

Standing in the Fear of God

ETS: Peter gave the final instructions on how to live in the midst of suffering

ESS: Living in the fear of God will enable you to thrive in the midst of suffering

OSS: I want people to stand firm in the midst of suffering

PQ: Are you standing in the fear of God?

UW: Fear

ME

Last week: **Fear is a powerful motivator**

- One of **Satan's best** weapons!
 - **FOMO** (Eve)
- Satan = **“god of this world”**
 - **“god”** of the world system (**Governments, Academia, Religions**, etc.)
 - Uses those **tools** to **instill fear** in people!

Today is **Independence Day**

Did you know that many Americans were fearful to rebel against the British Government?

“In June 1776, just a month before the Declaration of Independence was ratified, the white men of Barnstable, Mass., voted on whether America should break its bonds

with Great Britain. The tally: 30 for independence, 35 against and 65 abstentions.”¹

- Argued that 1/5 of colonists were opposed to the Revolution
 - Slave owners and American Indians felt they’d do be better remaining under British rule.
 - Others believed only oligarchies of well-bred intellectuals were competent to govern a country.
 - Others simply loved tradition and wanted to remain under British rule

There was a lot of **FEAR** surrounding the Revolutionary War

- The American colonies enjoyed the protection of the world’s strongest navy and one of the world’s best armies.
 - If they rebelled, they’d certainly be crushed by the British Military
 - If they rebelled and were successful, they’d lose protection of the British Military
- Many colonists suspected the cause of American independence would fail and were fearful of British retaliation.
 - Just 30 years before the Revolutionary war, the British had crushed a rebellion in 1745 on the British Isles.

¹ “Did Fear or Principle Motivate Opponents Of U.S. Revolution?”
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB115188326192196673>

- Many Jacobite rebels were executed while many more had their lands and titles seized.

Fear is a powerful motivator

- Fear can make people do what they normally wouldn't do
- Fear can (and is) the most powerful tool used to control people!

Peter is writing to people who are living in a hostile environment!

- It is an environment that is very conducive to **FEAR!**
 - **FEAR** of **being arrested** for being a follower of Christ
 - **FEAR** of being **harassed**
 - **FEAR** of **losing relationships**
 - **FEAR** of **losing jobs**

While these are legitimate fears, the **believer** should only be **controlled** by one fear: **The FEAR OF GOD!**

- **Matthew 10:28** “Don't fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; rather, fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Turn to **1 Peter 5** (Review from last week)

Starting in Verse 6, Peter gives us some **final thoughts** on how to live in a **hostile environment** in the **Fear of God**.

WHAT does living in the FEAR of GOD look like?

LIVING HUMBLY BEFORE GOD

1 Peter 5:6 “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time”

Why should we humble ourselves before God?

- *So that He may exalt you at the proper time”*
 - The “proper time” may not be **until years into** your suffering, but this is a PROMISE from God!

WHAT does living in the FEAR of GOD look like?

RELYING on GOD

1 Peter 5:7 “casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you.”

- If you are “**humbling**” yourself under the “**Mighty Hand of God**” then your **response** will be one of actively “throwing upon God” the burdens that you struggle with.

WHY should we RELY on God?

“Because He cares about You”

WHAT does living in the FEAR of GOD look like?

PRACTICING DISCERNMENT

1 Peter 5:8 “Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour.”

- “Be sober” in other words, be **clear-headed** in your thinking.

WHY? Be “sober-minded”?

“the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour.”

Today, let's continue looking at WHAT does living in the FEAR of GOD look like?

Standing Firm Against Satan

1 Peter 5:9a “Resist him, firm in the faith...”

- **3rd Command**
 - Command #1: **Humble** Yourselves before God
 - Command #2: **Be Sober-Minded**
 - Command #3 **Resist Satan**

Why are these commands?

- Because they are things we **naturally** DO NOT want to do!

Naturally, DO NOT want to

- Command #1: **Humble Yourself before God**—*We want to live life OUR Way*
- Command #2: **Be Sober-Minded**—We just want to be **told WHAT** to do or to **GO ALONG** with the **Crowd**
- **Command #3 Resist Satan**—He **appeals to SELF**: our fleshly desires!

Last command: “**Resist him**” = is a term of **defense** rather than attack.

- **REALITY:** We are told to “**Stand**” and “**Resist**” far more than **FIGHT** against Satan.
 - **Satan is constantly pulling** at our fleshly desires

HOW do you “**Resist**” Satan?

- **A:** Be “**Firm in the Faith**”

Know **WHAT** you believe and **WHY** you believe it!

- If you don’t know **WHAT** you stand for, you will **FALL** for anything!

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 6:11-18** “**Put on the full armor of God (WHY?) so that you can stand** against the schemes of the devil.

- **REMINDER:** 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the

authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens.

- **REASON:** 13 For this reason take up the full armor of God, (WHY?) so that you may be able to **resist** in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your **stand**.
- **HOW** do you **“STAND”**?
 - 14 Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest...**Know God’s Truth!**
 - 15 [Stand with...] and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace...**Know the Gospel**
 - 16 In every situation take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one...**live by Faith**
 - 17 [Stand by...] Tak[ing] the helmet of salvation**be assured** in your salvation
 - [Stand by Using] ...**the and the sword of the Spirit**—which is the word of God ...**the Scriptures** are your **home-base**, NOT culture, not religious institutions, etc.
 - 18 Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request...**Pray**,
 - and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints....**be “sober-minded**, be on the **“alert”**—don’t grow weary!

- **Pray for each other** because we are all in this battle!

Peter is adamant that we “**resist**” Satan.

- He is adamant that we are “**Sober in spirit**”
- He is adamant that we “**keep on alert.**”
 - Why, because Peter knew from experience that if we DO NOT “**Resist**” we will get “**Devoured by Satan.**”

Had Peter **obeyed** this instruction to “**Be sober-minded, be alert... Resist him, firm in the faith...**” the night Jesus was arrested, he would not

- Have gone **to sleep** in the **Garden of Gethsemane**,
- **Attacked** the servant
- **Denied** the Lord.

Peter did not take the **Lord’s warning seriously**; in fact, he **argued** with Him!

- Nor did he recognize **Satan** when the **adversary inflated his ego with pride**,
 - Peter didn’t think he had “**watch and pray,**” and look what happened!
 - Had **Peter listened** to the **Lord** and **resisted** the enemy, he would have **escaped** all those **failures**.

Peter and **Paul** give us the same formula: “Stand firm, resist Satan”

Peter and **James** give us the same instructions “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (**James 4:7**).

ULTIMATELY, the FEAR OF THE LORD, will empower us to “Stand firm, resist Satan”!

The **STRUGGLE** can make you feel...

- **Lonely**—like you are the ONLY ONE who is fighting against Satan
- **Tired**—you are not sure if you can keep up the struggle
- **Questioning**—why is God allowing this to happen—others don’t seem to have the struggle!

HOW do you continue to live in the **Fear of the Lord** and NOT Humanity?

Knowing You are NOT ALONE

Peter gives us a REMINDER that we need to remember: **1 Peter 5:9** knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world.”

Always remember that you are not the only one who is suffering.

- Right now, **thousands of Christians** are **suffering** in **prisons** for their faith.
- Right now, **thousands of Christians** are suffering because of their **stand** for Christ.

You are not alone so stand firm in your faith.

According to Open Doors:

- Over 340 million Christians are living in places where they experience high levels of persecution and discrimination
- 4,761 Christians killed for their faith
- 4,488 churches and other Christian buildings attacked
- 4,277 believers detained without trial, arrested, sentenced or imprisoned
- 1 in 8: Christians worldwide experience high levels of persecution

You are not alone so stand firm in your faith.

- Cool Prophet: Elijah
 - On the run (FEAR) of Jezebel

1 Kings 19:14-18 “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of Armies,” he replied, “but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and

they're looking for me to take my life.” ¹⁵ Then the LORD said to him, “Go and return by the way you came to the Wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive, you are to anoint Hazael as king over Aram. ¹⁶ You are to anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel and Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. ¹⁷ Then Jehu will put to death whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death whoever escapes the sword of Jehu. ¹⁸ But I will leave seven thousand in Israel—every knee that has not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

The ONE FEAR that will enable you to ENDURE the struggle is the “**Fear of God**”

HOW do you continue to live in the Fear of the Lord and NOT Humanity?
Living by Faith

It is important to see the “**Light at the end of the tunnel**”

Peter gives us the “**Light at the end of the tunnel**” **1**

Peter 5:10 The God of all grace, who called YOU (WHERE?) to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself

- **Restore (You)**
- **Establish (You)**

- **Strengthen (You)**
- **Support YOU**

WHEN? after you have suffered a little while.

WHO will “**Restore, establish, strengthen and Support YOU**”?

- **A:** “Christ, will himself”

WHEN will “**Christ Himself**” “**Restore, establish, strengthen and Support YOU**”?

- **A:** after you have suffered a little while.

How long is a little while? Peter doesn't say.

○ Peter told us at the **beginning** of his letter in **Chapter 1:6** that **suffering** was for a “**little while**” and now as he **closes** his letter he **again** wants to **remind** us that *suffering is only for a little while.*

- The **Apostle Paul**, who endured a lot of suffering wrote in **2 Corinthians 4:17** “**For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory.**”

There is an old fable that says the gold objected to the heat of the furnace and asked how long it should be expected to endure such heat.

- The answer was, “**As soon as the refiner's purpose is accomplished.**”

- "And when will that be?" **asked the gold.**
 - The answer was, "When the refiner can see his own face in you."

Look at **WHAT** God is going to do: "The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you

- Everything that Peter is listing in **verse 10** is in the **future tense.**
- Furthermore, the verbs Peter uses express a **promise** and **not** a wish.
 - In other words, this will be the end product, the end result—this is what we have to look forward to.
 - Notice that Peter states that what will happen will be done because "God Himself" will do it.
 - Again, this is not dependent upon us doing this to ourselves—God will do it to us.

The **ONLY** time I can think of when we will be "restored, established, strengthened and supported" is when Christ returns for His church!

- Those who are "alive" will be "caught up" to meet the Lord in the air

- Those who have died “in Christ” will be resurrected!

1 Cor. 15:51-57 “Listen, I am telling you a mystery: We will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible body must be clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body must be clothed with immortality. ⁵⁴ When this corruptible body is clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body is clothed with immortality, then the saying that is written will take place: **Death has been swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵ Where, death, is your victory? Where, death, is your sting? ⁵⁶** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!”

These bodies which may suffer persecution will be “**RESTORED**”

We will be “**Established**”

- **2 Timothy 2:12** “if we endure, we will also reign with him”
 - WHEN? The Millennial Kingdom!
 - **Rev. 20:4** “Then I saw thrones, and people seated on them who were given

authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and who had not accepted the mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”

We will be “strengthened and supported”

- **MILLENNIUM**: We will NOT be “ruling and reigning” in a world in which **Satan** is the “god of the world” but rather in a world where **Christ** is sitting on the throne!
 - **MILLENNIUM**: King Jesus will “strengthen and support us” as we “rule and Reign with Him!”

I believe Peter is thinking of the **Millennium!**

- Reason #1: The words are FUTURE TENSE
- Reason #2: Peter’s exclamation after reciting all this coming “After a little while”

1 Peter 5:11 “To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen”

- As Peter recalls what God is going to do for us he cannot not help but burst out in praise to God!

WE

Your life may be **difficult** right now and no end may be in sight.

But if you live your life in the **FEAR OF GOD** by ...

- **LIVING HUMBLY BEFORE GOD**
- **RELYING on GOD**
- **PRACTICING DISCERNMENT**
- **Standing Firm Against Satan**
- **Knowing You are NOT ALONE**
- **Living by Faith**

Then you will NOT live in the FEAR of humanity!

PQ: Are you standing in the fear of God?