

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL

LAST SUNDAY **1 Peter 5:6-7** Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. And then, as if to caution us against letting verse 7 lull us into complacency or sloppiness...

THIS SUNDAY **1 Peter 5:8-14** Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

NOTES:

1. To believe in Christ is to have a prowling, roaring, devouring enemy.

1 Peter 5:8 ... Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Prowling? Sometimes being inconspicuous so as not to be noticed.

Screwtape to Wormwood I wonder you should ask me whether it is essential to keep the patient in ignorance of your own existence. That question, at least for the present phase of the struggle, has been answered for us by the High Command. Our policy, for the moment, is to conceal ourselves. ... I do not think you will have much difficulty in keeping the patient in the dark. The fact that "devils" are predominantly comic figures in the modern imagination will help you. If any faint suspicion of your existence begins to arise in his mind, suggest to him a picture of something in red tights, and persuade him that since he cannot believe in that (it is an old textbook method of confusing them) he therefore cannot believe in you. (from C.S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters*, Letter 7):

Roaring? Sometimes being "loud" so as to be terrifying.

SPURGEON ... And now we turn, secondly, to SATAN'S ROARING ... I think it was Rutherford who said that he liked the devil best in this shape. I remember in one of his letters he thanks God that He had given him a *roaring* devil to deal with. Now what is the peculiar temptation which is intended under the metaphor of a roaring lion? **These roarings of Satan are threefold.** Perhaps Peter here alluded to *the roaring of persecution*. How Satan roared with persecutions in Peter's days... But there is another kind of furious attack—*the roaring of strong and vehement temptation*. This some of us have felt ... Once more—Satan has another way of roaring. I do not suppose that one in ten of God's people knows anything about this—and they need not wish to—Satan can *roar also in the Christian's ears with blasphemies*.

As Spurgeon suggests in the first place, it seems that the roaring that Peter has in mind is the roaring of persecution.

1 Peter 5:9 ... knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

Devouring? It's our faith that the devil seeks to devour. **1 Timothy 1:18-19** This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith... And notice that we should expect an issue of conscience to be involved. → Giving yourself permission to sin is one way to remove the armor that God has given you, and so expose yourself to a variety of moral disasters.

2. The suffering of God's people is temporary but the effects are permanent and positive.

1 Peter 5:10 And after you have suffered *a little while* [because of the work of the devil --- or the world --- or your own "flesh" → **1 Peter 1:6** In this you rejoice, though now *for a little while*, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials], the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. This is the doctrine of "the perseverance of the saints" which means:

If you are a saint (a person chosen by God to become holy), **you must persevere!** (That's our responsibility!)
If you are persevering, you must be a saint! (That's God's sovereignty!)

At any rate, what Peter has all along been writing about coping with is how sometimes doing the right things make things worse—and how to remain hopeful (and what to hope for!) while it's happening! **1 Peter 3:14** But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed.

ACTIONS:

a) **Be sober-minded and watchful.** So as not to be lulled off into complacency (especially by vs. 7)!

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. [One of 23 calls in the New Testament to "be watchful."]

How? Paul helps: it's a matter of faith and love --- and hope! **1 Thessalonians 5:8** But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

But Peter has told us that already! **1 Peter 1:5** ... by God's power [you] are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 Peter 1:13 Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:22 Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart...

So what can we do to become and remain sober-minded and watchful?

Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

As well as these Sunday morning experiences

→ **Forevergreen** and **The Ladies' Connection** and **Young Adults** and **CORE**

→ **Life Groups + Tuesday / Thursday morning prayer meetings!**

[This is a great time of year to get started! Details in the Bulletin and on our website (www.wlachurch.org)]

b) **Resist the devil.** Precisely why we need to remain sober-minded and watchful!

1 Peter 5:9 Resist him, firm in your faith... A firm faith is required. Trusting God enough to say "No" to the devil. Saying "No" emphatically. Convincingly. Which you can do because the devil is NOT equal and opposite to God. So he is not what God uniquely is: omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent.

James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. He only has so much time and opportunity to "take people down with him"! So go ahead and just say "No!" (And really mean it.)

And say it with confidence, in view of what Christ has accomplished. **Colossians 2:9-10,15** For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by **triumphing over them on the cross.**

NEXT WEEK: We begin a 4-week series entitled "**FIRST LOVE**" about some of what it really means to "love Christ first."

MARK 12:29, 30