

XLVII. I Peter in Biblical Perspective

The Elect in the Exile

“Spiritual Warfare”

I Peter 5:6–11

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We are in the study of I Peter 5. This is God’s Word and God’s Word is the truth. I Peter 5:5–7 says [5] *Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”*

[6] *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, [7] casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.* The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

Dr. Schaeffer wrote a book and then did a video series on what the Prophet said which was ‘In light of who God is, of who I am, because of what God has done, how then shall we live?’ What should our life look like? What should we expect? The word we use today is lifestyle. Today I want to share with you from God’s Word and unfold for you two dynamics, two precepts, two principles that are a part of our life, in Christ and for Christ, from our conversion until glorification when we go to be with the Lord or until He comes for us.

Who are we? Peter has already told us. As we have studied I Peter we have seen how Pastor Peter has been unfolding for us our title of elect exiles. Elect is who we are by God’s grace in Christ, because of Christ. He has given us 15 marks of the Gospel blessings secured by Christ for His people. How do we live for Him? Peter has given us 10 Gospel commands up to this point in I Peter 5 of what we are to do for Him, not for salvation but for the Savior who has saved us. We are elect sojourners on a mission, on a message, in ministry, on our way home. Until we get home we have a job to do. Our roots are in the Kingdom. Our lives are in this world for Christ on the way to that Kingdom.

Now in this life, how shall we live and what do we expect as a way of life? Peter has made one thing abundantly clear by covering an unbelievable amount of space in a short epistle to talk about it which goes from I Peter 3:13 all the way to I Peter 5:11. He says that you will suffer for Christ. This is why Jesus would say to people ‘Here’s salvation, it’s a gift and it cost you everything. Count the cost.’ Because all who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution (II Timothy 3:12). Jesus said ‘If they persecuted Me they will persecute you’ (John 15:20). The Bible tells us when we go through the fiery trials, not if we go through them. Paul says in Philippians 1:29, [29] *For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake.*

This is Christian suffering. I am not speaking of the suffering that everybody has in this world because we’re in a sin-cursed world, but the peculiar suffering of what Jesus pronounces a benediction upon in the Sermon on the Mount and He does it twice. Matthew 5:11–12 says [11] *“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. [12] Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*

Along with many of the other Disciples in their epistles, Peter takes Jesus serious to communicate to us what that every true Christian will to some degree, at some time, in some

manner, suffer for Christ's sake. It may be verbally, your livelihood, ostracized, marginalized, isolated, insulated, and may be even our life which is martyrdom. One of things I'm convinced that we need to start doing in the church in our discipleship, due to today's culture of Neopaganism, is we have to teach people not only how to do their job for the Lord but how to deal with losing their job for the Lord. We are in a revolution that it is celebrating what was previously condemned and condemning what was previously celebrated.

If you identify with Christ and are serving Christ, before long you are not going to get a parade you will get that persecution. You don't look for it or long for it but you're ready for it because Peter tells us he doesn't want us to be surprised at the fiery ordeal that comes upon you for a while. It's in your lifestyle and that's one aspect of our lifestyle. I will give you the second aspect of our lifestyle at the end of our study. It's a component of a Christian in this world on the way to being with Him in a new heavens and a new earth.

This transition in I Peter 5 is an abrupt change. Peter has gone from this pastoral, inviting, Gospel command number 10 of humbling ourselves in three directions – to God, to your elders and to one another – to a completely different dynamic of rapid fire commands. As he talks about humbling Peter gives us two incentives which are both God-centered. The first reason is that God is opposed (in battle formation) to the proud which is the opposite of humility. Pride is the mother of all the sins. So kill pride and put on humility. God enters into this grace-based relationship with the humble.

The second incentive is to cast all your anxieties (cares) on Him because He cares for you. We care about our family, our marriage, our children, our ministry, our church, the Great Commission, our nation, etc. These are all God-given cares so now you through the hands of prayer, believing prayer, bring them to the Lord with a picture of casting a net to Him with all your cares in it, because He cares for you. He has a mighty hand and He can handle all your cares. He has a mighty heart and wants to handle your cares but when you cast your cares upon Him it does not make you sinfully careless. It emancipates you to be focused, careful in life for Him, not in sloppiness.

This is where Peter abruptly shifts to three rapid fire Gospel commands right in a row. Now comes his call to arms, to action. The trumpet sounds and spiritual warfare is announced. There is no carelessness for as these commands in spiritual warfare are given there is carefulness. The only illustration I could think of here was when my dad taught me how to drive. I was taught on a stick shift and I know some reading this probably don't know how this works. In earlier cars we used to have to shift into gears rather than just move a handle from one gear to the next like most cars have today. These cars had a clutch which was used to shift the car into a specific gear, then there was a brake and an accelerator. You had to learn to maneuver each pedal with the shifting of the gears while staying in your lane.

I'll never forget my dad's frustration with me while teaching me how to drive a car with a stick shift, because initially me driving a gear shift was not the smoothest experience in the world. I remember my dad saying 'Son, you're about to shake my head off of my body. You have to learn to coordinate. You're an athlete for cying out loud, you can't do this?' My dad wasn't known for patience but he had persistence and we kept at it. I needed to learn to smooth shift from one gear to the next and this is how we are coming to this text where we have just been calmly into casting our cares on Him as we humble ourselves to boom – three Gospel commands. Here they are in the imperative.

I Peter 5:8–11 says [8] *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.* [9] *Resist him, firm in your faith,*

knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. [10] 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. [11] To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

In this text Peter gives us three Gospel commands. The first one is be sober-minded. This word sober-minded in the Bible is almost always put in opposition to ‘don’t be drunk with wine.’ So we are to be sober and not drunk with wine. Why does Peter do this? He is drawing a contrast between a stone-cold sober mind and the in appropriate use of wine, its alcohol content, as it produces drunkenness. Have you ever noticed in our culture how you can’t seem to have a social gathering without alcohol? We seem to lubricate every gathering with alcohol. I asked some why they think this is and it was said that it kind of stimulates everything. Medically speaking alcohol is a depressant, not a stimulant. You may want to think it stimulates but it’s actually depressing clarity, social filters, mental filters, emotional filters and relational filters. It’s amazing what you will do with hands and words if you were thinking clearly. You are actually creating this loss of control, an absence of filters and then confusion begins to erupt.

Peter is telling us not to be preoccupied with alcohol and any other thing for that matter like entertainment for he is telling us to let not anything to dominate us and to live stone, cold sober ‘so that whether you eat or drink you do it all for the glory of God’ (I Corinthians 10:31). You are to have a sobriety of life – sober-mindedness, clarity of mind. You are to have an awareness of what’s happening, of consequences to your behavior, of the behavior of others toward you and self-control. We see in Galatians 5:22–23 which says [22] *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* [23] *gentleness, **self-control**; against such things there is no law.* Instead of losing control, sobriety gives you control, filters, perspectives and clarity. You know who God is, who Satan is, and who you are because of what God has done in Christ. You know that the Spirit of God is in you. You know what Satan is doing. You know what you’re called to do. You have sobriety so that you can make clear evaluations and judgment calls in life. Attached to it is the next Gospel command.

The second Gospel command Peter gives us in this text is be watchful. Be on the alert. Be looking around. Be circumspect. Be scanning the horizons of life and the vertical dimensions of life. So many times in the Bible you find ‘be watchful’ and be sober-minded together. Peter has already told us three times in I Peter to be sober-minded. These two commands are interdependent and reversible to each other because they are like Siamese twins for when you’re sober-minded you can be watchful and to be watchful you have to sober-minded.

I want to go back to when I was learning to drive a car. I remember trying to learn to stay on the road in-between the lines of the lane and I would use the hood ornament on the hood of the car to help me do this. I realize some of you may not know what a hood ornament is but it was usually some type of chrome animal that had been fixed to the front end of the front hood of the car that stuck up. I remember my dad telling me ‘son, quit looking down because to drive you have to look up and look around. You have to know who is in front of you, who is coming up behind you, and who are on the sides of you. You have to look around. To be a safe driver you have to be a watchful driver, an alert driver.’ To be a believer you have to look up, look down, in front of you and behind you. You are to be scanning the horizon. Don’t be a daydreamer.

One time my dad and I were talking with a lady and when we finished the conversation with her my dad said to me ‘what did she say?’ I said ‘Dad, I’m not sure.’ He said ‘Son, what

do you think the color of the clouds are in that lady's life?' That was short-hand for him not having any idea of what she was saying. There are people that somehow walk through life in a daze and you can't do that as a Christian. You have to be alert, watchful and look at life being sober-minded.

The third Gospel command Peter gives us in this text is resist Satan. There is nowhere in your Bible you are ever allowed to flee Satan. James 4:7 says *[7] Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.* This verse comes with a promise that if you resist Satan in Christ, for Christ, by the Spirit to the glory of God, in the grace of God, Satan will flee from you. This is not because you are greater than Satan but it is because greater is He that is in you, than he (Satan) who is in the world (I John 4:4). He that is in you by the work He did at the cross has already defeated Satan. At the cross Jesus held the evil one up for ridicule for he bound the strong man (Satan) and he is stronger than you but because Jesus bound the strong man He says go plunder his house (Matthew 12:29).

Jesus says in Luke 10:18–20, *[18] And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. [19] Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. [20] Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."* Jesus has defeated Satan but He has not destroyed him yet. Because Jesus has defeated us He tells us 'do not flee him but resist him for he will flee you.' Your focus is upon Satan, the adversary and you know what he is – murderer, liar, deceiver etc. – but he doesn't always appear that way.

Satan has been a murderer from the beginning, from the Garden on and this Satan now is before you. You are not allowed to retreat, compromise, back down but you are to stand firm, resist him and take ground. I Corinthians 10:5 says *[5] We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.* Take ground in your own life so that every part of your life is going to Christ. Take ground in your marriage, your family, the hearts and lives of your children, your neighborhood, your culture, your nation and do it for Christ. Take ground and resist him for he is a pretender and greater is He who is in you for He has done the work. Whenever you shine the light the darkness has to flee. That is what Peter calls us to do.

So why these three commands? There are three Gospel reasons for these commands. The first one is you know your adversary and his intentions. In the Bible he is used as a metaphor – he is like a roaring lion. This is used five times in the Old Testament and every time it's used in the Old Testament you will find the lion's act before he devours his meal. The lion roars and a mature, male lion's roar can be heard from five miles away. The reason the lion roars is because it paralyzes his prey and when he does this he has just set the table to devour his meal. That word devour is used continually in the Old Testament.

One instance the word devour is used is when Jonah was swallowed by a great fish. In the Septuagint it says the great fish devoured Jonah in one gulp. Satan wants to make a meal of you, your family, your witness, your testimony and your ministry. Satan first of all wants to know if you belong to Jesus because if you do when the persecution comes you will grow. If you don't belong to Jesus and the sun shines the persecution on you then you will wither away because there is no root, but if you have a root it just goes deeper and gets dearer when the sun comes with persecution. Satan doesn't know who the elect are because he wasn't there when the foundations of the world were set. He sees you have made a profession of faith and he wants to know if you really have.

I get this all the time from parents where they say “I don’t know if my child’s conversion is true or not.” And I understand that but as soon as it starts costing them at school, on the playground or on a team, they will find out. Did they say something to please dad and mom or did the root get planted?

Satan knows he can’t pluck you out of that mighty hand but he can ruin your ministry or your marriage or other areas unless you’re sober-minded, watchful and resisting him so he can’t settle in. Then he has to flee because you’re bringing the light of the Word and the Spirit of God to bear upon him every single day, but until then he is coming to find out. Know that the next Lord’s Day he has all kinds of things for you to do instead of the banquet of praise to God, than the means of grace to grow. Know he wants to devour any and all areas of your life.

A second reason for these commands is that you are not unique and you’re not alone. Everything that has happened to you has happened to the brotherhood. I like the ESV translation for using this word brotherhood and this word is only used two times in the New Testament. It is properly translated from the original as brotherhood. Every time you’re facing a trial you know it’s not virgin territory for footsteps are already there. There are at least two steps of footsteps. I Corinthians 10:13 says *[13] No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.*

Secondly, Jesus has been there. Hebrews 4:15 says *[15] For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.* So you can go to Him and you know others have been there so you can go to each other. That’s why it’s so crucial for us to be vitally involved in a local church, the brotherhood, the family of God because we can uphold one another. If we begin to think we’re unique we get self-pity or we get isolated.

Notice what it says in I Peter 5:9, *[9] Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood **throughout the world.*** There is brotherhood that is not around the world and where is that brotherhood right now? They are in heaven and they are not undergoing trials because they’re done, but the brotherhood that is here like you, in this world are undergoing trials. So we can uphold, minister and care for one another.

The third reason for these commands is your battle is short and the victory is forever. I Peter 5:10a says *And after you have suffered a little while... this is temporary.* What is eternal is your victory for He will establish you now and forevermore, to Him be the praise. So while you are here put on the armor of God. Be watchful, sober-minded, and careful for that is what you are to be. Now here is your takeaway.

The takeaway is to remember these three Gospel commands; as a Christian be sober-minded in this world because you have spiritual warfare. Secondly be watchful, always scanning what is around you. Have you watched any of these documentaries lately of those serving in this unbelievable war? Who is the enemy? They don’t wear uniforms so they have to always be looking. You need to be clear for the enemy comes disguised and so does Satan. You seldom encounter Satan as a roaring lion but you encounter him like Eve did as the serpent – deceiving, disguised. Or you encounter him like Peter who denied Jesus as Satan did his work through a servant girl and a by-stander. Satan can even do his work from pulpits as he comes like an angel of light through false teachers, false prophets, false preachers, etc.

Satan has three schemes – intimidation, infiltration and imitation. Intimidation generally comes in the form of a roaring lion but in infiltration and imitation he comes disguised, deceptive

and with reasonable argumentation. He will even come with Scripture as he misuses it. We see that when Jesus was in the wilderness and He was tempted by Satan. Satan is at work so we need to be watchful, looking and resist him. Satan is real and is not a cartoon character. Forget pointed tails, horns and red uniforms. He is greater than you but he is not God. He is a fallen angel. God is for you so who can be against you (Romans 8:28–31). God is at work in you and on behalf of you.

Satan is smarter than you but he's not omniscient. He is more powerful than you but he's not omnipotent. As a fallen angel, Satan is real and you know what his intentions are. He is also not omnipresent. Because he is not omniscient, omnipotent, or omnipresent he is on the prowl. He is constantly doing reconnaissance. Satan is thinking, 'where is the weakness in Pastor Reeder? What has he (Reeder) left unattended? Where is he not watchful? Where is he not sober-minded? Where has his resistance been removed? I know Satan does this.

Look at the book of Job. Satan can't do a thing until he gets permission from a sovereign God but when he comes to God he gives an argument. Satan had done his reconnaissance work on Job. Where is the open door? Satan knew everything about Job. Satan not only has three schemes but he also has three snares – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life. Where is Harry letting his eyes go that they ought not to go? It would be where he is not taking precautions where he ought to.

I have been thinking about writing a letter on social media due to all of this criticism on the "Billy Graham rule" lately. He had a variety of rules that dealt with salary, counting conversions and relationships with the opposite sex. Concerning this last area the rule was men were not allowed to be alone with women. It is hard for me to believe the number of my brothers in the PCA who are criticizing this, with by the way 'theological brilliance' (sarcasm). I am so overwhelmed by this I'm getting ready to write something about it. I admit I am prejudice because my grandfather was on the original Billy Graham Crusade team from 1948 to 1952 and he had to do those rules. My dad and mom were converted in 1948 under Billy Graham's ministry and I was introduced to the Gospel as a two month old baby. Our two families (Graham's and the Reeder's) all grew up in the same church in Charlotte, North Carolina. Now this is where it stops in prejudice.

Now it comes back to common sense. This is what I share with my elder brothers in the PCA and other evangelic churches who say this is a legalism and this is how we should handle sin without going to the heart of the matter. Graham cares too much about his team, the wives of his team members and their ministry so he is giving them some road blocks to help them deal with sin from the heart. Whenever you're intentional about killing sin you are not a legalist, for you are pursuing holiness out of God's grace for God's glory. I'm thankful Billy Graham did it because my grandfather served there and his life with his wife continued on.

Here is what I would tell those who are critiquing this. Go look at the census of the Billy Graham team and see how they finished life and ministry and then go look at the number of teaching elders in the PCA that are leaving because of immorality. I'll take that one and give you this one. Be watchful, sober-minded, active and resist him. Satan wants to eat alive your witness, your testimony, your marriage, your children, your family and you say to him 'you do not have *my family* as a meal!' Put in that statement where 'my family' is; my witness at work or my testimony or my ministry. Satan is prowling. He is lurking around.

It went from amity to enmity. How did we start? We started in amity – friendship with God and then sin came and we became friends with the devil. That is why Jesus says we are to do the work of your father who was a murderer from the beginning but God is so gracious that

the God who saw us leave amity with Him to have amity with Satan in the sin of our father Adam, God immediately brings a promise. He says 'I will bring enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, for I will send a Redeemer who won't live in amity with sin and Satan but will defeat him' (Genesis 3:15). When you get converted then you will no longer have an amity relationship with Satan but now you have an enmity relationship and he can't get at Jesus who is at the right hand of the Father, he's coming after you.

You have a sovereign God who has already won the victory. He has given you the Spirit of God and the Word of God so you can be sober-minded. You have a Christian world and life view, framed with the Word of God, filled with the Spirit of God, focused upon the Son of God and He is at work within you. Satan is real, his intentions are known and you do not need to be a victim of prey but in Christ you are victor of praise secured by God's grace and prepared for His glory. You don't have to be a victim. Men, you are two clicks away from the seed of destroying your marriage on your computer.

Military people at war are always looking because nobody is in uniform. Who is ready to kill me? They are not in uniform. How are they going to kill me? They have IEDs buried everywhere to explode in my face, to maim me, kill me so I am looking for those hidden devices that are explosive devices. I don't want to be drunk with the things of this world. I am scanning around and resisting the evil one so they will have to flee us. I want to be in the fight.

Here is my final thought. Spiritual warfare is not a unique season of life. I've had many people tell me they have been in a season of warfare and not being in warfare is the oddity. Spiritual warfare is not a momentary season of life, it is our life. We are not on a cruise ship. We are on a battleship. We're not a social country club. We are an army of the Lord that is also a family. As Christians suffer they are going to be attacked by the evil one. We are called not to careless for we cast our cares upon Him to be emancipated to be careful. Then as we're careful we seek to serve Him.

One pastor said rightly, 'The movie Lone Survivor is so instructive in so many different ways. You watch this team of seals come all the way down to one survivor as you see battle after battle after battle. You see them take hits. Every time the incoming fire from the enemy arrived there were always two questions – are you hit? Next question, are you still in the fight?' I know Satan is going to take aim at you so be sober-minded, be watchful, and resist him for he will flee from you. I know the fiery darts are going to come so put on the whole armor of God.

I am asking you for a denomination, a church, a nation, stay in the fight for it will be over in a little while and your victory is assured. Christ has won it. Stay in the fight for Him and maybe the next time we sing the hymn *A Mighty Fortress is our God*, it might even land more. Martin Luther who wrote that hymn stayed in the fight, imperfectly but he stayed in the fight. I have stood in the castle where Luther threw the ink well trying to hit Satan because he was so real around him. That is why he wrote this hymn and words are as follows;

*A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing:
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and pow'r are great, and, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.*

*Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing,
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing:
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;*

*Lord Sabaoth, His Name, from age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.*

*And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us;
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.*

*That word above all earthly pow'rs, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are our through Him Who with us sideth;
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,
His Kingdom is forever.*

Be watchful, having a sober-minded way of life. Resist him and stay in the fight for your marriage, your family, your children, His church, for this nation and all the nations with the Gospel of the Kingdom. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Spirit of the living God please work in our hearts. There are some reading this today whom we would fight for to come to Christ and we fight through the weapon of prayer. Spirit of the living God let those who have not yet come to Christ see a Savior who with great love has overcome all of our enemies – defeated them and will one day destroy them – and until that day gives us the triumph of grace, even under the challenge of the battle. If you would like to make that commitment to Christ please call us here at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200 because we would like to pray with you about this or if you already know the Lord and you want to pray with someone please call as well. We are here for you. Come to Christ. Satan hates you. He's a murderer, a deceiver, a thief and he has come to kill and destroy but Jesus loves you child and sings over you the song of victory. Father, keep us in the fight with the armor of God, dependent upon the Spirit of God, standing firm, taking ground and every thought captive with the obedience of Christ, and fighting with the weapons of the Spirit divinely fashioned to take down the strongholds of Satan. God, keep us in the fight together for Jesus, in whose Name I pray, Amen.

Power Point

THREE MORE GOSPEL COMMANDS

- I. Be sober minded
- II. Be watchful
- III. Resist Satan

THREE GOSPEL REASONS

- I. Your Adversary and His Intentions
- II. You are not unique and you are not alone
- III. Your battle is short; your victory is forever

LIFE TAKEAWAYS

Gospel Command #11

Be Sober Minded

Gospel Command #12

Be Watchful

Gospel Command #13

Resist Him

Satan is real; His intentions known; you need not be a victim of prey, but in Christ, a victor of praise secured by God's grace and prepared for Glory.