

Do Not Be Surprised at the Fiery Ordeal Among You

An Expository Journey Through **1Peter** **1Peter 5:8&9**

53 What Spiritual Maturity Looks Like, Part 2, Understanding and Resisting the Devil

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1 Peter 5:8&9

8 Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

9 But resist him, firm in *your* faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

To the Glory of God

Now, even though there are many books out there which make the claim that they are *authoritative* concerning satan, and the devil, and demons, the Truth is that we simply don't know much about these beings. The Bible speaks "matter-of-factly" about them (as though we should already know), yet provides very little detail about them or their history. But there *are* things that we have been able to glean from the little information that God put into the sacred Writings.

For example, we know demons *actively and continually* oppose the Kingdom of God (**Luke 11:14-23**). We know that they seek to *deceitfully* ensnare humans, and manipulate them to do *their* will rather than God's (**2 Timothy 2:26**). We know that their *primary* manifestation is NOT in turning little girl's heads around and vomiting green bile, but in the dark and hidden *origination, development, and propagation* of False Teaching/Religions (**1 Timothy 4:1**), and that it's possible for them to gain *such* an influence over a lost person that they essentially "possess" them (**Luke 8:26-39**).

We know that unless people are granted with the Blessing of being "born again", and unless those who have experienced the miracle

of the New Birth live in the Authority of the risen Christ, demons have "the power of death" over them and use people's "fear of death" to *maximum* advantage (**Hebrews 2:14&15**).

Now, based on what I consider to be a relatively *obscure* Passage in **Ephesians 6:12**, many believe that there is some *hierarchy* of demonic Power. And whereas that may or may not be true, we *do* know that there seems to be a *primary, ruling evil being* known, since antiquity, as "the devil and satan" (**The Revelation 12:9**), who was *originally* created as an arch-angel, named "Lucifer", who, through his Pride, fell into sin and tried to rebel against God in Heaven (**Isaiah 14, The Revelation 12**), was *cast out* of Heaven (**Luke 10:18, The Revelation 12**), and was manifested as a serpent in the Garden of Eden (**Genesis 3:1-5, The Revelation 12:9**). This same evil being was present in the Divine Council concerning Job (**Job 1:6-12**), and was the one who tempted Jesus in the wilderness (**Luke 4:1-13**).

And now we know and believe and teach that this very *same* "devil or satan" goes about to cause all sorts of trouble for those who love and serve Jesus. James said he can "tempt us" (**James 1:13-16**), and so, Peter calls this being "**your adversary**" and says here that he:

... prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

We also know from the Gospel Records and the **Book of the Revelation** that 1/3 of all the angels in Heaven were cast down to the earth and became "demons" or "unclean spirits" who have the ability to "posses" or "inhabit" lost or unsaved people (**The Revelation 12**).

But as to their "Order" and "Organization", or their "Rank" and "Abilities", the Bible is silent. And since God determined *not* to reveal these details to us in trustworthy Scripture, we would do well to remain silent about them as well.

But as you spend time reading and enjoying God's Word, and as you develop a strong and powerful Prayer Life, and as you engage in the various Means of Grace that God has provided, like the Lord's Day assembling together, the Sacraments, times of Corporate Prayer, Fasting, Bible Study, Godly Fellowship, and Service, you come to an interesting conclusion:

Our *best* Protection against demons is *less* Preoccupation with demons and *more* Preoccupation with God.

Beyond this, we really don't know much about the demonic world, because God doesn't tell us. So, *why* doesn't God tell us more? Demons seem rather dangerous and influential. So, wouldn't we *benefit* from knowing *more* about our insidious enemies?

No. Because when it comes to both "Good" and "Evil", it is God's revealed Will for us:

... to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil. (Romans 16:19)

... so, even though many people are very *curious* about "spiritual Evil" and the Occult, God would have us to be *less* understanding about "Evil and Deception" and *more* understanding about "Righteousness and Truth". And that is true because the devil has no Authority over any Christian, except to the degree we *grant* to him by *believing* what he says.

Now no human is a match for satan and his demonic underlings. Satan is a spiritual being and has had 6,000 years to experiment with people. He understands human beings and he knows what bothers us, and what troubles us, and how to get us "off the mark". And so, I will tell you that those who *think* they have become highly educated in "demonology" have simply been fooled into spending *way too much* time seeking to comprehend the devil instead of trying to comprehend God. And as far as I am concerned, satan won that battle. We need to remember that it was the misplaced desire to understand both Good *and* Evil that got us in trouble in the first place back in the Garden. (Genesis 3:4-7). So, we are *infinitely* better off to go God's Way and...

... be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil

Now one of the biggest reasons why satan *seems* to win so many battles is *not* because God is weak, but because God's people are *apathetic* and *sleeping*. And that is *why* Peter begins this Section of inspired Truth by saying:

Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert...

Several years ago, God dealt with me to begin the year of 2012 with a Sermon Series on "Worldliness". "Worldliness" is the terrible, *compromising* condition of professing believers "buying in" to the ways of the lost, pagan "world system". Ian Murray, the editor of "Banner of Truth" publications defined Worldliness like this:

"Worldliness is departing from God. It is a Man-centered way of thinking; it proposes objectives which demand no radical breach with Man's fallen nature; it judges the importance of things by the present and material results; it weighs success by numbers; it covets human esteem and wants no unpopularity; it knows no Truth for which it is worth suffering; it declines to be a 'fool for Christ's sake'. Worldliness is the mind-set of the unregenerate. It adopts idols and is at war with God."¹

So, "Worldliness" is *loving* the fallen *system* of the world rather than loving what God has said. It is believing what the world teaches about life, and money, and happiness, and *abandoning* what Scripture teaches. It was the Apostle John who warned us against the "Curse of Worldliness" when he wrote this in **1 John 2:15-17**:

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

So, it isn't the dirt or the trees or even the people that were made in God's Image that John warns us about here. No, the "Worldliness" that John cries out against is described in three terms:

1. The lust of the flesh
2. The lust of the eyes
3. The boastful Pride of Life

These three things have an *intoxicating* effect on people. They cast their spell on us and *mesmerize* us until God and the things of God seem like a distant memory. Worldliness is dangerous because it makes

¹ <https://ericyoung.wordpress.com/2011/06/05/what-is-worldliness-%E2%80%94-iain-h-murray/>

us *lethargic* and *apathetic* about the important matters of the Spirit of God. So, whereas a believer who is “on fire” with God will *run* to God, and *run* to God’s Word, and *run* to Prayer, and *run* to God’s people, *worldly* saints will find everything else to do instead. There is just so much out in the world to occupy their time that gives them so much pleasure than spending time with God in Prayer or Bible Study or even gathering together with fellow-believers to worship God on the Lord’s Day.

Today, corporate America has deemed that the Lord’s Day is just “another day”. All the stores are open, the movies shows are packed out, families gather to water-ski or barbeque, while Jesus sits over in the corner as though Who He is and what He has done doesn’t matter. But the God, Who holds our next heart-beat in His Hands, has *commanded* His people to live “counter-intuitive” to the ways of the lost world, and God has said:

Hebrews 10:19-25

Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

So, in contrast to *intoxicating apathy* that Worldliness gives, the writer of **Hebrews** was “moved along” by God the Holy Spirit to say:

- Since it is true that Jesus has guaranteed our Salvation
- Since it is true that Jesus is constantly interceding for us

... since all that is true, THEREFORE

- **Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water**

- **Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful**
- **Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds**
- **Let us NOT forsak[e] our own assembling together, as is the habit of some**
- **Let us encourag[e] *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.**

... while the Apostle Peter simply says:

Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert...

But, *why*? If God is Sovereign, and if Jesus has done it all, and if Christ is constantly interceding for me, if my Salvation is *secured* and I am *guaranteed* to go to Heaven, *why* do I have to overcome the intoxicating effects of the lost world and labor to be of a "sober spirit" and "be on the alert"? Peter tells us:

[BECAUSE] Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

... and then Peter gives us an "Apostolic Command" to:

... resist him, firm in *your* faith ...

Now, as I said, there is a lot of Teaching out there about how believers are supposed to engage in what they call "spiritual warfare". And like the Pharisees, they take something very simple and straight-forward that God has spoken and they get it all tangled up with a million different Teachings that don't accomplish anything but confuse everybody.

Notice that Peter doesn't get into how to "bind the devil" or how to "cast out demons" here. Peter doesn't teach 38 chapters on "spiritual warfare" either. He used five Greek words (with a sixth word added in English to help clarify):

Resist him (the devil), firm in (your) Faith.

Now this is actually just one, single Commandment:

Resist him (the devil)...

... and the phrase "**firm in** (your) **Faith**" is telling us *how* we are to resist the devil. And this Command from Peter is very similar to what James taught in **James 4:6b-10**:

... GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

So, we see here that James teaches that the *way* that we are to resist the devil is *not* by us "binding the devil" or repeating certain prayers, but it is by us:

- Drawing near to God
- Cleanse your hands
- Purify your hearts
- Be miserable, mourn, and weep (sober minded)
- Humble yourselves

... which helps to define what Peter meant when he said:

Resist him (the devil), **firm in** (your) **Faith**.

Now when the Apostle Paul described our spiritual war against our supernatural foes in **Ephesians 6:14-18**, note carefully how he described our "Armor" and "Weapons":

- ✓ The "**Belt of Truth**": what holds our "uniform" together and keeps our "limbs" free is knowing God's Truth.
- ✓ The "**Breastplate of Righteousness**": understanding how we are clothed with Christ's Righteousness is what guards our vitals.
- ✓ The "**Shoes of the Gospel**": what enables us to traverse difficult ground during battle is knowledge of the Gospel of Peace.

- ✓ The **“Shield of Faith”**: trusting God’s Promises is what extinguishes darts of deception, not detailed knowledge of either the darts or their shooters.
- ✓ The **“Helmet of Salvation”**: our head (our brain) is protected by clearly knowing Who saved us and *how*.
- ✓ The **“Sword of the Spirit”**: the Word of God is our most powerful, effective offensive Weapon against a powerful spiritual enemy.
- ✓ **“Pray at all times in the Spirit”²**: speaking to demons is not something the Bible commends. We are not told to *communicate* with the devil. We are told to *resist* the devil. We are to communicate with God, in Prayer.

Notice here that every aspect of both our Armor and the Weapons of our spiritual Warfare has to do with us being *wise* as to what is “Good” (Holy) and *innocent* as to what is “Evil”. And that tells us that God Himself is our very best Protection from the ravages of our evil enemy: God’s Truth, His Righteousness, His Gospel, His Promises, His Salvation, His Word, and our prayerful orientation *to God*.

So, I would suggest that what both James and Paul taught is what the very simple phrase that Peter said **“firm in [your] Faith”** or **“Firm in THE Faith³”** looks like.

And so, before the Bible instructs us on *how* to send devils scurrying away in fear, it says:

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil...”

So, the day-by-day continual struggle that we are engaged in, as we:

war against the various lusts of our flesh (by the Power of the Holy Spirit),
to be found *humbly* and *joyfully* submitted to the Authority of Scripture
in our daily lives, all to the Glory of God.

... that *ongoing* effort *is* what “Submit yourselves to God” *is*. So, the small, seemingly unimportant battles that we wage every day to

² The phrase “in the Spirit” pertaining to Prayer is referring to us praying “in accord with” the *Product* of God the Holy Spirit, which is inspired Scripture, rather than “speaking in tongues”.

³ THE Faith would be the CHRISTIAN FAITH, or Faith that is in accord with historic, orthodox Christian Beliefs and Doctrines and Experiences.

continue to trust God, to *continue* to believe, to *continue* to repent, to *continue* to hope, to *continue* to rejoice, to *continue* to pant after God, to *continue* to seek for Him, to *continue* to delight ourselves in Jesus, to *continue* to see Christ as the Treasure of the Universe, to *continue* to behold the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus, this is not only our progressive Sanctification, it is also very powerful spiritual warfare.

Here's the key: we grant Authority to whomever we trust. The devil has no Authority over any Christian except to the degree we grant to him by "buying in" to whatever he is selling. The *more* we listen to the devil (or those who faithfully serve him), the *more* we believe what the devil says, the *more* influence and control over us we give to him, and the more hold he gets on us. This is not some mysterious spiritual secret. This is the way Influence or Control works in *any* relationship we have.

So, when it comes to demons, we do not need to "claim" any Authority over them. Our words don't act like spells with demons (**The Acts 19:15**). Demons only recognize God's Authority. But these fallen angels believe so strongly in God and in God's absolute Omnipotence that James says that they "shudder" in fear (**James 2:19**).

So, when we submit ourselves to God, when we *ongoingly* and *joyfully* submit ourselves underneath God's Authority as revealed in Scripture (because we have come to the reasoned conclusion that this is BEST for us), when we *voluntarily* reject Worldliness and *humble ourselves* under God's Ways, by *trusting*, and *obeying*, and *enjoying* Jesus, the Bible says that demons run away from us. And that is true for two reasons:

1. There are so many people who are NOT submitted to God, why spend time on those who are?
2. This act of Faith releases great spiritual power that demons *cannot* withstand.

And so, the more we know God and His Word, the more we trust and obey and delight in Jesus, the more dangerous we become to Satan.

So, yes, demons are real. They are *powerfully* real. They wreak more havoc in our lives and in society than most "post-Enlightenment Western church-goers" would think. And that means that we must take God's Words more seriously than our culture's ridicule. But I

categorically disagree that this means that we need to know more details about demons or their strategies than God has told us in Scripture. That is not only impossible in the first place, it is a fool's errand. But even *more* importantly, God has already told us that we do *not* need to become *wiser* in "Evil things".

We need to know God. Because the *more* we know God and His Word, the *more* we are able (and willing) to trust Him and to live in obedience to Him. And the result is that we become more and more wise about what is "Good". The bonus is that we also become more dangerous to demons, *not* because we are important people, but because we mirror God's Glory and Grace more effectively.

Our *ongoing* growth in Biblical Humility and Submission to God proves to a cynical world that Jesus is *better* than anything this world has to offer. And that *propagates* the Kingdom of God and brings His Kingdom to bear in the world. This is *exactly* how:

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. (Romans 16:20)

... and it is how...

... HIS ENEMIES [will] BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET.

But notice in verse 8 that Peter says that the devil is an "adversary" that walks around "roaring", seeking to "devour" Christians. And that likens satan to a lion. So, even in his wickedness, satan seeks to *emulate* Jesus, Who alone is the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah" (**The Revelation 5:5**).

But *why* is satan "roaring"? If a natural lion wants to eat someone, you'd think he would sneak up on them instead of roaring and giving himself away. In fact, that's exactly the way the devil is described in other places: he's like a snake (**Genesis 3:1**), which means he is "crafty" and "subtle". So, it isn't that satan has "all-power". He doesn't. God has "all-power" (Omnipotence). But satan is "subtle". He can fasten himself onto your heel before you know he's there. So, a snake doesn't roar, it hides and slithers and strikes *unexpectedly*.

And the Bible tells us that the devil is like that. He's dangerous sometimes because he is subtle and quiet and hidden. But that's *not* the case here. Peter tells us that satan is dangerous for other reasons. A

natural lion is dangerous, not mainly because he sneaks up on people (even though some do), but because he's so strong and fierce. So, even if you know a lion is there, you're still a goner unless you have some power more than your own, like a rifle, or a gigantic net... or God.

So, Peter's point here is *not* the devil's *subtlety* or *craftiness*, but his *power*. But *what* power, *specifically*? In this context, Peter is not talking about anything other than what verse 9 tells us:

... resist him, firm in *your* faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

So, the context of what the Apostle Peter is talking about right here is the Suffering of all believers. Read it carefully and you'll see this:

Resist the roaring lion... because the *same* suffering

Peter tells us to resist *this* lion because Christians *everywhere* are in this fight of *physical, tangible* Suffering. So, the "roaring jaws" of the lion, in this case, is the ongoing Sufferings of all of God's saints, which is meant by satan for their devouring.

We see a clear picture of this in **The Revelation 2:10&11**, where Jesus Himself says to the Church in Smyrna:

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.

Now this is literal. Jesus is prophesying here that Satan is going to be given the Authority (by God) to cast *some* of the believers of this Church into prison. But the *Reason* God is going to *allow* satan to do this is to "test" them. Which means that this Evil is allowed only because an *infinitely greater* Good will come forth from it (that would NOT have come forth had God not allowed the Evil).

And as bad as this seems to us, Jesus also promises that these precious saints in Smyrna will hurt so badly for ten days that their

Suffering will appear to be “tribulation” which lends itself to the very Wrath of God. So, this is *cataclysmic* Suffering, *life-altering* Suffering. And then Jesus gives these believers a Command:

Be faithful until death...

... which means that some will die. Now Jesus *could* have simply intervened and none of this would have happened in the first place. But He didn't. He *chose* to allow His Own people to suffer and for some to die. And then He *commands* those who will suffer and die to remain faithful. But that Command also has with it a “Divine Motivation”, a Promise from God Himself that these saints can hold on to, that will act as a Motivation to help them go through this horrendous Suffering:

... and I will give you the crown of life

... and...

He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death

Now it is very important to understand that these believers are not *earning* the Crown of Life by their endurance. That is NOT what this teaches. Jesus is NOT teaching, “*If you do this, I'll do that*”. That is the way the *inferior* Old Covenant worked. Instead, Jesus is creating a situation that will *require* these believers to *call out* to Him, *run* to Him, *embrace* Him, *look* to Him, *trust* in Him, in order to go through what is coming on them.

We must always keep this in the forefront of our minds when we are talking about the Issue of Suffering: Salvation is not *earned* by Suffering. No matter how terrible a person might suffer, he is *not earning* Forgiveness from God. It is common for Presidents to speak about fallen soldiers as though they immediately enter into Heaven as a direct result from dying in combat. And while we should honor our military, we must always maintain that *nobody* earns Heaven by *anything* they do in this life. Suffering *cannot* wash away a single sin. And Suffering does not impute Righteousness to a single person.

But Suffering *does* change us. Suffering burns away the hay, wood, and stubble of remaining love for this world and its fallen system.

Suffering *does* cause our eyes to see Jesus as both Infinite and Absolute. Suffering puts us in a place of great Humility, because Suffering is the *ultimate* tool of Humiliation.

Suffering proves to us and to the lost world that Jesus is *better* than *anything* that this world can give us, and He is *better* than *anything* that this world can take away from us. And that includes our very life.

But because some of the believers in Smyrna are truly saved, they *will* remain faithful even under ten days of excruciating Suffering. So, as a result of what God has already done *in* them and *for* them, they will be faithful unto death (or as Peter says, "**resist him firm in faith**"), and they will manifest that the Salvation that Jesus gave to them is real by living forever, or as Peter says here in **1 Peter 5:10**:

After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you.

This all serves to teach us that successfully resisting the devil does *not* mean that he *can't* or *won't* kill you. He might. But it *does* teach that satan cannot do you any *eternal* harm. The worst he can do is to kill your body. But he can't even do that without God's Permission. (**1 Peter 4:19**).

This is the difference between satan acting as "snake" and him behaving as a lion. His "snake-likeness" is his indirect sneakiness. But his "lion-likeness" is his direct attack in Suffering. The hardest thing about Suffering is *not* usually that it sneaks up on you (though that can sometimes seem to appear out from nowhere and make our trial harder (**1 Peter 4:12**)). The hardest thing about Suffering is that it can overwhelm our Faith with Fear and Pain. It can actually *destroy* our Hope that God cares about us, or that He has enough Power to help, (or that He even exists). And that's *exactly* what satan wants to happen. And that's *why* Peter says the lion is "roaring". The roaring of the lion's jaws is the power of Suffering to destroy our Faith.

So, the point of saying in verse 8:

"Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert...

... is *not* because the lion might sneak up on us. Because, after all, he's roaring! The point is that when you fight a lion, roaring with hunger, you better not be intoxicated or distracted or apathetic. You're going to need all your spiritual faculties.

But this raises some very important Questions. For example, We learned from **1 Peter 4:16&17** that there are times when the Suffering of genuine Christians is the Judgment of God.

but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. For *it is* time for judgment 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?

But what we learned back then was that the Suffering of Christians is *never* to their *eternal* Harm. All Suffering by true believers is God's *purifying* or *refining* Judgment. That's what **1 Peter 1:6&7** taught us.

But, here in this Passage, we see that Suffering is an attack by satan. So, which one is it? Is our Suffering the "*purifying* Fire of God" or is it the "jaws of the roaring lion"? And the Answer is: it's both! And this is the way it has *always* been. So, what we have to try to comprehend is that every single soul on earth is going to be put into the Fire. Those chosen by God to magnify the Glory of God's Grace will be put into the *temporary* "Fire of Purification", while those chosen to magnify the Glory of God's Justice will be put into the *permanent* "Fire of Damnation". But *everybody* will burn. We will either have Sin and Worldliness burned off of us in progressive Sanctification, or Sin and Worldliness will cause us to be burned up in a devil's Hell. The Fire of Purification will burn us, but we will NOT be consumed. But the Fire of Damnation will burn and torment us forever!

This is *why* the Books of **2 Corinthians** and **Job** and **1 Peter** are in the Bible: to teach us what God is doing *in, by, and through* our Suffering. Whoever wrote the **Book of Job** understood that God *used* satan to bring about Job's Sanctification. And Paul said his "**thorn in the flesh**" was given to him, *by God*, to keep him humble! Yet he also called this Gift of God a "messenger of Satan" (**2 Corinthians 12:7**).

So, we have to try to wade into deep waters to understand the ways of God. If God is absolutely Sovereign over everything, all the

time, then His Sovereignty includes satan and everything that satan does. And that means that God has a completely DIFFERENT Design in all the designs of satan than what satan does. When Christians suffer, the devil's design is destructive pain to help cause them to turn against God, and thus belittle God's Name and Glory. YET AT THE SAME TIME, God's Design, in the very SAME Suffering, is always constructive Purification and Holiness and Humility and the exaltation of Jesus Christ. And this amazing dichotomy works *simultaneously!*

A very popular Teaching is that God periodically looks over the horizon and sees that satan is beating up His children. So, God waits until His people "rise up in faith" and "bind the devil" or "declare victory" or "speak peace", or some other nonsense, and then God rides in like the 7th Calvary and rescues us. So, while satan meant our Suffering for "Evil", God (at some later point) TURNED it for "Good".

But this false Teaching minimizes God and puts Him in the position of being nothing more than a "Divine Responder". So, satan moves *first* in attacking God's people. Then that Attack comes to God's Attention. But God *will not* move to help us, because He *cannot* violate Human "free-will". And so, even though God *wants* to help us (because He is Good), He can't (He isn't Sovereign) until and unless we "exercise Faith". So, God waits until we "do our part", and then He moves to cast satan away from us either by changing our situation or by healing us or by performing a Miracle.

But if we don't have enough Faith (or we have "unforgiven sin" in our lives), then God *won't* move and satan will just continue to tear us apart. The net result of this evil and cruel false Teaching is that the only reason saved people are not physically healed or delivered or financially prosperous is *their* fault. They either weren't "good enough", or they "didn't have enough faith", or "they were too sinful", or they might not even be saved.

So, now the individual believer is not only under horrendous assault by the devil, the visible church is now accusing him of not doing enough or not having enough, and God's Silence as they suffer is the Silence of Divine Displeasure. This is one of the most destructive Teachings that has ever been devised, and yet, it is also one of the most popular. You can routinely hear this taught by some of the most popular Preachers and Teachers of our day.

The Reality, though, is just the *opposite*. The Scriptures are clear about this; God alone is absolutely Sovereign, over everything, all the time. And satan CANNOT do anything unless he first goes to God and gets Permission. And even when God allows satan to act, God always limits what satan can do. There is never a moment when satan or Man is Sovereign.

But the Bible is also crystal clear that the only Reason that God allows satan to do what is already in his heart to do, is that by allowing that Evil to be manifested, a *greater* "Good" will come forth that would *not* have come forth had God not allowed the "Evil". So, even in allowing Evil to be manifested to some degree, God is acting wholly as a Righteous and Good God, always doing what will bring Himself Glory and what will bring us into the fullness of Joy.

So, God doesn't *respond* to anything or anybody ever. God always decisively *acts sovereignly*. And His Acts are *always* in accord with His Will. And His Will is *always* that He alone will be magnified and that God's people will enter into the fullness of everlasting Delight.

So, God moves *first*, always, in counselling with Himself, way back in "Eternity Past", to either actively *cause* "Good" or to passively *allow* "Evil". And God will use Himself alone to cause the "Good", and He will use satan or evil men or both to allow the "Evil". But everything, including the sinful actions of evil men, is carried out *exactly* as God has already *pre-determined*. So, while it is true that satan meant our Suffering for Evil, God MEANT it for Good.

Now that raises another important Question. "*Can genuine Christians be 'devoured'?*" Peter says in verse 8:

Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour

... so, the devil's aim is to "devour". And to "devour" something is *not* to merely *scratch* them, or *maul* them, or even just *wound* them. It is to *chew them up* and *swallow* them. It is to *overcome* them. It is to utterly *defeat* them or *destroy* them. There is simply no honest way to make this mean anything less than satan bringing them to ultimate ruin. So, Peter is teaching here that the devil is determined to take people with him to the lake of fire.

In fact, this terribly serious Reason is Peter's logic as to *why* we should resist him.

But resist him, firm in *your* faith...

... why? Because he's trying to devour you!

But what should we do with this? Does satan have the ability to actually do this? I know many people, who would respond to this Question by saying, "*Absolutely not! I'm saved, and that is it. Nothing can take me out of Jesus' Hand. And so, satan can do whatever he wants to, but he can't touch me!*"

Okay, I believe that Salvation is eternal, too. But then why did Peter tell us to "resist satan"? Why didn't Peter just say, "*Even though satan is trying to do this, don't worry about it, because he can't.*" Was Peter confused about the eternality of Salvation? Was Peter saying that satan has the ability to steal your soul, even after you're saved? Was Peter just kidding about us resisting satan? Is all this just some big charade?

So, we are to believe that it is *not* possible for satan to devour believers, at all, right? And we are to maintain that genuine Christians simply can't get eaten by the devil. And, therefore, they *can't* go to hell. Okay, I think I've got it. And so, evidently, this is sort of like "war games" and the bullets are all blank, right? So, we're supposed to resist satan for real, and we're supposed to fight for real, but it really doesn't matter because nothing can happen anyway, right?

No, the Bible doesn't teach us to "play-act". The Bible doesn't teach that we are supposed to act like all this matters, but deep down, we shouldn't even be worried about it because nothing Eternal is going to change, no matter what we do. With every fiber of my being, let me tell you that that is a lie. And even though this is *exactly* what the overwhelming majority of people in the modern church believe, this is a gross *misunderstanding* of Salvation and of Christianity itself.

What most people understand today about the Doctrine of "Eternal Security" (ES) or "Once Saved Always Saved" (OSAS) is not even *biblical*, much less true. You ask ten people about the "Eternality of Salvation" and you'll probably get ten different answers. So, because the Biblical Truth about Salvation being eternal has been so twisted and so warped, we need to understand it correctly.

So, let me say, right out of the box, that true, genuine Salvation is Eternal. Okay, I said that. But let me also say that there is no such Doctrine called "Eternal Security" or "Once Saved Always Saved". Those two terms were never taught in a single Christian Church until in the last 150 years or so. The correct Doctrine about the *Eternality* of Salvation is called "The Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints".

So, what we need to understand this morning is that Peter was not confused. And so, satan "devouring" people is real. And us "resisting satan" is real. And, hear me, what is at stake here is Heaven and Hell. What is happening here is some being devoured by satan and going to hell, versus some suffering, but resisting satan, and entering into Glory.

So, can true, born again, Christians be devoured by the devil to the point where they lose their Salvation and end up in Hell? No. But not for the reason you may think. The only reason that satan cannot ultimately devour a genuine believer, and those people lose out and end up in Hell, is NOT because satan can't touch them. He can. Satan is periodically given Permission from God to cause *horrific* Suffering to the most godly and faith-filled believers on earth. And, at times, God gives satan the "go-ahead" to kill them.

So, never think that satan's devices against you are not real, they are. And they can be deadly. Satan is dead-earnest about attacking us, and about us losing out with God, and about us ending up in Hell. And the Bible says we should be just as dead-earnest.

But while satan can fight, and that fight is real and terrible, satan cannot *ultimately* win. He does NOT have the Power to steal our immortal souls. But there is only one Reason this is true. Because every single genuinely born-again Christian is engaged in the process of being progressively sanctified in the Fire of Purification. And that Fire *causes* him to *continually* humble himself to God's Will and Word. And that Refining Fire is *constantly* changing him so that he *responds* to God's amazing Grace by resisting the devil and all his ways, *firm* in Faith! Other than that, satan *would* prevail and we *would* lose our souls.

So, the Doctrine of Perseverance teaches that true saints *persevere*. We don't just believe and repent one time and that's it. Christianity is not about "getting your ticket punched" and now you can

rest on your “double-wide” and coast into Heaven. That is not taught anywhere in the Bible, and if you believe that, you’re deceived.

No, genuine believers *persevere*. We “*keep on*”. It is an ever-present, ongoing Reality. So, those who have truly experienced the Miracle of the New Birth *keep on* repenting, we *keep on* believing, we *keep on* reading and learning, we *keep on* hungering and thirsting, we *keep on* panting after God, we *keep on* beholding the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ, we *keep on* trusting, we *keep on* crying out to God to help us and change us and forgive us and humble us. That's the meaning of being a true, born-again Christians.

God the Holy Spirit will not ALLOW any genuinely saved soul to get “weary of well-doing”. He will not *allow* us to “take our hand off the plow and look back”. He will not *allow* us to “grow weak and fade away”. When the world beckons us to embrace it, Christ calls us to embrace Him. When sin calls us to believe its promises, God’s Word presents the Promises of a God, Who can’t lie. When the pleasures of this fallen world begin to look attractive, Jesus intercedes to God for us to stir our hearts and bring an Awakening.

If God promises in **1 Peter 5** that He will keep us eternally saved “by His Power *through* Faith”, then it is both foolish and evil to presumptuously say, “*I am eternally saved without a Life of Faith*”. If God has graciously given us the various “Means of Grace” to help us and assist us and strengthen us and keep us, then what kind of son or daughter slaps God’s Hand away and says, “*I don’t need (or want) what You have offered; I have planned the path of my own Sanctification*”?

God has promised to bring us safely through the jungle of this world and to keep us from being devoured by the devil. But He has determined to accomplish that only by His Power working through Faith. Therefore, the person who says “*I believe I am eternally secure, and so I don’t need to resist the devil firm in my Faith*” is not illustrating how much he believes in the eternity of Salvation, he is contradicting God Himself and he is throwing away the very Warrant of his Assurance!

Those who are truly called by God for Salvation don’t do that. They *humble* themselves to the Truth of Scripture, and they fight to the very end. And their struggle to fight is *not* a sign of unbelief or a lack of trusting, it is the unarguable badge of being born of God.

Verse 10 shows us where our Assurance is really found.

After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you.

What this verse promises is this: if God called you to His Glory, He's going to get you to His Glory. And a little Suffering in between is *not* going to stop Him.

The meaning of being a Christian is that we have been *effectually called* to eternal Glory (**1 Peter 1:15; 2:9**). This is Peter's way of saying what Paul said in **Romans 8:29&30**:

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

Peter simply says, "*The One who called you to His Glory will get you to His Glory: He will perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. It's a Promise!*" You can take it for yourself if you will have it and believe it and bank on it this morning.

And I urge you to take it. When Peter says that "*The God of all Grace*" makes this Promise, he wants to help you believe that it's for you. You may say, "*This just can't be for me. I'm not qualified. I'm not spiritual enough. I'm too weak. I've got too much sin in my life.*" Peter responds, "*You don't start with being qualified. You start with the God of all Grace. Grace precedes qualification. You may have this Promise freely, if you will believe in this God of all Grace.*"

And then Peter gives one last Encouragement to believe it in verse 11:

To Him *be* dominion forever and ever. Amen.

The word "Dominion" means: *superior Strength*. God has *dominion* over the devil. He is *stronger* than satan. Therefore, when God promises to successfully get us through the jungle of this world and bring us to Glory, He can do it! And He *will* do it. Dominion belongs to the Lord.

So, when Satan roars with Suffering in your face and threatens to devour you, don't say, "*O, I'm eternally secure, this is no real threat.*"

Rather say, *"The God of all Grace has called me to His eternal Glory in Christ Jesus, and after I have suffered a little while from your claws and fangs, He will perfect and confirm and strengthen and establish me. He is a God of all Grace. He is a God of absolute Dominion. You can maul me. And you can even kill me. But you cannot devour me. God has called me to Glory! And God will get me to Glory."*

That's *how* to **“resist satan firm in Faith”**. So, take this Promise. Believe it. And then act on it. Be saved by it. Rest in it. Fight with it. Persevere with it. It's yours from the God of all Grace!

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.