

1Peter 5:5-9

Christian Resistance

While on our mission here in this kingdom of darkness we must learn to discern the enemy from the people we are called to rescue.

We are in a battle, we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against demons. It is important to make a distinction between those we are sent to rescue, and those we are sent to oppose.

We are sent by Christ to humbly serve lost souls—to display before them the love and life of Christ—to bring Christ to them, so that they might call upon Jesus to rescue them from their bondage to sin and the powers of darkness.

As part of our ministry to the lost, we are to submit to the human authorities of this kingdom.

But we are not to submit to demonic powers, instead we are clearly instructed to resist the demonic forces who are destroying the people of this world, and who are fighting us because they hate us, and because they seek to prevent us from rescuing their captives.

***Ephesians 6:10-13**, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*

¹¹ *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **stand against the wiles of the devil**.*
[Notice now, here is the distinction we must make.]

¹² *For **we do NOT wrestle against flesh and blood**, but [we do wrestle] **against** principalities, **against** powers, **against** the rulers of the darkness of this age, **against** spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ *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.”**

However, this creates for us, pilgrim soldiers of Christ, a difficult tension that requires much wisdom, and reliance upon the Lord to resolve.

When we encounter human government authorities who are acting under the authority of demons, how do we submit to the human authorities, as a display of Christ’s love to them, and at the same time resist the demonic powers who control them?

This is a scenario that we are frequently encountering today. Many of our government officials, at the prompting of demonic influences, are putting into place evil laws which are designed, not for the good of people, as they deceitfully claim they are—“to keep you safe,” but they are actually laws designed to bring people under the control of evil forces for their destruction.

How do we submit to the human authority but resist the devil when they are both working together in the same person?

1Peter 5:5, “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Here we have reached the end of Peter’s first letter, and Peter is now pulling together some of his thoughts that he has been writing about, to bring things to a conclusion.

In verse five he is talking again about submission, and the opening word to this verse, “***Likewise,***” meaning, “In the same way,” takes us all the way back to ***1Peter 2:13,***

which begins with the word, “Therefore,” which is attaching the following thoughts to a preceding context, so we need to go back a little further to get the context, because it is important to interpreting chapter five also.

1Peter 2:11-12, “Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, [because this world is not our home, because we don’t belong here, but are foreigners here, in enemy territory, on a rescue mission]

*...abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul [learn to not listen to those enemy sent impulses and messages which do not agree with the instructions of your Master—we listen to one command only], ¹² **having your conduct honorable** [in the sight of God—they may not honor it] **among the Gentiles** [the citizens of this world],*

...that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation [implying that they might be among the saints glorifying God when Christ returns because of your influence].”

1Peter 2:13, “Therefore [because you are not of this kingdom of darkness, but are foreigners here on a rescue mission, and you have strategic orders from your Master] submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors...”

Then ***1Peter 2:18, “Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.”***

Then ***1Peter 3:1, “Wives, likewise [there is the same word that chapter five verse 5 opens with—likewise] be submissive to your own husbands, [notice the strategic, missional purpose for these instructions from our Master] that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives...”***

The goal is faithfulness to God’s voice for the rescue of souls of man.

And now, continuing that theme, because we are foreigners, in enemy territory, on a dangerous rescue mission, our Commander in Chief has given us leaders, ***1Peter 5:5, “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders...”***

Meaning that we are not on this mission as independent lone rangers, but we are part of a team, and the Lord has given that team elders for the well-being of the team and for the success of the mission.

Therefore, we are to submit to the authority of those elders, just as we are to submit to other authorities.

Remember from our last study, the spiritual leaders in the church were generally spiritually mature ones in the church.

The younger people, is an expression that refers not to age, but to all of those who are not elders, who do not have seniority—everyone who wasn't an elder was younger, regardless of their age. (*Jobes, p. 307*).

1Peter 5:5, “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you [this includes the elders] be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Notice, that though God gives authority to the elders, He doesn't elevate them and put them on a pedestal above the rest of the church—they are equals.

Matthew 23:8-12, “But [Jesus is warning His disciples, whom He is training to serve as elders, they are not to be like the scribes and Pharisees.] you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’ [don't take a title to your name that distinguishes you, or elevates you from the others];

for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. [We are brothers and sisters—we are equals. This is why I often tell you to just call me Ron, or Brother Ron, rather than, Pastor Ron]

⁹ *Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.* ¹⁰ *And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ.* ¹¹ *But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.* ¹² *And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

Notice the expression in ***1Peter 5:5, “...and be clothed with humility...”***

This is an allusion to the towel Jesus wrapped around His waist when He established for us the example of Christian leadership. (John 13:3-5)

1Peter 5:5, “...and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Christian humility is an attitude that recognizes that all I am, all I have, and any good that I can do that's of any eternal value, is only by the grace of God.

Here is the attitude: “The Lord created me, He saved me, He called me to this role, He gave me everything that I need, He is working to shape me into what He wants me to be, and apart from Him I can add nothing of any value”—that is humility.

1Corinthians 4:6-7, “...that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. 7 For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?”—that is humility.

God opposes the proud, not only because pride raises itself above our fellow creatures, but because pride raises ourselves up against God, and foolishly believes that I can get along without God, or that I have something that I can offer to God.

But humility puts no confidence in self, but is totally and joyfully dependent upon God for everything.

Peter knew the ugly and destructive power of pride. He had boasted that although all others might deny Christ, he would never deny the Lord.

From the height of that proud boast, Peter fell into the lowest experience of failure and humiliation, when three times he denied even knowing Jesus. (Matthew 26)

1Peter 5:5, “...God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

It is God’s grace that will get us through the times of trial more successfully than Peter got through that trial. And humble dependence upon the Lord is the key.

1Peter 5:6, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time ...”

Humility was viewed by the Roman culture in Peter’s day as the appropriate attitude of a slave, but unworthy of a free Roman citizen.

However, Christians are taught by the Bible, to NOT think of ourselves as citizens of Rome.

Here’s our default setting—this is not our home.

To humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, is not the picture of God’s mighty hand forcing you to submit to Him.

It is to make the choice to willfully, gladly, let Him place His mighty hand upon your shoulder, or to take your hand in His hand, and guide you through life, knowing that both the association with Him, and the path He leads you down, will bring you painful rejection and humiliation in the eyes of the world.

And perhaps it will bring you much physical harm and suffering at the hands of the world.

But you do it purposefully that you may more fully partake of God's glory when this is done.

1Peter 5:6-7, "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, ⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."

In the context of faithfully following the Lord in the context of a hostile world, what were their cares?

Persecution. The loss of reputation, loss of respect, loss of family relationships, loss of friendships,

Perhaps it may be the loss of your career, how will you pay your bills? How will you feed your family? What if you end up on the streets?

What if the Lord is leading you down a path that may be very unhealthy? The physical and emotional dangers may be great. Your cares may be the verbal abuse at work, or perhaps you are afraid of physical abuse, and in extreme cases maybe even loss of your life.

Will you continue to humble yourself and stay under that guiding, almighty hand of God, and follow, though it may cost you your life?

These are real possibilities for many Christians who submit themselves to identifying with Christ and following Him closely.

But God is aware and He is concerned about our well-being. He tells us to give Him these fears and worries, trusting that He is working for your best interests, and He will take care of you.

And remember as you do so—success is not about this world—this is not our home—success comes as we deny ourselves the temporary good things of this life that we might forever experience the best things of the next life.

1Peter 5:8, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."

To be sober and vigilant means to be alert and aware of what is going on around you.

To be vigilant is to be watching to avoid falling into the growing deception, to watch that your life isn't spiritually shipwrecked as you are knocked out of the game—which isn't a game.

In these perilous times we cannot afford to be casual or complacent, or to live in denial of the seriousness of our situation, and pretend that it is just a health issue, there is nothing evil going on.

"Your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."

Both the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation use images of fierce animals to symbolize world systems that were dominated by the powers of darkness and sin.

Peter is also warning the church that satanic powers are at work in the political system of the Roman Empire which was beginning to rise up against the church in Peter's day.

And in the last days, in which we are living, the devil is again dominating and using our political systems to bring about destruction.

But remember, our adversary is not our politicians or health officials—they are captives, under the control of Satan himself.

1Peter 5:9, “Resist him, [Resist who? Resist the devil. How do we do that? This is important to understand.] steadfast in the faith...”

To resist the devil is to stand firm in the faith.

We don't see Satan, and we don't hear the voice of Satan. He is a spirit being and therefore he works through humans who are under his control.

He is like a roaring lion. The devil roars through the threats of politicians to issue fines, or prison, and through the scare tactics of sinister health professionals, through media propaganda, and through the threat of neighbors to turn you in, etc.

Out in wilderness fields, when sheep hear a lion roar they scatter in panic. That is the natural response.

But the sheep of the King have the Spirit of God within us. We are instructed by our Master to submit to **Him**, trust in His power and wisdom, and experience the mighty hand of God work to lead us into victory over the lion.

Remembering that victory over Satan sometimes comes by letting human authorities crucify us.

To stand steadfast in the faith, means we must stand firm against fear, we must not allow the roar of the lion to frighten us into scattering, but we must remain together in fellowship and community with believers, trusting in the Lord, and **persevering in the mission He has called us to fulfill, together.**

The word, *steadfast* [or firm], in the Amplified is to remain, “*rooted, established, strong, immovable and determined.*”

The same expression of *steadfast*, is found in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) in Isaiah 50, describing Jesus when the devil was trying desperately to deter Him from faithfully continuing in His mission,

Isaiah 50:6-7, “I gave My back to those who struck Me [submission to human authorities—the soldiers], and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from [I submitted to] *shame and spitting* [inflicted by human authorities]. 7 “For the Lord GOD will help Me; Therefore I will not be disgraced; Therefore ***I have set My face like a flint*** [steadfast], and I know that I will not be ashamed”

Jesus resisted the devil by absolutely refusing to be deterred from His path of obedience to the Father.

In ***James 4:7***, we see the same connection between submission and resistance. “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

We must resist the devil by remaining steadfast and consistent in the exercise of our faith, even when he roars threats against us. We must be undeterred, continuing to devote ourselves to the proclamation of the gospel, to the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

We resist him by continuing to meet together in one accord, even if it means meeting secretly in small groups as house churches.

And to continue to break bread **together** from house to house, trusting the grace of God for the ability.

We love and pray for our authorities, we serve them, we pay taxes, we submit to all those laws that are for the good of society.

But when we see Satan working through them, we resist his evil.

And as we do so, we submissively give our back to them to whip, and we give our cheeks to them to strike—but we set our faces like a flint rock to steadfastly follow our one and only Master—whatever the cost—and in so doing, we resist the devil.

The danger to the Christian is not that we are helpless before the devil. We are equipped with the whole armor of God: the shield of faith will extinguish the flaming darts of the evil one. And the sword of the spirit will put the lion to flight.

The great danger to the Christian is that we will fail to stand firm and resist, that we will not watch and pray, that we will not put on the whole armor of God and take up the sword of the Spirit against him.

The sword of the Spirit was what Jesus used successfully against Satan in the wilderness, and it is our to use in the authority of Jesus Christ.

The role of the devil is to keep us frighten us away from following close to Jesus. He will try to prevent us from continuing with our ministry, to stop us from gathering together to minister to

one another and to build up the body; to hinder us from trusting in God's provision and protection.

He seeks to scatter us away from the safety of the Shepherd.

Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

What we are about to go through is not strange, it is a normal part of our mission. Our brothers and sisters all around the world are going through the same thing.

But one day soon we will be rejoicing with our King—for He is coming soon.

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