

OUT FOR NUMBER... TWO, 1PETER 5

A New Hope #10

◆**Intro:** During volcanic eruption of Mt St Helens, intense heat melted away the soil, leaving bare rock coated w thick mantle of ash. Naturalists of the Forest Service wondered how much time must pass before any living thing could grow there. Then one day a park employee stumbled across a lush patch of wildflowers, ferns, and grasses rooted tenaciously to a strip of the desolation. It took a few seconds for him to notice an eerie fact: this patch of vegetation formed the shape of an elk. Plants had sprouted from the organic material that lay where an elk has been buried by ash. (Yancy, Grace, ch19).

◆In his conclusion of his letter encouraging alien Christians to have hope in a persecuting world, because of a coming better world, a world of resurrection, and perfection, and solid life, – Peter outlines a shape of life that will sustain life through hardship. I'm going to give it away early: it's "humility". The greek term means "close to the ground." So like the animal shapes that dotted the bare sides of Mt.St. Helens, the Christians of Turkey in Peter's day, in the laying down of self, could bring life to an area of disaster.

◆**1. Where have we been in Peter's letter of hope?:** first a little reminder of the theme of Peter's letter. All along he has urged *submissive* character and the deep desire to fill the world with *goodness* even to the point of *suffering* to do so (3 of the most repeated concepts in the letter). Earlier in the letter he explained that:

OUT FOR NUMBER... TWO, 1PETER 5

A New Hope #10

- ◆1) submissiveness to rulers and those in authority would display God and be rewarded by God (2:13f)
- ◆2) submission in marriage, the foundation of society, would display the character of God, and win people over to him. (3:1f)
- ◆3) suffering for obeying God's good laws (submitting to the path holiness?) would reveal the reality of our good God right here in this life, and be rewarded by him (3:8f)
- ◆4) suffering for choosing Jesus as God, and his holiness (submitting to Christ's example?) would bless others and bring you blessing (4:1f)
- ◆Now in our text for today, we can see that Peter addresses
 - ◆5) the Church Family with the same challenge he spoke of in all the other instances. Church Leaders are to follow the self-effacing, suffering example of Jesus and be servants to the church (5:1-2)
 - ◆(But before you sigh in relief that it's their concern and not yours, note how quickly Peter jumps to everyone in the church (v5b *all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another*. It's interesting, I think, that the term "clothe" here is the same word used to describe Jesus at the Last Supper when he "clothed" himself in a mere towel, like a servant, and washed all the disciples feet. Humility.)
 - ◆Back to the church leaders and followers...

OUT FOR NUMBER... TWO, 1PETER 5

A New Hope #10

◆ They are shepherds, not Cowboys. (2a) Cowboys chase, and yell, and whip, and prod. Shepherds walk in front, and call each sheep by a personal name to follow where they themselves have gone. (I saw this happen in Israel)

◆ They are willing servants, not forced slaves (2b)

◆ They are eager servers; not greedy manipulators (2c)

◆ They are compassionate models, not arrogant hotshots. (3a)

◆ This one makes me think of my trumpet teacher in High School, Jesse Nelson. Mr. Nelson was the Concert Band director at Gar-Field HS. (We had three bands, and an orchestra, in a school of 4000.) Mr. Nelson gave all trumpeters free lessons as he was a professional trumpeter and former member of the Marine Corp Symphonic Orchestra in Washington DC, just a few miles north of our school. Mr. Nelson was so accomplished a musician that when a certain section of the band wasn't quite getting it he would cut the band off, walk over to whoever had the part, ask to borrow their instrument, and then play the part perfectly as a demonstration. But if you knew Mr. Nelson, you also knew he was not tooting his own horn. (He was actually tooting someone else's, literally.)

OUT FOR NUMBER... TWO, 1PETER 5

A New Hope #10

He was not showing off. He was modeling so that we could get better. That's what church shepherds are supposed to be like.

◆2. Question: are you noticing a theme here? **Humility is humble love and attention for... the other guy!** It's the repeated idea in our text today. And it came to Peter through the instruction of his Rabbi, Jesus of Nazareth.

◆*Matthew 23:11-12 The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*

◆A. Interestingly, Peter models the humility he endorses. You know probably, that Peter one of the most influential of the Apostles. The Catholic Church considers his line necessary for the leadership position of the Pope to this very day. In every listing of the disciples Peter's name is invariably first. He was the energetic one, the adventurous one. He braved walking on the water to Jesus on the sea of Galilee. He drew a sword to defend Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was on the Mt. of Transfiguration with Jesus. And, he denied Jesus three times, and was personally restored by Jesus three times with the words "feed my sheep". Peter carried enormous power in the early Church. He had all the qualities that make for a good bully. But Peter was not the type of leader to assign himself emergency powers of the country.

OUT FOR NUMBER... TWO, 1PETER 5

A New Hope #10

- ◆ Peter subordinated himself to the Lordship of Jesus. He calls himself only “a fellow elder” and a “witness” to Christ and “one” of many that will share in the coming glory (5:1).
- ◆ B. Let’s draw some conclusions. What traits in people push most of us away? Pride is certainly one. Arrogant people irk us, don’t they. We’d just love to knock them down a peg or two. Proud people “think they’re all that!” Right? You know the feeling. But isn’t it curious that you and I’d like to be “all that” too? On the other hand, what qualities in a person tend to attract us? Humility is certainly one, is it not? What is humility like?
 - ◆ Humble people compliment others more easily.
 - ◆ Humble people listen more than they talk. They don’t butt in as much either to “one up” your story.
 - ◆ Humble people share more readily.
 - ◆ Humble people will go last in line, unless they’re proud of going last, but then that’s not humility.
 - ◆ Humility is something you only have when you don’t think you have it. As soon as you think you are humble, you are not. Tricky isn’t it?
 - ◆ Here’s a tough one: Only the humble get the grace of God. (v5c -probably the thematic verse of our section).
 - ◆ Only humble people can be forgiven of their sins. Proud people can’t think of any, and if they could they wouldn’t admit it. Which makes the only unforgivable sin the lack of humbly asking for Jesus’ forgiveness.

OUT FOR NUMBER... TWO, 1PETER 5

A New Hope #10

- ◆ Humble people make for great community. Humility is the freon of the Church Family. Let me explain.
- ◆ In an air-conditioning unit there is a closed system of tubings, compressor, condenser, and coils through which flow repeatedly the same volume of gas (such as freon, or R134 now that we think R22 destroys the ozone layer). Unless it leaks, you never have to add anything. The process of compressing the gas, and then letting it expand absorbs heat, makes the tubing it is in frosty cold, over which a fan blows air on your hot sweaty body. The gas just keeps going around and around, compress -expand, compress - expand, absorbing heat and cooling you off. If you shut the system off, nothing happens with the gas although the potential is there.

◆ I think this is a good example of humble love. Humility is the freon in the church that keeps flowing around and around absorbing heat/sin/offense and cooling people off with love instead. It only exists in relationship (when the system is on).

◆ More importantly, humble love is the element that produces hope in the midst of suffering, which is what Peter's letter is all about. If you do good things because (v2-3) you think you have to, when you start suffering you're likely to give up. If you do good things in the world because it pays off, you'll for sure quit when it causes you to suffer. If you do good things because it makes you seem

OUT FOR NUMBER... TWO, 1PETER 5

A New Hope #10

important, you'll probably not last when it's not making you look great. But if you fill the world with good out of humble love, the circumstances don't matter, do they?

◆**3. God calls me to be out for the other guy.** Church leaders and church members are supposed to follow the example of the suffering Christ... Let's back up a moment: Christian people are supposed to first accept/ receive the sufferings of Christ as payment for their own sin... and then follow...

◆1Pet 2:9 tells us that God *called* his family out of darkness to *declare his praises!*

◆1Pet 2:21 If you suffer for doing good... it is commendable before God. For you have been *called* for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps

◆1 Pet 3:9 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were *called* so that you may inherit a blessing.

◆A. Are you catching the marching order of God in Peter's letter? God's people are to declare his goodness, do good even if it costs, and even when it's unfair (not repaying but blessing.) That is, Christians are supposed to be people willing to suffer (humble people inevitably suffer), for the sake of other people because that's how Jesus saved believing humans from eternal death, right?

OUT FOR NUMBER... TWO, 1PETER 5

A New Hope #10

◆ *Philippians 2:6-8 (NLT) Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.*

◆ Humble, self-sacrificial love is the key to hope.

◆ **B.** Ask yourself, Can I be out for the other guy? How might that look? How might humility look in my life? And this is a practical application for you whether you are a follower of Jesus or not. Just do an experiment. Go to work or school for one day and make out like you're something special. Answer every question in class. Correct all your comrades when they are doing something wrong. Tell lots of stories of your own achievements. Point out how good you look. Remind your spouse of the flaws they clearly have in contrast to yourself. Make sure to mention that they should be like you. When someone starts telling you about their frustrations cut them off and just tell them what they should do to fix their miserable life. –and just watch how people respond to your greatness.

◆ Or go to school or work for one day and put others before you as often as you can. Don't rush to the front of the line. Marvel at someone's story without telling one of your own. Compliment their hair or their ensemble! Catch someone in your house doing something good and point it out, without adding a few

OUT FOR NUMBER... TWO, 1PETER 5

A New Hope #10

complaints. When someone insults you, ignore it and say something nice back. –At the end of the day evaluate how people responded to your humble love. I think you can guess which one made for a better day.

◆ This is how Jesus is. You see there's a reason this man Jesus altered human history and created a believing community literally overnight.

◆ **Conclusion:** There's one more thing God's children are "called" to. This one is the reminder of their hope, and why you can endure the mess we live in down here on earth.

◆ 1 Peter 5:10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

◆ As the Mandalorian would say, "This is the way!" Imitation of Christ's humility and love is the path to glory. People who obey him will...

◆ v1 share in the glory to be revealed

◆ v4 receive a crown of glory that won't rust

◆ v10 come into eternal glory

◆ So let me remind us: we can afford to suffer, we can afford to be second, we can afford to forgive, we can afford to repay good for evil, we can afford give someone another chance, we can afford to be light in a darkness, we can afford to obey God's laws, we can afford to choose holiness!

OUT FOR NUMBER... TWO, 1PETER 5

A New Hope #10

◆ *1 Peter 1:3-9 (NLT) All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay...*

◆ *So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you have to endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. ...*

◆ *You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.*

Sing song "You Love Him"