

Ministry of Grace Church

1 Peter 5:8-14 - Speaker Notes



Introduction

Peter has told us how to behave when we are suffering under affliction whether it has been brought on by the providence of God or not. He has told us that we are to allow ourselves to be humbled and we are to toss all of our worrying onto Him. Lest we think that enduring suffering is a passive event, however, Peter now tells us what action we are to be taking. We are to be sober minded and vigilant even while we are being humbled.

Why? Because we have an adversary who is constantly trying to scare us. And he is attacking us, not with just scare tactics, but with fiery arrows as Paul told the Ephesians:

In addition to all, having taken up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one, (Ephesians 6:16)

And, beware! Satan does not just attack us on the battlefield. He attacks us in the courtroom. That is, the courtroom of God. Neither does he wait for the fight to come to him, he is constantly on the prowl to attack us when we are the most vulnerable.

Knowing that we are daily going into battle, Peter now gives us some last-minute advice and warning.

1 Peter 5:8-9

Be of sober spirit, be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished among your brethren who are in the world.

The words “of sober spirit” come from a single Greek word, *nēphō* which literally means “to abstain from drunkenness.” In the first century wine was the primary intoxicant. A watered-down version was used as the normal drink for meals, but it was not uncommon

for people to drink unmixed wine. This produced a state of intoxication that clouded the perceptions and thinking of a person. So – Peter is saying “Be sober!” The context makes it very clear that he is not talking about abstaining from alcohol. He means, be sober in your thinking. This is the third time Peter has commanded us to be sober (1 Peter 1:13, 1 Peter 4:7, and 1 Peter 5:8) so he clearly sees this as of great importance to Christians.

John MacArthur says this about it:

“Spiritual sober-mindedness includes the ideas of steadfastness, self-control, clarity of mind, and moral decisiveness. The sober Christian is correctly in charge of his priorities and not intoxicated with the various allurements of the world.”

The word “watchful” is translated from, *grēgoreuō*, which means “to keep awake” or “to be watchful.” Both of these (being sober minded and being watchful) are expressed in the imperative mood, indicating that they are not merely suggestions, but commands.

In other words, we are to keep our minds clear from distractions; we are to remain sharply focused on God and to be ever watchful. The implication is that we are to be constantly on the alert for some impending danger. Why? Because “our adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” The word translated adversary means “opponent,” particularly an opponent in a legal battle. The word “devil” is the Greek word *diabolos*, which literally means “accuser,” as in a court of law. So why did Peter use legal jargon referring to Satan? Because we **are** in a legal battle with him! Later during the tribulation when Satan is kicked out of heaven, it says this about him:

for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. (Revelation 12:10b)

And our accuser is walking about like a roaring lion. Notice, however, that it does not say that the devil is a roaring lion; it says he is like a roaring lion. But, he doesn’t always appear like a ferocious enemy. Sometimes he and his representatives here on the earth appear innocent, even helpful:

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:13-14)

Many pastors today are teaching falsehood in very subtle ways, perhaps without even realizing it. It was once said that Satan will use a lake full of truth to hide a spoon full of lies. Have you ever watched a courtroom scene where the prosecuting attorney is roaring at the defendant trying his best to intimidate the defendant? This is precisely what Satan is doing in front of the great Judge of all creation right now. Fortunately for us, we have the best defense attorney in all of creation. In 1 John 2:1 it says:

... And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; (1 John 2:1b)

So, as we allow ourselves to be humbled by God and as we toss our cares upon Him, we need to be alert and watchful. We are to keep ourselves from succumbing to temptation because there is one who is watching for us to stumble so that he can accuse us before the Father. But, when that does happen, our advocate presents His own blood as evidence of our righteousness.

Joining this with the previous three verses, we see that we are to ... allow ourselves to be humbled under God's mighty hand, without worrying, being alert and vigilant regarding our enemy, and when we do encounter our enemy we are to stand firmly against him in the faith. And what happens when we do this?

... Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (James 4:7b)

When we try to stand against the Devil in our own strength, we are certain to fail, but if we stand in the belief that God is with us, and we have humbled ourself under His mighty hand, Satan doesn't want anything to do with us because he knows that he is certain to fail. Peter then finishes off this section with a word of encouragement,

knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished among your brethren who are in the world.

We always seem to be able to withstand hardships a little easier if we know that we are not being singled out for the pain. Not only does God know what we're going through (in fact it may be part of His plan), but we are not alone. There are other Christians who are undergoing the same suffering we are now.

1 Peter 5:10-11

And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, strengthen, confirm, and ground you. To Him be might forever and ever. Amen.

Now Peter gives us a few more words of encouragement lest we think that we are fighting this battle alone. He tells us that even in the midst of our suffering, the God of all grace will do something for us. He is not simply a gracious God (the God of grace) but the God of **all** grace. The implication is that there is no grace which does not come from God. Keep in mind that grace is any good favor that happens to us that we don't deserve. He is the God of all undeserved good favor.

Peter goes on to tell us that not only does He bestow favor on us that we don't deserve, but he also invites us to approach His eternal glory. Approaching this glory is only possible for us because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ. This is the glory that James, John, and Peter got a glimpse of at the transfiguration:

And six days later Jesus brought with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. (Matthew 17:1-2)

God has called us to come and see His glory! And He will not stop His work until He has absolutely completed what He wants to accomplish in us. God will establish our position in Christ, firmly and securely. God will make us spiritually strong. Our position in Christ will be built "on Christ" as we are used by God to build his church of which Christ is the chief cornerstone.

When will all of this be done to us? Peter says, after you have suffered a while. The word translated "a little while" is *oligon*, which literally means "puny in degree or duration." That is to say, our suffering here under God's divine providence will be insignificant when compared with what has been promised us in eternity.

The last verse in this section starts with “To Him.” The obvious question is “To whom?” The answer lies in the first part of the previous verse, “The God of all grace.” So, we could read this verse as, “**To the God of all grace be might forever and ever**” amen.

He closes his benediction with the word *amen*. This is actually not a Greek word but a Hebrew word. And - it is not simply a formula type word for ending a prayer as we so flippantly use it today. In the New Testament it is often translated as “verily” or “truly.” Its most basic meaning, however, is, “this is true with absolute certainty!” It is not so much a period on the end of a prayer as it is an exclamation point.

To the God of all grace **be might forever and ever**. Amen!

1 Peter 5:12-14

Through Silvanus, our faithful brother as I regard him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and bearing witness that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it! She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does my son, Mark. Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.

In this closing salutation of his letter, Peter indicates that he believes this is a fairly short letter; “I have written to you briefly...” He tells us that this letter is by Silvanus. The Greek word for the name “Silvanus” is *Silounos*, which is an alternate spelling of *Silon* or “Silas.” It is most reasonable to assume that Peter is referring to Silas, who is commonly accepted to be the same Silas who accompanied the Apostle Paul during much of his missionary travels. But what does Peter mean, “by Silvanus.” Some believe that Silvanus (Silas) was the scribe who wrote the words which Peter dictated to him. Others believe that he was the messenger who carried this letter to the believers in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (see **1 Peter 1:1**). Either one or both of these may be true, though we don’t really know for sure. It certainly would make sense for Peter to send this letter to these churches by Silas, since he traveled with the Apostle Paul through much of this area (current day Turkey), and these Christians knew Silas.

Peter then tells his readers that he, himself, is exhorting and testifying that everything in this letter is a representation of the true grace of God. That is, Christianity is the one true religion, not Judaism, nor paganism, nor humanism, nor any other “ism.” It is this true belief in Jesus Christ by the grace of God in which we Christians stand. He then commands us to “**Stand firm in it!**” That is, we are to stand firm in our belief in Jesus Christ, but we can only do so by God’s grace.

This sounds very similar to what Paul told the believers in Ephesus when he instructed them in the use of the “armor of God.”

Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. (**Ephesians 6:13**)

Peter then sends greetings from several people. “Greet” or “greetings” is from the Greek word *aspadzomai*, which is made up of the particle *a*, implying “union” and a form of *spao*, meaning “to draw” or “to pull.” Therefore, it literally means “to pull into an embrace.” This “hug” was used as a common salutation either in greeting or bidding farewell to guests.

The next verse is one of those that looks innocuous enough, but which has been discussed and argued over almost since the day it was written. None of these issues concern any

particular doctrinal view, so they become nothing but a tempest in a teapot. Nonetheless, here's some of the discussion.

The verse literally reads (with the word order of the original Greek): “greet you the in Babylon together-elect one and Mark the son of mine.”

The first thing you will notice is that there is no mention of “the church” at all in the original (some translations say “the church in Babylon ...”). Therefore, we get, “The together-elect one in Babylon greets you.” Some have argued that Peter is referring to his own wife who is one of the elect, as are the people to whom Peter is writing this letter. Others, however, argue that it makes no sense for Peter to single out a particular woman and, since “church” is a feminine noun in Greek, he must be referring to the church which is in Babylon. Either way, she offers you a greeting in the form of a warm embrace.

The second point of contention is whether Peter is referring to the literal Babylon on the Euphrates River (in modern day Iraq) or whether he is using this as a code word for Rome itself. There was a fairly large population of converted Jews in Babylon at that time and Peter, as the apostle to the Jews, could certainly have been there. Some Biblical scholars believe that Peter was writing from Rome and referred to it as Babylon to hide his location since the government was looking to capture him. Nonetheless, the vast majority of Biblical scholars believe that Peter was actually writing from Babylon on the Euphrates.

The final discussion point in this verse is over who Peter is referring to as “Mark my son.” Most scholars agree that this is John Mark, the author of the second Gospel. It is believed that Mark wrote his Gospel account based on what was told to him by Peter. He is referred to as a son, perhaps because Peter had a significant part in Mark's conversion and early Christian training.

Peter closes this letter with a command and a benediction. He tells us to hug one another with a loving kiss. There is a similar expression from the Apostle Paul in the last chapter of Romans:

Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you. (Romans 16:16)

Peter then proclaims peace unto all those who are in Christ Jesus.

Peace be to you all who are in Christ.

This, it is said, was Peter's standard way of parting. He may have been following the example set by Christ himself to declare peace upon those whom he knew and loved. In [John 14:27](#) Christ expressed it this way,

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you.
Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

After all, what greater blessing could anyone have than to be at peace! Remember that this letter was sent to Christians who were being persecuted and who were suffering simply because they had claimed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. What better blessing could they receive than the peace that passes all understanding in a time of trial and suffering?

So concludes the Apostle Peter's first general epistle to the churches in Asia Minor and, subsequently, to all Christians everywhere. It is an encouraging letter given to all of us for those times when we are undergoing suffering for righteousness' sake.

So What?

Do you feel like you are under attack simply for being a Christian, or that there is an adversary making threatening noises against you and what you believe? If so, Peter says be humbled, quit worrying, think clearly, and be ever watchful, resting in the arms of our loving Savior.

Are you feeling the pain and anguish of faithful suffering right now? As a Christian, you know that God is aware of your pain and there are other Christians who are feeling the same pain and anguish as you. Why not take a minute to pray for them!

Though the suffering that you may be undergoing right now may seem to be almost more than you can stand, God will use the suffering to bring you to a more Christ-like condition, and He will use it to bring glory to Himself. And ... when we reach heaven, we will look back on the suffering and say, "Nah, that wasn't so bad!"

Is that where you are today? Are you suffering from persecution as a Christian or are you suffering because the weight of your sin is getting you down. Either one of these situations could be the result of an attack by our enemy. No matter what spiritual battle you are in the middle of, humble yourself and stand firm by the grace of God. Maybe your battle right now is that you don't know for sure whether or not you are a genuine Christian. Do you recognize that you cannot earn your salvation? The only way we can be righteous in God's eyes is by His gracious gift of salvation. And, God's grace, through the blood of Jesus Christ, is greater than our sins.

Also keep in mind that we don't earn a good standing before God by being obedient or by obeying a set of rules. The only way for a right standing before God and peace in your soul is through humble submission and confession.

If you are undergoing persecution or are suffering because of your faith in Jesus Christ, take some time to open your Bible and read through this first general epistle of Peter again from start to finish, and be encouraged that you are not alone. God knows of your suffering and will use it to bring glory to Himself. Give Him thanks and endure your suffering patiently.

One day you will probably say, "Nah, that wasn't so bad."

Peace be unto you!

Let's pray.