

# 1 Peter 5:8-11 'Beware your adversary the Devil!'

Last time, in 1 Peter we looked at v5-7: 'Humility, Anxiety and Worry.' Having spoken to the Elders in v1-4, Peter then says in v5 "likewise young men, (young people) be submissive (or subject to) older men." Literally the Elders. And more broadly I believe, those who are older in general. I suggested also that this may be applied to those who are young in the faith, though they be not so in years!

I explained that Peter is speaking about Christian 'humility' to those who are in authority over us at every level. And I said that like loyalty, 'humility' is a characteristic that if not dead today, is certainly on the endangered species list! Whereas Jesus said in Matthew 5:5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." And from Psalm 37 where Jesus takes His words from we learned, that this is not really an earthly inheritance but an internal one! Yes in the Christian, genuine humility, is a characteristic of Christ. In 2 Corinthians 10:1 Paul writes of "the meekness and gentleness of Christ." We must submit ourselves to Jesus through His Word as well as to those in authority over us, Christian or non-Christian, even as Jesus submitted Himself to God. "I came not to do my will but the will of him who sent me," he said.

All of this submission teaching is so that we humbly remember who we are. Forgiven sinners. This will always do away with our pride and vanity! Verse 5B: "All of you clothe yourselves with humility towards one another." Yes *clothe yourselves*. "Gird ye on." This doesn't happen by accident; it's a decision. It's about "loving one another," because "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Our pride and vanity are enemies of God. When such things are present we are not fighting for God we are fighting against Him. But when humility is present, He gives His favour, He "gives us grace," to deal with difficult situations that arise between brethren!

V6: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God so that in due time he will lift you up." No, we don't need to exalt ourselves in situations we rely on God to do that "in his due time."  
V7: "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." Yes, "anxiety;" that dividing of the mind. And worry, that choking of the life, even of that blessed assurance of life eternal, that we have through Jesus out of us. In our listening to Satan's whispers as did Eve in the garden!

Matthew 6:22: "If your eyes are good," (*applous*) simple, single eyes. Single focus. One God. One goal. One destination! No, we mustn't let Satan rob us of our heavenly assurance. "Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you."

And so we continue in the text 1 Peter 5:8-11: 'Beware your adversary the Devil!'

Verse 8 from the Greek. "Be sober minded (self-controlled) (*of spirit* the N.A.S.B. adds) watch ye, be vigilant, your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking souls to devour." So having spoken to us of the uprightness of "humility towards one another," conducting ourselves even as Jesus Himself did while He was in this life and this world, and the dangers of the divided mind by being "anxious," worrying, even robbed of our blessed assurance that we have in Jesus.

Peter now directs us to the real enemy of all true believers. In whose hands such things are powerful weapons. "Be sober mind and spirit, be vigilant." Yes, be watchful, beware, "be vigilant." So unlike that "anxious," divided worrying mind, that vexed mind, be clearheaded body and soul. Yes, be of one mind, of one focus as we saw last time. "Be of sober mind and spirit," and why? Because now you have an "adversary." You have a real enemy, since you have now put your shoulder to the

plough for the Kingdom of God! Yes friends notice that Peter says that the devil is “your adversary.” It is not that Satan is the enemy of the super spiritual Christians. Or those holy Christians, those born again Christians, (which of course, if we are Christian we all are). Peter is not saying this to any selective group of believers. He is saying that Satan is “your adversary,” “Your enemy!”

But Beloved, Peter doesn't say be afraid, be terrified. Lock your doors and don't venture outside for fear of the Evil One, no. He says “be vigilant. Be on guard.” Do you see that before you were saved you were of no concern whatsoever to the Devil. Because “you were dead in your transgressions and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). But when the light of Christ's gospel brought life into your dead soul, even as the Holy Spirit awakened you from your sleep of death, you then became Satan's Public Enemy number one. Because you were once his, but now you belong to Jesus! Praise God!

And yet with the awakening of your salvation, comes the arch enemy of our soul! Yes, “be of sober mind and spirit. Be vigilant. Beware. Be on guard against your adversary the devil.” And we need to be on such a high alert because of the kind of enemy that we are at war with!

Brothers and sisters, am I overly dramatizing the state of play as it were, between Satan and the genuine follower of Christ? By speaking of being at war with him, and our need to be on such high alert against our enemy? And even saying that we have such an enemy? Well may I say by no means. Because that is the reality that Peter is conveying to us through these images that he is painting. And he calls Satan “our enemy,” he's not merely a man, or some political leader or even some kind of religious figure to be feared, but as a “lion” even a “roaring lion.” A lion when it is most ferocious. As it roars with fangs bared, crying out it's dominion over the territory and those creatures of prey that it considers to be its own for the taking.

But was Peter then being overly dramatic? Well again, no. As any faithful preacher, he was using Biblical theology. Yes he was using scripture to interpret scripture. As the Holy Spirit breathed His Words into the apostles heart and mouth! In Job 1:6-8 we read: “One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them. The Lord said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Satan answered the Lord, “From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.” Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him, he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.”

Yes, “Where have you come from?” Satan answered the Lord, “From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.” But why? What is the Evil One's goal? Peter answers this question. “Seeking souls to devour.” Again we read from Job chapter 1:8-11: “Then the Lord said to Satan have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him, he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.” “Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied. “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.”

Yes, Satan's great desire as he accuses God's people of wrongdoing and hypocrisy to God, is the downfall of their eternal soul! Job 1:12b “then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.” It has been said that Satan lives off the unsaved souls of humanity. But it is the souls of the Saints that consume him! Matthew Henry explains that as the accuser, (which is one of Satan's names) this literally means to strike through, or to stab. It is a fitting description, since unbeknownst to Job, he stands before God seeking to put an end to Job's favoured position before The Almighty. Yes he seeks to run him through, even to stab Job in the back, so to speak. That is what the devil does with

his whisperings and accusations, but not only before God. He confronts us with our failures and shortcomings and our weaknesses of character.

As with Job, he accuses us before God and even seeks to use our loved ones and friends against us. All through the book, Job's so-called friends basically say, give it up Job, tell us the truth, tell us what you have done then we can all go home. We know that God would never bring such calamities upon anyone unless they had grievously wronged the Lord! Satan used Job's friends, his servants, his family and even his own wife against him. Chapter 2:9: "His wife said to him, "Are you still holding onto your integrity? Curse God and die." Beloved, if it not be for Christ, against such an enemy we would be without hope. We would be lost.

Again notice the words: "Seeking souls to devour." Listen to how the old Collins dictionary defines the word 'devour:' 'To swallow ravenously. To consume completely and wantonly. To destroy!' Dear friends, once you have sworn your allegiance to Jesus, having been brought from death to life, Satan's attack upon you is relentless and without ceasing. Again, he will seek to use family and friends. He will use people and things from without, and struggles from within. And his desire is to consume you completely and wantonly, until there is nothing left. His goal is to destroy you and your faith, so that he can drag you into the flames of hell with him!

We do need to continue to remind ourselves to whom this book was written, and when it was written and why it was written. It was not, and is not to the perishing world as some kind of moral code to do good, no. It was written to the saved of God! Tremendous persecution had broken out against the church under Nero. Bow down to him, and you could worship anything or anyone you like. But failure to compromise your faith in this way meant that you were an enemy of the state. And we need also to remember that Peter doesn't say to be afraid of the devil. No, he doesn't say stay in your bed with the covers pulled up over your head, he says "be on guard be vigilant beware."

Psalm 23:4-6: "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I'll fear no evil. For thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies, thou anointest my head with oil. My cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

And Psalm 27:1: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" Beloved, Jesus has gone to the Cross, and even as death could not hold the Lord of all life, we have the victory in Him! Colossians 3:1: "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your heart on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God." Yes we are spiritually seated with Jesus in heaven now.

But there is yet a war which is taking place that every true believer is part of this side of heaven, and Satan is our adversary. So we must "be on guard." We must "be vigilant" yes we must "beware" because he seeks our soul! In Ephesians 6:10-13 we read: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand!"

Yes Satan has many schemes and we must stand against him! Verse 9: "Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings." James 4:7 tells us, "Submit yourselves then to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." So as we just saw, we are told by Paul in Ephesians 6:13: "Therefore when the day of evil

comes you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand” and he goes on to say in the beginning of v14 “stand firm then.” Again, James tells us “resist the devil and he will flee from you.” And Peter tells us “resist him, standing firm in the faith.” There is a common theme running through these three men here isn't their brethren. And it's about “Standing!” Resisting. Yes making a stand! As the old hymn goes, ‘Stand up, stand up for Jesus!’

Many years ago at Burrill Pines during one of our fellowship teas, we started singing that hymn sitting down. Well Peter Snape, (God bless him) thought this wouldn't do, it's better that we stand. So he stood up. Then all 40 of us also stood up. Yes we stood together for Jesus. For our faith in Him! Well that was easy to do, it was a joyful blessing to do, and is a cherished memory that remains with me some 30 odd years later.

But what when we are not surrounded by brethren? What about when this kind of declaration of such as stand, comes at a cost? Even a great cost? It may be ridicule and the loss of worldly credibility. Yes the loss of face. Perhaps the loss of a job. Friends. Even family. What do we do? Well we remember the Cross! Yes we remember Christ's Sufferings. His Ridicule. His Humiliation. His beatings, and we “remain standing firm in the faith.” And “when we have done everything,” when we have prayerfully consulted the scriptures, when we have prayed alone, when we have prayed together. When we have committed our way ahead, and indeed all things to God and His glory that awaits us, we do “stand,” come what may! Because we are not of this world. We are of another Kingdom and another King. Yes we make “a stand” to defend our faith against Satan and his legions!

Ephesians 5:15-16: “Be very careful then how you live, not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.” And we take comfort in this Peter explains, that “your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kinds of sufferings.” Beloved, sadly, Australia today is a godless society, but also with every false God under the sun! Yes on the whole we have turned our back on the Living God of the Bible. And we have embraced every idol of the fallen world. So for the Christian, who is truly for Christ, (not just in name only but body and soul) it is a trying, even a vexing existence today. Yes we do still have many tremendous freedoms praise God, but everything which we hold dear, (as I've mentioned many times before) is under attack by “our enemy the devil” on all fronts. Our brethren around the world today are facing Satan's attacks manifested in physical harm, even death. It's as simple as declare yourself for Jesus, and die. Renounce or compromise your faith in Jesus and live. Or “stand” up, for your faith and die. It's that simple. That is their experience. And I fully believe that those ravenous wolves are tearing at the doors of Australia today as well. It is only a matter of time, before they are unleashed here!

We do need to pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world constantly. We don't do this nearly enough do we? But we do need to take comfort that those difficulties which we encounter for the “stand” that we make in Jesus, are things that are happening all around the world to our brethren. And yet with even far greater vehemence and violence, than we are currently experiencing or can possibly imagine!

And we take comfort also from v10: “And the God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered for a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.” Dear friends, firstly I want to direct your minds to the words “for a little while.” Peter reminds us that come what may within the sovereignty of God, however fierce, however difficult, however challenging our current circumstances may be, they are but “for a little while.”

But brothers and sisters, let us not misunderstand Peter's words here. He is not saying that humanly speaking such things will pass us by quickly, no. Our sufferings or difficulties whatever they be, may

well last a whole lifetime. No, what he is saying, is that in the scheme of eternity, such things are but a breath! And in the light of the glories that await us in Jesus, these things are but “a little while.”

We saw this same statement at the beginning of this letter from Peter in chapter 1:6: “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.” And with this other bookend to his letter, so to speak, about those trials which face us all to varying degrees, he again exhorts us, as he brings this letter to a close, to “stand” up and “stand” firm, because these trials are for, but “a little while” and glory is insight!

Next in verse 10 the words, “and the God of all grace.” Yes “all grace,” has its origin in God. His unmerited free gift of forgiveness for sin through His Son Jesus. And also that “grace,” to deal with one another in humility and graciousness as we saw in v5. This is Peter prayerfully committing them to God. It is in effect a benediction. And as he commits them to the Almighty he prays, that their suffering's may be short, (not that God would take those things away) because Romans 5:1-5 tells us “therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance, character, and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”

But he does pray that their trials may be short, even for “a little while.” And yet as long as they may be, (having been strengthened and sanctified through them by the Holy Spirit) that God the Father through those things would make them “strong, firm and steadfast.” What is Peter saying? That they would be able to stand against the wiles and schemes of the devil, as long as they were “standing firm” in the grace and mercy of God, which is found in Jesus through the Holy Spirit!

Beloved, resisting the Evil One, is standing firm in Christ. But we can't do this alone or in our own strength. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit to stand. But it is incumbent upon us to stand up and Ephesians 6:13, “having done everything to stand our ground, putting on the full armour of God,” we then “stand!” V11 “His is the might (or dominion) forever and ever Amen.” Or in other words, glory be to God, because all things are in His Hands! Hallelujah!

So in closing this morning Beloved, we have an Adversary. And he is seeking your soul be not mistaken! But we are not to live in fear of him for “greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world” the scriptures tell us. No we are not to live in fear of him, but we are to be “on guard.” “To beware” “To stand.” And to resist him and stand against him! And praise God that we can do this, because “His is the power and the glory. Forever and ever Amen.”

Let's pray!