

*1 Peter 5:6-11*

<sup>6</sup> Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. <sup>7</sup> Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. <sup>8</sup> Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. <sup>10</sup> And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. <sup>11</sup> To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

*Introduction*

The CDC reports that almost 100,000 people have died in the United States due to covid-19. Among them was a man named Roy Horn, partner to Siegfried Fischbacher in the entertainment team “Siegfried and Roy”. Their shows included white lions and tigers. I don’t know about you, but that would be a line of work in which I would rather not be involved. Health risks are high; life-insurance expensive. But every day we deal with a lion whom the Apostle Peter identifies as the devil. We may be tempted to deny he exists. We may want to diminish the danger connected with him. We may think that we don’t really have to deal with him. But today God speaks to us through the pen of the apostle Peter:

*“Deal with the Devil.”*

*1. The Devil in Our Lives*

**FALLEN ANGEL**        Peter uses the picture of the lion, a powerful and dangerous animal, to depict the devil. **“<sup>8</sup> Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (v.8).”** The devil is not feline, but of the family of fallen angels. Originally the devil was as a good angel of God and possibly an archangel. He, with other fallen angels, served God. But these angels rebelled against God. So God put them in gloomy spiritual dungeons to which they are confined. Although they cannot leave their gloomy conditions in the spiritual realm, they can roam about. It’s like they have their version of a motorized jail.

And roam about they do. And roar. And seek to drag people off. The devil did so with Adam and Eve. With this fall the devil dragged humankind into his realm and his destiny. That’s the condition in which people come into the world – in the devil’s lair.

**CHRIST**                BUT Christ delivered us from this as he lived in our place under the law and died in our place on the cross. From this the Holy Spirit delivered us as he brought us to faith and made us God’s children. Yet, the devil and the demons are still in our world roaring, trying to devour us even though we are children of God.

**PERSECUTION**        They were doing so with the Christians in Asia Minor to whom Peter wrote. These Christians were suffering persecution. Twice in these six verses and 17 times in five chapters Peter refers to their suffering. They were arrested, imprisoned, and physically abused. Their property was seized and they often they were forced into slave labor. Many died horrible deaths simply for being a Christian.

As a result these Christians were subject to the temptations of the devil to doubt God's love, to leave Christianity, and to do whatever would get them out of harm's way even if it would take them off God's way.

**DEVIL & US** THE devil and demons try to drag us off and devour us through temptation, doubt, denial, and sin. They take things that are harmful and tell us that they are not. "Drunkness or the abuse of substances? No problem," the devil says. "Hatred and holding of grudges? It's healthy," the devil says. "Dissatisfaction and complaining over God's blessings? Freedom of thought and freedom of speech." "Adultery, lust, or fornication? They're human." After we listen to temptation and slide into sin, then the devil roars, accusing us, "You've sinned. You're hopeless. You're damned."

Or, sometimes God uses his mighty hand to press on us as he allows trials in our lives. Do think that this might be happening now? God uses these things for positive purposes – to teach, to test, to strengthen his people. His motive is love. Peter wrote, "**You know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings (v. 9).**" They may be illness, family problems, financial issues, work situations, loss of loved ones or possessions or a covid-19 pandemic. The result is that we may hurt and find life hard.

But the devil may roar, "Do you think God really loves you? If he really loves you, why would he treat you this way?" Our sinful nature – lion within us - may roar back in doubt, "You're right! If God loved me, he wouldn't do this!" Or the devil may roar, "God doesn't love you. God doesn't care about you. Let me have you." Our sinful nature may think, "You right. God doesn't care." And while we may not think, "I'll let the devil drag me away and devour my faith," we may get to the point of giving up, trying to squeeze out from under God's might hand, and giving in to the devil.

If we let our sinful natures roar, if we try to squeeze out from under the mighty hand of God, if we feel like giving up and giving in, or if we in tension fail to love one another, we sin by not resisting the devil and not standing firm in the faith. We fail to deal with the devil.

## ***2. The Lord in Our Lives***

**SON OF GOD SAVED US** WE show how much we need our loving Lord to deal with the devil. The Apostle John wrote in 1 John 3:8: "**The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.**" He did that by providing the holiness and obedience God demands of us, but we don't have – "**...Like us in every way but without sin (Hebrews 4:15).**" Jesus destroyed the devil's works by removing sin's curse. As Paul wrote to the Galatians, he removed our curse by suffering it on the cross where he paid for our sins in full. Christ overcame the devil's works by overcoming death – he rose from death. As a result, at death our souls live on in glory with God and on the Last Day Jesus will raise and glorify our bodies. Jesus overcame the deadness of our souls by bringing us to faith – the faith through which we receive forgiveness, have his holiness, enjoy life with God that has no end, and came look forward to even the resurrection and glorification of the body. Jesus dealt with the devil.

**TAKE ACTION** But the Lord gives direction for doing our part in doing the same: "**<sup>6</sup> Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. <sup>7</sup> Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. <sup>8</sup> Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith.**"

Actively, consciously, purposely strive to remember that God is God and we are not. He is the Creator; we are the creatures. He is the preserver; we are the preserved. He is the Redeemer; we are the redeemed. He loves us with an unfailing and everlasting love. So his will is what counts; not ours. His plans will prevail; not ours. So we humble ourselves submitting to God and his will.

**PRAY** Pray because God tells us **“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you (v. 7)”**. The mighty hand that may squeeze us is also the mighty hand of the caring God that helps us. Pray knowing that he hears and answers prayer because of his love for in Jesus. Pray because Jesus himself said, **“Watch and pray so that you do not fall into temptation.”** Pray knowing that prayer is a powerful in dealing with the devil.

**ALERT & SOBER** God also tells us, **“Be alert and of sober mind.”** Be cautious and watchful. Understand that the devil, demons and our own sinful nature are deadly like a roaring lion roaming about. Know God’s will well. Know your weaknesses well. Be discerning in dealing with situations that may be sinful and in which you may be weak. Don’t read or look at things you shouldn’t read or look at. Don’t go places you shouldn’t go. Don’t dabble in things you shouldn’t do. Don’t deal with people with whom you shouldn’t deal. The devil may use these people, places, thoughts or things.

**STAND FIRM** Stand firm in the faith. Is this the faith with which we believe or the Christian faith in which we believe? It’s both. Be into the word of God regularly, receive communion frequently and remember your baptism often so that your faith is strong, so that you are wise, sober, watchful, and discerning, and so that you can say no to the devil. According to Matthew it was with God’s word that Jesus resisted the devil. So when tempted, pray. Then tell the devil God’s word and tell him, **“Get lost.”**

He will. That’s because as the Lord tells you to stand firm, he does not tell you to stand alone, but assures us that he stands with us.

**GOD WITH US** THE presence of God’s mighty hand, assures us of this. The invitation to cast all our anxieties on him reinforces this. The promises that he cares for us, emphasizes this. And so do these words. <sup>10</sup>**And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.**

God is with us to get us through the times of suffering. And he will be with us to get us out of them too. What God is talking about in principle is what he did with his Son. God humbled his Son. He sent him to be the perfect servant in our place, and to suffer and die for our sins. Jesus humbled himself and fulfilled his mission as Savior. Then God raised him from the dead and restored his glory. Jesus ascended to the right hand of God where he lives and rules eternally. Likewise God promises that when he humbles us, he will also exalt us – here on earth at many times and many ways, in heaven, fully and for eternity. Peter referred to this when he said that God called us to eternal glory. Remember this and the rest of what Peter wrote. While it won’t get permanently get rid of the devil, it gives us power to deal with him. **“To God be the power for ever and ever. Amen.”**