



1 Peter 5:8-11

A Lion Neither Safe Nor Good

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

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

10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

11 To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Kids, lets say you were invited to go on an adventure safari to Africa, and on this safari you were told you would be traveling to see one of the most beautiful spots on earth, but that to get there you had to travel by foot over some very difficult ground but that you also had an excellent guide who knew the way really well. So you start out on your trip, and on the first evening your guide gathers you all around the campfire and he says “for the next week until we reach our destination we are going to passing through the territory of a ferocious man-eating lion, so you need to be constantly on the alert, you need to be very careful. And then he said, now “I’m going to give you all a rifle and some body armor, you need to have these at all times”, because this lion is very dangerous and if you let your guard down, he can be on you before you even realize and then he shows you some terrible scars and says “this is what he did to me, when I wasn’t watching, and if I hadn’t had help he would have eaten me.” Let me ask you, would you say ***“pffffttt.. Lion. Big deal. And then proceed on your way not watching, not keeping a lookout, not bothering to see that you had your rifle and your armor.”***

No, I don’t think you would, you’d be on the alert all the time, wouldn’t you? You’d be saying, ***I’m not going to end up as Lion Chow!***

But kids, you want to know something funny? In a very real sense, you are all on that safari that I was talking about right now. Now I don’t mean you’re literally in the jungle in Africa. But you see that Safari is like the journey of the Christian to heaven. While we are here on earth, we are going through some very dangerous territory, territory where our enemy the devil is constantly prowling around looking for victims to gobble up. Now God has given you his word to guide you, and to tell you to be alert, to watch and to pray. And God has given you His armor and His Sword, the sword of the Spirit so that you might be able to resist the devil when he attacks. The sad thing is though that even though the word tells us about the devil, and that we need to be on our guard, not every Christian is doing that and a lot of them end up in terrible trouble as a result. A lot of them do get caught unawares by the devil. And a lot of Christians just drop their weapons and ***run away*** when the devil attacks instead of doing what they are supposed to do which is to ***resist*** him. They don’t stand their ground and fight him, like Christian fought Apollyon in *Pilgrim’s Progress*.

Well I don't want that to happen to any of you, so I want you to 1) *Know who your enemy is*, 2) *Know what to do to resist him*, 3) *Know why you shouldn't lose hope for a moment as you do that* and Peter tells us all of those things here in these verses.

1) Let's talk about your Enemy the Devil and what he does: Peter calls him your adversary and the devil, the first adversary is a legal term for someone who opposes you in court , and the second devil literally means slanderer or someone who makes false accusations. The Devil accuses Christians to God, he points out our sin, piling it on. He tries to use God's justice against us. But there he see his great weakness is that in that court, while we have may have a terrible accuser, we also have the best of all advocates: Jesus Christ, steps forward and says "***Yes he is a sinner, but I have fulfilled the demands of Justice, I have paid for this one's sins with my blood, and I have given him my perfect righteousness. I have met the laws demands, therefore this one is innocent.***"

There is a beautiful picture of that exchange in: NKJ Zechariah 3:1 ***Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him.***

2 And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"

3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel.

4 Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him He said, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes."

5 And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the LORD stood by.

But our adversary can also oppose us here on earth, stirring up slander and persecution in the world against Christians, he has many willing instruments he can bring to bear against the Christian. Just as he used the Pharisees, and the Sanhedrin and Judas against Christ. Today he has false religions, and totalitarian persecuting governments, he has the world to assist him there. But he also a fifth column he can call on, an enemy within us, and that is the flesh. He can use pride as he did with Adam and Eve, he can use lust, he can use greed, or discontent and he is constantly prowling about looking for an opportunity to do so in your life.

Now unlike God the Devil is not omnipresent and omniscient, he is not everyone at once, and he doesn't know everything, he doesn't read your thoughts. But he gets around incredibly fast, and he has legions of fallen angels, demons helping him. And he is desperately clever and always watching and waiting, stalking like a Lion on the hunt does - tail twitching – always hungry, waiting for the perfect moment to leap. He knows your weaknesses, better than you do.

And remember this his greatest trick, as the saying goes, has been to get the world to doubt his existence. Kids, If someone says to me watch out for the Troll, I'm not going to watch out, why? ***Because I don't believe in Trolls.*** If I go on that Safari and my guide says, "watch out for the Lion" and I don't believe in Lions am I going to watch out for one? **No.** 65% of American teenagers say they don't believe the devil really exists, are they going to be watching out for him? **NO.**

A lot of people who call themselves Christians say they believe in God, but think the idea of the Devil is silly. And for a lot of them that's because they have a ridiculously inaccurate notion of him and he uses that: CS Lewis talked about that in the Screwtape Letters: "***The fact that 'devils' are***

predominately 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 he therefore cannot believe in you.”

He exists, he is a person, and he is desperately wicked, and knows how to make evil beguiling.

2) **So what should you do to resist him?** Well first **BE SOBER** – And there that doesn’t just mean “don’t get drunk”, it means don’t be intoxicated with the world, all the fleshly lusts that Peter warned of in 2:11 that war against your soul. That dull you senses, lower your resistance, and draw us away from God. There are many people who wouldn’t dream of getting drunk or doing drugs, but who have made sports or movies or politics or money their intoxicating drug of choice.

Secondly **BE VIGILANT**: Expect the battles, be on guard for them and keep your gaze fixed on Jesus. Prepare for the day of battle. Make sure you are clothed with the armor of God, and in particular that you are steadfast in the faith, because faith in Christ is the only thing that will protect you and allow you to stand. To do that though you are going to have to attend on the means that God has given to build up your faith. You are going to have to be reading the word, praying, attending worship, partaking of the Lord’s Supper, fellowshipping with the saints, studying to show yourself approved. Training every day, and not letting your guard down. You know brothers and sisters, in all my time as a Pastor, whenever I meet a Christian whom the Devil has gotten his claws into, it is ALWAYS the case, that they had let attending on the means of grace slip. I’ve never seen one who was daily in the word, daily praying, daily doing family worship.

Thirdly as James writes in James 4:7 Resist the devil and he will flee from you. It may seem circular but it really isn’t – to Resist the Devil you need to Resist Him. To often he tempts, and we give in. Or **he tempts, we say no, he tempts again, and we act like it would be impolite to say No twice**. So then we give in. Stand fast, resolve that if something is sinful, you won’t do it no matter what the price or how enticing it is. Resolve not to be bribed, regardless of whether you are offered \$20 or \$20 million.

Fourthly take comfort in the fact, that you are not alone in your suffering. You have countless brothers and sisters who are this very day, suffering persecution, and that sometimes terrible, for their faith. You have a mighty host of witnesses who have persevered even to the death for Christ. Remember that when you know someone at work is going to make fun of you or a relative is going to be angry if you share the gospel. With the perspective what is that, its not even suffering by comparison! Also when it comes to temptation, remember how others men and women have resisted everything you have: **1 Cor. 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.**

Remember Joseph and Potiphar’s wife.

Finally, know why you shouldn’t lose hope: The suffering you experience now is as Peter puts it is only for a little while. The tribulations we experience are only for a little while, the Safari doesn’t go on forever kids. You were called by Christ, chosen by Him and have been commanded to Resist the devil - **your calling is to resist, to persevere, but it is the Lord who preserves and will bring you through. Because you have been called and united by Faith to Christ and as Calvin put it: “whosoever comes to this contest, endued with faith, he declares that he will certainly be a conqueror.”**

Peter knew from experience that those who are united to Christ by faith, can never be destroyed by the Devil can never finally lose their faith because Christ does not allow anything to separate His children from Him. Am I sure he remembered the words of Jesus to him before his time of temptation and failure in the courtyard Luke 22:31 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.

32 "But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

Brethren in a little while your journey will be over, and when you pass through the veil you will never suffer persecution or temptation again. Then HE will perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. All of the suffering you are called to is only for a moment, and even that is merely to sanctify you.

Remember this, you can resist because there are two lions, not one. The first, is your enemy a roaring lion who never seeks anything good for you, who desires only your destruction. He the devil is to paraphrase C.S. Lewis neither safe nor good.

The second lion is not safe either, but he is good, that is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Lord Jesus Christ and if you will but flee to Him, and rest upon, and trust Him you WILL be able to resist the Devil and Someday you will see your enemy the devil destroyed forever. O flee to that Lion who is God incarnate, who has all power and authority, and who will never leave you, never let you go, and who has always brought his own safely home to HIM.

To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.