

# Be Sober, Be Vigilant

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[0:00] 1 Peter 5 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. It tells us three things.

Be sober, be vigilant, resist. Firstly, be sober, be sober. It means be sober. In other words, be free from illusion, free from the intoxication.

The intoxicating effects of sin. We can think of those as selfish passion and greed, fleshliness. Soberness is the opposite of that.

It brings a soundness of mind. It brings a clear judgement. It brings self-control. What is the opposite of being sober? Being drunk.

[1:20] Alcohol. On the other hand, it destroys lives. It damns souls. It blights society. We see the ultimate home wrecker, alcohol.

Better to avoid a drop of it, in my opinion. The opposite of being sober is to be drunken. To be careless. To be reckless.

Think of a drunk. We've all seen them. I've seen what drink can do to families and homes. It's a wrecking ball. A drunk has little control over their mind, over their mouth and over their body.

We see the disastrous effects of demon drink. Rather, have a sober mind. A sober mind.

In understanding, be men. The word exhorts us to have a clear head. Felix heard Paul concerning faith in Christ in Acts 24. Verse 25 of Acts 24.

[2:22] Paul was witnessing to Felix saying, As he reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgement to come, and answered, go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

Righteousness, temperance, judgement to come. Temperance, same message really. Acts 26, 25 when Paul ministered in witnessing to Festus, the successor of Felix.

In Acts 26 verse 25, Philip Festus said to Paul, You're mad. Much learning has driven you mad. And Paul said, I'm not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

There's that word again. Truth and soberness. Soberness is a message that is important. Being sober means being serious about your Christianity.

It means taking it seriously. Being sober. Be sober and pray, we read. In 1 Peter 4 verse 7, Peter says, But the end of all things is at hand.

[3:38] Therefore be ye sober and watch unto prayer. In 1 Thessalonians 5 verse 6, Paul said, Therefore let us not sleep as do others.

The context of the second coming of the desperate times. He says, let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober.

Being sober. Being sober. Number one. Number two. Being vigilant. Being vigilant. It means wide awake. See those pictures that they put of drivers with the toothpicks holding their eyes open.

We need to be wide awake, brothers and sisters. If you're feeling like closing your eyes, wake up.

My eyes are feeling rather tired now. I've been poked. When I just poked, I've got all fuzzy now.

That's how we get, isn't it? The devil wants you to have your eyes all fuzzy and not be able to see clearly. But God wants you to be wide awake. Wide awake.

[4:42] To wake up. To be watchful. To try the spirits. To be vigilant. Be vigilant. Now it's a picture of a sentry on guard duty. I was thinking of those blokes standing there for ages.

It made me think of soldiers that fall over on guard duty. You know? As they have to wait too long. But you know, it's easy to just kill over in the hot sun, isn't it? And you're on guard duty.

Especially when someone's taking a long time about something. But we need to be vigilant, don't we? Be watchful. Be awake. And be on guard. You know, the soldiers, the guard duty won't be tied down as they go to sleep.

We need to be vigilant. Be on the lookout. Be on the alert. Walk worthy. Be on the lookout. On the alert for the enemy. For danger. To discern the signs of the times.

Keep our eyes peeled. Put those toothpicks in. Keep your eyes peeled. Be vigilant. Be vigilant. Be vigilant. In other words, recognise the flesh. Recognise falsely welled philosophies.

[5:43] Recognise the enemy's work in all of its forms. In all of its guises. And we need sound preaching. We need sound doctrine. It's been said that the problem is with some preachers, not so much what they are preaching, but what they are not preaching.

They are not preaching to discern, to be watchful, to be vigilant, to be awake, to be alert, to be aware. They are not urging God's people to discern.

That's why there is a lack of it. As well as Christians not reading their Bibles. I have been reading some statistics of how often Christians actually read their Bibles. Professing Christians is pretty woeful statistics.

We need to, brothers and sisters, be vigilant. You need to be vigilant. Vigilant. Don't hold too tightly the trinkets of earth.

Look rather with an eternal perspective. Peter goes on in the context there. And speaking of the God of all grace who has called us unto his eternal glory. By Christ Jesus, you've been called unto eternal glory.

[6:54] Eternal glory. We've heard about heaven already today. The big problem is that we hold earth too tightly. And we have an ignorance of God's truth. We need to be vigilant.

Watch out for the enemy and his works. Friends, the enemy is active. He's active. He's active. We'll give him credit. He's a hard worker. The enemy and all his works is something we should watch out for.

Watch out for discouragement. He loves to make you discouraged. He delights in discouraging Christians. It's one of these tools that he uses.

The tools of his training. And friends, you are his number one target as a Bible-believing saved man or woman. When Satan attacks, he goes for you. And when Satan's attacking, what should we do? We should do what Job did in the book of Job. When Job's world was falling apart, what did Job do? He praised and he worshipped the Lord.

[7:58] Satan had robbed Job. He robbed Job of his health. He had oozing pus. Pussy sores. Satan robbed him of his family.

All his sons and daughters were killed. Satan robbed him of his wife. She turned against him and said, curse God and die. Satan robbed him of his friends.

The ones who, so-called friends that came to him, were accusing him. They weren't much comfort. But Job held on to his integrity.

He held on. He did not waver. He stood his ground. He did not whinge and whine. But he worshipped. He worshipped. In Job 1 verse 20 it says, Then Job arose after all these disasters. He rent his mantle as a sign of repenting, of exposing himself to God, as it were, in contrition. He shaved his head as a witness of his vow.

[9:05] And he fell down upon the ground and he worshipped. And he said, Another area we must be vigilant is in the church.

In the church of the living God. What does the enemy hate? He hates Christians and he hates it when Christians get together. He hates it when Christians assemble to praise God.

He hates it when Christians assemble to pray. To study God's word. He hates the work of God with determination. How does Satan attack the church?

Talking about the assembly of the believers. The church. He attacks it from without and from within. He wants to disrupt and destroy the church. We see that through history, through persecution. Blatant attacks from without. But more so by subtle attacks from within. From within. He infiltrates the church.

[10:19] He infects it. He brings in false prophets, false teaching. The enemy of our soul. The enemy of the church.

He attacks you and me as a body assembled of the assembled believers of the church. He attacks us through error, through humanism, through worldly philosophies, through liberalism, through seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.

He attacks the church because he hates reverence. He hates righteousness. He hates Bible believers. And the enemy of your soul will attack through misleading, through hypocrisy, through sin, through his agents, through those he deceives.

We see what happens to Ananias and Sapphira. It seemed like they were pretty commendable people. Pretty generous. But they lied.

And it was not excused. It was condemned. The enemy tries subtle and sneaky ways.

[11:23] Christian, to take away your first love. He wants you to lose your first love. He wants it to wane. He wants it to grow dim. He wants your love to weaken.

He wants to destroy and disrupt prayer. He wants to blur the lines of separation and sanctification. That line between right and wrong.

He wants to make it blurry. He wants to make that so-called grey area wider and wider and wider. Where just about anything goes. And so Christians get worldly, bit by bit, without even noticing it. He's called the accuser of the brethren. He wants to hinder the work of the Gospel. He wants to cause strife and factions. He wants to provoke division and disunity, misunderstandings and murmurings.

The enemy delights in that. Be vigilant. Keep your eyes peeled. What are some of Satan's strategies?

[12:23] He likes to provoke busyness. I can be guilty of that. We all can. We can get so busy that we don't pray. We can get so busy that we don't commune with our God.

That we don't open His Word and receive from Him. Satan loves to distract churchgoers with a plethora of activity. That takes them away from the real work of building the Kingdom of God. He wants to provoke disagreements over trivial things. He just likes that. He's got a way about doing that. He likes to wear down the saints.

We read that is one of his strategies. He loves creating depressed Christians. I've seen some depressed Christians. I've met some lately. I've spent time with them.

It's depressing. Depressed Christians. Disobedient Christians. Backsliding Christians.

Self-obsessed Christians. Self-obsessed Christians. Woe is me. Me, me, me, me, me, me.

[13:22] The devil wants you to focus on yourself. He wants to promote pride. He wants to promote jealousies. He wants to promote bitterness and worldliness. And feeling hurt by so-and-so said something to me ten years ago.

I'm still getting over it. He loves Christians like that. He wants you to have that chip on your shoulder and cherish it. And take it out and admire it every morning and put it back on there.

That's what the enemy wants to do with that great big ugly chip on your shoulder. Get it off! Be vigilant. Be vigilant. Stop excusing your sin.

Recognize it for what it is. It's the enemy's work. Satan masterminded many plots. He wants to soil the testimony of the church through sin and scandal.

We see the media loves it. The church so-called. You know, anything to block the name of God. Anything to make church look bad.

[14:24] He wants to encourage gossip. You know, the word speaks of some whose words eat like a canker. It's Christians like that. Professing Christians like that, they don't have a good word to say to anybody.

Their words eat like a canker. That means like cancer. Gangrene. Ugh! Stinks. Stinking. Rotten words.

Words that eat like a canker. The enemy has many strategies. He wants to attack your family. He wants to attack your loved ones. Your marriages. And another big thing, another big strategy that the enemy rarely loves.

He loves hearing you sing when it's just lip service. Lip service. He loves hearing you talk about God when it's just lip service.

That's as far as it goes. It's just your lips. You know, the Lord Jesus talked about men who have a profession, but not a possession.

[15:27] They've just got the lips. They haven't got the heart. And the enemy wants you to just have a Christianity that's just a lip service. You just say the right things when you're around Christians and then your real self is exposed when they're not around.

Friends, it's clear that our enemy is hell bent on destroying the church. He's hell bent on destroying Christians as a corporate body.

So we should be for the church. We should be for the church. Support your church. Support your church as if it were something precious.

Something important to our Lord. Something that our Lord would bleed and die for the church. And give himself for the church. Because he did. He did. It is precious and it is important to the church. So be vigilant. Be vigilant. Love God. Love the assembly. Thirdly, Peter says, resist the devil.

[16:36] Whom resist steadfast in the faith knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. Resist the devil.

Resist him. Now, I've seen and heard some stories about our brethren that are in the world that are getting afflicted. I know brother Ian's got a heart for the persecuted church.

And there's much material that we do at times we're seeing. I know I've had some measure of persecution. But it pales into insignificance. It's nothing in comparison.

But friends, we need to resist steadfast in the faith. Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. Fellow Christian, resist steadfast in the faith.

There's a steadfastness that we're called to. To oppose the enemy and his works. To stand against him. To join the resistance. Join the resistance. How can we resist him?

[17:40] We can mount a counterattack. We can mount a counterattack as the people of God. As the people of God, right through Genesis through, have always stood firm.

Well, they've flipped and flopped, but they've generally stood firm. And we need to follow them where they did stand firm. Amen?

Isn't that right? How do we stand firm? How do we stand steadfast in the faith? The faith. It's the faith that we love. It's our Lord and Saviour and His saving work of His blessed truth.

We need to mount a counterattack. And how do we do that? By memorizing, meditating and vocalizing the Word of God. Make it part of your vocabulary. Stay in the Word.

Jeremiah 23, the prophet says, Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord. And like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces.

[18:44] Amen. It's not my word like as a fire, like as a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces. We need the Word. We need the Word. We need the Word.

We need the Word. Don't neglect the Word. We need to encourage and care for one another. Someone asked the heavyweight champion of the world, James Corbett, what was the most important thing that made him a champion?

And he said, Be willing to fight one more round. Maybe you're feeling like I'm a defeated Christian right now. Maybe I'm feeling, maybe you're feeling like, well, this is tough going and he's telling me to do more.

He's telling me to keep resisting. I'm saying, go one more round. You can do it. You can do it. Keep on fighting. Keep on resisting. Continue the fight. Take the fight to the enemy.

Don't hold back. Be steadfast in the faith. One more round. Arm your mind to persevere. To determine. Now the perseverance of the saints, I don't know so much about that theology, but the perseverance of the saints is something that we should have.

[19:56] Amen. We should have a perseverance of the saints. We should be saints who persevere. Who have that mind to continue to fight. Who determine with self-control, with steadfastness, with self-discipline, with truthful words.

Another thing the enemy likes is a double-minded man. The enemy loves a divided heart. Friends, be steadfast in the faith.

Resist. Resolve to resist. We live in a culture that's intoxicated. It's intoxicated. It's the opposite of sober, isn't it?

We know the drunkards in our street, the drunkards that are my neighbours and yours. It's an intoxicated culture. God help them.

They don't know what they're doing. God says, be sober, be sober. All around us there's a deliberate propaganda campaign and a disinformation campaign constantly bombarded with these untruths, these lies from the father of lies.

[21:03] One of his names. He's got it down to a fine art. He's a deceiver. A liar. God says, be vigilant. When you see this bombardment that you're constantly getting of disinformation, be vigilant.

As a roaring lion he seeketh to devour, to deceive. And he sows seeds of doubt in minds. He wants to take the word of God away. He wants to take the word of God away from us and to replace it with untruths, with half-truths.

We see that one of the enemy's works was to take the word. As we see in the parables of our Lord, that the enemy took the truth. He took the word. God says, Whom resist steadfast in the faith?

But the end of all things is at hand. 1 Peter 4 verse 7. Be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer. You know, I saw a video lately and it said, what is the most important meeting of the church?

It's the prayer meeting. It is the prayer meeting. It is the prayer meeting, brothers and sisters. Be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer.

[22:15] Whether you can make the prayer meeting or pray in your home. Pray before the service. Come early. Even if it's five minutes. Come and pray. Pray. It's time to launch the counter offensive.

It's time. It's time to sound the rallying call, to blow the shofar, to blow the trumpet, to say, come, let's take back the territory that the enemy has taken.

It's time for controversy. I know my dad said he's not going to be too controversial today, but let's not shy away from controversy. Let's not shy away from controversy. The Lord Jesus was controversial.

His message was controversial. It was shocking. It was amazing. It was mind blowing. And yet, yet, the church scene today, it's like, tone it down.

Tone it down. Don't upset anybody. Let's, you know, let's just go with the flow. Don't say anything that's going to challenge people. I was actually going to preach about, you know, alcohol today. But, you know, let's not shy away from controversy.

[23:19] Be sober. You can't argue with that. You can't argue with be sober. The Lord Jesus did not shy away from controversy. He was controversial. Controversial. His message was not more appealing.

His message was not to make it the least offensive. His aim was not to try to please everyone. He was controversial. Controversial. Let's not shy away from controversy.

John 7, 43, it says, There was a division, a division, a division among the people because of Him. When the Lord Jesus came, there was a line in the sand.

Either you're with me or against me. There was a division among the people because of Him.

Friends, Matthew 16, we read of our Lord. He says, I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The church is both building and battling. It's twofold. I will build, he says, my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

[24:23] Now, sometimes we get this picture of the church. Hey, we're all in this big castle and we're all going to huddle together, a holy huddle, and we're all going to get our bows and arrows through those holes in the parapets and we're going to keep the enemy from attacking us.

But really the picture is, the gates of hell shall not prevail against the army of the Lord. You know, it's a picture if you can imagine these gates here.

You know, if I had a great big battering ram, we could all wrap our arms around it. Amen. As brothers and sisters in this army that we're in, we could get this big battering ram and bash through those doors there and bust them wide open.

That's the picture of the church of God. It's not of being on the defensive, but rather on being on the offensive. And the picture for us here, Matthew 16, is to move from the defensive to the offensive.

To move out and actively attack the enemy's strongholds to attack Satan's kingdom and cast it down. And the Lord tells us of His church that the gates of hell are not going to prevail against it. [25:33] The gates of hell are not going to be able to stop the church of the living God. It's going to be an unstoppable force in the world. An empowered, united body.

An army. And our Lord says to us that the church needs to go on the attack. On the offensive. To storm the gates. Storm the gates. And smash them down. Now what does that all mean? In Bible times the cities, the larger cities were walled. And the cities had gates which represented a sink of power. It was through the gates that the merchants came. The traders came. It represented business and industry. It was at the gates that the elders sat. Who had council and rule. And made decisions about the city. Who took care of the business of the city. Gates speak of authority. Of power. Of wisdom. Of council. Of beliefs. Of philosophies. Of government.

[26:33] Of rule. And so when our Lord speaks of the gates of hell. He speaks of the powers. And the works. Of the enemies kingdom. Of the kingdom of darkness. And the gates of hell.

Represent the authority. The domain. Of the spiritual demonic realm. Another thing about gates. Is that gates lock people. In and out.

Gates lock and confine territory. They keep captives in. And rescuers out. Of the people. But the picture is really. Of. Of a prisoner of war camp.

If you like. Of a. Prison camp. Where people are held captive. And we as the. Army of God. Are in a way. Like rescuers.

And. We're on a mission. To rescue the Satan's captives. Out of his realm. And bring them out. To the kingdom of life. Of course we know.

[27:30] The work of saving people. Is absolutely God's work. It's not ours. But. He uses human beings. Like you and me. To open our mouths. And testify. Friends. We have a mission.

And we've got some captives. Behind the gates. And so. It's a picture to me. Of witnessing. Of taking some. Gospel propaganda. And getting it. Out there.

We've got lots of it. There's no lack of it. If we like. Run out. We'll get some more. Let's be. An army. Invading. An army. Storming the gates.

Through the power of God. Rescuing souls from hell. From eternal loss. To be. Smashing down. The enemy's authority. Over our. Place. Where we are.

Over this community. We've got an obligation. To take the offensive. Resist. It's a fact of history. I'm told that. No army. Ever won a war.

[28:26] On the defensive. I think sometimes. Christians. We get too defensive. We just get in our little. Holy huddles. In our holy clubs. And we don't. Go outside. The walls. A well-known.

French general. Was asked. In a war. Which army wins? And the general. The one that advances. The one that advances. We need to advance. Not retreat. Not just hold our ground. We need to advance.

And take ground. We need to be as those in Nehemiah's day. Both building and battling. They built and battled. They had the sword. They had the trowel. They built and they battled. They built and they battled. And we as a church. We need to break the enemy's gates.

Break through. Release the captives. It's our assignment that he's given to us. He's given us an assignment. To break them down. To breach them. To storm and plunder the gates of hell.

That's a picture. It's a picture that we don't always reflect on. We miss that. That we're not met. To not met any of those in Nehemiah. To not met any of those in Nehemiah. To not met any of those in Nehemiah.

[29:22] To not met any of those in Nehemiah. To not met any of those in Nehemiah. To not met any of those in Nehemiah. To not met any of those in Nehemiah. It's a picture that we don't always reflect on, I don't think.

We miss that. But we're not meant to be in some insular, comfy, cosy little Christian comfort zone. We're meant to be knocking down some gates. Knocking down them. Knocking them down, tearing them down, the strongholds, the vain philosophies that hold men captive, confronting them and

overthrowing them.

So we see that it says be sober, number one. Get a clear head. Don't make it fuzzy with whatever substance is going to make it fuzzy.

Be sober. It's plain. Secondly, be vigilant. Get those eyes peeled. Put the toothpicks in if you need to. Be wide awake and on the alert.

[30:25] And thirdly, resist. Resist the devil. Stand steadfast in the faith. Ultimately, the enemy's end is clear.

In the back of the book, Revelation 20, verse 10, And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, forever and ever.

Be sober. Be vigilant. Because your adversary, the devil, is a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour, who resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

Let us pray.