

Overcoming the devil through Christ (Quality: Very good)

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[0 : 00] The words to which I would direct your thought as the Lord help me are in the portion that we read in chapter 5 of the first epistle of Peter, the verses 8 and 9.

In 1 Peter chapter 5 and verses 8 and 9, Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour, whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

The 8th and 9th verses in 1 Peter chapter 5. I trust that the word is laid upon my heart by God himself.

As you will be, I am sure, well aware, it is a matter of concern, not only to speak the word of God, but to speak from it, by it that message that is suitable for those who are gathered to hear.

And of this, as of all the work of the ministry, how often we have to say in that great question, who is sufficient for these things?

[2 : 17] But it does appear to me that for myself I've been often led in a way of exhortation to dwell upon the word of God presented in this way in the epistles particularly.

We see how often there are those words of exhortation. There are words of a great doctrine.

There are words of comfort. And they are to be dispensed to. I hope there will be something of comfort and consolation this day.

But it is necessary to consider those great words of exhortation.

Well, Peter speaks in this way here. He speaks to the believers and he would have them to be very watchful and much on the alert.

[3 : 41] We may see that here in these verses is set before us, Satan, that great adversary.

And he is set before us as having strength. And then elsewhere in the word, not so much in these words here, it is true, but certainly we are reminded elsewhere in the scriptures that he has not only great strength, but he has great subtlety.

We are told of the wiles of the devil. Here Peter represents him as a roaring lion.

That which is not hidden, not secret, no subtlety here, but it seemed appropriate to just remind you that he doesn't always appear in this guise.

There are those times when the devil is subtle, as with our first parents in the Garden of Eden.

[5 : 06] More subtle than any beast was the serpent. And he came with his wily arguments. But then, against this, we have these words of strength and of exhortation, of encouragement here, whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

And so, the apostle speaks of soberness, and he speaks of steadfastness, and he speaks of sympathy, sympathy for others, and a remembrance that this is the way that pilgrims are called to walk.

We started our reading with that verse 12 in chapter 4. Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened unto you.

And the believers are reminded that it is not a peculiar and a unique thing for them to have troubles, to suffer, to come into trial, to find tribulation.

We may, it is true, in our individual way, consider that we are somewhat unique.

[7 : 03] There may be, as I think good Gadsby puts it in one of his New Year hymns, reflecting on the trials of the year, we have said none are so tried as we.

There may be sometimes this lurking thought in our minds, well, we have in a strange and peculiar way been tried.

Perhaps we imagine that others have escaped somewhat. There is often a tendency, isn't there, humanly to compare, which is mostly unhelpful, I have to say, and then the apostle reminds us not only of this general sense in the church of Christ, that the body of Christ has its sufferings, have the, they, the members of it have their particular and peculiar trials, but he reminds us of the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

He draws us as we need to be often drawn to consider him, and he says, rejoice in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings.

first then, let us think of this adversary, your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour.

[9 : 01] Throughout the scripture he is set before us as that great adversary, one who is against God, against the Son of God, and against the people of God.

He is constantly seeking to overthrow the work of God, and he is constantly seeking to overcome the people of God.

We are told of his strength, of his dominion in this world, and of his work in various ways.

We are reminded that he goes about in the very first chapter of Job, we have that picture set before us, Satan coming amongst the sons of God, presenting himself before the Lord.

What arrogance, what pride, what awfulness there is, and he has gone to and fro through the earth, and observed, particularly he has observed Job, that righteous man.

[10 : 41] Well, you know, the history, and it speaks to us, doesn't it, of this great work of Satan, and how he is constantly active and observant.

then, too, we read that he keeps the hearts and minds of unbelieving people in darkness.

The God of this world, says Paul, 2 Corinthians 4, have blinded the minds of them which believe not. He is said to be the God of this world.

not of that infinite power, that immortal power of God himself, but in that lesser sense, very great in his dominion, very powerful in his work of the blinding minds and hearts of people, very powerful in his activity to spread deceit and lies.

The Savior reminds us in John's gospel, he was a liar from the beginning and abode not in the truth. how he injected that thought of the suggestion that the word of God was not true and faithful, yea, hath God said.

[12 : 41] we know that the devil came against our Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter speaks of your adversary, the devil, but remember too that he was an adversary to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the gospels we are told of how Jesus in the wilderness was forty days tempted of the devil and how also he said to his apostles before he suffered, the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me.

Peter speaks of that strength of the devil and his desire to devour and Peter did know this in a personal way.

You will recollect how the Lord Jesus Christ said to him as Luke records in his gospel Peter or Simon he said Simon Satan hath desired to have thee that he may sift thee as wheat that terrible vigorous shaking process which shook Peter to the very foundation of faith he hath desired to have thee that he may sift thee as wheat but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not oh what gracious words they are that salvation so sure in the Lord Jesus Christ that rock unfailling though all may shake beside it so

[14 : 55] Peter speaks with very real feeling with personal feeling here he well knew the attack and the dreadful shaking that it occasioned your adversary the devil I was reminded of that verse in the book of the revelation there is that victory in heaven which is the cause of great exaltation now is come salvation strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ as he said in chapter 12 and verse 10 for the accuser of our brethren is cast down which accused them before our

God day and night what a picture it gives of that activity how it links up with that vision of Zechariah in his prophecy in chapter 3 where Joshua the high priest is before the throne of God and the accuser is there his adversary well here it is said he is cast down they overcame him but in verse 12 there is a warning there is the mixture rejoice ye heavens and ye that dwell in them woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath because he knoweth that he hath but a short time

I judge that the book of the revelation anticipates that glorious and great and ultimate victory that there is that time appointed and there will be that total overwhelming but here and now in this present time the devil is very busy having great wrath says the word well we see then that there is a great enemy and a danger and so we need to be sober we need to be vigilant watchful how often the saviour exhorted his followers to this spirit of watchfulness how he would have us to be diligent and to be vigilant too be sober says

Peter this is a good and a gracious spirit it means that we are to consider well we are to take heed to the word of God we are not to be diverted and deceived by those arguments of the world that pour ridicule and scorn upon any deep and sober things who often really deny the person and the work of the devil or make a mockery of it if they do not absolutely deny it but we are to be sober and to realize the truth of these things to be realistic but to be sober does not mean to be melancholy and it does not mean to be unbelieving and to be fearful not so for you know that often in the scriptures we are exhorted to rejoice in the

Lord we're to give thanks to be sober does not mean that we are to be defeated or defeatist but as I say surely it means that we are to understand something of the reality of the situation and to apply our hearts to it be sober then we're to be watchful we should be on guard and constantly awakened in our spirit the word reminds us that we may become sleepy there is that well-known parable of the

[20 : 55] Lord Jesus Christ concerning those virgins while they waited for the bridegroom we're told they all slumbered and slept there was a sleepiness that overcame them and that seems to be a rather sad picture the apostle warns against such a spirit he says they that sleep sleep in the night but we who are of the day are to be sober to be watchful he's not talking in a physical sense obviously we need sleep to refresh our bodies but he means in a spiritual sense we're to be alert we're to be watchful we should not be taken by surprise be vigilant then how we need to watch to consider that the days are evil how busy the devil is with his deceits how he comes with his attacks upon the word of God upon the truth of the gospel upon all that is good and holy and right and so we need to be very watchful we need to be strengthened to stand against him who resist steadfast in the faith a great word and we are reminded that there is a resistance and I drew your attention to revelation chapter 12 there is that great expression they overcame him what a wonderful thing it is to think that they overcame him they were not overcome but they overcame and how was this we're told by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony they loved not their lives unto the death they overcame they resisted they were steadfast in the faith by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony when the saviour resisted the devil he resisted him with that word of god i often think of the preciousness and the encouragement of that which is set before us in the gospels Jesus said it is written and he used the word of god that sword of the spirit we are told what a great thing that is that we too may use that word of testimony that we

may say it is written that we may be founded upon that word of god consider it in these ways that we may resist his thrust we may resist them in that general sense of the accusations against the word of god the temptation to dismiss it the oppositions of science falsely so called Paul writes to Timothy we know those in our day how they come up how the word of god cannot be true because conflicts with the theory of evolution how science it is said has proved this and proved that and it hasn't really proved it at all but here are the thrusts of Satan I believe he is very busy and men take this in but we can hold against that the word of god it is written God has spoken he is revealed in his word he has revealed how he created the world how he created man upon it he has revealed in his word the entrance of sin yes there is a mystery but it is shown to us in the word of god how sin has come into the world and death by sin and the only way of salvation from that awful state here is the word of god thy word says David is true from the beginning here he rests this is his foundation he has that resting place in the word of god and is not to be moved from it we may resist the devil in his thrust in a personal way how he may come against us with those objections that we are sinful that we are weak and ignorant that we are of such worthlessness that we really cannot expect God to have mercy upon us how unthinkable it is that we we should enter into that holy presence of God what thrusts and fiery darts he presents against our faith but we may overcome resist by resting upon the word of god it is said of Martin Luther that he felt in that personal way very much at one time the thrusts of Satan presenting to him a long catalogue of his sins

suggesting that really he could not expect to be forgiven and gathered into the presence of God but Luther says that he was encouraged and enabled to say yes Devil it's all true it's all true all the list you say is all true but he said you may put across it and through it the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth from all sin and it is said though that may be some addition and some legendary thing but it is said that he seized his inkpot and threw it at the wall to emphasize the matter but however that may be it speaks to us doesn't it in a very touching way of that grand truth yes indeed we are sinful indeed we are unworthy indeed we are so worthless and beneath that notice of God in one sense and yet we may say that he sent his only begotten son into this world for this very purpose that we might live through him he came to seek and to save that which was lost he came that we might have life and that we might have it more abundantly we may then resist resist the devil steadfast in the faith resist his temptations to give up his assaults upon us those suggestions that we are not getting anywhere we are not further upon the road we are falling back what many devices has

Satan to bring against us and then I believe that there are those assaults which are common in that we have around us the world and all those things of the world John speaks in that way of warning to the believers 1 John chapter 2 love not the world he says neither the things of the world all that is in the world he says the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the father but is of the world and the devil uses these things fools and he brings them before us we see that good and godly people have been overcome they've been assaulted and they have fallen they've fallen in those various ways there was

David Satan we are told stood up and tempted David to number the people this was pride pride similarly acted upon good Hezekiah when the king of Babylon sent those emissaries to inquire because Hezekiah had been sick and was recovered of his sickness and Hezekiah apparently showed them all his treasures and he showed them in this way as if to suggest that Hezekiah was the great king and it seems there was no mention of God and of His grace and of His mercy and of His healing power and Hezekiah was a reproof for that you see how godly people can be overcome

[34 : 13] I've already thought of Peter overcome by fear overcome by that sense of weakness weakness well we are weak aren't we in ourselves we are weak we are so ready to fall as David says in his psalms halting ready to fall but remember that there is that strength of God and his provision for us when Peter says whom resist steadfast in the faith he is not suggesting that we are able of ourselves to overcome that we are such wonderful and strong people that nothing can get us down no there are the provisions we are reminded of the mighty hand of God there's six here he speaks humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God he may exalt you in due time we are reminded of his care in verse 7 he careth for you we are reminded in verse 10 of the how he is able to make you perfect establish strengthen and settle you in short we are reminded of all the grace of God who giveth more grace so we should apply for that we should seek that grace constantly how often that was the desire of the apostles for believers they start their letters in that way they often finish them in that way the grace of our Lord

Jesus Christ might be with your spirit but don't we constantly need that grace that fresh supply from his fullness that we might be quickened that we might be revived that we might be alerted and made vigilant and then there is his strength what a great word it is he giveth power to the faint and to them that have no might he increaseth strength you know that promise very well I am persuaded but do you rely upon it is that your plea do you feel just like that you are in that place where you need such strength yes indeed we do we need strength and

Paul puts it in that way personally doesn't he when he writes to the Corinthians when I am weak then am I strong well that is one of the paradoxes the Christian paradoxes in his letters to the Corinthian church Paul brings forward good many of those paradoxes having nothing and yet possessing all things and so on poor yet many making many rich he speaks various places things in a similar way when he speaks of that thorn in the flesh and how God said to him my grace is sufficient for thee so he rejoices his strength the strength of Christ made perfect in his weakness when I am weak then am I strong that's not of course the carnal reasoning or the logic of this world but it is spiritual truth it's heavenly doctrine yes indeed when we depend upon him then we know that strength would he plead against me says

Job with his great power no but he would put strength in me Daniel fuels that strength imparted thou hast strengthened thou strengthened thy servant helping him with that help for that is the promise of God so we may rely upon him and we have those provisions of the heavenly armour and the holy weapon that we may use it would be quite foolish to not consider that well-known passage in Ephesians 6 take unto you says Paul the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil having done all to stand take unto you and he speaks of that provision of God how our loins are to be girt about with truth similar similar to this word of Peter here isn't it steadfast in the faith holding that truth of God being surrounded by it completely girt about completely surrounded not departing from it in any way fixing upon it having the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace walking in that gospel and holding to that way that is set before us that way one says is track

I see and I'll pursue the narrow way till hear my view this way the way the holy prophets went this king's highway of holiness you go depending looking to the saviour resting upon him trusting in his precious blood for the pardon of all sin calling upon his name well that's the way to go isn't it the way the poor sinners can only go that's the way they're encouraged to go in this way that is set before us in the gospel and then you think of that helmet of salvation and so on how all is provided for every part is protected there is the shield of faith to quench those fiery darts quenching of them how as

[42 : 37] Joseph Hart says we may oppose this put it forward yes there are those challenges but we believe in the power of God we believe in his word we believe in the efficacy of that blood of Jesus we believe that he is the only saviour and the sufficient saviour of sinners we believe in that one sacrifice for sins forever and the virtue of it that is so great and what a great thing it is to truly believe these things and to be able to oppose them that shield of faith oh great is that which the

Lord has provided the sword of the spirit which already I have really brought your attention to the word of God how we may have that weapon of attack it has been said that is in a sense the sole weapon of attack of thrust but how great it is thy word the word which we have rested on shall help our heaviest hours knowing says Peter that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world I take this word to be both encouraging and a word of exhortation of sympathy we should consider that throughout the world there are those who are suffering who are under attack

I'm sure you have been aware of those in Pakistan for instance who have been imprisoned and threatened with death because it was alleged that they had slandered the prophet Muhammad come under the assault of the Islamic fundamentalists well it seems unlikely that they had in fact done anything very wrong but because they were Christians it seems more likely they were under that reproach and persecuted and there are various places in our world today where it is a difficult and a dangerous thing to be a follower of the

Lord Jesus Christ because it isn't so in Britain not outwardly at least then we may sometimes be lulled into a sense that all the world is the same but it certainly is not remember that the devil is as a roaring lion he can stir up the forces of opposition and persecution as on various occasions there has been and yet the Lord is able to deliver his people we see that and he is able to keep them faithful unto death the same afflictions accomplished in your brethren that are in the world and those who have endured and overcome are not different creatures from ourselves

Elijah James reminds us was a man of like passions with ourselves and yet how God stood by him mightily used him lifted him up from his depression and lowness and sent him again in his service lastly just let us think how we should call upon him and how he has promised to hear those in their need call upon me in the day of trouble says the Lord I will deliver thee and thou should glorify me well may God then bless his word to our hearts Amen

[48 : 27] God don't bite please Thank you.