

Pastor Ben Libby
 Sermon
 7/9/2019

To Jesus Christ, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification, be glory forever Amen.

The Word of the Lord which forms a portion for our sermon text this morning comes to us from Peter's first letter, chapter 5, starting at verse 5:

1 Peter 5:5-11 [EHV] Likewise, young men, be submissive to those who are older. And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another. For "God opposes the proud, but he gives grace to the humble."⁶ Therefore humble yourselves under God's powerful hand so that he may lift you up at the appointed time. ⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. ⁸ Have sound judgment. Be alert. Your adversary, the Devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him by being firm in the faith. You know that the same kinds of sufferings are being laid on your brotherhood all over the world. ¹⁰ After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who called you into his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you. ¹¹ To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

This is the Word of God. Congregation may be seated.

Grace and peace be to you from God our Father and from your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear fellow Redeemed...

It was the fourth of July last Thursday. I'm sure you were aware of that, it is pretty hard not to notice. With all the fireworks that were going off, it is pretty clear something was going on. If you were in the car on Thursday, and you were going through the various radio stations, they would also make it obvious that it was the Fourth. There is a good chance that you might had heard the song, "I'm proud to be an American." It is a very patriotic song, and it gets played a lot on our Independence Day. Our you proud to be an American?

People display their patriotism on the fourth in a variety of ways. Setting off fireworks, wearing red, white, and blue clothing, maybe even going to a parade or two. There is nothing wrong with a little national pride. We should be thankful that we do live in a country that allows us the opportunity to be able to worship our God in whatever way we see fit.

But there is a difference between national pride and personal pride. National pride is pride in our country, whereas personal pride is pride in the self. Now, there can be times when those two things cross over into each other, and we need to be aware of that.

Well, in our sermon text this morning, the Apostle Peter writes to us about pride and about humility. He is writing to the dispersion of Christian Jews throughout the known world. He was writing to them to encourage them. They were being persecuted for their beliefs in Christ, even to the point of martyrdom. His whole aim here is to encourage them, and He gives them a self-help lesson: What to do when you're under the gun, under persecution. Peter sets the godly plan: what to do when you are persecuted. **MAY THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH AND THE MEDIATIONS OF**

OUR HEARTS BE ACCEPTABLE IN YOUR SIGHT O LORD, OUR MAKER AND REDEEMER, AMEN.

Likewise, young men, be submissive to those who are older. And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another. For “God opposes the proud, but he gives grace to the humble.”

Many people were clothed in American Pride on the Fourth. Perhaps some were literally, wearing red white and blue. Other were clothed metaphorically in it. Well, how does one clothe oneself in humility? This is something that is harder to do than you might think.

In this section of scripture, Peter is talking about pride and humility. These two subjects go together because they are opposites of each other. Humility is elusive to obtain because pride is hard to shake. It is truly a tricky thing to be humble. It is a trait and a virtue that once you think you have it, it slips through your fingers. You cannot say the words “I am humble” without that statement being the opposite of what you just said.

But, another problem with humility is that not only is it hard to obtain, it is necessary to our Christian walk! Peter tells us here to be clothed in it! God does not want us to just dabble a bit in humility, He wants us to be completely covered by it, from head to toe. This does not mean walking around in a T-shirt that says, “I am humble”. Rather, the clothing of true humility can only be provided by God Himself!

⁶Therefore humble yourselves under God’s powerful hand so that he may lift you up at the appointed time. ⁷Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.

How do we humble ourselves? Well, it means lowering oneself, but it also means raising up someone else. Peter tells us here that we are to humble ourselves “under God” so that “He may lift us up”. That is the key! Anyone can live a humble

life. But true humility puts someone else ahead of yourself. And that is what we are to do with our God. Put Him first in our lives.

But this is one of many things that Peter tells us here that is easier said than done. It is hard to be humble and it is hard to put God first. What does humbling yourself under God fully entail? Well, again it’s the lowering of ourselves while at the same time raising Him up. How do we lower ourselves? By merely stating the truth. By calling a spade a spade. We lower ourselves by stating how sinful we are. We did it a minute ago when we said our help was in the name of the Lord, and by saying that if He was to keep a record of our sins, we would not be able to stand in His presence. This is not breaking news. Anyone who knows us on any level well know how sinful we are. But God still wants us to confess our sins. This is what humility really boils down to, coming to grips with reality.

But, even as we lower ourselves, we have someone put exalt. Yes, we are terrible sinners who have no right to anything at all. But we also have a Savior who loved us so much that He was willing to put His life on the line for us. Jesus is truly worthy to be praised for what He did, not only for you on a personal level, but what He did for the whole entire World! **2 Corinthians 10:17 But "he who glories, let him glory in the LORD."**

Yet, it is also hard to “cast on your anxiety on Him.” We are problem solvers. We like to fix problems. While it is good to be industrious and proactive at most times, it pretty futile when it comes to spiritual matters. And that is the problem with PRIDE, it is the complete opposite of humility. Pride is essentially trust, that is, self-trust. Pride says, “I’ve got this”, “I don’t need any help”, “I can work through this myself”! That attitude can be good when it comes to practical matters, it might even be a trait that our bosses would like to see out of us. It is good to be determined and independent. But not when it comes to your soul. Pride is self-trust, whereas Faith is trust in God. We should cast all our

care on Him. We can't handle them ourselves, only God can! There is nothing too small or too big for us to take to God in prayer. He wants us to do it. Why should we cast all our cares on Him? Peter says it, "because HE LOVES YOU!!!" It's not always the easiest thing to do, but it is what we are meant to do!

⁸ **Have sound judgment. Be alert. Your adversary, the Devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him by being firm in the faith.**

HAZARD, CAUTION, WATCH OUT!!! These are all signs that should grab our attention. Yet, sometimes they don't get the attention that they should. For instance, you might read a sign on the road that says "CAUTION: Bridge may be icy". Well, that is certainly good information to be aware of. You wouldn't want to slip on an icy bridge. But that sign would not warrant much attention in the month of July. In December, certainly, but in the warm months you would ignore it.

But that is the problem with our old evil foe. When it comes to the Devil, there is no off season. He is always looking to pounce on us, to flip our humility back into pride again. That is why Peter says "Be alert! Watch out! Resist Him!"

This picture of the Devil prowling around like a lion may lose a bit of its full force with us here in the United States in 2019. After all, if we were to come into contact with a lion, it would probably be a zoo with layers of Plexiglas between us and them. Most likely you will see lions lounging around, taking it easy. But even in that safe environment of a zoo, if you hear a lion roar, you will take notice!

To Peter's original audience, this would mean something else entirely. The early Christian church was suffering persecution. In the apostolic age, Christianity was not the majority of the World's religion like it is today. It was viewed as a cult. People who believed in Christ crucified were persecuted for their beliefs. Early Christians in Rome were even taken to the colosseum and tortured by being eaten

alive by lions. They were something else back then. They are a predator. So is the Devil. He needs to be watched out for, and He needs to be resisted!

And how are we to do that?⁹ **Resist him by being firm in the faith.**

It has been said before, "You cannot reason with a tiger when your head is in its mouth". This is most certainly true when it comes to the Devil. Nothing makes the devil lick his chops like sinners who have a prideful attitude. No meal will be easier for a predator than prey who underestimate them and don't take them seriously. This is a trick that the Devil has always been able to pull off. Today He has even gotten people to think He does not exist. Yet, those who know God's Word know a lion's roar when they hear it...

No one knew this better than the writer himself. Peter, like most of us, also had a pride problem. He was often brash and head strong. He was not a timid guy. And what was Satan's attitude towards this "ROCK", this Peter? He asked for him personally! **Luke 22:31 "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.** So too has he asked for you! He wants us to pridefully rely on ourselves so that we sink in the storms of life instead of keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus. This is why He must be resisted, again, in the Faith! That is how we resist the Devil, by trusting in the LORD!!!

¹⁰ **After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who called you into his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you.**

Notice here how Peter talks about suffering so matter of factly. The way he writes makes it sound like it is not a matter of if, but when. And of course, there is truth in that statement for any Christian. The original audience of this letter were actually suffering persecutions for their faith. We do as well, to a much lesser degree. That lion is still as active as ever. People have stopped looking out for him,

stopped trying to hear if that was a ROAR or not. The foe is terrifying, and the world in which we live is not a safe place. Everywhere we turn there is another threat, another danger, another situation where we are tempted to try to turn to our own strength instead of to the LORD for deliverance. No matter who you are in this, you will suffer. But as Peter points out, it is for a little while!

We always have the ultimate trump card to play. We have God! Yes, our enemies are fierce and the environment in which we live is very formidable. But our God is stronger than any danger that could ever befall us. God more powerful than anything else in this universe. And, HE LOVES YOU!!! He uses that power for your good! **2 Thessalonians 3:3** ³ **But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.**

This is why we put ourselves under Him, because only He is able to deliver us! And deliver us He shall! That is why Peter says here, **humble yourselves under God's powerful hand so that he may lift you up at the appointed time.** There will come a time when He will deliver us. He will deliver us from any temporal or physical pain, one way or another. It is the appointed time that we sinners have a problem with! We do not know when that appointed time is, but He most certainly does. It is APPOINTED, so it is known, just not by us. That is why we must cast ALL our cares on Him, for only He knows what He truly has in store for us.

And what will happen at this appointed time? **the God of all grace ... will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you.** These words are music to our ears! He will strengthen us in times of need. When that Devil comes prowling around, You can trust that God will give you the strength to resist him. He will set you up to be able to face temptation, to stare it down in the eye, and defeat it. When David faced the giant Goliath in the open battlefield, it seemed like a pretty bad situation. But David was not worried. He was a shepherd, who had been dealing with wolves and lions ever since he

was young. This giant was just another predator. David would not defeat him because he was so quick or so skill with a sling. He would best him because he had the Lord on his side! David ran full speed ahead towards the giant, knowing that God was his strength and would give him the victory!

It is the same still today! It does not look good for the Christian in our day. We are despised, our beliefs are looked down on, and we are branded as hateful for simply standing up for God's Word. But even so, we never have to shrink in fear. Being humble is good, but not when it comes to who you trust! **BOAST** in the LORD, for He is your strength and your salvation! He restores us from our sin, He has established us as witnesses for Him, He gives us the strength we need to exalt His Name, and He actively supports us in our efforts every day! Charge full speed ahead! There are dangers, but when you trust in the LORD for your salvation, there is truly nothing to fear! In this vale of tears, lions may prowl, and we will suffer. But it is only for a little while. Those who place their trust in Jesus as their Savior will never be put to shame. He loves you and strengthens you! May the Holy Spirit ever give us the strength to humble ourselves by putting our care on Him, to resist sin with faith, and to look toward our eternal restoration in heaven! **AMEN!!!**