



KING'S CHAPEL

Daily Devotional - 1 Peter Study

Week 7 - Day 4

Approaching God

Read Psalm 77:1-4 - *I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me. When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands, and I would not be comforted. I remembered you, God, and I groaned; I meditated, and my spirit grew faint. You kept my eyes from closing; I was too troubled to speak.*

Prayer: When we meditate, we work the truth down and down and down, until it affects the heart. This is the key to handling difficulty. The psalmist here is redirecting his thoughts and feelings toward the truth about God. His first effort, in these verses doesn't seem to have helped much. So this is not the work of a moment, and learning it takes a lifetime.

“Lord, your disciples asked you to teach them to pray - but I also ask you to teach me to meditate on your Word - even today. Give me the patience and habits of mind that can mark and notice, savor and relish, and inwardly digest your words. Let them dwell in me richly.”

Tim Keller

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation - 1 Peter 5:8-11

Passage Introduction: *A new section begins here with an admonition to spiritual watchfulness. Just as a person walking down a dangerous road might be advised to be alert and careful, so Peter's readers are warned - “Be sober, be watchful.” One great reason for alertness here is the danger of attacks by an adversary - who is pictured metaphorically as a lion. The metaphor is apt, for a prowling lion attacks suddenly, viciously, and often when its unsuspecting victim is engaged in routine activities. Peter wants the church to approach life on high alert.*

“Be Watchful”

Watchful translates a word “grēgoreō” which also indicates a spiritual alertness, with perhaps more of an emphasis on one's focus of attention. (see Matt. 26:38, Acts 20:21, Col. 4:2) The opposite of this sober watchfulness is a spiritual drowsiness in which one rarely considers God's presence or perspective on events or circumstances.

1 Peter 5:8-11 - **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.

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words. What words or ideas are repeated, related, compared, contrasted?

Daily Study Questions

You may find it helpful to read through the commentary in “Resources for Further Study” at the end of today’s study to answer these questions.

Questions for Study

- In vs. 5:7, what did Peter tell us to take our minds off of? In vs. 5:8, what does he tell us to devote our minds to?
- What image does Peter use for our adversary the Devil? How is this a fitting illustration? Think of at least three behavioral parallels.
- How does Peter say we can resist the Devil in 5:8-9?

Questions for Meditation & Application

- What does the God of all grace have in store for your future? (5:10) How does this thought encourage you to suffer well?
- Take a minute to look up Ephesians 6:11-18. How can the words of Paul help you in your efforts to resist the temptations suffering brings? Specifically, think about and reflect on how each item mentioned in Ephesians 6:11-18 offers protection from Satan’s attacks.

Close in Prayer:

Why does Peter include vs. 5:11 in his letter? What mechanical purpose do you think it serves here? What spiritual purpose does it serve? How can you close out your time in prayer today by affirming along with Peter, the dominion that God has in your life and the world around you?

Resources for Further Study

1 Peter chapter 5 notes

Commentary & Notes on 1 Peter 5:8-11

Peter already warned us that because the end is at hand, we are to keep our heads about us and think soberly (4:7). Now he reminds us once again to think soberly (5:8). This time, he adds that we're also to be "watchful." Sobriety and alertness are required because "your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." An adversary is literally the person who brings a charge against someone—an accuser (as in Revelation 12:10). Peter is saying that the devil stands behind the evil intentions of our persecutors. Ever since the Garden of Eden, Satan has been seeking to "devour" God's people. We are to be sober and alert because the devil is real, and if we're not careful, he will devour us—destroy our faith.

Sadly, when it comes to the devil, Christians have either been obsessive or dismissive. C.S. Lewis put it brilliantly:

"There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight." (The Screwtape Letters, Preface)

The devil is real, and we must be ready for his attacks, but our Lord has confronted him and defeated him once and for all. Therefore, he who is in us is greater than he who prowls around us. The devil is a real foe, but he is a defeated foe. He is a real threat, but he is a limited threat. He is on a leash, and he can only do what God permits him to do. And God has granted us the grace to resist him. So we "resist him, firm in [our] faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by [our] brotherhood throughout the world" (1 Peter 5:9). Alertness and sobriety provoke an active response to the devil. We are constantly to be on the lookout for him, so that we can resist him time and time again. We resist the devil and his deceptions as we remain steadfast in our trust of God and his gospel.

When we suffer, the devil may tempt us to believe God no longer cares for us—that he has abandoned us. But we remain steadfast in our faith, entrusting ourselves under God's mighty hand, and reminding ourselves of God's gracious care. When we suffer, the devil may tempt us to think that life is better for everyone else—that if we only abandon Christ, our suffering will be relieved. But, we remain steadfast in our faith, knowing that our suffering is not unique. All Christians everywhere face similar suffering, and God is at work in all our suffering to strengthen our faith and perfect our character in order that we may obtain our imperishable inheritance.

Peter says all this is possible by remembering a critical truth: *"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."* (5:10) Peter wants us to put our suffering on this earth in perspective. Compared to the eternal glory to which we have been called by the God of all grace, our present suffering is only for a little while. It will fade; our future inheritance will not. We can endure for a little while because we have humbled ourselves under God's mighty hand. We can endure for a little while because God cares for us. We can endure for a little while because he will sustain us and lead us through this present suffering to our eternal glory.

If you're not convinced yet that humiliation leads to exaltation, just listen to Peter as he concludes his letter with four verbs that, though similar in meaning, crescendo to a dramatic climax. It's almost like the final part of a spectacular fireworks display when a flurry of pyrotechnics are released at the same time for maximum effect: Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! After we have suffered for a little while, Peter says, "the God of all grace ... will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you" (v 10). God himself will strengthen and fortify believers so that they endure to the end. J. Ramsey Michaels puts it like this:

"[This] benediction turns out to be a promise of victory or vindication."

And just as the impressive finale of a fireworks display leads to awe, so also ought the glorious truth of God's true grace. It should lead us to say, or sing, "To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen" (v 11). All that God has done and will do is for the glory of his name. We are called to endure suffering as a church in order to display his gracious rule on the earth. As we entrust ourselves to God, living dependently under his mighty hand, we are displaying to an unbelieving world