

FACE TO FACE WITH A LION

1 PETER 5:8-14

We live in an age of extremes.

We find those extremes reflected in the popular conception of Satan:

C.S. Lewis warns of two dangers concerning the devils (demons) that apply equally well to our conversation concerning Satan:

- 1) To disbelieve in their existence
- 2) To believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.

"They themselves are equally pleased by both errors, and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight."

Historically, it has been popular to laugh at the idea of Satan, either as a little man in a red suit with horns and a pitch fork.

Or, as the figment of the imagination of the psychologically unstable. The intellectually enlightened wouldn't take such a being seriously!

However, people aren't laughing anymore.
Satan is alive and well. And most people know about it, and at least suspect that there may be some element of truth to the rumor!

The modern image of Satan—at least four views:

The Satan of the horror films, books and music—

Shadowy, evil, powerful presence

Seeking to destroy everything that is good

Possessing kids and turning them into monsters that do his bidding

The Satan of the comics–

Flip Wilson's character Geraldine who explains: "The devil made me do it!"

The Satan of the cults–

Those groups that worship Satan
Who celebrate black masses and sometimes ritualistic killings

The Satan of the Christians–

The one who gets the blame for everything I do wrong

The one who gets the blame for everything that goes against me.

Are any of these views really in line with the biblical view of Satan?

As Peter has been dealing with the issue of Christian suffering for the name of Christ, after dealing with the basic principles involved, he wants to make sure that they are aware that Satan is a very real part of the process and has dedicated himself to seeking their downfall!

I must confess, that as I was preparing for today's message and remembering that it was Mother's day, I was caught between two disconcerting thoughts. Number one, this didn't seem like the kind of message you ought to preach on Mother's Day. Somehow it seems that Mother's Day ought to be a "time of sweet loving thoughts."

However, the other thought that kept plaguing me is one that has occurred to me many times over the years, and certainly no less in the days in which we live: this is no time to be starting out in the difficult task of parenting. In fact, there has probably been no time in history when parenting has been more difficult or when it is going to require a more realistic view of Satan and his plans for

modern society and for our families! So mothers (parents!), pay attention. You are going to need to know the things God wants to say to us today!

Purpose/theme of the letter: *Remember?*

Two key sets of words, or concepts, are repeated frequently throughout the book: "**suffer**" and "**glory**". The repetition and interrelationship of these two ideas point to the theme of 1 Peter: **the relationship between the present suffering and the future glory in which we will participate in the future.**

GOD USES SUFFERING TO PREPARE US FOR GREATER GLORY.

His purpose is **to encourage them to remain faithful to God and to maintain a good testimony** when facing affliction and suffering for the cause of Christ. In the end, **God will be glorified and they will participate in His victory.**

One point that Peter makes very clear: **God's purpose for our suffering, and Satan's purpose for our suffering are in conflict with one another.**

Peter's prayer for them is that God will strengthen them, guide them through their temporary sufferings, and cause them to experience victory in the end.

Be sober and alert 5:8-9

THREE COMMANDS FOR DEALING WITH A LION:

1) **Be sober 5:8**

népho–to drink *no wine* => to be sober,
dispassionate, unmixed with wine
=> *sober judgment (opposite of every kind of fuzziness.*

To be free from every form of mental and spiritual
"drunkenness", free from excess passion, rashness,
confusion.

To be well-balanced, self-controlled, to exercise self-restraint.

2) **Be alert 5:8**

gregoreo– (<egeiro = to awaken, raise, arouse, =>
waken the dead

To be awake, wakeful, alert, watchful.
lit., to watch
fig., to be vigilant, be on the alert, keep one's eyes' open

3) **Resist him 5:9**

They should resist him, stand firm in the faith, and
refuse to let discouragement defeat them.

James 4:7: "Submit to God; Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

Eph. 6:11: "Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil."

They are to actively fight against the devil.

Implies active, determined opposition, often through confrontation (cf. Moses before the magicians in Egypt, 2 Tim. 3:8; Rom. 13:2; Gal. 2:11; 2 Tim. 4:15). Cf, Eph. 6:10-18.

Paul Cedar: a missionary to Africa gave the children's message in their church. He told them what to do if they should meet a hungry lion. "The first thing to remember is that you should never try to flee. That would mean certain death. The lion can run much faster than we can. [The roaring scares us into running, then the lion attacks from behind and slaughters the defenseless fleeing victim]. Next, you should try to look very brave and stare right into the lion's eyes. If you are successful, he will back down and run away. However, if that does not work, you should be ready for the lion to attack you. Have your spear ready so that when he leaps on you, he will land on the spear and be killed!"

That is good advice for meeting the devil also. We should not try to flee from the devil. We are to resist him by remaining steadfast in the faith.

Our resistance is a "firm in faith" resistance. We are no match for him in our own strength. We need God's strength and protection to resist him. Jude 9; Eph. 6:10-18

"Firm"– => "stiff, hard, stubborn (in good sense), firm, solid"

When applied to people, the word is normally used of a negative trait, stubbornness, but here it clearly looks at the positive side of the same trait [*cf. Melinda as "one of our children"*]

Defeat is not inevitable. We should expect the enemy to flee when we resist him. That is the act of faith.

Swindoll warns us: "Never confuse confidence in Christ with cockiness in the flesh."

Cf. Jude

They need to be cautious because *the devil would like to use their affliction as an occasion to make them fall.*

FIVE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE LION:

Satan is searching about as a roaring lion seeking some to devour.

- 1) **Satan is our adversary**—an opponent in a legal conflict, or lawsuit.
- 2) **Satan is our accuser—slanderer**
 Rev. 12:10—"the accuser of the brethren."
 Job 1-2
 Zech. 3:1-5
- 3) **Satan is like a lion *roaring***

The lion's roar is one of his weapons. It puts panic into the victim.

He will either turn to run, making him an easy prey.

Or he will freeze from fear and take no action.

He will give up.

One of Satan's favorite tactics is to roar. He wants to scare us—to make us think we are victims, trapped under his power.

He is defeated. We need to know who we are in Christ, and what Christ has done to defeat him.

HOW TO TREAT A WILDCAT

Writing in "Moody Monthly," Carl Armerding recounted his experience of watching a wildcat in a zoo. "As I stood there," he said, "an attendant entered the cage through a door on the opposite side. He had nothing in his hands but a broom. Carefully closing the door, he proceeded to sweep the floor of the cage." He observed that the worker had no weapon to ward off an attack by the beast. In fact, when he got to the corner of the cage where the wildcat was lying, he poked the animal with the broom. The wildcat hissed at him and then lay down in another corner of the enclosure. Armerding remarked to the attendant, "You certainly are a brave man." "No I ain't brave," he replied as he continued to sweep. "Well, then, that cat must be tame." "No," came the reply, "he ain't tame." "If you aren't brave and the wildcat isn't tame, then I can't understand why he doesn't attack you." Armerding said the man chuckled, then replied with an air of confidence, "Mister, he's old--and he ain't got no teeth."

We don't have to quake when he roars. We can call his bluff.

"He ain't got no teeth!"

You see, Satan's roar is his most potent weapon. We just have to put on our spiritual armor and resist him!

You can't withstand him in the flesh.

The nature of our spiritual armor in Eph. 6 indicates that we need to be sure we are clean in God's sight, or Satan will take us to the cleaners. He knows just what weakness to hit us with.

4) **Satan is like a lion walking around seeking a victim**

Various times in Scripture this warning is given.

Satan will tempt us; he will take advantage of us. 1

Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor. 2:11;

He will disguise himself as an angel of light. 2 Cor.
11:14

All of this in the hope of finding a victim!

Therefore we are warned not to give him an
opportunity. Eph. 4:27

He tempts us to follow him, and then clubs us with our
failure.

We don't have to fall into his trap!

5) **Satan is like a lion walking around seeking to devour someone**

Our Lord warned Peter that Satan desired to sift him
like wheat (Luke 22:31)

Satan would prefer that we ignore his existence, that
we write him off as a myth, the figment of someone's
imagination.

He would rather we act as if he doesn't exist, so that he
can take us by surprise.

One of the worst mistakes we can make is not to take
him seriously. To act as if he were no threat to us.

Notice that we are to *resist* him; not to fight him. We
aren't wise or powerful enough to enter into conflict

with him. But by faith we can resist him. We don't have to give in to his temptation.

"The devil made me do it!"

We're all too prone to blame our wrong on him. Frequently, we are too willing to do what we know is wrong. He may not even have to get involved!

He gets those who are furthest away from the shepherd.

His plan is to use our suffering as a wedge to drive us further away from God.

Recognition of their identification with the entire body in its sufferings will encourage them.

We are not in this alone. Other Christians around the world are going through the same kinds of opposition and attack. As we stand together by faith, Satan will be defeated and God will be glorified through us.

Cp. Heb. 12:1-3

Peter's Concluding wish for them 5:10-11

Peter's desire for them is summarized in the prayer that God will strengthen them, guide them through their temporary sufferings, and cause them to experience victory in the end. Cf. 2 Cor. 4:16-18

The suffering is temporary.
The glory is eternal.

The ultimate result of our suffering is GLORY.

Spurgeon: "The glory which God has in reserve for His chosen will never come to an end; it will stay with us, and we shall stay with it forever. It will always be glory too; its brightness will never become dim; we shall never be tired of it, or sated with it. After ten thousand millions of years in heaven our happiness shall be as fresh as when it first began. Those are no fading laurels which surround immortal brows. Eternal glory knows no diminution."

GOD DOES FOUR THINGS FOR US, THROUGH OUR SUFFERING, IN MOVING US TO GLORY: 5:10

1) HE PERFECTS US – "fit" or "join together" – restore, mend, complete, put in order again

This is the word commonly used for setting a fractured bone, or for mending nets. By this process both are restored to their intended use. It is to supply what is missing, to mend that which is broken,

Barclay: "Sir Edward Elgar once listened to a young girl singing a solo from one of his works. She had a voice of exceptional purity and clarity and range, and an almost perfect technique. When she had finished, he spoke softly, "She will be great when something happens to break her heart."

I believe it was Tozer who said, "I doubt if God will ever be able to use a man greatly, until he has hurt him deeply."

That is what Peter means here, it is only after we have suffered a while that God is able to restore what is broken and use us effectively for our intended purpose.

2) HE CONFIRMS US—make fast, fix, set, => confirm, establish, (set firmly, stand fast, firm footing)

The believer who is established in this way will not be moved by persecution, nor by false doctrine.

This is what our Lord told Peter to do for his brethren after he turned back from his denial of the Lord. Lk. 22:32 (In v. 31, His prayer was that Peter's faith would not fail—He wanted him to "stand firm in faith".)

3) HE STRENGTHENS US—make strong, strengthen—

Barclay observes: Wind will blow out a weak flame, but it will only create a stronger blaze from a strong flame.

4) HE ESTABLISHES US—lay the foundation, found firmly—a solid foundation will hold us securely against the storms of life. It won't be easily shaken.

Though the suffering come for a while, the ultimate victory is assured!

The short-term result is not guaranteed. Suffering may be a tool of Satan to drive us to bitterness. Or, it may be God's instrument to strengthen us. If it is accepted in the trusting certainty that a loving Father's hand will never cause His child a needless tear, then strength will come from the suffering that an easier way will never produce.

Growth and strengthening doesn't come by escaping from affliction. It is testing and trial that produces patience and perfection. If we never face the strong counter-currents of life, we will never become strong. That's why the God of all

grace does these things for us, AFTER we have suffered for a little while.

Don't try to escape the pain. That's Satan's way to get us down and to weaken us. Face it head on so that God can do His perfect work in you. Then, He will restore, establish, strengthen and found us firmly. That's His work in us.

Therefore, He alone is worthy of all the glory and of all dominion. 5:11
He does it all for us!

He has dominion. He is in control of it all.
That's the way it should be!
That's the way it is!

Personal matters 5:12-14

The message he sent them through Silvanus is this:
5:12

This process is what **God's grace** is all about.
Therefore we are to stand firm in that **grace!**

We are in this together, therefore, we all stand together.
Thus the greetings 5:13-14a

Peter's prayer for them is that they might experience
God's peace. 5:14b

What should the results of this hope be?

Spurgeon said that our hope of glory ought to produce four results in us:

- 1) **Desire**—to attain that glory in Christ
- 2) **Fear**—tremble lest we miss it

- 3) Gratitude
- 4) Courage

HOW DO WE FACE THE LION?

1. We first must know who we are in Christ.

Ch. 1 (1:3-5, 23; 2:5, 9)

We lay claim to be who God says we are.

2. We live the way God wants us to live, whether anyone else comes along or not.

Ch. 2-4 (2:12; 4:15-16, 19)

Like Christ, we remain faithful to what God wants His people to do.

3. We remain alert to Satan's attempts to defeat us and to devour us. 5:8

4. We resist Satan and his strategy, remaining firm in our faith. 5:9

Aware that God's people around the world are in this together.

Aware of what God wants to do in our lives.

But, don't get hung up focusing on Him! Focus on the victor, not on the victim! Not on the loser!

5. We look forward to being united with Christ in His glory, as a result of our suffering. 5:10

John Newton captured Peter's thought about what the God of all grace has done for us in his famous and beloved hymn, "Amazing Grace":

Amazing grace!
How sweet the sound—that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear The hour I first
believed!

The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be As long as life
endures.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have
already come;
'Tis grace hath brough me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining, as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise Than when
we'd first begun.

5:10-11