

## Your Adversary: the Devil – I Peter 5:8-9

### I. Introduction:

- A. Peter, while in the midst of some practical exhortations, uses a **simile** to punctuate his lesson.
1. *“Your adversary the devil, **AS** a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”*
  2. We will get back to the illustration of the lion in a moment, but first...
  3. As always, it is helpful, if not essential, to consider the context of any important Biblical statement.
  4. And this **is** an important statement.
  5. Other than the **Book of Proverbs**, which is primarily a collection of pithy statements, most of the rest of scripture flows from point to point – whether historical or theological.
  6. And that often includes the practical exhortations of the epistles.
- B. So looking back one step, Peter encourages us to *“cast all your care upon (the Lord); for he careth for you.”*
1. And then it is in the next breath that he says, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”*
  2. I hope you can see the relationship between those two verses and thoughts.
  3. One of the important reasons to practice **“care casting”** is the roaring and the assaults of the devil.
  4. Many of the problems of our lives are indirectly coming from the hand of Satan.
  5. And he is striving hard to keep us from casting all our cares upon God.
  6. He would like us to live in terror before we reach heaven.
  7. I believe the devil enjoys seeing our terrified eyes, as we hear another of his tremendous roars.
  8. He wants us to be so intent, watching for conspiracies & problems, what we are kept from serving the Lord.
  9. But I am getting ahead of myself.

### II. Satan is the primary adversary of the children of God.

- A. As I said this morning: while the devil may be **our** adversary, he is **not actually** the adversary of the **unbeliever**.
1. Metaphorically speaking, Satan is the father, the spiritual parent, of the unsaved soul.
  2. And that relationship dictates the way he treats the two different kinds of people in this world.
  3. You could say that he doesn't want to disturb the unsaved to any great degree.
    - a. He doesn't want his own child to realize how wretched and spiritually destroyed he is.
    - b. Sure the life of the lost person may sometimes be miserable, but as a rule he doesn't realize how miserable he really is.
    - c. If he did, he might want to leave the lion's pride to join the Good Shepherd's flock.
  4. So Satan encourages, not discourages, his children in their crimes against God.
  5. He blesses them with the euphoria of their sins in the same way that drugs and alcohol enslave more people with every use.
  6. Generally speaking, Satan is not the adversary of his own people.
  7. But **he IS** the adversary of God's people.
- B. And by the way, the Old Testament word translated **“satan”** literally means **“adversary.”**
1. Those Jews who may have been reading Peter's epistle knew exactly who he was talking about when they heard the word **“adversary.”**
  2. And what exactly does that mean? What is an adversary? What is it to be adversarial?
- C. An adversary is **more** than an **enemy**; he is an **opponent**, a **challenger**, an **enemy combatant**.
1. He doesn't just dislike his enemy, he engages and fights his enemy.
  2. The original Greek word refers to a lawyer – perhaps a prosecuting attorney – someone with accusations and charges against someone else. Against you.
  3. At times, as we see in **Job**, he stands before the Lord, arguing against us.
  4. And at other times, he may fill or direct the prosecuting attorney in an earthly case, such as those people who refuse, on scriptural grounds, not to serve homosexuals.

- D. The prophet **Zechariah** paints a picture in **chapter 3** of God's high priest standing before the angel of the Lord with *"Satan standing at his right hand to resist him."*
1. Like a corrupt government agent, Satan was there to oppose everything the priest was trying to do.
  2. He might have been whispering into his ear that he was **not worthy to serve** the Lord as His priest.
  3. He might have tried to say that the **details of his service** weren't as precise as the Lord required.
  4. He could have had a dozen *"objections"* to shout toward the righteous judge about this poor servant.
  5. But the Lord overruled them all: *"And the (Angel of the) Lord said unto Satan, the Lord rebuke thee..."*
- E. In **Job chapter 1**, we see the devil arguing with Jehovah over the character of that righteous man.
1. *"Doth Job fear God for nought?" Hast not thou made an hedge about him...  
a. Thou hast blessed the work of his hands,"* as well as the state of his heart.
  2. Then in **Job 2** Satan roared once again, *"Skin for sin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life."*
  3. He was essentially saying that Job, like all of God's people, was nothing but a hypocrite.
  4. After that the devil tried his best to devour and destroy godly Job using every weapon in his arsenal.
- F. **Revelation 12** speaks of the devil, describing him with several uncomplimentary terms.
1. **Verse 9** says, *"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."*
  2. And then someone there in heaven then added a bit more information, without actually naming Satan.
  3. *"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the **ACCUSER** of our brethren is cast down, which **accused** them before our God day and night."*
  4. This scripture calls the devil the *"accuser of the brethren,"* as if it is one of his most descriptive and characteristic traits.
  5. Accusing the brethren is one of the devil's priorities, since he can't attack the Lord himself.
- G. Satan delights in roaring against the people of God, accusing them of every tiny failure & every major sin.
1. But it is all to none effect, because there is salvation and strength in our Redeemer – **1 Peter 5:10**.
  2. So *"cast all your care upon him, for He careth for you."*
  3. *"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding."*
  4. Don't listen to the roaring of the *"king of beasts."*
  5. Don't let his roaring disturb you other than to encourage you to draw closer to the Saviour.
- H. In the midst of his adversarial roaring, the Bible depicts the devil as a inveterate, perpetual & consummate liar.
1. At the very beginning he lied to our first mother, and he has been lying ever since.
  2. **Peter** revealed to **Ananias** that it was Satan who prompted him to lie to the church and to the Holy Spirit.
  3. **Paul** confronted a false prophet in **Acts 13** and bluntly told him, *"O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, the enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?"*
  4. And the **Book of Revelation** describes Satan, over and over again, as the deceiver of men – **Revelation 12:9; 13:14; 20:2-3; and 20:10**.
- I. The devil is the most corrupt lawyer in the history of jurisprudence – either earthly or spiritual.
1. He is not only the accuser of the brethren, but he delights in slandering them.
  2. The word *"devil"* is even sometimes translated *"false accuser"* and *"slanderer"* in the Bible.
  3. And the Lord Jesus said that he is a **murderer** – **John 8:44**.
  4. Satan would like to see your life cut short and your service of God destroyed or devoured by sin.
  5. There is a sense in which if he can get us to poison ourselves with worries and cares, we will become effectively dead to our God-given responsibilities.

### III. Therefore, be sober and vigilant, resisting the devil in the strength of the Lord.

- A. In all of this, we have one of those narrow roads Austin referred to last week, with deep ditches on either side.
1. There are a few Christians who imagine Satan behind every rock and around every corner.
    - a. That fear turns them from being useful servants of God into spiritual sloths.
      - b. *“The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets” – (Proverb 26:13.*
  2. But generally speaking that is not **our** problem; we’re usually stuck in the opposite ditch.
  3. We don’t consider Peter’s words to be important enough to seriously consider or implement.
  4. We don’t consciously *“put on the whole armour of God,”* because we aren’t sufficiently aware of the spiritual world to know that we **must** *“stand against the wiles of the devil”* or be devoured by him.
  5. *“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”*
- B. Peter tells us to be *“sober.”*
1. The word might be appropriately used in talking about **drunkenness**, but it shouldn’t be confined to it.
  2. And the word is **not forbidding** us from **laughing, smiling** and **enjoying** our Christian lives.
  3. It doesn’t mean *“grave”* or *“somber.”*
  4. In this case it is the spiritual equivalent to *“defensive driving,”* being aware of what is going on around us.
  5. In the Bible it is often tied to the word *“watch,”* and sometimes is even translated that way.
  6. **I Timothy 4:5** – *“But watch thou in all things.”*
- C. Admittedly Christians sometimes sin with their eyes wide open, knowing full well what they are doing.
1. At that point their service for God and their worship become ineffectual – useless.
  2. But if they are children of God worthy of the name of the Lord, this is not something common in their lives.
  3. Far more often, they sin because they are surprised and caught off guard by some temptation.
  4. Their jealousy, their pride, or their anger overcomes them when they are least expecting it.
  5. Peter’s exhortation is all about this kind of spiritual attack.
  6. **I Thessalonians 5:6** – *“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”*
- D. The word *“vigilant”* is related to *“being sober,”* but it seems to carry a different attitude and approach.
1. While to be *“sober,”* suggests watching for danger, to be *“vigilant”* carries the idea of watching with expectation – and usually it is about watching for something good.
  2. Several times the Lord Jesus said *“Watch therefore, (be vigilant) for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”* The Lord is returning soon, live in that expectation. Watch for Him.
  3. In **Gethsemane**, Christ told the disciples, *“My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.”*
  4. But later *“he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?”*
  5. Paul uses the same word in writing to the **Corinthians** and **Colossians** – *“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” – I Corinthians 16:13.*
  6. And *“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving” – Colossians 4:2.*
  7. After beseeching the Lord for His blessings, watch and be ready to receive them.
- E. The word *“vigilant,”* which is sometimes translated *“watch,”* is also used by Paul in another interesting way.
1. In **I Thessalonians 5:10** the word is used to express someone being **fully awake** and **alert**.
  2. **Verse 6** – *“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”*
  3. For what should we watch, Paul?
  4. He replies in **verse 10** – vigilantly watch for the return of our Saviour, *“Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him”* – whether we are still alive or having passed away.
  5. The word *“wake”* is the same word that Peter uses.
  6. Someone who is truly awake is watchful, vigilant and expectant.

7. And going back to Peter, what is our apostle telling us?
  8. I think he is saying, *“in addition to watching for the lion that goeth about seeking whom he may devour, watch for the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.”*
- F. And then finally, he says in regard to the devil, *“whom **RESIST** stedfast in the **faith**.”*
1. Looking for scriptures where this word is used, we go back to Paul’s exhortation in **Ephesians 6**.
  2. *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*
    - a. *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*
    - b. *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*
    - c. *Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to **WITHSTAND** in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”*
  3. Where Peter says, *“resist”* this roaring lion, Paul in this scripture says, *“withstand”* his devilish wiles.
  4. How can we withstand the devil? We begin by putting on the whole armor of God.
  5. In order to resist Satan, we have to live with the expectation of meeting his temptations in serious battle.
  6. If we go through life in a fog, or blind or bedazzled with the things of the world, we are not even going to know how spiritually defeated we are. Paul says elsewhere that we need to wake up.
  7. We need to put on the armor of light with the expectation of going into battle, because we are.
  8. Be aware, watch and pray, because *“your adversary the devil, **AS** a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”*
- G. Then **James** adds another important element in **chapter 4**.
1. *“Submit yourselves therefore to God. **Resist the devil**, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh to you. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and he shall lift you up.”*
  2. It is not enough to put on the girdle of truth and the breastplate of righteousness.
  3. We need the whole uniform from the helmet of salvation to the shoes of the preparation of the gospel.
  4. And that includes the shield of faith to protect and cover it all.
  5. Peter says, *“resist stedfast in the faith.”*
- H. How can we drive Satan away from our hearts? I will tell you point blank: you can’t. But the Lord can.
1. We need God’s blessings in order to be victorious over this lion, so we must cling to the Lord **by faith**.
  2. How can we successfully cast all our care upon the Lord? We must learn to so do **by faith**.
  3. Ordinarily, we are going to cling to our worries & problems, because that is how our fallen natures are wired
  4. But as long as we encumber ourselves with the cares of this life, we are going to be devoured.
  5. We need the strength of the Holy Spirit.
  6. *“Lord, we believe enough to be saved, help thou our unbelief in order to live victoriously in this devil-besotted world.”*
- I. Peter concludes his thoughts on the subject with the encouragement that we are not alone in our struggles.
1. *“The same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are (found throughout) the world.”*
  2. I can think of Christians who it appears are under assault after assault, with new problems laid on top of old problems. It may appear that things could not possibly get worse, but for some people they do.
  3. Look at the lives of Job, Joseph and Jeremiah. Your problems have not yet reached that high degree.
- J. I said look at those three, but actually, there is someone much better to consider.
1. Look to the *“God of all grace, who hath called unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus”* – **verse 10**.
  2. Our light affliction, endured for a little while, has been designed by the Lord to make you perfect, strengthened and settled – **verse 11**.
  3. *“To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”* – **verse 12**.
  4. We have a very strong adversary, but we also have an even stronger divine Mediator. Praise the Lord!