

Dealing with the Devil

Framing the Flock, Part 7

1 Peter 5:9

Discussion Guide

Main Idea:

Continuing in our theme of learning about the Devil, we are in a daily battle with him. Scripture tells us to be ready at all times to fight, to not be surprised that the Devil wants to destroy us, to not be overconfident but to have confidence in God's defense, and to not be caught off-guard by his tactics. As intimidating as the Devil seems, he's not one that we should be scared of. We have a defense greater than him. God ordains and is sovereign over all, including Satan. As Pastor Davey says, Satan's power is providentially delegated, and his influence is personally limited. Most importantly, the battle has already been won. Satan is defeated! We can be confident in our Lord and firm in our faith as we fight this battle.

Discussion Points:

As was mentioned last week, the Devil wants to destroy us. Peter tells us to refuse to flee from him.

- How does one flee sin but refuse to flee the Devil?
- How does God's sovereignty and power provide comfort for the believer?
- What are some passages that talk about the power and sovereignty of God?

One of the best ways that we can fight Satan is by knowing the Scriptures and knowing what we believe. We aren't using our words against Satan but God's Word.

- List some verses that help with fighting this battle with Satan.
- In what ways does Satan twist Scripture and our circumstances to make us start to doubt?
- If we really believe that God forgives us and has forgiven us, why do we continue to live as if He doesn't?

Discussion Guide Cont.

Another encouraging part from the verse is that Peter reminds us that we are not alone in this. Our friends and fellow brothers and sisters in Christ are in the same battle.

- How important is it to have a community of friends who encourage and pray for you in your walk with Christ?
- Knowing that you're not alone should be a comfort. Do you look for ways to encourage others when you seem them struggling?
- Having others going through this with you should help you keep things in perspective. How easy is it to fall into the trap of thinking that "No one knows what I'm going through?" Is that really true?

Gospel Connection:

The Gospel is necessary in our life if we are going to have victory over Satan. It's also necessary in our life if we are going to have healthy relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ as we fight this battle. Our victory is in Christ alone. As Pastor Davey mentions, we can't just run up to Satan with a super hero mask on and expect to win. We can stand firm and unwavering as we fight him, but not because of who we are; it's only because of who our Lord is. Our confidence cannot be in ourselves. It must be in the One who is the Creator of all. Nothing takes Him by surprise, and our hope and strength is in Him alone. Thankfully, God has provided a way for us to defeat Satan, and it is possible through the Gospel.

Practical Implications:

Think: Do you confidently stand firm in your faith? Do you know what you believe? Do you trust God and the victory He provides for you?

Pray: Ask God to reveal the areas in your life where you doubt Him. Ask Him to help you trust Him. Ask Him to help you honor Him in every area and relationship of your life.

Do: Be thankful for the sovereignty and power of God. Stand firm in your faith and be confident in the Lord as you fight your battles.

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I picked up a book recently entitled, *Creativity, Inc.* It's written by the president of Pixar and Walt Disney Animation Studios.

The subtitle of the book is, "overcoming the unseen forces that stand in the way of true inspiration."

Much of the book includes the biography of this president, who early in life wanted to figure out a way to draw cartoons – and then, to figure out how to draw them on a computer, which he did figure out and go on to produce Pixar's first computer animated feature film, in 1995, called *Toy Story* . . . and more movies came later including *Monster's, Inc.* which the book title plays off of.

By the way, if it seems to you that *Toy Story* came out not all that long ago – what that really means is that you're getting old. That was 23 years ago.

The president of Pixar made this interesting comment in his book. He writes that when he was 12, the Soviets launched the first artificial satellite into earth's orbit. It was 1957. The Russians called it *Sputnik 1*. In Russian, *Sputnik* means, traveling companion. And by naming it *Sputnik 1*, they were essentially telling the world, there were more to come.

The author writes, "This was huge news, not just in the scientific and political realms but in my sixth grade classroom at school, where the morning routine was interrupted by a visit from the school principal, whose grim expression told us that our lives had changed forever. Since we'd been taught that nuclear war could be waged at the touch of a button, the fact that the [Russians] had beaten us into space seemed proof they [now] had the upper hand." It was time to practice getting underneath your desk.

The United States was now at a tremendous disadvantage in offensive and defensive warfare.

The author continued, the US government's response to being [surpassed] was to create a research agency whose mission was to begin research at an accelerated pace in the hopes of preventing what it called, "technological surprise." In other words, let's not be surprised again!

He writes, "Looking back, I still admire that kind of reaction to a serious threat [that said]: we'll just have to get smarter."¹

I found it interesting to learn that this agency would be largely responsible for the computer revolution, the Internet, and many more innovations and inventions including the GPS system – originally designed to track *Sputnik 1* as it orbited the earth. Now used to help you find your way home, or when you travel, how to find the nearest *Cracker Barrel*.

I found that response fascinating. In other words, we're just going to study harder . . . we don't want to face a technological surprise in the future.

Well, beloved, we don't want to be spiritually surprised either by the unseen forces that would harm us and bring dishonor to the kingdom and glory of God.

In fact, I couldn't help but think of taking the Apostle Peter's words and titling them – not *Creativity, Inc*, but *Christianity, Inc* . . . and the subtitle could actually stay the same, "Overcoming the unseen forces that stand in the way of true inspiration."

But we're not talking about inspiration to make movies . . . but inspiration to make progress . . . inspiration to live by, worship by, walk by . . . and wage war by, against our unseen enemy – the Devil himself, and his demons.

Let's return together to *1 Peter and chapter 5* where we'll wrap up Peter's warning and

encouragement and where Peter will how tell us how to deal with the devil.

1 Peter 5 and we're arriving now at *verse 9*. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

1 Peter 5:9

Now right away I want you to notice that Peter is effectively telling us to not be surprised. Expect the devil to show up . . . don't be spiritually caught off guard – you're going to have to resist him.

Peter doesn't want us surprised . . . and secondly, he doesn't want us to be self-confident.

The previous verse described him as an intimidating lion who wants the believer for lunch; he can't have your soul, but he wants to destroy your integrity, take away your joy and muzzle your worship.

Peter wants us to have a proper sense of respect for him, much like you respect electricity. You keep a healthy distance from anything that might give you a shock. Sticking out your chest and acting like a super hero works in those animated, highly computerized films – and it works when your 4 years old runs around the house wearing their super hero costume – and all the adults play along.

For the past year, every time I see my four-year-old grandson, he's wearing a super-hero outfit; his iron man costume one minute and then his Captain America mask and shield and later on his power ranger pajamas. And he always wants to engage me in some heroic battle – and frankly, I don't stand a chance against him.

That doesn't work in the real world. In fact, we're not only facing a roaring lion, he's also an invisible lion which means we have no idea when and where he'll try to pounce next. There's simply no place in Christianity for self-confidence.

I enjoyed hearing the story of the great boxer, Muhammad Ali during his reign as the heavyweight champion of the world. He was quite a showman. On one occasion he took his seat on a plane and that giant 747 was starting to taxi toward the runway when the flight attendant walked by, noticed Ali hadn't fastened his seat belt. She said, "Please fasten your seat belt, sir." He looked up her and said, "Superman don't need a seatbelt." And just as quickly, she leaned down and whispered, "Superman don't need an airplane either . . . now buckle up." And he did.ⁱⁱ

Don't be self-confident, don't be surprised, but third, don't be scared.

Peter doesn't tell the believer here in *verse 8* that the devil is a roaring lion, roaming around seeking someone to devour, so you'd better run for your life!

No – resist him . . . and that means getting smarter about your enemy.

If we allow the Bible to provide commentary on this text in First Peter, we know at least three truths about the Devil:

First, we know: The power of Satan is providentially delegated. Satan can only demonstrate his power in accord with the purposes of God.

Secondly, we also know that the influence of Satan is personally limited. He's a dog on a leash and God's hand holds the leash.

I came across a Puritan author by the name of William Gurnell who wrote a classic work in the mid-1600's entitled *The Christian in Complete Armor*, taken from Ephesians chapter 6. He wrote this interesting analogy:

When God says to Satan, "Stay!" Satan must stand like a dog by the table while the believer feasts on God's comfort. Satan dares not snatch even a tidbit, for the Master's eye is always upon him."ⁱⁱⁱ

His power is providentially delegated
His influence is personally limited

Third, the judgment of Satan is prophetically determined.

Again, he knows his future doom is sure . . . Martin Luther wrote it and we just sang it – for lo his doom is sure!

Revelation 19 and 20 spell it out . . . Satan knows, even now, that his power has been broken and we belong to Christ.

He knows the battle has been won by Christ, but still he refuses to lay down his arms – as long as he’s allowed to roam and tempt and allure and intimidate – he will do his worst, while he is allowed. But he’s like a lion with broken teeth.

Beloved, don’t be surprised; don’t be self-confident and don’t be scared.

So what exactly do we do? Peter informs us in this next verse to take action in three ways.

1. Refuse to flee

*Notice the opening words of verse 9 –
But resist him . . .
1 Peter 5:9a*

The word resist means to take a stand against.^{iv} In other words, don’t run away. And don’t climb underneath your desk either.

Peter uses a military metaphor here with this word which means that a Christian needs to take a stand in opposition to the lies of the devil.^v

In other words, dig in your heels when it comes to integrity and truth . . . take a firm stand against the undertow of temptation.

Resisting the devil means you’re not going to back down, slack up, or go along.

The Bible often tells the believer to flee from sin – to run from sin:

- Paul wrote to the believer to *flee immorality (1 Corinthians 6:18)*
- He wrote again in the same letter, *my beloved, flee from idolatry (chapter 10 and verse 14)*
- Paul wrote Timothy and described a variety of sinful behavior and then wrote, *but flee from these things . . . fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:11)*

- Again, Paul wrote to Timothy in *2 Timothy 2:22, Now flee from youthful lusts . . .*

Has it ever occurred to you that while the Bible often tells the believer to flee from sin, it never once tells the believer to flee from the devil. Not once!

In fact, while the Bible never tells us to run away from the devil, it tells us that the devil will run away from us.

The Apostle James writes, Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, same word Peter uses here in this text and he will flee from you.

James 4:7

The one doing the running away is the devil. It’s not that he’s afraid of you . . . the devil isn’t afraid of you - he wants you for lunch. But he’s afraid of God – and when you are in communion and worship and obedience to God, the devil would rather get as far away as he can.

I can remember getting caught one afternoon by our neighborhood bully – I was about 10 years old. He was older, bigger, and meaner than any kid in the neighborhood.

And one day he caught me in my neighbor’s back yard. I won’t tell what I did to make him chase me – that’s beside the point – but he caught me. Threw me down on the ground and proceeded to make me pay . . . my two younger brothers didn’t run for help either. In fact, they – front row seats!

But my mother heard the commotion – ran out of the house and leapt over the backyard fence without even touching it – and that bully saw her coming and he got up ran for his life.

He wasn’t afraid of me, he was afraid of my mother. I was afraid of my mother! But she saved my life so I could grow up and become your pastor.

Imagine, this ferocious demonic creature who comes against us, can actually be resisted by us – how? Because he’s afraid of us? Because we’re wearing our favorite iron man suit of imagined self-confidence? No . . .

because greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4). He's terrified of our sovereign Lord!

So the first action point is to adopt a defensive stance in the confidence of our indwelling Savior. This is what James means when he tells us to draw near to God. Stand in confidence next to Him.

Secondly, and even more specifically . . .

Rehearse the faith

Notice, *But resist the devil, firm in your faith . . .*

1 Peter 5:9b

You could render that "firm as regards the faith."^{vi}

Again, Peter isn't telling you to try and muster up the strongest, biggest, greatest faith you can in order to take on the devil, he's simply telling you to stand firmly in the truths of the faith that God's word has revealed to you.

"*Your faith*" here in this text is in the objective sense of "your truth" – that is "the truth of God's word to which you cling."^{vii}

So it isn't your words against the devil, it's God's word against the devil. Martin Luther wrote – one little word shall fell him – one little word of the truth.

The devil will tempt you and your resistance should look exactly like Jesus when He was tempted by the Devil – and Jesus responded to every temptation by quoting verses of scripture.

The Apostle Paul described our warfare with the devil as a war of words and thoughts – a battle between God's truth and Satan's deceptions.

And we resist the devil with the weapons of praying to God and rehearsing the word of God.^{viii}

Paul wrote, For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful . . . we are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

In other words, the battle of the believer against the schemes of the devil is first and foremost a battle of the mind and will of the Christian.

A woman in our church, to whom I am very grateful, introduced me to a book, which she then later gave me. She heard me mention puritan authors and she asked me if I had Thomas Brooks book entitled, Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices.

I didn't have it . . . she gave me her copy and then she warned me, it isn't easy reading.

What Puritan is? You typically have to read a page or two and then get up and walk around . . . take a break.

Of all things, a Christian journal I received in the mail yesterday, had a quote from this same book by Thomas Brooks – it was obvious I was supposed to start reading Thomas Brooks! On one occasion Brooks called the devil that wicked whisperer . . . so what are the wicked lies and deceptions that Satan whispers as he tempts us to sin?

Let me give you 7 of them . . .

First, Satan:

a. Reveals the bait but hides the hook^{ix}

- If you want to catch a bear, you lay a trap with fresh meat;
- If you want to catch a fish, you use a worm;
- If you want to catch a mouse, you use cheese. The trick is to tempt your prey with something they like. That's the hook.

As we've learned, demons and the devil can't read your mind, but they can watch you blink – remember? They watch our actions and reactions. They see what you watch on television; they look over your shoulder at what you're reading.^x

They watch what you click with your mouse on the computer – your computer even seems to know too . . . you end up with cookies. Your computer remembered.

I ordered a necktie online the other day and now every time I open a program the whole right side of my screen is filled with neckties. Some of you don't know what those are. They're strips of cloth worn around the neck by really spiritual people.

Satan knows all about cookies, and he custom makes his bait and cleverly hides the hook.

Secondly, he

b. Paints sin with virtuous colors

One author wrote that Satan's method is to make sin look good to us.^{xi} So he's got to rework the terminology. He doesn't say to you, "Look, this is going to be the dumbest thing you've ever done in your life." He's going say, "This is the freedom you're looking for in your life."

He renames sins to make them seem virtuous;

- it isn't a bad temper, it's personal conviction;
- it isn't stealing, it's something you deserved;
- it isn't materialism, it's good taste.
- it isn't pornography, it's an appreciation for God's beautiful creation;
- it isn't drunkenness, it's Christian liberty
- it isn't lying, it's discretely withholding the truth

And on and on. Satan is a master artist and he can paint temptation and sin with the most beautiful colors imaginable.

Third, Satan;

c. Downplays the consequences of sin

It's not going to hurt anybody . . . it's not going to entangle you . . . it's not the end of the world.

And then he gets his foot in the door.

One early church father wrote that if the devil can claim even one hair of your head, he will lose no time in making a braid of it.

He's constantly offering excuses for sinning . . . but never revealing the tragedies of sinning.

D. L. Moody, the great evangelist of the past used to say that *excuses are the cradle that Satan rocks people to sleep in.*

Fourth, Satan;

d. Maximizes God's compassion and minimizes God's commandments

The only time Satan will whisper positive thoughts about God is when he waxes eloquent on the love and mercy and compassion of God; but then he misapplies it to mean that God won't care if you do whatever you want to do. God is loving . . . so you can go on sinning!

Fifth, Satan;

e. Leads you to compare yourself to greater sinners.

That's a classic device of the devil. He whispers:

- yeah, you've got a problem with a hateful spirit, but you're not on death row for murder!
- You've got a problem with covetousness, but you've never robbed a bank!

Look, there is always a greater sinner out there to make you look better.

But Satan doesn't just lead you to compare yourself to greater sinners – he also – number six;

f. Reminds you of the sins of greater Christians

In other words, if godly people do bad things, then you're not so bad after all! Look at them . . . and they got away with it!

Look at what King David did . . . adultery, murder, lying . . . never mind the fact that his family and personal life literally fell apart

during the course of his reign in Jerusalem . . . so, the wicked whisperer says, “you’re not nearly as bad as David.”

But then – there’s another device of the Devil – watch this – when the demonic world senses that you’re not so interested in someone else’s sin and that you’re beginning to focus on your own sin, Satan switches gears and he – number 7;

- g. Encourages you to mind your sins more than your Savior

He effectively says, “Okay, you want to think about how sinful you really are – well, let me just back up the truck and bury you with all of your sin . . . in fact, I’ll remind you of sins you’ve long forgotten!”

And he attempts to captivate our minds and overwhelm our souls with our record of failure . . . so that we become captivated by our sinfulness rather than our Savior!

By the way, how can you tell the difference between the Holy Spirit convicting you of sin and Satan accusing you of sin? They both point to the same sin – but for radically different reasons.

When Satan accuses and reminds us of sin, he does it to ruin us, cripple us and discourage and defeat us. When the Holy Spirit points to our sin, it is to convict us and cleanse us and restore fellowship between us and our Heavenly Father.

The devil’s goal is despair and discouragement; the Holy Spirit’s goal is cleansing and encouragement.^{xii}

Thomas Brooks wrote that Satan is a master at reminding you of your failures, but remaining silent on your virtues.

Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)

If Satan sees that you’re under conviction and just might confess and repent of some sin, he’ll back up the truck and say, “Which one do you want to confess – where would you like to start, you’ve got so many of them!”

I mean, why kneel in prayer confessing *one* of them when you’ll never be able to remember *all* of them!

John Newton, the author of the hymn Amazing Grace put his finger on Satan’s terror at this point when he wrote,

Satan trembles when he sees the weakest Christian going to his knees in prayer.

John Newton (1725-1807)

That’s how you fight in this war against this old lion. These are the action steps to resisting the devil.

1. Refuse to flee
2. Secondly, rehearse the faith

Thirdly,

3. Remember your friends.

Interesting that Peter reminds us here at the *end of verse 9*,

Knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished (literally, paid in full) by your brethren who are in the world.

1 Peter 5:9b

There is something wonderfully encouraging about knowing that we’re not alone in this fight. Don’t forget about your friends.

There are at least 4 reasons Peter may have added this closing reminder.

1. First, to keep us encouraged – you’re not alone in this battle. Temptation is common to man (1 Corinthians 10:13) – it isn’t unique to you. You’re not the only one in this war.
2. Secondly, to keep us humble – In other words, other Christians are suffering too . . . in fact, there are those today who are suffering more than we are.
3. I think Peter wrote this thirdly, to keep us connected.

Remember, a lion looks for the isolated member of the herd or flock to attack. Peter essentially says, don't do this alone . . . don't wander away from the flock – the assembly – the church.

In fact, this word translated *brethren* should be translated *brotherhood*. This is a collective singular – a word used only by Peter in the New Testament – this is the second time he's used it in this letter; in *chapter 2 verse 17* he told us *to love the brotherhood*.

We're in the brotherhood – redeemed men and women, boys and girls. We're in this together.

We don't want to let each other down; we don't want to let the church down . . . we don't want to bring dishonor to the bride of Christ . . . to the brotherhood of the saints!

Other people are counting on you to stand with them – support them – pray for them – to fight the good fight with them.

Peter says, "Don't forget, you're in the brotherhood of the body of Christ.

Peter wrote this, finally,

4. to keep us grateful

You happen to have a problem with sin and Satan because you happen to belong to the redeemed. That's why you're his target.

Listen, the fact that you are hounded by the demons of hell is actually good news! There's a lot to say about you in who your enemies happen to be!

To be hated by the devil is a wonderful realization. And we happen to know the end of history. Victory is already ours, and defeat is already his.

In the meantime, we know now that Satan is merely out on bail . . . his court date is set . . . he's allowed to roam until his court appearance which has been determined by God, in fact, his eternal verdict is already in print in your Bibles.^{xiii}

So we, with our brother – Martin Luther, the Reformer – and in the company of the saints here today – close with those lyrics over which Peter would heartily agree . . . in fact, it sounds a lot like this paragraph we've explored together in 1 Peter:

And though this world with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed,
His truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim,
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo! His doom is sure,
One little word fell him.

That word above all earthly powers,
No thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours
Through Him who with us sideth:
Let goods and kindred go,
This mortal life also;
The body they may kill:
God's truth abideth still,
His Kingdom is forever.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 06/10/2018 by Stephen Davey.

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- i Ed Catmull, Creativity, Inc. (Random House, 2014), p. 9
- ii Charles R. Swindoll, Hope Again (Word Publishing, 1996), p. 257
- iii Erwin W. Lutzer, The Serpent of Paradise (Moody Publishers, 1996), p. 12
- iv Fritz Rienecker & Cleon Rogers, Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament (Regency, 1976), p. 766
- v D. Edmond Hiebert, 1 Peter (BMH Books, 1984), p. 315
- vi Ibid
- vii Adapted from Hiebert, p. 316
- viii Adapted from Warren W. Wiersbe, Be Hopeful: 1 Peter (David C Cook, 1982), p. 157
- ix This point and the following are adapted/edited from Thomas Brooks, Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices (FRP, reprinted, June, 2017)
- x Lutzer, p. 135
- xi Ibid
- xii Adapted from R.C. Sproul, 1-2 Peter (Crossway, 2011), p. 189
- xiii Adapted from Lutzer, p. 96