you worry about whether or not you are

genetically vulnerable to worry then you are! I once read a neuroscientist who said that people prone to worry can have a very active imagination, and are probably bright. He said, quote, "A rat can't worry about the stock market crashing. We can."

Then come big-league worries. "Will I ever have children?" "Is the bump malignant?" "What if this marriage breaks?" Or if we're alone, "Am I safe at night?" And, if our ultimate trust is in us, then we're going to worry! But when we're weak – when we fail – if our ultimate trust is in another, then we not only put them in a position to fail, because they can't deliver what we expect, but we might worry about their rejection. If our security is in things, then we might worry about losing those things.

Worry leaves footprints. You can track those footprints of worry back to their source. And worry has a high cost, a high price. Corrie Ten Boom said, quote, "Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength."

The solution to worry is to throw it, to toss it, to toss the burden onto God because your worry is too heavy for you. Let God carry it. Why? Why throw your worry onto God? Because He cares for you. He is the only one who has the right and authority to say, ultimately, 'Just trust Me with this.' And we can.

We can trust Him because He cares so much that He sent His Son who became like us, who suffered, who died, who was raised to give us forgiveness and cleansing and strength, to give His Spirit to those who believe, to give us a life and a future hope. There is only one God who is

strong and mighty and cares for us and can be fully trusted, and you can trust Him. He will never, ever 'cut the rope.'

Let's trust Him together.

Heavenly Father. Thank you, Father, for loving us as Your daughters and sons. For adopting us into Your family through Your Son Jesus Christ, and the salvation we have through faith in His death and resurrection. Father, we thank You for the strength that You promise today. Thank You that You attend to us, that You're not caught off guard, that You're not surprised by anything that surprises us. Thank You that You know the beginning from the end, that You make all things work together for good to those who love You and who are called to Your purposes. Thank You, Father, that nothing can separate us from Your love – no created thing. Thank You that You sent Your Son, Jesus. That You are the good Shepherd, that we can hear Your voice, that You know us, and that we can follow You. Father, help us to be true to Your calling to us, that we would follow faithfully out of love for You in the footsteps of the Son who loved You and who loves us. In His name we pray. Amen.

*Ben Rico:*

Amen.

[music: "The Great I Am"]

Amen, go in peace.