

What Lions Want for Lunch

Framing the Flock, Part 6

1 Peter 5:8b

Discussion Guide

Main Idea:

As was mentioned last week, we are in a constant battle, a spiritual battle. Satan observes and watches us to learn our weaknesses. He uses our weaknesses against us to hinder us in our walks with Christ. He accuses God to us and makes us question who God is and what He promises. Satan is out to seek and destroy us. We are secure in the Lord, but Satan wants to hinder our growth. We should be always aware and ready for his ploys. We should confess and repent when we sin. We should rejoice and cling to the strength that we have through Christ.

Discussion Points:

We communicate with our eyes. It's hard to hide what we are really thinking because our eyes tell all.

- What are some ways that people communicate with their eyes?
- How is it true that the eye is the window of the soul?
- How does Satan use the communication of our eyes against us?

Peter tells us as that Satan is our adversary, prowling around trying to find someone to devour. We are not fighting a battle to keep our salvation. We are fighting a battle to continuously grow in Christ.

- In what ways does Satan try to make us doubt God?
- What does Scripture say about God's trustworthiness?
- What are some passages that talk about turning our eyes to the Lord?

Satan is our great accuser, but Jesus is our great Defender.

- In what ways does Jesus defend us? Find some verses that show us how Jesus defends us.
- How can we run to that defense?
- Satan is no match for the Lord. How is that comforting?

Discussion Guide Cont.

Gospel Connection:

We need the Gospel as we go about our daily lives fighting this spiritual battle. We are no match for Satan, but Jesus is. He is our strength to fight this daily battle with Satan. Apart from the Gospel, we have no defense. But with the Gospel, we have the strongest defense. Because of Christ's gracious gift on the cross, we are his forever. Satan may accuse and discourage us but we know that we belong to the family of God. We will not fight this battle forever. Let hope remind us of the security we have in Christ and the peace we have with that relationship.

Practical Implications:

Think: In what areas has Satan tried to cause doubt in your mind? Is there any sin in your life that is hindering your walk with the Lord?

Pray: Ask God to show you the sin in your life. Ask Him for help to turn from it. Ask Him for strength to fight Satan and the peace in knowing that Jesus is the great Defender.

Do: Be thankful for the strength of Jesus. Be thankful for the victory that you have in Christ. Arm yourself and faithfully cling to the cross as you daily fight your battle with Satan.

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1 Peter 5:8b

Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote,

When the eyes say one thing, and the tongue another, you can rely on the language of the first.

–Ralph Waldo
Emerson

There is a reason why the eyes are called “windows to the soul”. While we can choose our words and control certain facial expressions, our eyes never lie.

They have the ability in a hundred different ways to reveal our thoughts, reflect our feelings, express surprise or approval or disbelief or guilt or fear . . . or even boredom. I won’t point anybody out!

One article I read talked about the emotions that are reflected in rate of blinking – in fact, one researcher made the claim that the presidential candidate who blinked most often compared to his opponent, never one an election.

Research has revealed the connection between the dilation of the pupils to interest and even affections – and the constriction of the pupils to disinterest or dislike. The eyes are a language without words.

Without thinking about it, we communicate with our eyes all the time. Without words ever being spoken, our eyes have the power to condescend, to judge, to frighten, to sympathize, to smile, to scold – my mother could silence four boys by simply giving us ‘the look’. That look could stop the world from revolving . . . the whole universe would freeze in motion. Her look was a flash of lightning and the sound of thunder all with one look – mother’s just have a God-given ability for developing that look.

Your eyes speak volumes. They can also express compassion, sorrow, love and affection. One author wrote, a young couple can flirt with each other across the dinner table without ever saying a word. That’s true . . . but at my age I’m just trying to get my wife to pass the potato salad.

Let’s be clear – Satan can influence our thoughts and minds, but he cannot read our minds – only our omniscient God can try our thoughts and our hearts (Psalm 26:2).

However, we’re more an open book than we’d like to be. And Satan and his millions of fallen angels have studied the human race for thousands of years, ever since Adam and Eve. It’s possible he can know what we’re thinking before we ever say a word because he can study our actions – our reactions – our expressions – and our eyes; even the dilating of the pupils and the blinking of our eyelids.

Temptations are custom made . . . Satan and his underworld study you . . . like they studied Job – and even the Lord Jesus.

Satan takes note of the glaze of lust he just saw in your eyes; or the spark of covetousness; or the shadow of doubt or the cloud of anger that formed in your eyes.

And he reloads his bow with yet another flaming arrow, directed at that very reaction which he determined is a chink in your armor.

In our last session we began to lay down a Biblical framework for the person and personality of the highest ranking cherub created by God – we know him as Satan, or the Devil.

He’s real . . . and we as believers are at war with him. The Apostle Paul informs us that our true battle isn’t with flesh and blood – things and people we can see; our true battle is against that which we cannot see – the rulers, powers

and darkness – literally, the fallen spirit world (Ephesians 6:12).

But keep in mind, beloved:

- we're not fighting the fallen world, the flesh and the Devil for our security in Christ, but for our growth in Christ;
- we're not battling for forgiveness from God, but for fruitfulness for God;
- we're not fighting for a home one day in Heaven, but we are fighting for holy living while on earth

One Puritan author wrote more than 300 years ago,

Satan wants to keep the believer from all holy and heavenly service; to keep us in a mourning, staggering, doubting and questioning condition. At one time he will restrain from tempting that we might think ourselves safe and neglect our watch; at another time he will seem to flee, that he may make us proud of the victory; a man might as well count the stars and number the sands of the sea as reckon up all the devices of Satan.

Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)ⁱ

So we began in our last session to study the Devil . . . we turned the tables on him. He doesn't like exposure – his deeds are evil and he loves the darkness.

And we're studying him, not to get to know him better, but to know how to arm ourselves better. So that we could follow the advice of the Apostle Paul in not being ignorant of Satan's schemes (2 Corinthians 2:11); so that we could follow the warning of the Apostle Peter to watch out for our enemy (1 Peter 5:8)

In fact, let's return to Peter's first letter . . . and to that verse of scripture. ***Peter writes in 1 Peter 5:8***, Be of sober spirit, be on the alert.

These are two imperatives – by the way – you could write into your Bibles next to each command an exclamation point!

You could translate this: Be alert! Be awake! Moffat translates this – *keep cool and stay*

awake . . . and as we discussed in our last session – yes, the previous verse told us that Jesus Christ cares about us . . . and now this warning immediately follows, as if to say, just because Jesus cares doesn't mean we can become careless . . . just because Jesus cares about us doesn't mean we get to coast.

This is no time to snooze in some spiritual backyard hammock.ⁱⁱ We're in a war . . . there's a lion on the loose.

Read on – Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 1 Peter 5:8

In other words . . . this lion happens to want you for lunch.

Peter unmask the Angel of Light, and what you find underneath is a vicious animal-like devil . . . he's a real, living, breathing, threatening lion-like devil who can't have your soul, Christian, but he wants your life; he wants to devour your joy and integrity and service and worship.

Peter essentially says, don't panic . . . keep cool, but stay awake . . . there's a hungry lion lurking around in your life. And he wants you for lunch.

Now what Peter does here is begin to describe who this lion is with two key words.

This is who he is:

First, he's described as your adversary.

1. Adversary

This is a legal term and it was used in Peter's generation to refer to an opponent in a law suit. He's a legal adversary – ⁱⁱⁱ And he wants to strip everything away from you, leaving you absolutely bankrupt.

Over time this word for adversary came to refer to an enemy, in general. In other words, Satan never has your best interest in mind. He only wants you to think you're getting a good deal – but his sinister, brutal, vicious motives are unmasked here by Peter.

During the early 1800's, John Brown pastored Broughton Place Church in Scotland

for 30 years. And for 16 of those years he taught through the Book of First Peter. It took him 16 years to get through it. You thought I was slow.

I have his commentary on this particular text and this is what he wrote:

The devil is the friend of none and the enemy of all. Maliciousness is the very element of his moral being. He hates God, and mankind, and holy angels; the only tie existing between him and his subordinate demons is their common hatred against God and all that belongs to God. He has deeply injured the human race; and he does not pity those whom he has injured.

John Brown (1784-1858)^{iv}

Secondly, Peter refers to him as *the devil*.

Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion . . .

1 Peter 5:8

The name devil, from diabolos, means accuser. In fact, the verb form means to press charges.^v

2. Accuser

Again, this has the nuances of a legal environment where the devil is given to making false charges and revealing evidence and bringing accusations to our minds of all sorts of things.

The Apostle Paul writes that the Devil is the accuser of the brethren – accusing them before our God day and night (Revelation 12:10).

And then he comes and accuses God to us.

- God is against you – look at how you’re suffering
- God’s not powerful – look at what’s happening to you
- You’re not growing spiritually – look at how weak you are
- You can’t say your sins are forgiven – God’s going to pay you back someday

- What assurance do you have of heaven – look at your track record^{vi}

He’s a skillful opponent at law – and apart from the promises of God’s word and the truth of your redemption through Christ alone, he’s got the goods on us all.

Nobody can close an argument like the devil. He’s a double-crossing, mudslinging, fault-finding, nit-picking, belittling, vilifying tattle-tailing accuser. You thought your little sister was good at it.

By the way – and more on this later – there is only one match for this Accuser – and it is our Advocate – our sure defense.

Who can bring any charge against God’s elect. The slate has been wiped clean.

John writes –

Little children . . . if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

1 John 2:1

Satan is a great Accuser – he knows everything about you up to today.

But Jesus is the great Defender – and He has forgiven everything about you for all of eternity. Satan can’t bring anything up about us to God that God doesn’t already know and that Jesus didn’t already die for . . . Jesus literally took care of our sin-problem for good.

And Satan knows that too . . . listen, beloved, he knows – and this is one of the reasons he hates you so – he knows that you are going to inhabit the palace of Heaven that he was kicked out of. You’re going to live where he once lived.

He thought he could get it all by defying God. He knows that you’re going to get it all because you belong to God, through Christ. Think of it – you’re going to get all his stuff . . . which he forfeited in his rebellion.

You remember you’re older brother or sister catching you in their room . . . and turning beet red and yelling at you to get out of their room and stay out of their stuff. And you just said, “Get behind me Satan.”

Can you imagine the level of anger and hatred and revulsion and bitterness and disgust and contempt and spite that Satan has against us in knowing that we puny little human beings are going to inherit everything that he lost.

- He wanted his own throne, and we are going to be given one of our own.
- He wanted the glory and splendor and riches of Heaven, and we are going to be live there forever.

Do you think he's happy about it? You have become his enemy #1 on planet earth.

Alright then, this is who you are to him and who he is to you . . . now then . . . let's look at what he does:

This is what he does:

I'll put the remainder of verse 8 into the form of two descriptions.

Description #1:

1. He roams the earth like a lion

Notice,

Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion . . .

1 Peter 5:8b

He's prowling around . . . he's roaming the earth. Job chapter 1 informs us through Satan's own words to God when God says to Satan, "Where have you been?" Not that God didn't know, but he wanted to Satan to admit it – and Satan answered, "***From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.***" (Job 1:7)

Peter effectively makes the same observation. And he uses the present tense to inform us that the devil never stops roaming.

One author writes that this verb indicates the restless energy of the devil in his search for participants in his rebellion.^{vii}

And he never sleeps; he's not human and does not need rest or food or sleep. He's constantly on the prowl.^{viii}

For thousands of years, ever since he first succeeded in the Garden of Eden, he has been mastering his schemes and devices as he hunts down humanity.

Peter drops into this straightforward text an interesting word picture. He's not just prowling around – he's prowling around like a roaring lion.

And since the very next phrase tells us he's looking for someone to devour, we assume that he's roaring because he's hungry.

But lions don't roar when they're hungry . . . furthermore, they don't roar when they're hunting either. They move quietly in the tall grass . . . they lurk on the front steps or under the car . . . they stalk you in the hallway and then they pounce so they can finally kill you and eat you – then they remember they're too small. I'm sorry, I got off track.

Well, actually, just like their little cousins, lions remain quiet when their hungry and when they are hunting.

Lions roar for two basic reasons – first, they roar to tell other lions in their pride where they are – they communicate to one another by roaring and loud huffing and grunting.

Secondly, they roar to let all the other cats know that this is their territory. And a mature male can be heard roaring on a still night 5 miles away.

The point is, the louder they roar, the bigger they must be and the greater they are to be feared so don't invade their territory.

So a lion roars for the purpose of communication and intimidation.

Satan is like a lion; he's dangerous . . . powerful . . . deadly . . . he also communicates with the members of his pride – those fellow fallen demons . . . and the fallen world system and the unbeliever . . . they recognize and they follow his voice just like the believer recognized and follows the voice of their Good Shepherd (John 10:27).

Satan also roars, intimidating everyone around that he's bigger and worse than anyone else and he wants everyone to believe that this

earth is his territory . . . so don't try to get in his way.

Frankly, he hasn't stopped bragging and boasting about himself since Isaiah 14 which recorded his boasting that he was bigger than God – and he won't stop roaring either, until he is judged and incarcerated in Hell forever.

You can study this a little further on your own, but the Devil – just like a lion – attacks: Build these one upon another – thanks!

Lions attack:

- The weak and the suffering
- The newborn
- The isolated one who isn't with the herd or the flock
- The unprepared and unsuspecting^{ix}

He stalks his prey . . . he takes advantage of their personality; their age; their station in life; their sorrow; their physical and mental condition; their spiritual maturity; their understanding of scripture. He uses it all to custom make his bait.

He waits . . . and he watches . . . and don't forget, he can see you blink . . . he can study you, watching your pupils dilate or constrict . . . he can hear your heart beating faster and faster – and he can figure out why . . . he probably even knows your blood pressure too . . . and why it's rising!

And for what purpose does he study you, beloved? Peter tells us – notice:

Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

1 Peter 5:8b

The devil not only roams around like a lion, secondly,

2. He seeks for someone to ruin

The verb for seeking is again present tense which tells us that Satan is involved in a persistent, ongoing, never-ending search.^x And his desire is to ruin another person's life; to intimidate and blind and keep the unbeliever; to intimidate and distract and discourage and discredit the believer.

Peter pictures it here with the verb to devour or, literally, to drink us down.^{xi}

A lion weighs on average 420 pounds . . . they can gulp down up to 100 pounds of meat in one sitting. They grow to a height of 4 feet at their shoulders. In other words, for most of us in this auditorium, were we standing in front of a full grown lion, we'd be looking him square in the face. We'd realize how small we are.

A couple of weeks ago, Marsha and I went to one of our favorite zoos in northern Virginia. She walked down the hill at one point to see the baby giraffe and I walked over to the enclosure where this massive female Bengal tiger was lying under a tree – only a tall fence between me and that cat. It was only 12 or 13 feet away; beautiful clear eyes, massive paws. It looked over at me and just kind of studied me . . . that fence seemed awful thin . . . nice kitty . . . I hoped it never heard me on the radio. Someone gave me a little plaque last year that reads, I actually love cats, I just cannot finish a whole one by myself. I used to think that was funny.

Talk about powerful. We cannot imagine the intimidating presence of the chief enemy of God and the church and every believer. He is no laughing matter.

Having lost us to Christ forever – and none of us can ever slip or be pulled or taken out of the Father's hand (John 10:29) – but the devil will now do all he can to strike back at God by staining our lives and by spoiling our witness.^{xii}

And to think, beloved, every time we sin we essentially yield to this wicked lion – every time we sin we effectively conspire with him in grieving and disobeying and even defying our sweet Savior.

Our joy is stifled and our service is stunted and our worship is silenced – until we confess that sin – and until we do, Satan mocks God because of us and mocks us because we took that forbidden fruit all over again.

So this week . . . deal as ruthlessly with sin as Satan wants to deal with you. Rejoice in the strength of your Savior; remember that Satan can roar, and it might be a loud roar, but it will

never shake the Throne on which Jesus is sitting.^{xiii}

Next Lord's Day we'll expose a dozen or so of Satan's favorite devices as we learn to resist him, according to the next verse in 1 Peter.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 06/03/2018 by Stephen Davey.

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- i Thomas Brooks, Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices (First Rate Publishers, 2017), p.2
ii Adapted from Charles R. Swindoll, Hope Again (Word Publishing, 1996), p. 256
iii Fritz Rienecker & Cleon Rogers, Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament (Regency, 1976), p. 766
iv John Brown, The Christian's Great Enemy (The Banner of Truth Trust (1848), reprinted in 1975), p. 10
v The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Volume 13 (Zondervan, 2006), p. 355
vi Adapted from Sinclair Ferguson, By Grace Alone (Reformation Trust, 2010), p. 68
vii D. Edmond Hiebert, 1 Peter (BMH Books, 1984), p. 315
viii Ibid
ix Adapted from Life Application Bible: 1 & 2 Peter/Jude (Tyndale House, 1995), p. 136
x Adapted from Hiebert, p. 315
xi Ibid
xii Derek Cleave, 1 Peter (Christian Focus, 1999), p. 159
xiii