

"The Believer's Suffering"

Part 15

1 Peter 3:13-5:14

Introduction: Last week in our study of 1 Peter we looked at how we are to trust the Lord in the midst of difficult times. In that study we looked at two verses.

Notice 1 Peter 5:6-7

Peter was reminding his readers of the power of God over the circumstances they were facing. He referred to the "MIGHTY HAND OF GOD" which looked back to the power of God that brought Isarel out of Egypt and sustained them for forty years in the wilderness. Just as He delivered Isarel so he would deliver Peter's readers and would exalt His people in due time.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

Peter then called on his readers to cast all their care upon the Lord because He cared for them. The word "care" refers to "anxiety". All of our worries and cares are to be given over to the Lord. Now as Peter moves on, he is going to explain the need to be alert because there is a real enemy who desires to destroy each believer.

I. Be Spiritually Alert

Just because we are called to cast all our care upon the Lord does not mean that we sit back and do nothing. We are soldiers in a battle and as we have looked at in Ephesians we are to STAND. Now we would think that the enemy would not attack us while under a trial, but he certainly will. He will come when we are the most vulnerable and many times that is in the trials of immediately after the trials.

Notice 1 Peter 5:8

We have an enemy that is walking about as a roaring lion seeking a believer to devour.

Job 1:6-7

⁶ Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.

⁷ And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, *From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.*

Peter instructs his readers as to how to guard against the enemy.

1. Be sober.

When we think of "sober" we think of someone who is free from the effects of alcohol. Peter has the very same idea here but not concerning alcohol. He is exhorting his readers to guard against becoming intoxicated with the cares and the problems of life. Just as alcohol can affect the way a person acts and thinks and it can slow down his reaction time, so the cares and the problems of this life can do the very same thing. People become intoxicated with worry to the point they are unaware of what is happening in their spiritual lives. Let us notice what Paul wrote to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 5:14-20

¹⁴ Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

¹⁵ See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

¹⁶ Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

¹⁷ Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

¹⁸ And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

¹⁹ Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

²⁰ Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Paul wrote something similar to the Thessalonians.

1 Thessalonians 5:5-8

⁵ Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

⁷ For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

⁸ But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

Notice how Heibert defines "SOBER":

"It denotes a condition free from every form of mental and spiritual loss of self-control; it is an attitude of self-discipline that avoids the extremes of the 'reckless irresponsibility of self-indulgence on the one hand, and of religious ecstasy on the other.' It inculcates a calm, steady state of mind that evaluates things correctly, so that it is not thrown off balance by new and fascinating ideas. Such 'level headedness' is a constant Christian need."

Wiersbe gets a little more detailed with his thoughts:

"A part of this soberness includes not blaming everything on the devil. Some people see a demon behind every bush and blame Satan for their headaches, flat tires, and high rent. While it is true that Satan can inflict physical sickness and pain, we have no biblical authority for casting out "demons of headache" or "demons of backache."

So, what Peter is saying is that as believers we are to practice self-control and step back and evaluate everything through the lens of Scripture. We are to remain calm in the trials of life. We are to be "level headed" as we pass through this world. People who get caught up in extremes become distracted and they get focused upon one thing and they are then vulnerable to the enemy.

2. Be vigilant.

The word "vigilant" means "to be cautious, to be alert". What is it that we are to be on alert for?

1. The Devil.

Ephesians 6:11

¹¹ Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

The word "wiles" means "craftiness or trickiness". Satan is very deceptive, and he will do whatever he can to defeat us believers. One of the main gates which he works through is the world.

1 John 2:15-16

¹⁵ Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Satan will use the things of the world as bait to entice the believer into sin.

James 1:13-15

¹³ Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

¹⁴ But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

¹⁵ Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

2. Temptation

Temptation is something else that we must be fully alert to.

Matthew 26:40-41

⁴⁰ And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

⁴¹ Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

We do not look for a demon behind every bush, but we must be mindful that this spiritual war that we are in never stops. There is not a time when we can step away and not be involved. This war rages on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and it will for us until we leave this world. There are temptations all around us and we **MUST** be alert.

Genesis 3:1-6

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

² And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

³ *But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.*

⁴ *And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:*

⁵ *For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

⁶ *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*

There is so much to learn from the fall.

- a. Satan went after the weaker person.
- b. He went after the unlearned person.
- c. He used the one whom Adam loved to get him to sin.
- d. He worked through the family.

The next thing we must be alert to is:

3. Apathy and indifference.

We can see a picture of indifference in Jesus' letter to the church at Sardis. This city sat upon a very high rock and was surrounded by sheer cliffs. Those who lived there believed their city was invincible because of its location. But there was an enemy who found a way to scale the cliffs and the city fell. Let us notice the warning which Jesus gave to the church.

Revelation 3:1-3

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

² *Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.*

³ *Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*

Let us notice what happened to this city.

The Greek historian Herodotus tells the story of the fall of Sardis in days of Cyrus. King Cyrus came to Sardis, and found the position of the city ideally suited for defense. There seemed to be no way to scale the steep cliff walls surrounding the city. He offered a rich reward to any soldier in his army who could figure out a way to get up to the city. One soldier studied the problem carefully, and as he looked, he saw a soldier defending Sardis drop his helmet down the cliff walls. He watched as the soldier climbed down a hidden trail to recover his helmet. He marked the location of the trail and led a detachment of troops up it that night. They easily climbed the cliffs, came to the actual city walls and found them unguarded. The soldiers of Sardis were so confident in the natural defenses of their city they felt no need to keep a diligent watch, so the city was easily conquered. Curiously, the same thing happened almost 200 years later when Antiochus attacked and conquered the overconfident city that didn't set a watch.

4. False Teachers

This was a concern of Paul when he was at Ephesus.

Acts 20:27-31

²⁷ *For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*

²⁸ *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

²⁹ **For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.**

³⁰ **Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.**

³¹ *Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.*

Conclusion:

Notice 1 Peter 5:8 again.

Why does the Bible tell us the Devil is like a ROARING lion? Here is another question, "Why do lions roar?"

- a. The roar to call the pride together.
- b. The roar to cause fear and to intimidate.

c. They roar to mark their territory.

Application:

The Devil is like a roaring lion because he does not fight alone. He calls many demons to join in the battle. He is also doing what he can to instill fear in every believer. We are on his territory. He is the god of this world.

Let us be extremely careful in our walk because we are the hunted.