

"The Believer's Suffering"

Part 17

1 Peter 3:13-5:14

Introduction: In our study of Ephesians we were permitted to see who our true enemies are.

Ephesians 6:11-12

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

¹² *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

Peter knew who the enemies were also. He himself had faced Satan in the heat of the battle the night of our Lord's arrest and trials. He knew the power of the enemy from that battle. He had also learned that the enemy can be defeated if the right steps are taken. Peter also knew that the end result of being tried in the fires was worth the suffering. This is exactly what he is relating to his readers in the verses that are before us tonight.

Notice 1 Peter 5:8

This is the verse that we looked at last week. We are called to be sober which means level minded. We are not to be people of extremes and we are not to be caught up in the things of the world which can cause us to be in a state of intoxication in the sense that we are distracted and unable to focus upon what God has called us to do.

Peter also called his readers to be vigilant which means alert. The Devil defeats many believers because they relax in the battle. Many times this relaxation comes after a hard-fought victory. Let us notice one such example.

1 Kings 17:1

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

Elijah stood in the face of the most wicked man on earth and shook his fist and announced it would not rain. Then there was the showdown on Mount Carmel.

1 Kings 18:38-40

³⁸ Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

³⁹ And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.

⁴⁰ And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

Then word reach Jezebel.

1 Kings 19:1-4

And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

² Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time.

³ And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.

⁴ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

I. Resisting the Devil

Notice 1 Peter 5:9a

There are several things that we are told to flee from in the Bible.

1 Corinthians 6:18

¹⁸ Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

1 Corinthians 10:14

¹⁴ Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

1 Timothy 6:9-11

⁹ But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

¹⁰ For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

¹¹ But thou, O man of God, **flee these things**; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

2 Timothy 2:22

²² **Flee also youthful lusts**: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Notice 1 Peter 5:9a again.

The one thing that we are not to flee from is the Devil. We are to "RESIST" him. The word "RESIST" means "TO STAND AGAINST". The word "STEDFAST" means "FIRM." Putting the two together we can see that we are to stand firm against the enemy.

This is exactly what Paul calls for in Ephesians.

Ephesians 6:11

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

But there is more.

Notice 1 Peter 5:9a again.

We are to resist the Devil stedfast in the faith. This is our faith that we are to stand in and on.

Hebrews 11:1

Now **faith is the substance of things hoped for**, the evidence of things not seen.

Faith is the firm foundation upon which we are to stand. The deeper the faith the more solid the stand. The more shallow the faith the more unstable the believer is in the battle. It is our responsibility to know the promises of God and plant our feet firm upon them. Let us notice what faith in God's promises does for the believer.

Hebrews 11:30-37

³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

³¹ *By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.*

³² *And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:*

³³ *Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions.*

³⁴ *Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.*

³⁵ *Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:*

³⁶ *And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:*

³⁷ *They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented:*

Getting back to the point, we are to resist the Devil as we stand on faith. But we cannot stand against the Devil until something else happens first.

Notice the words of Warren Wiersbe:

*"Before we can stand before Satan, we must bow before God. **Peter resisted the Lord and ended up submitting to Satan!**". This is exactly what we see in our world today. People will not bow to God, so they submit to Satan."*

Let us notice something interesting that James wrote.

James 4:6-8

⁶ *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*

⁷ *Submit yourselves therefore to God. **Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.***

⁸ *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.*

James tells us that when we resist the Devil he will flee. Now what we need to know is that the Devil does not fear us, but he does fear our faith. He will attack us because of our faith, and he will flee when we stand fast in our faith.

II. The Encouragement

Notice 1 Peter 5:9b

Here Peter reminds his readers that they were not the only group that was suffering. There were believers all over the world who were suffering. These suffering believers were not alone.

Notice 1 Peter 5:10

Let us not miss the contrast here. There is suffering in the world for believers, but God has a plan. God uses the suffering to bring the saint into spiritual maturity.

Romans 8:28-29, 35-39

²⁸ *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

²⁹ *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

³⁵ *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

³⁶ *As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

³⁷ *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

³⁸ *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,*

³⁹ *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Notice 1 Peter 5:10 again.

Through the suffering God does several things.

1. **Makes us perfect.**

The word "perfect" means "to be restored." Notice the words from the Pulpit Commentary:

"The words speaks of the great work of Divine grace by which our defects are made good, the rents which sin has made mended, the tarnished purity given back, the scars effaced. That form of the Divine help answers to the deepest of our needs, and, in its beginning stages, is the first fruits of the great harvest of God's grace which a believing soul reaps. We need first of all forgiveness and the removal of the guilt of our sins. All restoration of fallen men to the lost ideal of man, which is the likeness of God, must begin there, and then there follows a long process which the patient God carries on, mending us by slow degrees, and step by step supplementing this defect and repairing the results of that sin, till there be no gaps remaining needing to be filled and no flaws in character needing to be corrected.

Psalm 23:3

³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

2. He will stablish us.

This means "to stand firm" in the grace of God. Notice the words of the Daily Study Bible:

"Suffering of body and sorrow of heart do one of two things to a man. They either make him collapse or they leave him with a solidity of character which he could never have gained anywhere else. If he meets them with continuing trust in Christ, he emerges like toughened steel that has been tempered in the fire."

3. He strengthens us.

This exactly what it says. God gives us strength in the midst of the suffering of this life. He gives us what we need to endure whatever we must face.

4. He settles us.

This refers to being built on a solid foundation. God makes us solid and continues to strengthen the foundation in the midst of the sufferings.

Conclusion:

God provides all we need for the sufferings of this life. Let us remember that God's plan for our growth requires pain in the present.