

**1 Peter 5**  
**Surviving and Thriving in Adversity**  
**J.D. Farag**

KAPONO: Heavenly Father, it's hard not to come to tears, tears of joy, Lord, when I think about how great You are, Lord. We're not just singing these words. But I pray that it will just mean everything to all of us who are singing, Lord.

You are great, Lord, You are great, You are great, Lord. We ask Lord, that You would just bless this time, Lord, and bless the teaching, Lord.

And we thank You so much for bringing this pastor to this earth, Lord, Pastor JD, Lord. We pray that he will continue to stand on Your strength and continue to hear from You and that he will speak with Your courage given to him, Lord, Your word. Again, bless this time. Thank you, Holy Spirit. Speak. In Jesus' name.

PASTOR JD: Amen and amen. Good morning. Welcome. You can be seated. I want to welcome those of you online as well. So glad that you're joining with us. Come on up, you guys. I have some very, very, very special guests to introduce you to. This is Ed; I call him Eddie, Ed and Ramona Scott.

Now, listen to this. This guy right here, okay? High school together. Yeah, don't tell anybody.

[Congregant saying something inaudible]

Yeah, that's right. We were five. So after we graduated, he graduated in '78 and I graduated in '80, we moved to Spokane, Washington. We were roommates together. This is all before Christ. I hope you don't mind if I share this. It's just the glory of God. We got evicted.

[ Laughter ]

No, seriously. First, we were roommates in an apartment. He got me my very first job as a dishwasher at the Red Lion Hotel, close in proximity of the apartment. Oh, yeah, it was humble beginnings. (Chuckling) And so we were roommates together in this apartment, and we got evicted because we were partiers. That's an understatement.

Anyway, so then we move into a house, and we lived in that house, and we got evicted from that house because our friends were, you know, we had a party one night and they went over to the neighbors and anyway, I'll just leave it there.

So we got evicted from two places in like six months. Yeah, I think it was a record. It didn't last very long. And we lost a lot of money in security deposits, but whatever. So this is 1980, 1981.

And I was just sharing with Eddie in the back that – so he played the drums for the starting lineup at the sporting events at the high school. And who do you think was the emcee with the microphone?

So I think God looked down at us and said, Get down there and they need to get saved. It was a sanctified pity and compassion on just two party animals.

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And so now today I'm behind the same microphone, as it were. He's the drummer on the worship team at his church in Boise, Idaho.

[ Applause ]

Ed and his lovely wife, Ramona, are visiting here. We've been talking back and forth, but it's been over 40 years. And anyway, I just wanted to introduce you to my friends.

[ Applause ]

Okay. All right. Oh, my goodness. I've been looking forward to this quite a long time. Only God could do that. Take two guys in a small town of Tekoa, Washington. Nobody's ever heard of it. And don't drive through it and blink, you'll miss it.

Oh, just God is amazing, yeah? We have a couple of other classmates and friends who came to Christ as well. It's like God just kind of moved in that very small town many, many years ago. So thank you for letting me share that with you and hope that's a blessing to you.

Hey, before we get started, I just want to mention just by way of a friendly reminder, this Thursday, of course, is Thanksgiving. Can't believe it's already here. As such, we're not going to have our mid-week Bible study and we will resume our amazing study through Jeremiah the following week.

So just wanted to mention that. And with that, our text today is *1 Peter, Chapter 5*. We're going to pick it up where we left off last week in *verse 5* and make it all the way through to *verse 9*. So if you're able, I'll ask you to stand. You can follow along as I read. If not, where you're seated is fine.

The Apostle Peter continues by the Holy Spirit, and in *verse 5* writes, **“Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older.”**

Oh, yeah. Can I just read that again? (Chuckling) I'm sorry.

**“All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, [Verse 6] under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time.**

**[Verse 7] Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”**

Let's pray. If you would please join with me. Father in Heaven, thank You so much for Your word and for this time. This is our time for us to get together as a body of believers and our time together in fellowship, worship, and now Your word.

But Lord, we readily admit that unless the Holy Spirit is present here and is our teacher and our guide then our time together is going to be a waste of time and I don't think there's one of us here or even watching online that wants that.

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Lord, would You, in our time together, speak into our lives in and through Your word as only You can and are always so faithful to? Very specifically if need be, Lord, very personally. You're always so gentle when You do. Just, we want to give You unfettered access to the deep recesses of our hearts so You can put Your finger on any area as You search our hearts, any area in our lives that You want to deal with.

And again, in a gentle way, not a harsh way. So Lord, thank You in advance for what You're going to do in our time together today. We pray in Jesus' name, amen and amen. You could be seated. Thank you.

So what I want to do today is talk to you about adversity, specifically that which we as last-days Christians can do to survive it and even thrive in it. In the text that's before us, Peter is warning the early Christians then, which is for us as the last-days Christians now about everything that's against us. And in so doing, reminding us that we're not helpless or hopeless.

And the detail with which the Holy Spirit inspires Peter to write here in *1 Peter*, which we're almost done with, by the way. Lord willing, next week we'll finish *Chapter 5*. No promises. We'll see. Don't hold me to that.

And then, of course, you know the book we're going to go through verse-by-verse after *1 Peter*? Thank you, *2 Peter*. I know that's deeply profound. Can't wait; actually *2 Peter* is wow!

But here in *1 Peter*, towards the end of his first epistle, he's really kind of zeroing in on very specifically the issues, the struggles, the concerns, because you got to know and remember that these early Christians were going through severe and extreme persecution and suffering.

I think we would do well as graphic as it is to remind ourselves of the kind of world these Christians were living in at that time. This was under Caesar Nero. And these Christians, many of whom would be on the receiving end of this inspired letter from Peter, the Apostle.

These early Christians, many of them probably had family members who were put on this stake after being dipped in tar and then set on fire as Caesar Nero in his chariot rode around with his homosexual lovers – again, I'm sorry for the graphic nature of it – and he would mock them and ridicule them and say to them, 'There be the light of the world, Christians, as they burned alive. They would take carcasses of animals, gut them out, hollow them out, take these Christians, put them inside that carcass and throw them into the sporting arena there in the Coliseum.

And for sport, the fans, for lack of a better word, those sick people that enjoyed the show would watch as these wild beasts would come out and devour these Christians that were in those carcasses. That's the world that these Christians are living in.

Now, when you understand it and see it through that lens, it really changes the complexion of the passage that we have before us today. I go into that detail reluctantly, honestly, only

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because we do err greatly when we have a passage like this in Scripture and we just treat it as we would any other passage of Scripture. In fact, we could be guilty of just kind of reading it and running past it and maybe fast reading it, and then we just move on. We can't do that.

There's so much here, so much so that I actually prayed about in preparation for today's teaching breaking this up into a two-part teaching. But I decided to go ahead and do it all in one shot. So I'll have you out here by about 3:00 p.m. today. I'm just kidding, sort of. So let's roll up our arm sleeves and get to it. You ready?

What we have here are no less than five ways, you might find more, I found five, five ways to survive everything that's coming against us and not only survive, but even thrive in the face of it. So first one in *verse 5*, and it's a biggie. They're all biggies. It's that of submitting to the lowest position.

Here, Peter turns his attention from the elder to the younger, as it were, and he quotes *Proverbs 3:34* concerning the submitting to God-given authority. And the reason being is that those who hold positions of authority are to be submitted to as unto the Lord. They are to be respected. And it's done by putting on the apron of a servant.

Now, let me explain this, because when Peter writes about clothing oneself with humility, he's speaking culturally in that day. The one who would take the lowest position would put on the apron to wash the feet. And this is what Jesus did by example. In fact, Peter, of all people, knew a thing or two about this. Stay with me on this.

Do you remember what happened when Jesus got the towels and the washbasin, put on the apron of humility and got down on the floor? This is the Savior of the world. This is the Son of God, and He humbles himself, taking on the form of a servant and He's getting ready to wash the disciples feet. And He comes to Peter.

What does Peter do? Ain't going to happen. No way! You're not going to wash my feet Jesus. I'll wash your feet.

Okay, let's be honest. It's pride. Come on. I mean, and Peter, all these years later, he can speak to this, can't he, about clothing ourselves in humility?

So what does Jesus say to Peter? Peter, listen, if you don't let Me wash your feet, you will not partake in My kingdom.

And this is what I love about Peter's personality. You know, these guys had personalities. I think it's a great tragedy when we, you know, read an epistle from Peter, who we know more about in the gospels than any other disciple, actually, all the disciples combined. And these were real people like you and me. And they had personalities. They had tempers. They had – I mean, the list goes on and on.

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But leave it to Peter, and this was who he was and how he was, after Jesus says to him, If you don't let Me wash your feet, you cannot protect My kingdom, you know what Peter says? He's an extreme personality.

He goes, Oh, okay. Wash my whole body then.

No, Peter, we don't have to go that far. I just need to wash your feet. You have to understand, this was the lowest and dirtiest thing you could do. Now, in our culture, here on the islands, in our day, we kind of see it, right?

Because we all wear slippers. Don't ever call them flip flops. I made that mistake early on. I was corrected and rebuked in Jesus' name. What, you from the mainland? (Speaking with a local accent) Flip flops. Okay, slippers. So we're wearing these slippers. Am I doing that okay?

[ Laughter ]

Thank you. Thank you brother. I love you, man.

So our feet get dirty, right? Now this is a cultural thing in that day and to this day in the Middle East. The dirtiest part of the body are the feet.

That's why – (Chuckling) this is terrible – you'd never put your feet up when you have company and guests in your home. It's an insult when you put your feet up on the ottoman or the recliner, which I do all the time. You're basically putting the dirtiest part, the bottom of your feet, and it's an insult. It's the dirtiest part of the body.

So for Jesus to do what He did and for Peter to say what he says here, he is talking about taking that low position, that humble position of washing the dirtiest part of the body. It is a symbol of, a form of submission. And it's humility. And this dovetails into our next one in *verse 6*, which is that of humbling yourself under God.

Now, this is very interesting for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the specificity. What do you mean? Well, notice he says, “humble yourself.”

Now, he just got done saying in the previous verse that God gives grace to the humble but the proud He knows from afar off. In other words, He distances Himself from the proud. But He gives grace to the humble.

Why?

Because God Himself is humble. And pride cannot be close in proximity to humility; it's repulsive. It's repulsive. Humility is attractive. Pride is repulsive. So He knows the proud from afar of like, get away from Me. I know nothing of this. I am meek and humble, and I cannot... Humble yourself.

Now, this, of course, proverb that Peter quotes is replete throughout the proverbs about humility, humbling yourself. I've kind of personalized those proverbs that say, “Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up.

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I've kind of, again, personalized it. So it goes like this for, you know, humble yourself, JD, so that God doesn't have to do it for you. No, that's what Peter's saying here. Humble yourself. Do you want God humbling you? No! How many times has God had to humble me?

And here's the thing about humility. It's so... We're proud of our humility, aren't we? And we're humble about our pride. This is hard for us. Humble yourself. It goes against everything innate within our sin and adamic nature. It chafes against humbling myself.

Because see, my default, my go-to is not to humble myself, but to exalt myself. And again, Peter knew a thing or two about this, right? How many times did God have to humble him in the Gospels? And how humiliating, which interesting, humility, humiliate. In a sanctified sense there's a humbling, a humiliating and embarrassing whenever we try to exalt ourselves.

Now, Peter is going somewhere with this because when he specifically quotes this proverb, what he's saying is that God gives grace to the humble. He lifts up the humble who are already down. And if you're high and mighty, guess where you're going? When you're up high, you have nowhere to go but down.

And conversely, when you're low and humble, you've got nowhere to go but up. And that's the way it works. It's the paradox of the Christian faith. And the sooner we as God's people get used to this paradox, the better. The way up is the way down.

You want to live? Die. No, die to yourself. Pick up your cross. Deny yourself.

Well, we got a problem right there. Because again, everything about me in me, of me, from me chafes at that. I don't want to die to myself. I want to take care of myself because I love me. I'm the most important person in my life. In fact, it's the unholy trinity. Me, myself, and I.

And is that not the problem? As one aptly noted, that the letter 'I' is right smack in the middle of the word 'pride.' So too, is 'I' right smack in the middle of the word 'sin.' And so, too, by the way, is 'I' right smack in the name 'Lucifer,' who said, "I will exalt my throne above the Most High." I will. I will. Aye yai yai yai yai. There's an 'I' problem. 'I' is the problem.

I need to humble myself? No, you need to humble yourself first.

Oh, come on. Husbands, wives, you know how that works, right? So we're submitting ourselves one to another, the younger to the elder. And we're submitting all of us one to another by putting on the apron of service and humility. And then we're humbling ourselves under God.

Why is this so crucial?

Because think about this with me. When you're going through intense suffering and affliction and adversity and you take that low position, God then will be gracious unto you. And if there's ever a time that you need the grace of God, it's when you're going through

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adversity. The worst time to be proud and lifted up is in a time of adversity because there's no grace.

It's not that God won't, it's that God can't. I know when I'm going through difficult times, those trials of life, I even pray, God be merciful to me. Oh, God, be gracious unto me. And it's like the Lord's going, I want to. But I can't because you're exalting yourself. Humble yourself so I can.

We tie the ropes of God's grace – We tie the hands of God's grace with the ropes of our pride. We tie His hands because of our pride.

And one last thing and we'll move on. I want you to again, think this through with me, please. I would just kindly ask: Isn't it true that every single problem, conflict, issue in our lives has at the core when you peel back all the layers, pride? Pride. Ask James. We did when we went through James verse-by-verse. What causes conflict, fights, quarrels amongst you? Pride.

Here's an example. We've talked about this before. Maybe this is a good time to – it's apropos. Let's just bring the marriage relationship into focus here on this. How hard would it be for a husband and wife to continue arguing with each other? Now, understand, my wife and I, we just have what one said is intense fellowship. We don't argue, as the pastor and wife.

Anyway, you're having a – you, not me of course, you're having a conflict in your marriage and you're going back and forth. (Making angry sounds)

Me? What about you? That's the pot calling the kettle black!

How hard would it be to continue in that way if one of the two were to humble themselves and say, You know what, honey? You're right. I'm sorry. Well, they would probably look at you going, What happened? Where'd you go? Where's my husband? Where's my... Who are you, or what do you want? Right?

This is so out of character for you. I mean because you're going back and forth. Why do you keep going back – and it escalates, right? Can I suggest that escalate and exalt are roommates? It escalates because of pride.

Because see, what pride is doing is exalting you over them. You have no right to do that to me!

Oh, I didn't know. Sorry. (Bowing) I'm not worthy.

That's pride. It's exalting oneself. How about humble yourself and take the higher road by going down? I mean, you know, instead of washing the feet, husbands, wash the dishes. I'm going to get myself in trouble now. I'm so convicted.

*Verse 7.* Moving right along. Look at the time. Would you look at the time?

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Cast all [All] anxiety on the Lord. This is huge. I don't even know if it's possible to overstate the paramount importance of what Peter writes here as it relates to fear and anxiety. And here's why.

Fear and anxiety are among the most devastating and debilitating adversities that take us down in our Christian lives. In other words, it's in those times when we're down that we're the most vulnerable to being taken down both from within and without. We're going to talk more about this in just a moment.

So Peter, and again, if you don't mind, the common denominator in everything that Peter writes is his own personal experience when he was with Jesus. He was younger then. He had a lot of anxiety. Again, I'm talking about his personality here.

You know, some people are more prone to and have more of a proclivity to fear and have anxiety. I think Peter was very anxious. I mean, it's evidenced in many of the things that he said and did a lot of anxiety and fear. So again, he can speak to this and the importance of this. It can be absolutely devastating because see, when you're going through adversity and difficulty and hardship and pain and suffering and persecution, for that matter, is it not true that the anxiety just spirals you down even more?

And by the way, the enemy knows this, which is what we're going to talk about in a moment. He knows how we're wired. And in some ways, it could be argued that he knows us better than we know ourselves. And he knows those areas in our life that cause us anxiety.

And as we're going to see he, like that lion that's stalking the prey, he pounces at that moment because we're the most vulnerable. Fear, even physiologically, it's devastating to every system in our body, the nervous system, the digestive system, the cardiovascular system, every system in our body is affected negatively.

This is why it is that the Apostle Paul, writing to the Philippian church in *Chapter 4:6-8* says, "[Don't] be anxious." [Don't have anxiety about no thing] [And here's how] Pray about everything and thank God for anything. And the peace of God, which surpasses human understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

It's the peace of God from the God of peace, and it's the cure for anxiety and worry. Now, we've talked a lot about worry. I've been very open, maybe uncomfortably so about being a professional worrier, a recovering worry-aholic.

Of course, I'm walking in victory, I want you to know. But I'm a really good worrier. I have a Ph.D. in worry, and I'm so good at it that if I run out of things to worry about in my own life, I'll ask you if there's something I can worry about for you. Gives me something to do. which as one said, is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do, but you don't get anywhere. So that's worry and anxiety.

Now, why would Peter kind of turn this corner again, so to speak, and go from talking about humility to talking about anxiety?



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Well, here's a thought. Can you imagine how much stress these Christians were under, the intensity of the pressure of their lives, not knowing if they were next? These are friends, family, loved ones, brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, uncles, aunties. And just the stress of that environment, being persecuted in that way, the anxiety that would ensue.

And please never imagine that, you know – this is an issue because no one ever dare share that they have anxiety with another brother or sister in Christ.

Oh, they would say, Where's your faith? Come on, I thought you were a mature, godly Christian. I don't struggle with fear.

Yeah, you struggle with pride, is what you struggle with.

No, because see, now all of a sudden, if you dare share that you struggle in this area, you're seen as less, inferior. And you're judged, right? Am I right?

So you put on the facade. You come the church. How are you doing? I'm so blessed. No, you're not. You're full of fear and anxiety. Let's be honest. And it shows on your face, by the way. Nice try. The emoji smile doesn't work. Stick with the texting of that face, but...

So here you are. Now you're just riddled and filled with fear and anxiety. And God knows this. It's not like God's surprised by this. Could you imagine?

Oh, no, JD, what? He's anxious again? How many times have I told you not to worry?

No, He knows. How many times throughout Scripture do you read the words, “Do not be afraid.” Why would God say to someone, “do not be afraid” lest they were afraid? Again, I know that's deeply profound. They were full of fear, and these were mightily used men and women of God who were terrified and full of anxiety and full of fear.

So God wants us to do something with it. What does he want us to do? He wants us to cast – and by the way, this word “cast” carries with it the idea of you're carrying this weighty burden on your back and it's weighing you down and it's taking you down. It's what anxiety and fear does.

You're carrying this thing and God says, roll it off of you, cast it off of you and put it on Me because My burden is light and My yoke is easy and the commands of the Lord are not burdensome, and the wisdom from above is easy to be entreated. My yoke is easy.

Come unto Me all you who are weary and heavy laden, burdened down, weighed down with fear and anxiety. Bring it to Me and give it to Me and cast it on Me and I will carry it for you because I care for you.

You do?

Yeah.

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And here's the thing. We've somehow bought into this lie, and it's a lie from the father of lies that well, you know, God's got bigger, more important things to do than you know, He's got a whole universe to run and a whole planet to save.

And so, you know, here I've got these, you know, problems. No, He cares. He sees, He knows, and He cares. All three of them. He doesn't just see it like we do. We see someone really struggling, and, you know, we know they're really struggling, and we stop right there. We don't care. Not God. He cares. He cares so much for us because of His love for us.

And He says to us, Give that to Me. I never designed you to carry that weight. I never intended for you to be filled with anxiety. And think about how the Lord must take that personally if I can say it like that.

Because you know the message we send when we worry and fear and are filled with anxiety? We're saying that He's not taking good care of me. And we are basically saying, I don't trust you, God, to care about, so I'm taking care of myself. You know, I was thinking about this the other day. You know, how we will say to somebody, Hey, take care of yourself.

I think that's wrong and here's why. Actually, we're not to take care for our lives. We're not to take care of ourselves. No, He cares for us. See, if I'm weighed down by the cares and the affairs of this life, I'm going down. And God's like, What are you doing? I'll speak for myself. I'll take one for the team here, okay?

JD, what are you doing?

Oh, Lord, you know, it's the burden of the Lord.

Why?

I know but it's heavy, it's weighty, it's intense, it's hard.

It doesn't have to be. Why don't you just give it to Me? By the way, I paid for it. So what are you doing with it?

And then here's what we do. Oh, we're so clever, aren't we? Okay, so we give it to the Lord. We come to the Lord. Lord, here, I cast this on You, and You take this from me. Then we walk away and kind of sneak in the back door a little bit later and take it back.

Come on. Don't look at me like that. You know what I'm talking about, right? And we take it back and we start worrying about it again.

And God's like, What? Why are you doing this? I thought You gave that to Me. You cast that on Me. Why did you take it back?

I don't know. I'm a stupid idiot. That's probably why.

[ Laughter ]

Let me say one more thing and we'll move on.

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Some of you are saying, please move on. One minute with anxiety is one minute wasted. Let me say the same thing in a different way. One minute spent worrying or fearing or being anxious is one minute wasted. It is absolutely unnecessary. Stop it. Give it to Him and don't take it back. All right. I feel better now. I hope you do, too. Let's move on.

Verse 8. Number 4, be self-controlled and alert. We need to spend just a little bit of time on this one for what I think would be deemed obvious reasons. So you know, we got the world, the flesh, and the devil, right? All three are working in concert, one with the other against us.

So you've got the world that's against us. The flesh – that alone, right? But then add to that the devil. And to make matters worse – I mean, if this were not bad enough, this devil is likened unto a prowling and roaring lion.

Now, I'm sure Peter had in mind these man-eating lions that are very patient. They're not in a hurry. They just watch, stalk, and wait. They study their prey. That's what the enemy does. You know, those old movies and photos of World War II, where you've got these military advisers all hunched over the table, strategizing militarily with the map in front of them?

That's what the enemy does with us. He's strategically, patiently studying the map of our Christian lives, and he's looking for that area and time, optimum time and area in which to strike and launch the attack.

And so too, like with the lion, he's stalking and studying and waiting, and when the optimum time comes, he pounces. When is that time? When we're not alert, when we're not watching. And when he attacks against us, he has this propensity to devour us, which is what those lions do.

So what are we to do then? It's a circumspect, which means circumspect, circle. It's you're aware of everything around you. Always watching. Don't be naive. Paul said it this way, **“Don't be ignorant of Satan's devices.”**

You know, I think as Christians, we go to opposite extremes and both mess us up terribly. On one sense, we give the devil too much credit. And on the other side of the table we don't give the devil enough credit. Meaning we overstate his power on one side of it, but then we understate and underestimate his power on the other. The balance is in the middle.

What do you mean?

Well, first of all, the devil is not God's opposite. He's not omniscient, omnipotent, or omnipresent. And by the way, spoiler alert. It's probably not the devil; it's his demons. Because the devil cannot be all places at one time. Only God is omnipresent.

So next time you say, or you hear someone say, Man, the devil was really attacking me this week. The devil was attacking you? Whoa, dude. The devil? I'm not worthy. I mean, he's got bigger fish to fry. So you must be a high value target if it's the devil himself.

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No, it's the demons, the powers of darkness. We're going to talk about that just real quick here in a moment.

So again, you're going through this adversity, and you have to be aware, alert, watching, sober would be a good word. That's how some translations render it. Always aware that we have an enemy that is stalking us.

We're not to be afraid because **“Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world.”** We already have the victory, but we unnecessarily and I want to say naively don't realize how much the enemy wants to attack us when he stalks us and studies us.

Number 5, lastly. *Verse 9*, Resist Satan and stand firm. Now, what Peter writes here can be easily missed, certainly at first read, concerning the much-needed reminder that we're not alone. And what I mean by that is we do rightfully emphasize, **“Resist the devil and he will flee.”** Resist the enemy, resist Satan.

But we do so at the expense of what Peter says here about, Hey, you're not alone. And is that not what the enemy does successfully, by the way, unfortunately? He gets us thinking that it's just us.

No, you're in good company, my friend. Your brothers and sisters all over the world are suffering the same kind of adversity, the same kind of persecution as you are. I think we have a saying in our day that goes something like, 'Misery loves company.'

I mean, there's something comforting about knowing that it's not just me. You know somebody else is going through a really hard time and you start thinking to yourself, Woah, I thought it was just me, like I was singled out.

Now, sometimes maybe God has to chastise you. That's another sermon for another time. But what Peter wants to remind us about is that we're not alone. There are other brothers and sisters that are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.

So you stand because they're standing with you, by the way. They're standing with you in this fight to resist the enemy. Because when you're together, standing with one another, the enemy can't get you. So let's bring our lion back into the picture. These lions that Peter is likening the devil to will wait for the prey to get outside of the camp where the rest of the people are. Now he's got them alone. Let's go.

And is that not what the enemy does? He gets the Christian isolated from their brothers and sisters who are going through the same sufferings. He gets them all alone outside. They don't go to church. They're a sitting duck. They're a sitting duck. They're a wide-open target for the devil. And he's just waiting, very patient again.

And as soon as that Christian gets out of the fold, so to speak, like the sheep out of the flock, (Clap sound) lamb chops. Yes. I'm sorry. That's a terrible illustration.

I want to close with a very well known – And I – if I could just be so candid as to say that this is, I guess, in vogue now when we talk about the spiritual armor and the spiritual battle. And

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it's kind of sad because in a way, it profanes the sacred and secularizes it and kind of mars it. I don't know.

Maybe I need to just take that to the Lord. That's my own personal problem. So enough of my problems.

Let's talk about *Ephesians 6*. We affectionately refer to this as the armor of God. Put on the armor of God. Armor up! But there's something here I want to draw your attention to before we close. Let's start in *verse 10, Ephesians 6*. You know it well. **“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”**

I like that word. It's one of those words, it sounds like what it is. Wiles of the devil. And here's why, *verse 12*, **“For we do not wrestle [Keyword] against flesh and blood...”**

Now, why is wrestle important? Because in the original language, this is full-on. For those of you who know anything about wrestling, it is full-on, every muscle in your body. And it is everything and it is so exhausting. Wrestling really pictures it better than just a battle.

No, think about Jacob when he wrestled with the Lord all night long, demanding that God bless him. And here's God saying, I want to bless you, but I got to first break you. And when he broke him, touched his hip, then he blessed him.

So **“We don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities [One], against powers [Two], against the rulers of the darkness of this age [Three], against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”**

Now, why do I emphasize how Paul delineates it here? Because these are rankings in the realm of the spirit. These are ranking powers of darkness, and they have certain areas. So you've got powers, you got rulers, you've got principalities, you've got these spiritual hosts. They all have rankings in authority in the spiritual realm.

So we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, brother and sister. Our battle we're wrestling against is against these four distinct entities in the spiritual realm.

He says, **“Therefore [Verse 13] take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, [That's today] [We're in a very evil day] and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.”**

And I want you to pay particular attention to *verse 16* and hang on to it, we're going to come back to it. **“Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and [The only offensive weapon in the armor] the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; [How do you put it on?] [Verse 18, prayer] Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.”**

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Okay. Now, real quick, and I don't want to get too far into this. If you're interested, in our verse-by-verse study through Ephesians, I think it was 2018, we went in-depth into this passage. It's really powerful, actually. But you have to understand that the belt held everything together.

Truth, how appropriate, right? Even the sword would go into the sheave in the belt. The helmet would hang on the belt when not in use. The breastplate would connect to the belt. Everything would connect to the belt. That's what truth does. It holds everything together.

How about the helmet of salvation? It protects the mind because the enemy attacks the mind. Oh, does he ever attack the mind. And very specifically, he attacks the mind by planting seeds of doubt about our salvation. So we have the helmet of salvation protecting your mind.

The breastplate protects the heart. **“Guard your heart [The proverb says] for out it follows the issues of life.” “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”** I'm convicted about that one too. But anyway, so it protects the heart.

The shoes, the gospel of peace, at the ready, it's a preparation. You're always at the ready to give an answer of that hope that lies within you. Salvation in Jesus Christ, the good news. **“Oh, how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.”**

Then very interestingly, and it could be misunderstood at first read, but he talks about the shield of faith. And he says of the shield of faith, **“Above all, taking up the shield of faith.”**

What does that mean? Does that mean above all the other parts of the armor the shield is the most important?

No, what he's saying, and they would have got it in that day because the shields in that day were made of wood and metal, and they would dip the wood in water, the Word. And they were tongue and groove. And when they were all together, [All together] they would take the shield above all of them, all together and lock it in and create an impenetrable fortress.

So when the enemy fired that arrow, which they would dip in not water but fire, It would not be able to penetrate. In fact, it would get extinguished and not get inside.

Now, here's where I'm going with this. There's that lion, though. Oh, look at those shields. That's adorable. Oh, you've got your armor on. That's a good fit off the rack. Not bad. Nice shoes, by the way. Peace!

And then you got this one loner, wanders from the group. And there's that lion going, Hold on. Stand by. Oh, he's got his shield. But what use is it? Oh, he can put it above himself, but he's exposed. And by the way, just parenthetically let me say, no armor for the back. In other words, you can't run. No, you stand. You don't run. If you run, you're done. If you run, you're done. That rhymes. So let's leave it at that.

You stand, but if you're not locked in together with your shield above all, and you're out by yourself, he's got you. He's got you. And that's what the enemy does. And here's what that

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looks like and sounds like. So you're going through a really hard time. Man, they don't care about what I'm going through, and I just don't have it in me to go to church and put on the facade, the fake smile, you know, the Christian smile, right? The one that we didn't pull into the parking lot with when we got here today.

So we put it on. There's something very interesting about that front gate. It changes everyone's face when they come in. Man, I just don't have it in me. I'm just really struggling, and I can't tell anybody.

So there's the enemy right there. Yeah, I know, right?

Don't go then. You know, just, hey, why don't you just lay low for a while.

And so you do. And it's not long before he's got you. I've said this before, and I'll close with this now.

Do you know that more ministry takes place in this place, not between pulpit and pew, but between you and you, pew and pew? Let me explain.

When we get together as a body of believers and assemble ourselves together. Remember Hebrews? Assemble, not gather. We're a functioning body. If all the parts of the body are functioning and assembled, then you have a functioning body of believers. If all the parts are just gathered like this watch and I just have all the parts, it's not functional. It's not operational. It doesn't work. It's of no good to me.

But when we assemble ourselves together as the body of Christ, now we've got a functional, operational organism, not organization. The body of Christ is a living organism. And so when a body of believers is assembled together, it's just like our human bodies. Physically, the cells in our body know when there's a cell in our body that needs to be surrounded.

And it's true, when we hurt ourselves, you know, we hammer that nail in and we hit our thumb, our whole body comes to the rescue of our thumb. We love on it. Kiss it. Talk to it. It's okay. (Chuckle) That's what a healthy body does.

You know what an unhealthy body does? Well, they call it cancer. It attacks the body and spreads throughout the body.

So when you have a healthy body assembled together, as we are a body of Christ, and Satan knows that if he can get you to stay away from that, you don't have the benefit of that. When you come to church, it's not just, again, from pulpit to pew, but it's that brother or that sister that God has given a word of knowledge to, to speak to you.

And unbeknownst to them, by the way, and they'll say something, maybe just encourage you and just share a verse You know, the Lord just kind of put on my heart. I've been praying for you. I know you're struggling. You know, maybe they quote a psalm.

And you're just like, ah, a soothing, healing calming balm on a very hurting heart.

And sometimes it's a pat on the back or just a prayer. Can I just pray for your brother, sister?

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See, the enemy knows that, and he wants to cut you off from that. And this is what they would do. This is enemy warfare. In the Old Testament, we talked about this in our Thursday night Jeremiah study, you know how they would take a city?

In fact, the Chaldeans are doing that right now, by the way, this week in Jeremiah, not this week because it's Thanksgiving. But next week the Babylonians are coming back to Judah. Just wanted to let you know, that's next week. And they're besieging the city, and they've cut off the water and food supply to the city.

And now it's just a matter of time. The cisterns are all empty now, only full of mire. They're living on whatever bread is left in their storehouses. They're living on and surviving on just the water, whatever water is left.

But see, that's what the enemy would do. That's what the Babylonians do to Judah. They cut off their water supply and then they've got them. And that's what the enemy does in our life. He cuts off the water of God's Word. He cuts off the fellowship.

It's Acts 2:42. It's the four legs on the table of a Christian's life and the life of a church. It's the Apostles doctrine; that's the Word. It's fellowship. It's the breaking of bread and prayer. And the enemy knows that if he can cut that off, it's just a matter of time The supply of the bread of life, cut off. The water of God's Word, cut off. The fellowship, the breaking of bread, cut off. Prayer, cut off.

You're done. And he knows that. And he doesn't want you to know that because you just go on like a lamb to the slaughter and you just become his prey needlessly, needlessly, needlessly. Well, I'm out of time.

Kapono, come on up. And if you would, please stand. We'll close in prayer and song. Thank you for your patience with me. I did the best that I could. So now the Holy Spirit takes it from here, yeah? Father in Heaven, thank You so much.

Lord, You know the heart. You see the heart. We only see the outward appearance. But, You know, every hurting heart here in this church or even watching online. You know, the struggles, the adversity, the suffering, the affliction. And You care. You know all about the anxiety and the fear.

So Lord, this passage today, again, that You inspired Peter to write. First of all, thank You for inspiring Peter to write it all these generations later, some 2000 years. It is a word fitly spoken in our lives. So Lord, I just want to ask now that You would take it from here by the Holy Spirit. And especially for those that are hurting, very discouraged, really going through it. The adversity is intense. The suffering is difficult.

Lord, please, even just with the anxiety, I just pray that right here and right now, there's a meeting between us and You. Lord, thank You that we can bring everything to You and that You care so much for us. Lord, we love You so much and we thank You so much. In Jesus' name. Amen.