

# Installation Service for Jeremy Sarber

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Preachers: Jon Hueni, Colin Horne

[ 0 : 00 ] Please open your Bibles to 1 Peter chapter 5. Our plan this morning is for me to give a charge to Pastor Jeremy, followed by Pastor Colin giving a charge to the congregation concerning your new pastor.

So follow along as I read from 1 Peter chapter 5, the first four verses. To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings, and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed.

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers. Not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be.

Not greedy for money, but eager to serve. Not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Our text this morning is a message written to the elders of churches that were scattered throughout the ancient Roman world. And it comes from a fellow elder, Peter.

[ 1 : 25 ] He speaks as one who knows something about the work of an elder. He was trained for three years under the tutelage of Christ himself, and then after that went on to serve by the Spirit of Christ for 30 years at least.

So, he speaks with at least 33 years of personal experience in the school of Christ. Moreover, he speaks as his words were breathed out by the Holy Spirit, inspired and kept and preserved for you today, Brother Jeremy.

So, it's quite fitting for me to be giving this charge to you as one of your fellow elders, which means that everything I say to you needs to be said to me. But since it's your installation service, I will say it to you.

This is like a pastor's conference from one pastor to another. And Peter knows that pastors can become easily weary in doing good. So, he bookends this charge to you, Jeremy, with encouragement.

It's the first thing and it's the last thing, and it's to color everything in between. Notice how he begins. He's not talking down to you as an apostle, but rather, I appeal to you as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings, and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed.

[ 2 : 54 ] He's reminding you that a disciple is not above his master. If the chief shepherd experienced sufferings in his work, then you as one of his under-shepherds should expect much of the same.

As Luther said, there are three things that make a minister. Prayer, meditation, and affliction. Suffering, hardship. It's all part of the curriculum in the school of Christ.

Peter found it so, and he says to you, embrace them, expect them, endure them. How's that for a cheering start to your installation service? Well, there's more to Christ's agenda and to yours.

Yes, suffering now, but with glory to follow. You are one who will also share in the glory to be revealed. So, don't let that coming glory grow dim, or you'll grow weary under the present sufferings and hardships.

To labor without the coming glory and view is to be sapped of the energy you need to fulfill your calling well. Now, we'll say more about the coming glory when we come to the last verse.

[ 4 : 03 ] But for now, notice that your ministry as an under-shepherd is bound up together with Christ, the chief shepherd. He's your example, and your ministry as a shepherd is to be modeled after his and is to reflect him.

So, that brings us then to the very heart of Peter's charge to you as an elder in Christ's church here. First, he tells you, what is your ministry as an elder?

And secondly, how you are to perform it. What is your ministry as an elder? Peter summarizes it this way, verse 2a, be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers, or as the ESV has it, shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight.

What a helpful picture this is of the shepherd. Jeremy, you are to do to these what a shepherd does to woolly sheep. Indeed, Jesus has said that I am the good shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep.

The sheep belong to him. He purchased them with his blood. And in verse 4, Peter will call Christ the chief shepherd. Over all of God's sheep, and indeed over all of his under-shepherds.

[ 5 : 22 ] But it's the will of the chief shepherd that his sheep be divided into separate flocks in each location. And so that's why Paul and Barnabas, when they went around planting churches, they ordained elders in every city, in every church that they had planted.

So that each local flock is to have shepherds on the ground right there to shepherd the sheep in that flock. Six times we can read in the scriptures about sheep without a shepherd, and never is it a good situation.

It's always a disastrous, dangerous situation. And Jeremy, you're not called to shepherd all of Christ's sheep in the world, but to shepherd God's flock that is among you, the text says.

The flock under your oversight, under your care. This particular flock that God has made you a shepherd over and given you the responsibility to watch over, to nourish and care for, and then one day to give an account to the chief shepherd.

So as a shepherd, you're to lead the sheep. You're to guide them in good and right paths. You're to feed them in the green pastures and refreshing waters of God's word.

[ 6 : 38 ] You're to protect them from thieves and wolves and noxious plants, false teachers and false teachings. You're to watch over them. That is to keep watch over them.

To know the condition of your sheep. To exercise oversight. That means to sight over them. To know their needs and then to minister to them accordingly.

You're to heal their wounds and to seek the straying ones to restore them. Now this is not work that can be done from the barn. Rather, the shepherd must be among the flock with the sheep that he might know them and properly care for them.

As Jim Neuheiser reminded us about a month ago at the General Assembly, shepherds are to smell like sheep because they are with the sheep. And to exercise oversight means you must be with them to keep an eye on them like a mother's tender eye when her children are in a place of danger. elders are not to be like the Swiss cuckoo clocks where the little birdie comes out once an hour and chirps and then immediately goes back into seclusion and stays there until the next hour and then comes out and chirps again and then back into isolation.

[ 8 : 00 ] That's not the picture of the pastor. Rather, the picture of the pastor is a shepherd who is among the flock, with the flock. Now, there is a tension here and may God give you the wisdom to work it out.

Yes, you are to preach the word and that takes a lot of time to prepare in seclusion, alone with you and God and his word. And if instead of studying and praying, you're always out with the sheep, you'll not have much to feed them when it's time to preach and teach them.

That's why Paul gave this charge to Timothy. Preach the word. In season and out of season.

Reprove, correct, encourage with great patience and careful instruction. That takes time alone with God and his word.

But it's by being with the sheep that you'll know them and better be able to preach God's word to them in a way that will feed and nourish them and meet them at their point of need.

I can assure you, Jeremy, that these sheep here have a voracious appetite for the word of God.

That's where they hear the voice of the chief shepherd as he speaks to them through his word.

[ 9 : 19 ] Lead them to Christ who loved them and gave himself for them. Shepherding the flock of God that is among you is the way for you to show your love to the chief shepherd. He loves and cherishes these sheep and you can show your love for Christ by caring for them.

Three times he asked this same Peter, do you love me? And he says, Lord, you know I love you. And the Lord says, then feed my sheep. The Lord wants his sheep shepherded by men who love him.

They're only safe in the hands of such men. So serve them out of love for Christ. So that's what your ministry is as an elder.

In summary, it's the work of shepherding. Peter next tells you how you are to perform your shepherding of this flock. And three times you're told both negatively how not to do it and positively how you are to do it.

And you'll notice he really emphasizes the hard attitude behind your labors. So first of all, you're to shepherd God's flock not because you must, but because you are willing as God wants you to be. [10:30] Not to be forced to do it, not reluctantly, not well, okay, I guess if I have to, then I will. No. If your heart's not in it, the quality of your shepherding will suffer.

It'll come through. It can't be hidden. And Christ wants no such attitudes in his under shepherds. Because men whose hearts are not in it will cut corners. They'll do the bare minimum just to get by. We see it so often. Many start out willing, but then find it hard going that indeed there is affliction and suffering involved. And sooner or later, they lose their willingness and just start grinding it out. I mean, just because it's expected and I have to do it now. Some depart, like Demas, who lost heart in the work and found the world more attractive.

Christ wants his sheep shepherded by men who are willing as God wants them to be. So, is that not true of all of us, whether giving of our time, our money, our labors, we're to give not reluctantly or under compulsion because we have to.

[11:46] For God loves a cheerful giver, a willing worker, a voluntary spirit that says, here am I, send me. Here am I, use me. What would you have me to do, Lord? And Jeremy, there are aspects of shepherding that are less desirable than others.

like seeking the strain, putting out fires, rebuking, correcting. We can easily say of these things, well, I'll do it, but only because I have to do it.

We've got to meet such attitudes head on and drag them into the presence of the chief shepherd who without reluctance came willingly to lay down his life for sheep that love to wander, you and me included.

He wouldn't be deterred. He set his face like a flint to do all that his father had given him to do. And he did it from the heart. All that we needed for our salvation, he came and did willingly, going to the cross, more willingly than sometimes we go to our duties.

Well, this willing heart for the work of shepherding then is maintained by a heart for the chief shepherd. Close to him. Stay close to him. And in staying close to him, you will see his willing spirit and you will learn from him who is gentle and lowly in heart.

[13:07] There is no labor in the king's service that will make up for neglect of the king himself, said Robert Murray McShane. Well, that's the first thing, how to perform your shepherding, not because you must, but because you're willing.

Secondly, not greedy for money, but eager to serve. Now, here's another unworthy motive for shepherding the flock. It's for what you get out of it, whether money or fame or praise of men. It's rather to be done so that you can eagerly give of yourself to spend and be spent in the care of Christ's sheep. So men wondering, what's in it for me need not apply.

A cross on which to die is what was in it for our chief shepherd. And there will be deaths for you to die too. Deaths to self in order to serve the good of the sheep. There'll be sacrifices to make to serve them rather than yourself.

And again, you have to do it with willing eagerness on your own initiative. Paul says to a troublesome Corinthian church, as you recently preached from 2 Corinthians 4, we are your servants for Jesus' sake.

[14:25] Death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. So, not for what you can get out of it, but what you can give eagerly in service to them.

And then thirdly, how to shepherd God's flock, not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. Not with a domineering spirit, sitting back and barking orders as if we were kings and they exist to serve our will.

For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. Your whole office is to be spent for the good of the sheep entrusted to you by the great shepherd.

They are not your servants to serve you, but you are theirs to serve them. And you notice you do this by being examples to the flock. That's the way the good shepherd shepherded the twelve, Peter included.

The good shepherd was with them. He walked and camped out with them. They not only heard him teach, they saw how he lived, what he taught. And that's how you are to shepherd these sheep.

[ 15 : 38 ] Not just do as I say, but follow me as I follow Christ. So let your life be the best illustration of your sermons. That they may see in you how to apply God's Word in their lives.

My time is nearly up, but Peter ends as he began with needed encouragement then. Your task is to shepherd the flock with oversight over them.

How to do it, he's told you. And now, he ends with the needed encouragement to shepherd God's flock in this way. Verse 4, And when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

You see how it echoes what he says in verse 1 that he is an elder who will share in the glory to be revealed. There's glory yet to be revealed. We're waiting for the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

And when the chief shepherd appears in glory, he's coming back to reward his faithful under-shepherds. You will share in his glory and receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

[ 16 : 50 ] Oh, the crown of glory given to an Olympic athlete was made out of sticks with leaves on them woven together in a wreath and that was the victor's crown and oh, how it was beautiful as he stood on the stage and received the praise and accolades of the people but life went on and branches dry out and leaves fall and the glory fades.

And that's the way the glory, all the glory of this earth will be one day when it will blend in common dust. But there is a glory that will never fade. This crown of glory that the chief shepherd gives to his faithful under-shepherds just to hear his well done good and faithful servant is a reward enough for me for all eternity to see his joy in you and in your service performed by his grace and to see the joy of those sheep that you helped heavenward safely home at last.

Then you will see the fruit of your labors. Here on this earth we know little what our labors perform. But there you will see the fruit of your labors and their joy will be your joy.

Their glory will be your glory. Paul says to those Thessalonian believers what is our hope, our joy or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes?

Is it not you? Indeed you are our glory and joy. And that's the way the chief shepherd endured the hardships and sufferings of shepherding.

[ 18 : 26 ] He endured the cross he despised the shame all the way till it is finished. And how did he do it? For the joy that was set before him. The coming glory. The joy of returning to the Father having completed the work he gave him to do.

Being rewarded with seeing the Father's joy and pleasure in him. Glorifying him to the highest place at his own right hand. And the joy of bringing many sons and daughters to glory through his shepherding work.

Seeing their pleasure. Yes brothers and sisters your pleasure as you enter the new Jerusalem that new heaven and earth the home of righteousness and Jesus' joy will be full as he sees your joy in sharing in the fruit of his salvation.

He stands presenting us before the Father. Here am I and the children you have given me. Not one of them is missing. So my brother keep your eye on the coming glory.

Shepherd the sheep with one eye on the chief shepherd and your face to face meeting with him. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus the one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

[ 19 : 38 ] Amen. You can turn back just two books in your Bible to Hebrews chapter 13.

There's a couple places in God's word where churches are directly told how they are to relate to their pastors. Given direct instructions about their responsibility to their pastors.

So what is our responsibility to Pastor Jeremy now that he is one of our pastors? And I say our very purposefully because he is now my pastor too.

And he's Pastor John's pastor as well. And we are Pastor Jeremy's pastor if all of that math can make sense in your mind. We are pastors together shepherding this flock together but each of us.

We are each a sheep in this flock and we need to be shepherded as well. Pastors need to be pastored. So what is our responsibility church to Pastor Jeremy?

[ 20 : 52 ] Well Hebrews 13 verse 17 answers that question. This is one of those places where clear instruction is given to us about our responsibility to our pastors.

There we read this. Obey your leaders and submit to them for they are watching, keeping watch over your souls as those who will have to give an account.

Let them do this with joy and not with groaning for that would be of no advantage to you. So first, very briefly, let's consider what this verse tells us about Pastor Jeremy's responsibility to us.

He is to keep watch over our souls. We see that there in the text. He just agreed to do that as he stood up here. So members of Grace Fellowship Church, that is his responsibility to us.

And it's a weighty one. It's a serious one. It's a sobering one. Because as the text says, he will give an account for us, for how he shepherded us.

[ 21 : 56 ] He will answer to the Lord one day for how he kept watch over our souls. Our souls have been entrusted to him by the Lord.

And why will Jeremy have to give an account? Why will he need to do this? Why will I have to do this? Why will John have to do this also? Because every member of Grace Fellowship Church belongs ultimately to the Lord.

This isn't Pastor John's and Pastor Jeremy's and Pastor Colin's church. This is Christ's church. He is the chief shepherd. He is the head.

We are the body. Pick your metaphor from God's word. They all teach this same truth. Jesus Christ is ultimately in charge. He is the leader of the church.

We belong to him. He's the chief shepherd. And what a great responsibility given to Pastor Jeremy to be one of the under-shepherds of this church. To watch over our souls. As Hebrews 13 says.

[ 22 : 57 ] That is his great responsibility. Now, what is ours? What is our responsibility to Pastor Jeremy? We are to let him watch over our souls with joy and not with groaning.

We are to try to make it a joy for him to be our pastor rather than a burden. In our home, I am often tearing down beds and putting beds together.

Many times, I've put a crib together. Many times, taken the side off the crib as baby transitions to toddler. Many times, I've constructed bunk beds and then taken those bunk beds down to put together a twin bed or a full bed to take the full bed down to put the bunk bed back together.

Seems like we are constantly shuffling the sleeping arrangements in our children's rooms. And many times, as I'm putting that bed together, for my boys especially, they seem to interpret that as dad is putting a playground together.

And as dad is putting the playground together, it's time to play. And in fact, dad is part of the equipment on this playground that dad is putting together. Did you know it is much more challenging to put a bunk bed together when you have little hands over your eyes and you have some extra weight clinging to your back?

[ 24 : 22 ] Now I'm trying to wrangle a bed and wrangle a little boy all at the same time. Putting that bed together. That's my responsibility as dad. That's my job.

But when that bed became a jungle gym, when I found a three-year-old on my back covering my eyes, well, I began to groan. Sometimes, that's how this goes.

But other times, perhaps my kids will do something else, especially if they're alone. Just one of them wanders in and they're not all worked up and they're not all excited to play and instead, they're curious.

And one will come to me and say, Dad, what are you doing? We're putting this bed together. You want to help? And he and I will work together to put that frame together.

The job hasn't changed. My responsibility to put that bed together hasn't changed, but now I'm doing it with joy and not with groaning. Pastor Jeremy isn't building a bed for us, but he has been given good work to do.

[ 25 : 30 ] God has given good work to him to watch over our souls. Let's do everything we can, everything we can to help him in that.

Let's do everything that we can to make sure that we're not climbing on his back and covering his eyes. And you know, Hebrews 13, 17 tells us just how we can make that responsibility a joy and not a burden.

There's clear instructions given to us. We can make it a joy and not a burden by doing what? By obeying Pastor Jeremy and submitting to his authority given to him by God.

That's how verse 17 starts. That's how the writer of Hebrews leads for us. You want to know how to bless Pastor Jeremy, how to make his labors a joy? Obey him and submit to him.

Meaning, receive his preaching and his teaching so long as he remains faithful to the word. Receive his preaching and his teaching.

[ 26 : 35 ] Be ready, be eager to put into action what you hear from him as he opens God's word to you as he sets it before you. We should be coming on Sunday morning, Sunday evening, Wednesday night, ready to hear God's word taught and preached to us by Pastor Jeremy.

And ready to live it out. Ready to live out what we've heard from the word. So we're coming and we're expecting him to help us to understand God's word, to help us to understand how it relates to our lives.

That's one way that we obey and we submit to him. Here's another. Listen to Pastor Jeremy's wise counsel. Seek out your pastor's help.

Come to him for guidance. Take his advice to heart as he brings God's word to bear on whatever situation you have before you. Of course, Pastor Jeremy isn't infallible.

I know he knows that. All three of us pastors know that about ourselves. But as your pastor, you should seek him out and heed his godly advice.

[ 27 : 48 ] He will be laboring to watch over your soul as he counsels you, knowing that he will have to give an account before God. And then also this. Follow his lead as he guides and as he directs our church with Pastor John and with myself.

Maybe you have preferences for something. Maybe those differ from Pastor Jeremy. I'll be willing to set those aside as you submit to his leadership. Of course, you can disagree.

Of course, you can see something differently and bring it to Pastor Jeremy's attention. You can ask questions and give input and raise concerns. I know that's all welcomed by him.

A godly leader like Pastor Jeremy, he'll receive all of that. and take all of that into account. But then, in humility, be ready to obey and to submit to his leadership if he doesn't go the exact direction you might have hoped for.

And then finally, pray for him. Pray for him. Because you are for him. You are praying for him that God would bless him.

[ 29 : 00 ] Pray that God would protect him. Pray for God to uphold him. Pray for God to enable him to be faithful to his wife and his children.

Pray for God to keep him from temptation to sin. Pray for God to keep him humble in the ministry. Pray for God to make him eager to serve just as he was charged.

Eager to be an example to the flock. Pray for Pastor Jeremy's good. That is an evidence of submitting to his leadership. Asking God to bless him in the position of leadership that he's put him in.

And we're always remembering this. We are called to ultimately submit to Christ, the chief shepherd. And he's given Pastor Jeremy to us as an under-shepherd.

! And so we submit to him. That will be to his joy. That will encourage and spur Pastor Jeremy on. that will bless him and make his labors a great delight.

[ 30 : 03 ] We won't hear his groanings. And, as Hebrews 13, 17 says, it will be to our advantage.

Yes, it will be to Pastor Jeremy's joy, but also to our advantage to submit to his leadership, to look to him, to follow him. That's to his benefit.

That's to yours as well. Because here's the wonderful thing. Pastor Jeremy should be laboring for your joy. He should be laboring for your benefit.

I know that words like obedience and submission are not always well received today in our society. Even when God's word speaks so plainly about them, even Christians can struggle with the idea of obedience and submission.

But when those who lead us are laboring for us, when they are laboring for our good, for our advantage, that makes the obedience and the submission so sweet, doesn't it?

[ 31 : 12 ] Such a sweet joy. And, we're very fortunate, we're very privileged. The Lord has been kind to us. Haven't we already seen the evidence of this with Pastor Jeremy through the years of His ministry to us?

Even before we called Him as a pastor in His faithful teaching through the years, in His faithful friendship in Christ to us through the years, we know from experience He's for us.

We know from experience He's laboring for our good. Now, God has graciously called Him to be one of our pastors. God has blessed us with Him and God has called us to very specifically obey and submit to Him as Pastor Jeremy now continues, he continues to labor for our joy.

The Apostle Paul talks in just this way about his own ministry to various churches. To the church in Corinth, Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1.24, we work with you for your joy.

Then again, he says in chapter 2, verse 3, for I felt sure of all of you that my joy would be the joy of you all. And then once again, he says to the church in Philippi, in his letter to them, he says in chapter 1, verse 25, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith.

[ 32 : 44 ] Paul labored for the joy of these churches. He labored in the ministry that these churches might be built up in their faith, that these churches might grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

Paul, as a leader among these churches, labored for their good. He labored for their joy and so it's fitting that those churches should seek to make those labors a joy for leaders such as Paul.

Well, we have called Pastor Jeremy to be one of our pastors to minister to us for our progress, for our joy in the faith, for our advantage, for our benefit.

So let's reciprocate and let's make it a joy for him. I don't want Pastor Jeremy to groan on my account. I don't want to be the kid on his back covering his eyes.

I don't want Pastor Jeremy to groan on your account either. That wouldn't do any of us any good.

Pastor Jeremy groaning because of us wouldn't be to our advantage.

[ 33 : 48 ] No, it would be just the opposite. It would be to our detriment. It would be a harm. He's laboring for us. He's working for our progress, for our growth in godliness.

He's working for our joy. So let's make it a joy for him to do that. what I'm really saying is this.

Receive Pastor Jeremy just as you received me not all that long ago.

I can speak from very personal experience that you have made this ministry a joy for me. I thank the Lord for this body of believers. I thank the Lord for the encouragement that you are to me.

I thank the Lord for the ways in which you've come alongside me, the ways in which you've prayed for me, the ways in which you've cared for me, the ways in which you've encouraged me, the ways in which you've loved my family.

Do all of that. Continue doing that now for Pastor Jeremy. And continue doing it as you have for decades now for Pastor John. So let's bless Pastor Jeremy in all those ways.

[ 34 : 55 ] Let's do just the same for him that you've already been doing. Receive Pastor Jeremy as you've received me. And as many years ago you received Pastor John. He is to labor for our joy.

God has called him just to that. And we're to submit to him for his joy. God has called us just to do that.

And we do all of this remembering the chief shepherd, Jesus Christ, has given Pastor Jeremy to us. And above all, we obey and we submit to our chief shepherd.

Our joy is ultimately found in him. And may he receive all the glory. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we give you thanks that we can come into your presence this morning rejoicing.

You've been so abundantly good to us. You've blessed us. We are a people who are richly blessed. You've given us the greatest of gifts, the indescribable gift of your son, Jesus Christ.

[ 36 : 02 ] You've given us your spirit. You've united us together. You've made us to be a body of believers, now gathered as a local church here in Bremen, and you've given us pastors. You've given us this morning, Pastor Jeremy.

We thank you for the good gift that he is to us. We pray that you would make us to be a people who bless him, who make his labors to be a joy as he seeks to labor for our joy.

We thank you for him. We thank you for how you have providentially brought all of these things together to bring us to this very day, to now be installing him as a pastor.

We pray you would bless his ministry for many years to come, that your name would be made famous in our community. We pray all these things in Christ's name. Amen.