

TITLE: "Faithfully Fighting the 'Fight of Faith' to the Finish" (Part 2)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 5:8-9a

THEME: Humble dependence on God's sovereign will is that which carries us through the sufferings of this life to the finish line of faith

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{{Read Passage}}

[i] Here in 1 Peter 5 we're looking at the Apostle's concluding thoughts

Remember: the theme of the book is Hope for t/Hurting. How to navigate as a believer in JC through the maze of t/various trials and sufferings we experience living in a fallen world. Esp. relevant in that regard is the suffering that comes at t/hands of a hostile world - a world that hates JC (there God) and hates those who most closely represent Him ==>

John 15:18-19 18 "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

1 John 3:13 Do not marvel, brethren, if the world hates you.

Don't be shocked // surprised. In fact, as James tells us, friendship w/the world is hostility toward God. There can be no such thing as a worldly Christian.

BTW - When Jesus said these things he was speaking primarily w/i t/context of false religion. As I've learned recently, some of t/most virulent scathing attacks come from t/direction of those who are religious—even those who would consider themselves "Christian." If you doubt that, take a public stand for t/Gospel. Say, "*I'm sorry, but Roman Catholicism is a false Gospel. I cannot fellowship w/RCs.*" Do that; put it up on your blog (if you have one) and see what happens.

In Peter's case - his readers were being persecuted & were suffering largely at t/hands of religious pluralists – those who held to a plurality of gods and ideas, but were for t/most part divorced from any absolute stds. of morality. Sounds much like today's America: pluralistic and hostile toward those who hold to universal absolutes: such as t/Bible. So Peter exhorts his readers (us!) ==>

2:11-12 11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul. 12 Keep your behavior excellent among the [pagans], so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may on account of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

3:13-17 13 And who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, 15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; 16 and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. 17 For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.

[ii] As Peter concludes this letter in ch. 5 –

he is careful to do what any good pastor would do: Give some final reminders // exhortations to his readers before he leaves them.

It's like parents leaving one of their children off at a far-away college for t/first time. Before you get back in t/car to drive home you give what could be called t/final loving lecture! – *"Call home if you need anything // Don't eat junk // Study hard // Don't waste t/money I gave you // Don't lose your cell phone // Brush your teeth once in a while!"* ISF - Peter is giving his final words of advice to his spiritual children.

Peter's final advice centers on (outline) ==>

I. How to Persevere Through Suffering (6-11)

"Faithfully Fighting the 'Fight of Faith' to the Finish"

Here are 4 things that we need to do if we are going to persevere through suffering // or if we're going to be faithful in fighting the 'fight of faith' to the finish.

Last week we noted our first point in that regard. The first step in persevering through suffering is to ==>

A. Humble Yourself Before God (6-7)

1. You might note the transition from v. 5 to v. 6 {Sum up v. 5}

You young men, likewise, be subject to your elders. And all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, FOR GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.

THEN - Peter goes from humility as it relates to one another (horizontal) TO humility before God (vertical) ==>

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that HE may lift you up in time: (or *exalt you at t/proper time* - NAS)

a. Side Note:

Peter quotes here from Proverbs 3:34 ==>

Proverbs 3:34 (Hebrew) **Though He scoffs at the scoffers, Yet He gives grace to the afflicted.**

Proverbs 3:34 (Greek LXX) **The Lord resists the proud; but he gives grace to the humble.**

Peter's quote is nearly ID to t/LXX except for one word: LXX uses t/word "Lord" (κυριος) and Peter substitutes t/word θεος (God). Every other word is identical in form.

(1) There's one other place in the N.T. where this same verse is quoted – James chapter 4

1 Peter 4:5b-11 (To the Suffering)	James 4:6-10 (To the Apathetic)
<p>5b “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”</p> <p>6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that He may lift you up in time:</p> <p>7 casting all your anxiety upon Him, for He cares for you.</p> <p>8 Be sober, be alert; your adversary, the Devil prowls about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. 9 Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are being accomplished by your brethren in the world.</p> <p>10 And the God of all grace, the One who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, He will perfect, confirm, strengthen, [and] establish [you].</p> <p>11 To Him be the dominion for all eternity. Amen!</p> <p><i>N/A - relates to the apathetic</i></p> <p><i>N/A - relates to the apathetic</i></p>	<p>6b “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”</p> <p>10 Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.</p> <p><i>N/A - relates to the suffering</i></p> <p>7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.</p> <p><i>N/A - relates to the suffering</i></p> <p><i>N/A</i></p> <p>8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.</p> <p>9 Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom.</p>

Interesting how two inspired authors apply the same passage to two different circumstances.

As it relates to humility within Peter's context – It's a humility that is characterized by 4 things ==>

1. It is a Humility that Bows to God's Sovereignty (6)

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God . . .

a. Phrase "mighty hand of God" or "God's mighty hand" is an O.T. reference to 2 things: 1) God's dominion; 2) God's discipline

(1) As it relates to God's dominion (sovereignty) his mighty hand is associated with the Exodus

(2) As it relates to discipline – to be subject to God's hand or his "mighty hand" as we have it here is to submit to his judgment

i. Here we have a thread that goes back to 4:17

For [it is] time for judgement to begin from the house of God; and if [it begins] with us first, what will [be the] end of those who are disobedient to Gospel of God?

This judgement connects to verse 12 of chapter 4 "do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you" The F.O. is God's judgement. Suffering is one way that God purifies His Church.

We see that t/o history. Suffering and persecution purify and grow t/CH One of the early Romans spoke about how persecuting Xns only seemed to cause their movement to grow and flourish. Seems contra. You try to kill us // silence us // persecute us – it only makes us stronger.

Both of those ideas (Dom. + Disc.) are encompassed in t/command that we must ==>

Humble [ourselves] . . . under God's mighty hand . . .

It's a humility that bows to His sovereign control over all things, even our suffering.

2. It is a Humility that Looks to Eternity (6)

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that He may lift you up in time:

Be humble; place your heart in God's hands // w/humility receive His discipline. If you do, here's the promise ==>

... He [will] lift you up (or exalt you) in time (or in His timing) ...

Ultimately, that time is eschatological. In other words, after you have finished t/course of this life and enter into the next.

Interesting that MacArthur doesn't see this as an eternal promise per se, but as a temporal one. IOW - he contends that this is for the here and now. Humble yourself before God and He will exalt you in time during this life.

I have to disagree - the phrase $\epsilon\nu\ \kappa\alpha\iota\rho\omega$ (in time) is best understood as "the last time" or "the time of the end." This fits t/regular emphasis of Peter on t/final glorification of the believer.

3. It is a Humility that Forsakes Worldly Anxiety (7)

IOW - Anxiety is a form of pride. This phrase ==>

casting all your anxiety upon Him . . .

must be understood in connection w/humility. That's t/context. This is HOW we are to humble ourselves B4 God: By forsaking our anxieties.

a. Anxiety or Worry can be a subtle form of idolatry

It's to deny God's rightful place as Sov. Lord of t/Universe.

It's to say, *"I don't really trust that you're in control and that you are working all things for good in my life."*

Note that this isn't a "God helps those who help themselves" sort of thing (*BTW - that little cliché is bad theology - unless you use it at the dinner table or when reaching for t/cookie jar!*).

This isn't like me saying, "Throw that in the garbage" and then I don't provide you with a garbage can! This isn't God saying, *"Don't be anxious." Just stop it! Don't do it."* Or, You may be anxious, but just deny that you really are. *"What? Me Worry?!" I'm not worrying"* (as you pace t/floor & devour t/Rolands as if they were buttered popcorn!).

(1) Note that God provides a receptacle:

Humble yourselves . . . under the mighty hand of God . . . casting all your anxiety . . . WHERE? ==> upon Him . . .

Give it to Him. He's provided t/means to winning over worry ==> Humble yourself by giving Him all your worries ==>

Then note the end of v. 7 ==>

. . . for He cares for you.

4. It is a Humility that Rests in God's Care (7)

John Calvin, himself prone to anxiety, wrote ==> *"Those who are extremely anxious, wear themselves out and become their own executioners."*

I know what that's like. I can testify that there is nothing worse than being plagued by anxiety. It imprisons you w/i a jail which is your mind. I know what it's like to suffer from depression (which is bad). But suffering from anxiety is worse. If you're depressed you usually can usually escape it at least w/sleep. Anxiety can be like your shadow.

a. As I said last week: there are different kinds of anxiety

Some are quite normal. If your car breaks down on Saturday night in a bad neighborhood it would be expected that you be anxious.

I suffer from panic attacks – something I've had to deal w/my entire life. I believe there are genetic or medical factors (family history). That's a result of living in a fallen world.

There are those that are more prone to worry and those who are less prone to worry. Some women can find a lump in their breast and stay very calm. Others go to pieces. But that same person who goes to pieces may have little temptations in another areas that the unflappable person struggles with. We have weaknesses at different places in our armor. I might be weak in one place where you're not; vice-versa.

However, for all of us there is a place where our anxieties cross a line from weakness to sinfulness. There's a place where we are really just refusing to trust God. We refuse to cast our anxieties upon Him because we don't really believe that He cares for us.

But don't give up . . . As one writer notes ==>

"Hope and peace don't come without a fight. God is pleased to work hope and peace in us surely but gradually. They come as we mediate, feed on Scripture, feed on Christ, and keep calling out for manna and grace. The kingdom of God advances through weakness and dependence on the King, not through quick and bloodless victories. If you are feeling a bit weak, you are probably on the right path."

He continues ==>

Essential to this battle with fear and anxiety is the gift of humility. . . . In our anxieties we are usually concerned about things we love [*includes not only our comforts, but our loved ones, TAB*]. We want control. We want to take matters into our own hands to protect our

future, but we are finding that it is impossible to manage all possible contingencies. We want to protect our kingdom. Find anxiety and you often find that your agenda is more important to you than God's. You might find that you adopt your own interpretation of God's world rather than submit to God's clear words about His power, love, and care."

[Ed Welch, *Tabletalk*, January, 2010, page 23]

Andrew Murray, the noted South African pastor, upon facing a tremendous time of suffering, penned into his journal these wise words: First, [God] brought me here, it is by His will that I am in this strait place: in that fact I will rest. Next, He will keep me here in His love, and give me grace to behave as His child. Then, He will make the trial a blessing, teaching me the lessons He intends me to learn, and working in me the grace He means to bestow. Last, in His good time He can bring me out again—how and when He knows. [Therefore,] Let me say I am here, (1) By God's appointment; (2) In His keeping; (3) Under His training; (4) For His time.

I. How to Persevere Through Suffering (6-11)

A. Humble Yourself Before God (6-7)

You do that by recognizing His sovereignty and casting your anxieties upon Him knowing that He cares for you.

Second Point ==>

B. Be Aware of your Adversary (8-9)

That first point relates to trusting God. But this doesn't mean we don't have to act. We may know that God has ordained the length of our lives, but that doesn't mean we don't wear our seatbelts!

As Cromwell was reported to have said to his troops: "Trust in God, and keep your powder dry."

B. Be Aware of your Adversary (8-9)

Be sober, be alert; your adversary, the Devil prowls about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.

1. Did you know: You are being hunted?!

In fact, you're in a battle; a war! You have an enemy who has an army and that enemy & army are extremely powerful.

a. Note Peter's words (two present imperatives) ==>

Be sober, be alert . . .

(1) These two words complement one another

We saw t/same word for "sober" (Gk. verb $\nu\eta\phi\omega$) in 1:13 and 4:7.

1:13 **Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

4:7 **The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.**

Second word translated ==>

. . . be alert . . .

Is often used of watchfulness or being ready for t/Lord's return.

Matthew 24:42 **“. . . be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming."**

Those who have been in t/military (& those who k now anything about warfare) realize how important being alert is, not only for your own safety, but for t/safety of your fellow soldiers.

Historically, falling asleep on guard duty was one of a soldier's worst poss. offenses. Many dreaded guard duty.

During the American Civil War, 100s of men fell asleep while trying to be alert at their post. One letter, written by a Civil War soldier to his family at home reads:

"I saw my first example of "Army discipline" today - and don't like it one bit. Tommy McKearnan fell asleep on guard duty last night. After all, it had been a long day, what with the skirmish then the ride down to here. . . . He was caught by the sergeant of the guard early this morning, and placed under arrest. They didn't even bother much with a trial - he was guilty anyway. As punishment, they've stripped him down to his underwear, and are making him wear a barrel around camp with a sign on it 'I Fell Asleep.' He'll probably be back on duty tomorrow. In another regiment, they 'bucked and gagged' a soldier for the same thing. Talk about cruel - they gagged the poor guy, made him sit on the ground with his knees up, then tied his hands around his ankles. To make sure he didn't get loose, they ran a stick between his arms and his knees. Then, they left him like that for 8 hours! Glad I'm in the 40th Ohio - we don't do that stuff. But, you betcha I won't be falling asleep on guard duty to find out!"

BTW - These men got off easy. In that day, the Regulations for the Army of the United States, in a section on the Articles of War, contained this clause ==>

Any sentinel who shall be found sleeping upon his post, or shall leave it before he shall be regularly relieved, shall suffer death, or such other punishment as shall be inflicted by the sentence of a court martial.

That last part of t/article no doubt saved many a man's life!
[<http://www.floridareenactorsonline.com/crimespunishments1.htm>]

During WW II General Patton gave an infamous speech to his troops during which he addressed the issue of alertness. Touching upon the subject of t/discipline of having to run drill after drill (what seemed to the soldiers as too much drilling) Patton declared:

"That, like everything else in this Army, has a definite purpose. That purpose is alertness. Alertness must be bred into every soldier. . . .A man must be alert at all times if he expects to stay alive. If you're not alert, sometime, a German . . . is going to sneak up behind you and beat you to death . . ." [In fact, he said] "There are four hundred neatly marked graves somewhere in Sicily, all because one man went to sleep on the job".

b. As serious as warfare is, Peter is touching on something even more grave (pun)

Be sober, be alert [why? what's the danger?] **your adversary, the Devil prowls about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.**

Some Gk. MSS add the word "because" {state} - that's just to clarify what's there.

Here the Devil, himself a fallen angel and t/commanding general of all demonic forces, here he is called ὁ ἀντίδικος == "THE adversary."

ἀντίδικος == an old word from the law courts that was used one's opponent in a lawsuit. It is to be t/accuser.

Word διάβολος = in ancient Greek = 'to slander, accuse, or defame.' So even his name διάβολος speaks of his desire to accuse and oppose.

He's very busy. He ==>

...prowls about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.

JOB Chapter 1 ==> Satan comes before the Lord who asks him **"From where do you come?"** Then Satan answers: **"From roaming about on the earth & walking around on it."** We see that same Q&A repeated in 2:2.

Prowls about like a roaring lion (roaring because he's fierce and he's hungry) in fact, he's ==>

...seeking someone to devour. That means you; me.

There are a few cautions that I must mention at this point. In theology we call t/Biblical study of Satan and demons, "Demonology." This is an area where we struggle to stay doctrinally balanced.

1) We can over-emphasize Satan's role.

80s seemed to be a time of an unbalanced on spiritual warfare. Some of you remember books like Neil Anderson's "Bondage Breaker." There was a tendency to blame most anything and everything on Satan. So-called "Immoral Xns" (no such thing) were beset w/a sex demon. If you were prone to cursing you had a "profanity demon"

On and on it went.

In some circles it is fashionable to boss demons around. You have those who talk about binding the devil and stomping on demons in Jesus' name.

I love the humorous account in Acts 19.

Acts 19 - 11 **And God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul,**

This shows you how confused Satan's kingdom is. God was doing special miracles in reaching the people by the hand of Paul, in Acts 19:11, and in verse 12, it says that ". . . **handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.**"

13 But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, "I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches." 14 And seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said to them, "I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?"

Amazing! Here were some demon-possessed exorcists trying to cast out some other demons and the other demons didn't even know that the other demons were trying to do this! So, what happens?

16 And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

One demon-possessed person beat up the other demon-possessed people. Satan doesn't even cooperate with himself!

1) We can over-emphasize Satan's role.
Deifying Satan (omnipresence / omnipotence)

2) We can under-emphasize Satan's role.
EPH 4:27 **and do not give the devil an opportunity.**
EPH 6:11 **Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.**

We can be sure that neither Job nor Peter under emphasized Satan's power.

Luke 22:31-32 31 “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; 32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

How Peter knew this from experience! He denied his Lord 3x.

We want to be balanced.

a. What Shall We Do?

(1) Don't Run, Resist!

Resist him . . .

ἀνθίστημι = to oppose, resist || Aorist Imperative. Possibly an Ingressive Aorist ("take your stand against").

Ja 4:7 **Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil & he will flee from you**

Cf. Luther's "A Mighty Fortress." {read v. 3}

Here's spiritual warfare according to Scripture. Simple.

(2) Stay firm in the faith: Guard Your Heart and Your Doctrine . . . firm in the faith . . .

two options: 1) The faith; or 2) Your faith (NAS). Cf. Jude 1 / Jesus' temptation. Doctrine and Devotion.

Two more points, save those for next time (hopefully plan on concluding this letter).

Close w/an extended quote by someone who could be called the General Patton of the Reformers. Martin Luther was no stranger to suffering or to battling against the Devil. {read Luther's commentary on 1 Peter, pages 217-21}