

Resisting the Devil, A Neglected Responsibility

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1 Peter

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Bible Text: 1 Peter 5:8-9

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Good evening.

If you would, please turn to the book of 1 Peter chapter five.

I don't know what has motivated these young people to sit up front on my left here, but I noticed it and I am thankful for it. And I would encourage some adults to consider sitting up closer. Sometimes I feel as though our building is going to tip like this with everyone lined against the walls on Sunday mornings.

1 Peter chapter five and tonight we are going to look at verses eight and nine.

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.¹

Let's pray together.

Lord, thank you of the joy and the privilege it is to belong to you, to belong to your people, Lord, to have experienced your saving work in our lives and to be able to know the joy of fellowship with our Creator. Thank you, Lord, for the privilege it is to be together tonight, to be able to gather with the church and sing songs of praise and receive from you through the ministry of your Word. We ask that you would be at work in this hour in a powerful way dealing with our hearts, imparting to us, Lord, fresh manna, what you know we need tonight. And from glory to glory transforming us into the image of your Son. We love you. We do continue, Lord, to ask for salvation in the case of those

¹ 1 Peter 5:8-10.

who might gather with us who don't know you. And, Lord, also as we have been making ourselves mindful of the past two midweek services, I pray that you would continue to give us opportunities to share your gospel with others throughout the week. Use that, Lord, to see many gathered in to your family we ask. We pray for this tonight in Jesus' name. Amen.

Spiritual warfare is a reality. We face a very real enemy. We face a very real spiritual battle as we live our lives in this world. We are engaged in a very real struggle. Peter tells us, the Lord tells us through Peter that we are to be sober minded, verse eight. We are to be watchful because we have an adversary, the devil. And he prowls around like a roaring lion and he seeks someone to devour.

And because of that very real struggle, we have been given very real responsibilities. The Bible tells us, God tells us what we are to do in the face of this struggle. Responsibilities have been imparted to us. And not only is it true to say that we should do what the Bible tells us to do, it is right to say that we must do these things. If we are to live obedient lives, if we are to enjoy the freedom and the victory that is ours in Christ, we must take note of the responsibilities God has given us and we must act upon them.

Now I want to suggest tonight that in the verses we have just read there is a responsibility imparted to us that is among the most neglected responsibilities in the Christian life. I want to suggest that there are many believers who struggle in their battle against sin. They feel like they are losing the battle because they are not taking to heart the responsibility that we are going to talk about this evening. The responsibility I have in mind and I say, again, one of the most neglected in all of the Christian life is the one mentioned at the beginning of verse nine when the Word of God tells us that we are to resist him. We have a real enemy. He is the devil. And the Bible says we are to resist him.

We have been given the responsibility to resist, to resist in the face of temptation, to resist the temptations offered to us by Satan, to resist the offers that are going to come to us from the world, to resist the things that are going to appeal to our flesh. We have the responsibility to resist.

And I am convinced that somehow many have been lured into thinking that spiritual obedience is going to be an easy thing, almost an effortless kind of thing. Now they have come to believe that repentance will be easy, that saying no to sin is sort of a one time, once and you are done decision. You know, even if it is one decision at a time that all you have to do is realize what the temptation is, realize what the sin is and you just say no to it and that is the end of the matter.

And in thinking that way what we have often times forgotten is that we have a responsibility to go on resisting. That is what I want us to think about tonight, a neglected responsibility and that responsibility is the responsibility to resist.

The first thing I want to mention tonight is this. I want us to recognize that this responsibility to resist the enemy or to resist temptation has been set before us more than once in Scripture. If the Word of God says something one time, that is all it takes. I mean, it is important. God said something. That is important. But when you see something coming to you again and again from Scripture, something is repeated, when you see a pattern emerge, we need to take notice.

This exhortation to resist is not a one time exhortation. It is a pattern that is consistently applied to us when the Bible talks about our dealings with Satan, our dealings with the enemy.

For example, James chapter four verse seven says this.

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”²

Ephesians 6:13 says:

“Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.”³

James says, “Resist the devil.”⁴

Paul says in Ephesians, “You must be fully prepared to resist in the evil day.”

And now Peter writes and says we are to resist him.

So this is something given to us more than one time.

A second thing I just want to note. I know you see it, but I just want to underscore it. Resistance is what is specifically set before us regarding Satan. I mean, whatever else the Bible tells us about how to deal with Satan, how to deal with our enemy, we have got to recognize that an indispensable element of what we are to do when it comes to our spiritual enemy is we are to resist him, which leads to the third thing tonight and the most important thing at the moment and that is: What exactly does that mean?

What is resistance? What does it mean to resist Satan? What does it mean to resist if we talk about temptation?

If this is a responsibility that we have to embrace in order to live a victorious, obedient Christian life, then we had better understand what it means.

What is this resistance?

² James 4:7.

³ Ephesians 6:13.

⁴ James 4:7.

Several things we can see about it in Scripture. First of all, we can say this. Resistance is an act of faith. Do you notice in verse nine it says:

“Resist him...”⁵

What is the next statement? What does it say?

“Firm in your faith.”⁶

Resist him firm in your faith.

Resistance is an act of faith. It is not something mystical. It is not magical. It doesn't involve pronouncing things or pleading things. To resist the devil doesn't mean you go to war against the devil.

Are you familiar with that kind of teaching? Just resist Satan. What do people mean by that sometimes? Well, they mean this, that you are supposed to say certain things to the devil, I rebuke you or I bind you. Or some would say we are to plead the blood of Jesus over a situation or over a location. Some believe that you overcome him by just pronouncing the fact that he is defeated and that you are victorious and in that way you sort of tread upon the enemy.

But that is not what the Bible teaches. We don't see any examples of that in Scripture. No, to resist means we are firm in our faith. What does that mean? It means that to resist the enemy we have to operate, we have to live our lives in a knowledge that has been imparted to us by the Word of God. To resist him means we don't listen to the enemy's perspective. We listen to the Lord's perspective. We don't believe the enemy's lies. We don't take hold of the enemy's lies in the form of temptations. Rather we believe God in the face of those temptations and we believe the Word of God throughout those temptations.

In fact, you will notice the very next thing he says in verse nine.

“Resist him, firm in your faith...”⁷

And then he... notice the next word.

“Knowing.”

You see, there is something that you know.

What is your perspective of suffering? Do you think it is something strange? Do you think it is something that is only in your life?

⁵ 1 Peter 5:9.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

Now one of the ways you resist the devil is you understand the teaching of the Word of God that suffering is a part of the Christian life.

These people who were going through hard times, one of the ways the enemy would attack them was to make them believe they were all alone in the situation. Peter writes, “Now listen. You stand firm in your faith. Here is something you know.”

“...that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.”⁸

How do you know that? Well, you know that because that is the biblical perspective, that suffering is a part of the Christian life.

And there is something else they would hold in their minds as they were resisting the enemy, verse 10.

“And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ...”⁹

Right? You know what you are destined for, eternal glory in Christ Jesus. You know this.

“...the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.”¹⁰

You can be certain of this. So you are not abandoned in your suffering and your sufferings are not being wasted. There is a God ordained purpose for all that we go through and the ultimate end of it all is eternal glory in Christ Jesus. This is the way you overcome the enemy as he attempts to discourage you and want you to lose heart in the midst of whatever it is you are going through.

So how do you resist the devil? You resist the devil, you resist temptation by believing God’s Word, by looking at life from the vantage point of God’s truth. It is an act of faith, not faith in faith, but faith in the Word of God.

Second, what does it mean to resist? Well, resistance is not only a scriptural act, an act of faith, second, it is an act of submission. To resist means I am going to submit myself to the Lord consciously, immediately, in a fresh kind of way. I am going to submit myself to God.

I get that from James’ comment. Right? James 4:7.

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”¹¹

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ 1 Peter 5:10.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Notice that resistance goes hand in hand with submission. You can't resist the devil while you rebel against the Lord. If you are rebelling against the Lord, you are not resisting the devil, you are giving in to the devil.

So to resist the enemy means that I must be submitted to the lordship of Jesus Christ. There is no resistance without submissive trust. To submit to the Lord means I trust the Lord. To submit to the Lord means that I believe him, I trust him and I am ready to obey him in the midst of the temptation, in the midst of the struggle.

We could say it this way. We are going to resist Satan and temptation when I realize that I am under a purchase obligation. I have been purchased by the blood of Jesus. I do not belong to myself. I am not my own man. I am the property of Jesus Christ and all of my life, all of the time, is to be devoted to him so that in the face of this immediate temptation, I realize I don't have a right to do what the devil would offer to me. I belong to the Lord. I am his and I am to offer myself every day as a living sacrifice ready to do what pleases him.

1 Corinthians 6:18 says this:

“Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.”¹²

But notice where he moves from that commandment, that exhortation.

Next verse.

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?”¹³

By the way, you will remember this. The Holy Spirit he is the guarantee of our future inheritance. He is a down payment. He is a first taste of future glory. He is the seal of God upon our lives so that his presence in us is a mark of the fact that we belong to God.

Next statement.

“You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”¹⁴

How do you flee from sexual immorality? How do you put to death the deeds of the body? You remember that the Holy Spirit who lives in you, he is the mark, he is the seal of the fact that you belong to God.

¹¹ James 4:7

¹² 1 Corinthians 6:18.

¹³ 1 Corinthians 6:19.

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

You are not your own. Therefore glorify God in your physical nature. Glorify God with all of your life.

How do you resist the enemy? It is an act of submission. It is an act of faith. I believe God. It is an act of submission. I want to honor the God to whom I belong.

In fact, in this letter, 1 Peter, look over to chapter one. And, once again, the exhortation to live a holy life in this world is tied to the idea that we are not our own.

1 Peter one verse 17.

“And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds...”¹⁵

Right? Do you call him Father? Is he your Father? Do you say you are born again? Notice the next statement.

“...conduct yourselves with fear through the time of your exile.”¹⁶

Right now as you are a pilgrim, a stranger in this world on your way to heaven, you live your life in the fear of the Lord, reverencing the Lord.

Verse 18.

“...knowing...”

Here is something you are to know. You see, this is a matter of faith.

...knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for your sake, who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.¹⁷

How do you live a holy life in this age? You do it by faith and you do it by submitting, recognizing that you have been bought with a price and you do not belong to you. That is what resistance is.

But there is a third thing we can say about this thing called resistance. Resist him, 1 Peter

¹⁵ 1 Peter 1:17.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ 1 Peter 1:18-21.

five. 1 Peter 5:9 says resist him. This is an act of faith. This is an act of submission. What else is involved in resisting?

Well, third, resistance is an act of patient endurance.

Do you notice something in verse eight? Again, look there.

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

And after you have suffered a little while...¹⁸

You see, this isn't going to go away immediately. Oh, in the comparison to eternity it is just a little while. But nonetheless, you will have to suffer a little while. In other words, this resistance against the enemy, it is not just an immediate sort of thing. It is not just a one time sort of thing. It involves ongoing resistance. It involves patient endurance.

Look over to the book of James, if you would, to the left there and look at chapter four and notice something we see in verse seven.

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil.”¹⁹

What does the Bible say will happen when you submit yourself to God and resist the enemy? What does he say will happen?

“...he will flee from you.”²⁰

Well, how many here have known what it is to battle with temptation? Could you raise your hand? All right. Let me ask you this. Does it seem like he always immediately flees?

You see, I think that is where we fall down. We sometimes think, well, now, Lord. You know, I have believed your Word and I have quoted these verses and I have thought about what is true and right and why doesn't this temptation just go away? Why doesn't the enemy just run away?

Well, listen. There is more to resistance than just an immediate kind of faith and an immediate kind of submission. There must be ongoing faith and ongoing submission. It has got to be an enduring kind, a patient kind of faith and submission, because sometimes the temptation doesn't immediately go away.

¹⁸ 1 Peter 5:8-10.

¹⁹ James 4:7.

²⁰ Ibid.

Whether it is a temptation to be bitter, a temptation to think a certain way that doesn't honor God, a temptation to be discouraged, a temptation... whatever the temptation is. It doesn't always immediately go away.

Look at Hebrews 12, if you would, please. Notice something there. Hebrews 12. Look at verse one.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also [see, as they did] lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with [what?] endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

[Then notice this] In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.²¹

How long do I have to resist?

You may have to resist to the point of martyrdom.

The writer of Hebrews says you haven't gotten there yet.

What is the message? Keep on resisting. Keep on enduring. Keep on believing. Keep on submitting. Don't grow weary. Don't be faint hearted. Look at this cloud of witnesses. Look back at those who have walked with Christ by faith. Look at Hebrews 11. Consider what the Lord can do in ordinary human lives by faith and you keep on believing and you keep on submitting and you keep on enduring.

What does resistance involve? Faith, submission, but it also involves endurance. There are certain besetting sins you may battle with for a lifetime. And you go on believing and you go on submitting and you go on enduring. You don't give in to your temptations. You resist them by faith and submission to the Lord.

There is a fourth thing we can say about it if you look at Ephesians six, a fourth thing that goes into this idea of resisting.

It is an act of faith. It is an act of submission. It is an act of patient endurance. Fourth, it takes place where there is watchful preparation. It takes place where there is watchful preparation.

You notice in James four where we read that we are to resist, there is the specific mention

²¹ Hebrews 12:1-4.

of our enemy. And 1 Peter five when we are told to resist there is the specific mention of our enemy, the devil.

Now look at verse 10 of Ephesians six.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.²²

You see? You are not going to know this by looking around at the physical, material world. You are not going to look around at the world and say, “Well, there is a devil.”

No. The way we know there is a devil is because God has revealed that fact to us in his Word. And he tells us that our enemy is real and he tells us something about the character of our enemy, not that we might live our lives fearing the enemy, but that we might live our lives understanding the day by day, moment by moment need for believing our God and submitting to our God.

And in this case he tells us we have to be prepared in advance for that day of testing. This is why we put on the whole armor of God so that, notice:

“...you may be able to stand.”²³

In other words, if you live a dull, unwatchful, spiritually insensitive life and you are not walking faithfully with the Lord and taking to yourself all of the benefits he has given you in Christ and all the preparation he has set forth for you in his Word, if you are living a lazy existence, acting as if you don't have an enemy, then you are going to stumble.

No, to be able to stand when that time of testing comes means that you are alert. You are spiritually awake. And you are believing God to the extent that you are taking full advantage of everything that he has set before you in his Word to be ready to stand. There is a preparation needed.

Look at verse 12.

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”²⁴

How do we know these things exist? God tells us.

Therefore, plead the blood of Jesus.

²² Ephesians 6:10-11.

²³ Ephesians 6:11.

²⁴ Ephesians 6:12.

Satan I rebuke you or I bind you.

Is that what it says?

What does it say?

“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.”²⁵

Well, what kind of stuff is this armor?

Verse 14.

Well, you put on the belt of truth and you put on the breastplate of righteousness and you have your feet prepared with the knowledge that you are at peace with God. And in all circumstances, verse 16, you take up the shield of faith. You believe the Lord so that you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one and you take the knowledge of your salvation compared to a helmet. You take the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God and through it all you are constantly living a prayerful life.

Do you see that, folks? It is not mystical, is it? It is not some kind of incantation that we learn to say. It is living this life of faith and submission to the Lord moment by moment by moment in an ongoing, enduring fashion and it means we are spiritually awake and we are being prepared every day. We put on that armor. We are ready to face this world as we go out into it to serve our Savior as long as we are exiles, as long as we are here.

Which leads to something else I want to share tonight. We have talked about the fact that resistance is indispensable. It is given to us more than once in Scripture. We are told to do this. It is specifically related to our relationship to the enemy and then we have talked about what this resistance is.

Now a fourth thing I want to point out is, we have a model. We have a model for what it means to resist the enemy.

Where do think we find that model? Who do you think our model is? It is our Savior. And I want you to turn to Matthew chapter four and notice what we find there. Matthew chapter four verse one.

“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”²⁶

Who led him into the wilderness? The Spirit, to be tempted. From the devil’s point of view it is a temptation. From the Father’s point of view it is proving ground.

Verse two.

²⁵ Ephesians 6:13.

²⁶ Mathew 4:1.

And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”²⁷

He is hungry, right? And he has the power. The devil knows he has the power to turn a stone into bread if he desires to do so.

Verse four.

But he answered, “It is written,
“Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.””

Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

“He will command his angels concerning you,
and
“On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.””²⁸

Oh, so you want to talk about the Scriptures?

How many know that the devil makes use of Scripture? It has amazed me at times to see people in clear, undeniable sin quoting Scripture to try to justify what they are doing.

It shouldn't surprise us, though, should it, because the devil is a master twister of Scripture. Jesus sets him straight. He corrects the devil's interpretation of Scripture with Scripture.

Verse seven.

“Jesus said to him, ‘Again it is written, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.”’”²⁹

Oh, what you have quoted concerning Christ is true. But the Son of God living a sinless life as a man will not presume upon the Father.

Verse eight.

²⁷ Matthew 4:2-3.

²⁸ Matthew 4:4-6.

²⁹ Matthew 4:7.

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”

Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written,
“You shall worship the Lord your God
and him only shall you serve.””

Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.³⁰

There are several things I want you to notice here. One, I want you to notice that we meet with temptation in the will of God. Jesus is walking perfectly in the will of the Father and yet he meets with temptation along that pathway. As we are walking faithfully with the Lord we are going to come to task. As we walk faithfully with the Lord we are going to meet with temptation.

How did Christ resist these temptations? Well, he is completely submitted to the Father, isn't he? He says in the last temptation we are to worship, we are to serve the Lord God only. He says in the second temptation we are not to put the Lord our God to the test. He says with the first temptation we are to live by every word that comes from the mouth of God. Here is complete submission, reliance upon, trust in the Father. And here also is this faith we are talking about, a believing of the Word of God because in every single temptation what does Jesus do? He quotes Scripture. This is what the Bible says.

So he resists with Scripture. He resists with submission. And you do notice he didn't have to resist just one time, did he? The first temptation is given, he resists. The second temptation comes, he resists. The third temptation comes, he resists. There was this enduring faith, this enduring submission.

And finally what does the devil do? He flees. He leaves.

Folks, I just tell you. As a pastor, it grieves my heart to see people we love destroyed by sin. And as you shepherd as an under shepherd the Lord's people, and you watch the way that they are thinking and you watch the way that they are living and you watch the choices that they are making and you hear their rationalizations and excuses for sinful behavior, you just want to stand as I am doing tonight and remind them that we are called to live holy lives, not in step with the world, but in step with our God. And it is not going to be an easy task. And we have a real enemy and we live in a real sinful world and the flesh that still resides in saved people doesn't get improved.

How many know tonight that your flesh is not on an upward trend? The flesh is as wicked as it ever has been in you and it will be wicked until you receive a glorified body, so that what is needed in the church, what is needed in our lives together is resistance. We are commanded. We are responsible to resist him.

³⁰ Matthew 4:8-11.

Let me ask you as we finish tonight. Do you understand the need to resist? Do you understand it is not going to be easy, that this is described in terms of a battle, a struggle?

Remember what we read in Hebrews 12.

“In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.”³¹

It is a struggle, which is why you need to resist. Do you tonight understand the way to resist, that it is not magical? It is very practical. It means submission.

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil.”³²

It means Scripture. Resist him standing firm in your faith. It means endurance. You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood. It means watchful preparation. Doing everything necessary to stand, being prepared to stand in the evil day. Put on the whole armor of God.

Are you prepared to resist? Are you committed to resistance? Do you care? And I know the answer to this question for every truly saved person in this place, but I am going to ask it anyway? Do you want to resist? Do you want to honor the Lord with your life?

Saved people do. So that if you don't, if sin is more attractive to you than obedience, if the thought of indulging your flesh is more attractive to you than the thought of obeying the Lord, you need to examine the reality of your profession.

Jesus said, our Savior said:

“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?”³³

Let's bow together for prayer.

Our Father in heaven, we thank you that you have given us everything that we need for life and godliness through the true knowledge of your Son. And I pray that even this night we would look to our Savior, the knowledge of him, to know, Lord, how to trust you in the face of the enemy's activities and temptations that he offers to us. I pray, Lord, that we would learn what it is to submit to you afresh and anew, moment by moment throughout our day and I pray that we would learn what it is to believe you and to stand firm just as our Savior did and say, “It is written.” I pray, Father, that we would learn that we are not promised that the battle at times not only will not be hard, but that it won't rage on, so that we would be committed to enduring even to the point of blood shed. I pray, Lord, that we would not wait until we are in the midst of the battle to take

³¹ Hebrews 12:4.

³² James 4:7.

³³ Luke 6:46.

these things seriously, but we would see the need for watchful preparation, that we would be spiritually alert and sensitive to you in putting on the whole armor that you have provided for us of truth and righteousness and the knowledge of salvation and the good news that we are at peace with you and the Sword of your Spirit which is your Word and that we would be prayerful at all times.

Lord, I pray for any brother or sister who is failing, it feels to them, because they are not walking in these things. They have neglected this responsibility. I pray that even this night they would be thoroughly committed to receiving this commandment and to resisting the enemy. And we ask you for this in Jesus' name. Amen.