

Lesson Notes: 1 Peter 5:8-12 (NIV based)

TITLE: Our Suffering Can Originate From Our Spiritual Adversary

INTRODUCTION: Have you ever watched a science fiction movie where the hostile invading enemy aliens were invisible? What advantages does invisibility have in attacking unsuspecting humans? How hard is it for the humans to battle such invisibility capabilities? Does such a condition like this actually exist in our reality today?

READ: 1 Peter 5:8-12, with vv.5-7 for context

v.8

Be alert for what?

- - Implies potential for danger.
- - Implies naivety can plunge us into problems or worse; it can make us vulnerable / susceptible / open to falling victim to the devil and his will.
- - Some suffering that believers endure has at its source an adversarial spiritual component, which we cannot see and therefore have difficulty detecting and defending against.

Why introduce the devil as “your enemy” and characterize his activities as being like a lion?

- - He is to be respected in terms of his potential to harm us - take him and his power seriously.
- - God will not necessarily protect us if we do not take precautionary steps in protecting ourselves.
- - Playing with things of the devil is like playing with a lion.

What does “prowls around” seem to indicate?

- - The devil sneaks up on you.
- - He comes from an angle of our poor or no visibility.
- - He strikes in his time - perhaps when we least expect it.
- - He is bent on acquisition / conquering / consuming for his purposes.
- - He watches intently, studies, stalks his victims.
- - He analyzes and seeks to capitalize on our weaknesses and vulnerabilities.
- - There is no satisfying / appeasing him - he always wants more.

What does “devour” indicate?

- - The devil works to devour or destroy our life.
- - The devil works to use everything for his purposes alone with no regard for the well-being of the victim.
- - The devil has callous disregard for the innocence of his victim.

v.9

“Resist him” how?

- - Self-control (v.8), alert (v.8), cast anxiety on God (v.7), humble yourself (v.6), stand firm in the faith (v.9).

What does “standing firm in the faith” accomplish in this regard?

- - One of the devil’s tactics is to get us to stray from the faith into sin / doubt / defeatism.
- - The faith contains the proper moral guidelines for living - the devil’s guidelines are immoral.

What “kinds of suffering”?

- - Choices:
 - suffering for the cause of Christ;
 - suffering to stand firm in the faith;
 - suffering from the devil’s activities;
 - suffering from human activities instigated by the devil;
 - suffering to resist the devil.

Doesn’t the devil try to make everyone suffer - not just believers? Is the believers’ amount of suffering from the devil different or more than for non-believers?

Why is it suppose to be encouraging that other believers are going through the same kind of suffering?

- - We are not enduring anything extraordinarily beyond what others are suffering; therefore we should be able to successfully endure it.
- - The religious suffering we are going through is normal and expected.

What is a theme interwoven in these last few verses of comfort / reassurance in the midst of suffering?

- - v.9 - Brothers (fellow believers) go through the same suffering.
- - v.7 - God cares for you.
- - v.6 - God will lift you up.
- - v.5 - God gives grace to the humble.
- - v.4 - The Chief Shepherd will appear one day.
- - v.4 - Those who serve God in the right manner will receive an unfading crown of glory.
- - v.10 - God will restore you.

Are there any reasons listed here that might explain why God allows such suffering to occur?

- - To strengthen us to stand firm in the faith. (vv.9,10)
 - - To build spiritual maturity that resists the activities of the devil. (vv.8-9)
 - - To develop character that is pleasing and useful to God. (vv.6,7)
 - - To improve the qualities of our interactions with and ministering to others. (vv.2-3,5)
 - - To increase our reward. (vv.1,4,6)
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v.10

What is verse 10 saying about what happens to us when we are in the midst of suffering?

- - Our suffering will come to an end; in the eternity of time it is but “a little while” even though it may seem to the contrary at the time.
- - God has called individual believers to both future eternal glory and present suffering; He regards this combination of callings as an extension of His grace.
- - God will surely take direct action to restore a person, presumably after the person has been devastated by suffering.
- - Likewise, God will surely take direct action to strengthen, make firm and steadfast the person during the suffering.

v.11

Why is this statement added here - how does it fit in to the topic being discussed?

- - God has the power and the determination to accomplish all that He states and promises here.

v.12

Have the principles written in 1 Peter been an encouragement to you? If so, why and how? And if not, why not?

Have the principles written in 1 Peter supplied compelling motivation to you to stand fast in God's grace and in the faith? If so, why and how? And if not, why not?

BIG IDEA: God is and will continue to take direct action to help and fortify each believer to successfully go through suffering He has ordained they go through, which may include an invisible adversarial spiritual element to it.

IMPORTANT SUB-POINTS: What are some other important points God is making here in these verses?

APPLICATIONS: What applications can you think of for how we should respond to the concepts in these verses?

- - Realize and continually remind yourself that you have the full support and backing of the all-powerful God when you go through suffering in a way that He approves of. And in the midst of this suffering, God has His part to fulfill just as you have your part to fulfill.

- - Some of your suffering may have at its cause source elements or influence from adversarial spiritual forces in the invisible spiritual realm.
- - No matter how extensively you have been devastated or ripped to pieces from the suffering, God is and will continue to work to restore you and bring healing, but presumably over time and not instantly.
- - Apparently, God finds great value in this process of divinely-empowered successful enduring of suffering of His believers, followed by divinely-empowered healing and restoration.

PERSONALIZED APPLICATIONS: From these verses, what do you think God wants you to learn, or know, or remember, or put into effect in your life? How are you going to do that?

Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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