

# 1 Peter: Hope, Serving and Spiritual Warfare

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[ 0 : 00 ] And Peter is talking and he's ending up the passage in chapter 5. And for the first time, he mentions something that you never see him mention. It's in verse 8.

He talks about the devil. You know, what he said, this was written about 50, 60 A.D. And pretty soon, things are going to become very uncomfortable for the church.

In 62 A.D., Rome burns. And you know the story. Rome burns. Nero's playing a fiddle. And most people think that Rome burned because Nero burned Rome.

Because he wanted to do new building projects. And he wanted to clear out the old things and put in statues of himself in his garden. And when you go to Rome, you see those things that were built after the fire. But what Nero does is he accuses the Christians of starting a fire.

And so because of this accusation, in 62 A.D., across the whole Roman Empire, there's massive, massive persecution. And Christians are being killed left and right. And so Peter is talking and he's preparing the people in the church for this persecution.

[ 1 : 04 ] Now, again, we probably will never face some of this persecution. But we do face persecution every day. And Peter is challenging and encourages us to handle it well. Now, I know when you hear the word devil, some of you probably had your eyes rolling.

Oh, my gosh. Pitchforks, red outfit, you know. And to be honest, that's what I thought too. When a friend introduced Christianity to me and we're talking about the devil and spiritual things, I'm like, oh, come on.

I'm a scientist. I study medicine. You can't believe in the devil. No way. But what the Bible says is that there's a spiritual dimension to everything. And that there's this personal, very powerful entity called Satan.

He has many names. His names usually characterize what he does. One of his names is Diablo, which means to rip and to tear. He's always shown in Scripture as in separating.

He always comes in and he causes tension, separation, disunity, and breaks up the community of God. And we see it from the beginning of Genesis to all the way through Revelation that this angel who refused to submit to God has been leading a rebellion throughout Scripture.

[ 2 : 19 ] You know, when you think about spiritual things, C.S. Lewis said that often we do one of two things. We either make too much of Satan and we say, oh, yeah, there's a devil everywhere. Demons are everywhere. Oh, be careful.

Let's be praying all the time. Or we tend just to kind of, oh, we're modern man. No one thinks that way anyway. That's terrible. And both of those things are wrong. We are to respect the devil. We're not to mock him or make fun of him because he's incredibly powerful. And Scripture says that he knows your name. But we're also not to fear him.

Because God has already won the battle. And if you're in here and you're God's child, there's nothing to fear. There's a whole book about this in the Bible. It's called Job. And it's probably the first book written that was added into the Old Testament.

And it's a story of a man who's doing very well and he's prospering. And when it says one day that the devil comes in front of God, which I don't understand how that happens, a lot of questions. And God says to him, have you looked at Job? Have you considered my righteous servant?

[ 3 : 23 ] And the devil looks at him and goes, oh, of course he's righteous because you give him everything he wants. He's prosperous. He has kids. Everything. But if you let me get into his life and if you let me take out everything that he holds dear, then Job is going to curse you.

He's going to hate you. And what you see from that point on in Scripture is that whenever Satan comes into the scene, he basically makes us answer two questions.

There's two questions that we've been answering all through 1 Peter. You don't know it because you haven't talked about it. There's two questions that we always answer all through Scripture as we study it. They're hidden questions, but they're found throughout all temptations.

And the questions are this. Is there a God? Is he involved in my life? And is he good?

Can I trust him? Does he have my best interest at heart? Does he care about me? Is there a God? I mean, when things are good, Satan comes in and he tempts us not to believe in God because we don't need God because we just have everything that we need and we don't need God.

[ 4 : 31 ] And when things are bad, Satan comes in and he tempts us to say, well, God must not love you. God must not care for you. He must not be good. In my life, I just ask the questions, where's God in all of this?

And when things are difficult and stress is hitting me and I feel like I'm about to fall apart, the question I ask myself is, is God really good? Does he really care for me?

Does he really know what I'm going through? I'm pretty sure that every one of us in here asks those same two questions at different times in our life. Sometimes we ask those questions multiple times in our life.

And Peter has been answering all these questions through the book of 1 Peter as he's been talking about suffering and submission and authority and serving. And sometimes we don't realize it, but what he's saying is Satan is at work in your life.

He works especially during suffering. The passage says that whenever you see suffering, you know that Satan is at work, especially among God's people.

[ 5 : 40 ] And so that's what 1 Peter 5 is about. 1 Peter 5, you can divide it into two sections. You can divide it into the leaders and then the rest of the people within the church. But what you realize in 1 Peter 5, 1 through 11, is those two questions are being asked over and over and over.

Things are going to get bad. Is there really a God? Things are really difficult. Does God care for me? Can I trust Him? Can I give my life to Him? Can I submit to Him? All these questions are happening. And what we see in verses 1 through 4, if you look in your bulletin, is just basically this. When there's suffering and when there's temptation, Satan comes in and he attacks the leaders. It says that he attacks the leaders first in the midst of suffering. He attacks the elders.

He attacks the overseers. He attacks his shepherds. Verses 1, 2, and 3 says, He attacks them by trying to make them forget why they do what they do.

He attacks the leaders by trying to make them forget why they're leading God's people. He attacks the leaders by making them lose their willingness in the proper motivation to shepherd and to lead.

[ 6 : 46 ] He's attacking the leaders by making them not model what Christ has called them to model. The leaders are just bullying. The leaders are just lording.

The leaders are just saying, Do this even though I don't do it. You need to do this. He attacks the shepherds in their ego and in their prestige and in their power and in their earthly honor.

And he tries to make the leaders of the church, the leaders of the community, forget that they're leading. I mean, he's there and he's trying to make us forget that there is really a chief shepherd and that shepherd is Christ.

And one day when that shepherd comes back, he's going to call all the leaders account for that. The passage says that he tries to make us forget authority.

Satan comes into your life, to the leaders' lives, and he makes you forget what authority is all about. In the stressful times, you default and you say, Well, the authority is for me.

[ 7 : 55 ] I need to look out for myself. I need to get these things for myself. I don't need to bless the people underneath me. I don't need to take these people into a better place. And that's how Satan attacks the church.

But the scripture says that's also how he attacks dads. And that's also how he attacks men.

That in the difficult times, men forget what it means to lead. Men forget what it means to shepherd their family and their wives and their kids well. Men default to getting what they want for themselves to the exclusion in the pain, in the hurt of their family, in their children, in their wives.

And Peter is telling us, Be careful. Because Satan is real, and he's going to tempt you in this way. And if you're not careful, you're going to fall for it.

Now remember, the world is going to tell you a couple things. The world is going to say a leader is confident. A leader is self-assured. A leader is assertive. A leader is self-made.

[ 9 : 10 ] But what Peter says, what the Bible says, is that the leader is humble. That he or she serves. Humility doesn't mean to think that you're a worm.

Because we already know as Christians that we have this incredible comparison that we are bad off, but then we are precious in God's sight. But what humility means is that we think less of ourselves.

We think less of ourselves, and we think more of those around us. The passage says that the world measures leaders in terms of success in numbers.

But the leaders of the church, the leaders of the family, the leaders of your business, they're measured in things like faithfulness.

They're measured in things like service. They're measured in things like sacrifice. And Peter's talking to us, and he's saying, Be careful. Because in the difficult times, when things get really hard, you're going to forget that.

[ 10 : 23 ] And when you do, you're going to damage. You're going to damage the church. You're going to damage your families. You're going to damage your wives. You're going to damage your colleagues.

Verses 5 through 7, Peter begins to talk to this group of people. In the Greek, the word men is not actually there. It's just the youngers. And what Peter says is that in the middle of these temptations and these trials, Satan is going to come into everybody else in the church, everybody else.

And he's going to attack them. He's going to tempt them to forget what it means to be humble. He's going to encourage them to attack the leaders, to attack the elders, to be prideful, to think of themselves only, to not think of everybody else.

The word there actually means to clothe. It means to get on an apron that a servant gets on. And Peter says that when you're going through life and the difficult times hit, and it becomes really hard in your family and in the church, your default is going to be pride.

Your default is going to be, I have to think of myself because if I don't think of myself, no one else will think of me. Now, I don't know if you've ever said those words, but I have.

[ 11 : 47 ] And they're scary words to say because what Peter says is the minute we say those to ourselves, the devil is grabbing us.

He's trying to destroy everything that we hold pure, valuable, and true. So in 5-7, he says the devil comes in and he causes disunity, he causes tearing, he talks to the younger people in the church and he says, you don't need to submit, you don't need to serve, just think of yourself, don't think of the leaders and don't think of anybody else.

Now, Peter has been sharing about what a healthy community looks like all through all of these five chapters, and what he continues to say is a healthy church, a healthy family, a healthy business looks like the leaders who serve and where everybody else submits to each other.

In the rest of the passage, verses 6 and 7, it's for the rest of the church, and what Peter says is if Satan is walking around, if Satan is attacking you, if there's difficult times, if there's pressure, there's suffering, Satan is going to attack you in your pride, verse 6, and in your anxiety, verse 7.

The Bible says that pride is just this attitude, this attitude of anything that's opposed to God's grace, that a prideful person answers the first question, no, there's not a God, I don't need Him, because I'm God.

[ 13 : 18 ] And Satan says, in the midst of the trials and the suffering and the temptations, that all of us are going to be tempted to be prideful. We're all going to think that we're God, we're all going to be thinking that we don't need anybody else.

And what he says in his passage is we need to, at these moments, realize that we're in the middle of this incredible battle, sometimes for our soul. And we need to humble ourselves and bring our lives underneath Christ.

Again, the idea of humbling is we focus on all that Christ has done for us. We focus on our worth and all of our worth is focused on all that Christ has done in us and through us.

In verse 7, the word anxious means to divide, to distract. It says, when we become anxious, we lose our focus. We lose our focus on God and what He's doing around us and our focus is distracted.

The imagery is almost like you're digging this bucket and you're filling it with water, but when you become anxious, holes are punched in the bucket and water is spilling out everywhere and you're carrying your life around like this and you're distracted because all of the things that you are supposed to do, all the things that you are focused on are flowing out through the holes.

[14:37] And He uses very, very, very strong language here, guys. I mean, I wish I could, He uses very strong language here and what He says here is if we as a church are in the middle of this battle and we become prideful and we become anxious, what He says is that God sets Himself against you.

That if you are walking around with a prideful heart, if you're struggling with not being humble, if you're struggling with not serving, if you're struggling with being anxious, all of these things are answering those two questions.

No, there's not God and no, He's not good. And the Bible says if we live our life like this, Peter says if we do this, the God is opposed to us.

The imagery is, I'm an American, so I think of American football, but basketball or whatever, and you're lining up in the field of life, you're about to go to work, and you're about to play the play, and you look up, and your opponent is God.

And so many of us go to work and we have incredibly difficult times. And so many of us go into marriage and in relationships and we have incredibly difficult times.

[16:00] And what Peter says is one of the reasons that could be for that is is that you have pride and you're anxious and you don't believe there's a God and you don't believe that He's good.

He's saying it's for everybody, that we all are going to struggle with it, especially when things get difficult. And He's saying be careful when that happens because there's this lion, this roaring lion, and He's watching and He's prowling.

And the words are the devil is His adversary. Verse 8. He's going after us. He's looking around. He's prowling. He's active. He's trying to devour, destroy, swallow, break up, cause grief.

And the problem is that sometimes in the church we don't realize that. And sometimes as God's people we don't realize that.

And we don't realize that when things are difficult it might be because we have prideful and unhumble hearts and we don't think that God is good enough to take care of us.

[17:17] Does that make sense? This week Kip and I are watching the Discovery channels. There's some great shows on there. We've been watching the Arctic channels. So they've been talking about the Arctic and they've been talking about the little seal islands off of South Africa.

And it's interesting because they're talking about predators and you know what's going to happen, right? I mean the seals are swimming around and as long as the seals stay together in a group they're pretty good. I mean they can do these little moves and the sharks miss them most of the time and all these things.

But what the passage showed us is that you know that the seals when they get off by themselves when they leave the community when they leave the family of faith when they leave the group this great white shark comes up and just chomps them in half.

When the seals get off by themselves and they're walking around and they forget where they're at this polar bear comes in and just pounds them on the head and drags them away. And Peter's reminding you and I that that could be us.

the imagery he uses is very powerful. He says that we are all sheep. Now I don't know what you think about sheep.

[18:31] I don't know if you've ever been around sheep. One of the things I've learned as a pastor is that sheep bite and sometimes sheep aren't as cuddly as you think they are. And sheep are totally defenseless.

We were in Israel probably the first time we went and we were at Bethlehem and we were there and all of a sudden we were in this field where the angels were supposed to appear and we watched and these shepherds came together and they were talking and there was probably like 800 sheep mingling around.

And you're like how in the heck are they going to separate 800 sheep when it's time to leave? And our guide said hey watch this. And all of a sudden the shepherds broke up and the shepherds just started talking and he's just walking off singing a song and the sheep heard his voice and whoever his sheep were they followed him.

And within a matter of minutes 800 sheep were divided perfectly to their owners because the sheep knew who their master was and they followed him. And what Peter is asking each one of us in here is do we know who our master is?

Do we know his voice? Do we know what he's saying to us? I mean the wording is really, really, really specific.

[ 19 : 52 ] I mean he's giving us a lot of responsibility. He's saying be on the alert. Watch. Be careful. Know that there's something prowling after you.

Know that it doesn't have your best interest in heart. Watch out. But sheep do one thing really well. What sheep do really well is they cling to the shepherd.

And the shepherd is that protection for them. And what Peter is talking to us as a church is in the midst of difficult times, in the midst of temptations to forget why we lead, in the midst of temptations to forget why we're men and dads, in the midst of temptations to forget why we're good friends, in the midst of temptations when things are getting difficult and we want to be selfish and we want to be angry and we want not to be humble.

We want to take care of ourself. We want to be prideful. In the midst of all these things, he's warning us, don't go away from the flock. Don't leave the shepherd.

I mean to me, this is the, probably the most powerful passage of hope in all the world when it comes to suffering. Because at the end, what he says is this.

[ 21 : 04 ] He says, just realize this. You're going to suffer. But you're not going to suffer alone. Because everybody else is going to be suffering the same ways that you have.

And people have gone before you already. Just realize this. You're going to suffer, but it's going to be for a very short time. Just realize this. Difficult times are going to happen.

But God is with you. He's guiding you. He's protecting you. He's going before you.

There's nothing that you're going to face today wherever you go out, wherever you leave this week, whatever happens in your life, no matter how bad things get, there's nothing you're ever going to face that's going to be apart from Christ if you're his child.

Peter's saying, remember that. Remember that. It's the message of ultimate hope.

[ 22 : 06 ] Does that make sense? We're all sheep. We're all going to be tempted to forget why we do what we do. Leaders are going to forget to lead.

They're going to be anxious. It's going to be hard. There's going to be suffering. There's going to be difficult. People are going to get angry. The younger people are going to want to submit to the leadership. They're going to be angry.

They're going to be prideful. They're going to be thinking of themselves. I can do it better. The rest of us are going to struggle with anger and pride and worry. And Peter's saying, it's okay because there's an adversary who's after you.

And if you realize that, you can handle him. And if you realize that, you can trust Christ. The passage ends by saying, you and I have the arch, the chief shepherd.

and he's coming back for us. And that shepherd has already laid down his life for you and me. He's already taken the sting of death.

[ 23 : 16 ] He's already taken the sting of sin. He's already resurrected to prove that he is God and he's given us eternal life and given us passage back to God the Father. And all we need to do now is to trust him.

To walk with him. To do it together as a community. To be aware. Does that make sense?

The church is an amazing thing. One of the scariest things for me about being a pastor is that I'm responsible for everybody in here. I pray for you.

The elders pray for you. When you're not here and I see someone's not there, Ji-Shing's not there, I'm like, okay, I wonder where he is. He's still traveling. I call him up. We do our best to shepherd and take care of everybody.

I mean, we don't even know. Some of us aren't members. We're doing a membership class next week, but that's one of the important things about being a member is so the elders know who you are and we can pray for you. Some of the saddest times in my life have been seeing people leave the fellowship.

[ 24 : 25 ] Wander off on their own because they just get angry and they get prideful and they refuse to be humble and they forget about grace and all that Christ has done for them.

And I just hear this sound. Da-na-na. Da-na-na-na-na-na-na-na-na-na-na-na-na. And I think this seal swimming and I think this great white shark going after it.

And I just pray. I pray that's never us. I pray that's never us. Father, I thank you for this day.

We thank you for your faithfulness. We thank you for your word. We thank you for a place to meet. We thank you for your son who is the model of our life as men and as women, as leaders and as underleaders.

We're called to look at his life and to lay our life over him and to follow in his footsteps and to trace him. And Father, I thank you for these words of Peter.

[ 25 : 31 ] We're assured that there will be hard times. There will be difficult times because we're different than the world around us. But we're also equally assured that you're there. That you're using those difficult and hard times to create something amazing in us.

and we know that you don't waste suffering. That you're always at work. Father, I know there's some of us in here right now who just laugh at what's been said and I laughed when I first heard it. And I pray that you would open their hearts. I would pray that they would think about what is actually shepherding their life. Whether it's their company or their finances or their body or their intellect.

And I pray that they would realize that one day all those things will fail them. And they'll be left shepherdless. But there's one shepherd that never fails and that's your son, Jesus Christ.

I pray for us who are on this journey already and we become prideful. We start to worry and we start to doubt. I pray that we would be in a community of people who love us enough to come alongside and to encourage us.

[ 26 : 53 ] I pray for every father in here that he has another man in his life who has the strength to call him out when he's being selfish.

Who loves him enough to challenge him and how he uses his authority and how he serves. I pray for all the singles in here. And Lord, I pray that they would become a community that would love each other, think the best of each other, care for each other, and be there in the difficult times and in the good times, rejoicing of your mercy and your grace.

And Lord, I pray for us as a church. All right, Lord, I just pray, I hope we don't just come here and gather and then leave and come back next week and we do nothing. I mean, if that's the only reason we're here, to take up space and to get hot in a little box, then we might as well stop being a church.

I pray that we would be a church that thinks of what it was like before we knew you, how fearful it was to be away from the true shepherd and that we would share with those around us this amazing gift of grace that we found.

Father, we love you. We thank you. We pray all these things in your Son, Jesus Christ, holy name. Amen.