

OUR ENEMY, THE DEVIL - 1 Peter 5:8

June 20, 2021

We've been going through 1 Peter for many months now, and we continue to look at two primary topics, that of suffering and humility. And they are related in that when we suffer, then we need to be humble before the Lord, and then He will give us the grace and peace we need to get through that suffering. And we've been talking about how humility relates to everything in our Christian life:

- We've talked about how we are to be subject to those in authority.
- We've talked about how young men are to be submissive to the elders.
- We've said that Christians are to be humble towards all people, both saved and lost.
- And we've said that the key to not being anxious is being humble before God, where we cast our burdens on Him, where we trust Him to help us when we are anxious.

1 Peter 5:8-9. We have these verses about our enemy, the devil, also called Satan. And the devil is behind a lot of our suffering. The devil hates us and wants us to suffer, wants to hurt us, and keep us from serving God and doing the work He wants us to do. And the answer to our suffering is to be humble before God, to humble ourselves under His mighty hand, for He's our umbrella of protection, our strength, the One who can deliver us from the devil and his evil schemes and attacks. Let's look at these vss.

First, we learn that God commands us to be sober. This word "*sober*" literally means to return to one's senses from being drunk, to be free from the influence of intoxicants. But an expanded meaning is that we need to avoid being controlled and addicted to any fleshly and worldly thing, whether it's food, drugs, sports, games, partying, etc. You don't want to lose spiritual control of your life by being controlled by fleshly and worldly things. You are to be self-controlled which means being controlled by the Spirit and not the flesh. DUI. You all know you don't want to be under the influence of alcohol when you're driving, because your senses will be impaired and you can get in an accident. - 2 Tim. 4:5 says, "*Therefore, be sober in all things, in all situations.*"

This word sober is used in conjunction with being alert. That is, God commands us to be sober so we can be alert, which is also translated as being awake, being watchful. As Christians, we are not to be nonchalant, we are not to be carefree and easy going, and that happens when we are controlled by sin, by the flesh. Rom. 13:11-14

- 1 Thess. 5:5-6. You need to be sober and alert because you're in a spiritual battle – in a spiritual war. If you were fighting the enemy in some actual physical war, you would need to be sober and alert, you would need to know what the enemy was doing, and how he's trying to attack and kill you.

- Now these vss. are written in the context of the end-times, and so we also need to be sober and alert in view of the fact that Jesus Christ will be coming back soon.

As Christians, we need to be spiritually sober and alert, to be wide awake and watchful, to be aware and attentive to what's spiritually going on around us, and this means every day of our lives, for the devil doesn't sleep, doesn't take days off. As it says in Luke 4:13 and here in 1 Peter 5:8, Satan is always looking for an opportune time to attack us.
- 1 Cor. 16:13 says, "*Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.*"

Now we read how the devil is our adversary, and the word adversary literally means a legal opponent, an opponent in a lawsuit. In the gospels there was this widow who said, "*give me legal protection from my opponent.*" The word Satan actually means adversary, which means he's against us, opposes us, accuses us, and wants us to believe and feel that we're sinful, that we're wrong, and that we're guilty. And so we need this protection from the Lord. Zech. 3:2, 1 John 2:1-2

And the devil is our #1 one enemy. He hates us with a passion. He wishes we were dead, and he will do everything he can, to slow us down, to get us off track, to get us to sin, to stop us, to keep us from loving God and doing God's work. Heb. 12:1-2
- When we watch a movie, there's often a bad guy - good guy theme. But now there's the devil and God and this isn't a make-believe movie. The devil is the bad guy, but God is the Lord God Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth, the Sovereign ruler of the world.

And we need to remind ourselves that God is always in complete charge of all that goes on in the world, and that includes the devil's activities. The devil can only do what God allows him to do, what God permits him to do. As I've said many times, the devil is like a dog on a leash, and God gives him only so much rein. Job 1:12
- Now we can't understand why God allows the devil to do all the evil he does, but God does, and it's for His purposes, and for His glory, and for our good. And what happened to Job with his loss of family, loss of livelihood, and loss of health were bad things, and God allowed it, and God worked it all together for good. You must always remember that God is sovereign over all evil. Acts 2:23-24

Well, let's look at some more verses that talk about the devil, about Satan.
- Rev. 12:1-5. Vss. 1-2 are describing Israel, and her main purpose was to bring Jesus Christ into this world. But this woman, the nation of Israel, was in labor. This labor relates to vss. 3-4 which speaks of this dragon, and this is the devil. During the OT times there were 6 Gentile kingdoms influenced by the devil, and they all tried to wipe out the Jews, for it was the devil's goal to keep Jesus from being born.

Now this tail sweeping away a third of these stars of heaven is a picture of the devil influencing 1/3 of the angels, and these became evil angels, demons, and other evil beings. For the devil was a good angel, called Lucifer, but he became proud, and turned against God, and 1/3 of the angels joined him in his rebellion against God. A large part of this rebellion is seen in that the devil is influencing these 8 kingdoms, and their goal was to keep the Jews and the Christians from fulfilling their purpose.

Vs. 4 talks about one of these kingdoms, one we know as the Roman empire, and Herod, one of its rulers, wanted the baby Jesus killed.

- Vss. 5-6. Well, Mary did give birth to Jesus, and then God used her and Joseph to help Jesus escape. And then this verse tells us that Jesus ascended into heaven.

- But vs. 6 jumps ahead to the end-times when Israel, being attacked by the devil, escapes from him during the last half of Daniel's 70th week.

Rev. 12:7-10. This tells us more about the devil, also called the dragon, also called Satan, also called the serpent of old, referring to that devil-possessed snake who tempted Adam and Eve to sin, to rebel against God. But here it's in the end-times and the angel Michael fights against the devil, and casts him and his evil angels down to earth. And this is during the last 3½ years of Daniel's 70th week when the devil possesses the Antichrist, who then persecutes both Jews and Christians during the great tribulation. Rev. 12:17

- And so the devil's main enemies are God's people, both Jews and Christians, and we will continue to see the devil's opposition to them during the end-times. Anti-Semitism

But what is the devil's character? John 8:44. The devil is a murderer – he wants people dead, both believers and non-believers. I can't say that the devil is behind every murder in this world, but he's behind a lot of them, and he also helps to instigate a lot of wars. The devil is also a liar, and he loves lies and hates the truth. There are a lot of liars and lies in our country and in this world, and the devil is behind a lot of these liars and lies.

2 Cor. 11:12-15. Satan is deceitful, and disguises himself as a servant of righteousness. This means there are a lot of false teachers, people who are tools of the devil, and they're preaching a false gospel, a false message. And with that, there are a lot of false and fake churches, and the devil is behind them too. Rev. 2:9, 13

- This is extremely evil and sad, that many so-called churches are actually used by the devil to lead people astray and, in fact, lead people to hell. Matt. 23:15

Eph. 6:10-12. What do we learn here? That the devil is our invisible enemy, that he's a schemer, that he's powerful, that he's organized, that he rules, that he's influential, that he's very sinful, and that his evil forces are affecting every part of this world. But be encouraged, for you have all the power, all the spiritual tools you need to resist and defeat the devil. Yes, the devil is super strong and super smart but, with God, you can beat him, you can overcome him. 1 John 4:4, Rev. 12:11-12

1 Peter 5:8. This word prowls is from a Greek word that means walk, and metaphorically speaking, the devil is walking around, looking for prey, looking for someone to devour. He's like a roaring lion. We know that the lion is the king of the jungle and back in the 1st century, people knew that the lion was an extremely dangerous and powerful animal.

Lions walk about, freely, confidently, proudly, and unafraid, looking for someone to attack, to eat. But big cats, like little cats, cats you may have in your neighborhood, can be very quiet, and can slowly sneak up on their prey. And so the devil can be deceptively quiet, but he is also like a roaring lion, for he has a big mouth, and he roars, and he tries to scare you, intimidate you, and make you afraid.

- And much of what the devil does relates to the lies he wants you to believe, lies that if believed, can do great damage to your soul and your life. And it relates to how he wants to tempt you, to how he wants to trick you into believing his lies. But remember, the devil can't make you sin, he can only influence you to sin.

The devil is seeking someone to devour. He is looking for Christians, oftentimes weak ones, or young ones, or tired ones, or proud ones, ones he can influence with his lies. If you watch a nature show, you see how lions, wolves, and other predators try to pick off a young animal, or a weak one, or a stray, and chase after them, and kill them. And the lesson is that you don't want to be a loner, you don't want to be off by yourself. We are a church, and God has designed it so that we need each other. And we are meant to be together, to have fellowship with one another, and to help each other. Eph. 4:16-17

And the devil wants to devour us. This word devour is from a Greek word that means to drink down or swallow. I think of how cats chase after squirrels, and in the last 10 yrs. or so, I've seen in our backyard a lot of cats kill squirrels and devour them, eat the whole thing, except the tail. And so too the devil wants, spiritually speaking, to devour us, kill us, wipe us out, to make us totally ineffective. John 10:10

- Now you're not to be afraid of the enemy, but you should respect him, and not be naïve, and think the devil can't hurt you. Most importantly, you are to fear God, and stay close to God, or we could say, stay close to the Shepherd, stay close to Jesus. Psalm 23:4-6

1 Peter 5:9. This tells us three things you need to do:

1. You need to resist the devil, to fight against him, to stand firm. James 4:6-7
2. You need to have faith - you need to trust God and His word. Luke 4:1-13
3. You need to know you are not the only Christian being attacked, for other Christians in this church, in this city, and all over the world are being attacked, and are suffering for their faith.