

The Strategy of Satan and The Triumph of Grace

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 18 October 2026

Preacher: Rev Callum Macleod

[0:00] Let's turn together now to 1 Peter 5 and we can pick up the reading at verse number 8. 1 Peter 5 at verse number 8.

Be sober-minded, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.

Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

To whom be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. I guess when we read this letter, it is written to a people who are very much like ourselves.

They were a people who are suffering in the world. They were a people that Peter wants to remind them that they were actually exiles who were scattered in this world.

[1:09] And that they were chosen and elect by God and seeking to encourage them on their journey. He draws their attention to not only the privileges that they do have, but to the status that they have and the grace of God in their lives.

And we begin to read the letter and we see the way in which Peter draws attention to that. And very much through the letter, there is the focus on the believer suffering in the world and the different ways in which suffering may come.

And the different ways in which the suffering that we do endure, that it reminds us that Christ himself suffered for us. And there are certain things that we see emerging through the letter.

And one of these is the way in which the children of God, the Christian, is to live life in a culture that is against the gospel and that is against the church.

And if that was true of them, it is true of ourselves in the day in the society in which we do live, we are engaged in the midst of a culture that is anti-God, anti-church, anti-Christ, against everything that the gospel stands for.

[2:30] And that's why Peter wants to remind them that they should not be surprised at the trials that they are going to meet with because that's the kind of world that they are living in.

And in order for them to survive in their faith, he wants to emphasize the importance of Christians in the Christian community.

And the importance of having the strength of community life to sustain faith and to enable people to live on through suffering.

And in this chapter itself, we come to the beginning of the chapter and he shows something to us of the roles and the responsibilities in the Christian community. And we see, when they are working the way that they should, that they are the means of keeping the faith of the people of God and of sustaining people in their times of trial.

And we see mention made of the roles of the elders. We see mention made of the roles of the congregation. Elders have responsibility to shepherd the flock.

[3:41] The congregation has the responsibility to be humble and to be led by those who are pastoring them. And then together, they are to mutually respect each other and be humble with each other.

And that is the simple recipe for community life where faith will flourish and the people of God are kept. And having dealt with that, he comes back at the end of the letter to speak to the individual. Because the individual is important, not more important than the community. But unless each individual in the community stands in the faith of the gospel, then the community itself will be under threat.

He goes from the community life to think of the individual. And we want to think of something of what he says to the individual believers in this Christian community from these verses. And to think of the strategy of Satan and the triumph of God's grace. We want to see, first of all, that we have a responsibility.

[4:55] And the Bible is full of places that remind us that as the people of God, as those who want to live as the people of God, that we have a responsibility.

And we have that responsibility brought before us in the version of the 8th. Be sober-minded. Be watchful. We have to have the kind of mind that's not intoxicated by the world in which we live, that is saved from the fuzziness that the world will cause to be inner thinking.

And we have to guard against being like the world, which is described by the likes of Michael Reeves. It's a world which is de-godding God and in-godding itself.

And making God of itself. And that's our natural inclination as those who are born in sin, that we are inclined to de-god God and have him out of the picture.

And to make ourselves the center of everything. And Peter here recognizes the importance of having clear thinking with regard to who and what we are as the children of God.

[6:08] We have to be sober-minded. And when he wants us to have that kind of clear way of thinking, he is presenting to us, as it were, the two images that make up the world in which they live.

Image one is the culture in which they find themselves. The society that is against them. That causes persecution and suffering for the faith. And on the other hand, he wants to show them the word of God.

And they are to be sober-minded in the sense that they are not going to frame and mold their thinking from the world which is against them. They are to completely avoid doing that.

But instead of doing that, they are going to frame their thinking on what the word of God says. They are to be intellectually stimulated by the teaching of the word of God so that they will have clear way of thinking when it comes to life.

And that is so important for us all, to know our Bibles, to understand what the word of God says.

And perhaps one of our weaknesses when it comes to learning the Bible, the Bible is guided by Paul as the Bible that is breathed out by God.

[7:31] And all Scripture is breathed out and it is all profitable for teaching, for discipline, and for training in righteousness. It is all breathed out.

But one of the weaknesses in the ways in which we use our Bible is that we have favorite passages. And that we avoid what seem to be difficult passages.

And by having these favorite passages, which is good to have, when we omit the rest of the Bible, then we are leaving our minds open to assault based on the gaps in our understanding of the word of God.

And we have to train ourselves from a very early age, train ourselves to read the Bible systematically, to read the Bible in its totality, so that as we grow up in life and grow up in faith, we are learning our Bibles.

And we know what the Bible says. We have to have clear thinking based on the whole of the Bible. For example, if I don't read the book of Numbers, I'm never going to hear about Phineas and his faithfulness in the midst of the rebellion in the days of Moses.

[8:52] A great story. A story that was the inspiration for the Apostle Paul in his own zeal for serving the Lord Jesus. If I'm not going to read the history of the book of Kings and Chronicles, I'm never going to hear about Josiah, who was the greatest reformer among the kings in the Bible, and who changed a people and a whole nation, because he reintroduced the book of the law himself.

We want to make sure that we have no gaps in our thinking and our knowledge of the Bible when it comes to living life, so that we see the world around us, and we see it through the lens of the Bible. And whatever the word says, we're able to say, thus says the Lord, to be sober-minded. How much tonight do we know our Bibles?

How much tonight do we know the Word of God? How familiar are we with the truths of our salvation and the truths that belong to the experience of the people of God from the very beginning of the Bible to its end?

The more familiar we are with the Word of God, the more we ensure that the fuzziness in our thinking will not be there, the more we will ensure that we will be thinking clearly, spiritually, when it comes to life in the world.

[10:22] And along with that sense of thinking clearly, we also have the responsibility to be watchful.

It's simply to stay awake and not fall asleep when things are happening around us. Watch and pray, said Jesus to the disciples.

And that reminds me that there is a back story to what Peter is saying here. And the back story is Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

And Jesus telling the disciples to pray, to watch and to pray. And Jesus comes back and finds the disciples not praying and says to them, could you not watch with me one hour?

Watchfulness. Alert to what's happening. Alert to what the truth is saying. And so the double way in which we have a responsibility, it's the responsibility to know the Word of God and to understand the teaching of the Bible and the responsibility to be consistent in our prayer life and to be watchful in all that we do and wherever we go, that we carry ourselves in prayer before God and that our thinking is governed by everything that the Word of God says.

[11:56] And that, of course, means that we have to be disciplined. I often think I'm going to be disciplined to this coming week and I'm going to do so many things that I've promised myself to do.

And the week comes and the week goes, and it's still undone. Discipline is not easy, but discipline is essential. We have to discipline ourselves in the things that are getting in our way which we need to remove.

We have to discipline ourselves with regard to our Bible reading and our Bible thinking. We have to discipline ourselves with regard to our prayer life. And in that way, we are alert to what God is saying and alert to the danger around us.

And we are connecting with God. The responsibility. What is your Bible reading like?

What's your prayer life like? Do they work together? Are you disciplined enough to work together on these key elements of the Christian faith so that you can live and face the challenges of the world in which we live?

[13:20] And the responsibility is there not simply because of the challenges of the world around us, but the responsibility is there because in and through and with and by the world around us, someone else is operating.

And Peter wants to draw attention to that. Your adversary, the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.

There's an enemy out there and he's active. And we learn from the Bible that he knows the Bible.

We learn from the Bible something of how he works. And the adversary speaks to me of somebody who stands against me in the court of law.

And so immediately, I have the responsibility to watch and to pray and to be sober-minded because this adversary is going to raise accusations against me and cause me to do things that will be against the law of God, the judge of all the earth, to whom I am accountable as the child of God.

[14:40] His intention, his strategy is to ensure that I do something or say something that will bring the judgment of God upon me. He wants to take away my peace with God in the court of law.

He is the adversary and he is the devil. He is the one who throws something across my path to trick me, to cause me to fall down.

He is called the accuser of the brethren in Revelation chapter 12. That's what he does. We read the story of Joshua and the prophecy of Zechariah and there was Satan to accuse him.

We read the story of Job and there was Satan at God's throne to ask God to test Job and to take from everything that he had. We have an adversary and he is active in the world and through the world and by the world and behind the world and he is active in the presence of God against us.

He wants you and me to fall. And when he's prowling like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour, I often wonder why Peter actually used the word prowling.

[16:14] We read the story in Genesis chapter 3 and the serpent was not roaring he was cunning. And I guess we have to understand the devil the serpent this accuser we have to understand him doing both things.

Sometimes he is he is roaring we can hear him. Sometimes he is moving quietly and we cannot hear him and we cannot see him. We have to be so on our guard.

But however he is operating he has one aim and view and that is that he will devour us. That he will swallow us up or swallow up our faith.

We spoke in the morning of the way in which Jesus the great king and the way in which he is going to swallow up death and victory. And that great day of the marriage supper at the end of time. But here Satan is there wanting to devour you and to devour me. And his strategy is clear and his aim is also clear.

[17:33] Satan will have devoured you and devoured me when he takes us back from our godly living to living with the world as we were.

It's not a case of Satan bringing about the end of our lives. It's bringing about the end of our faith. And he will try everything to make you abandon your faith.

To abandon your thoughts about seeking faith or having faith. He stands in the way using every means that are available to him seeking to see you falling away.

And that's what raises the stakes the importance of us fulfilling our responsibility. And I think it's fair to say that if the adversary to the devil if he is prowling around in the world around us and working in and through them in order to seek for us to fall away from our faith is it not the case that he is active even right now where the people of God are worshipping.

To fall away in our thinking to fall away in our attention to fall away in our focus ultimately to have our minds drifting away to the world that is under his control and ultimately unless we're careful deciding to have the things that the world has and possesses and by doing so turning our backs on the very things of God the responsibility the danger the need to be alert to the work of the devil our spiritual death and the sense of being back into the world and having lost our faith and abandoned everything that God has given to us and God gives to us in our lives and I guess we can look at the story of the Bible itself and the history of the church in the world and there are examples of this very thing happening of people who belong to the church of

[20:09] Christ and through circumstances through events through the devil working their life they lost their faith as Paul says they made shipwreck of their faith and they disappeared from the sin the responsibility is so important the threat is real we need to be aware of it and alert to it and the more we are aware and alert to it the more it will drive us to fulfill our responsibility secondly we want to think of resistance that's what we have in verse number nine resist him firm in your faith knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world to stand against him he is powerful so is the devil he is mighty in the works that he does he has a powerful influence upon us the forces of darkness are exceedingly powerful but yet we are asked to resist the works of the devil and to stand firm in opposition to him and that opposition to him is not so much physical as what we are going to do the way we would resist somebody in pressure it is something that's intellectual it is something that's spiritual it is something that takes place on the battlefield of the life that we live before

God in our faith standing firm in our faith and so often we we crumble far too quickly so often we give in and so often we don't stand the way that God requires us to and see the way in which Peter addresses the people here resist him firm in your faith how am I going to resist the devil who is seeking to devour me am I going to do so by being firm in my faith being firm not in the sense of the faith that I exercise but the faith as the things which I believe and that's why the responsibility to know what I believe is important the importance of knowing my

Bible and knowing the word of God because it is standing in the word of God that's who I'm going to resist him and there's a subtle distinction there that I'm not going to stand firm in the faith by putting more strength into my believing which the words may suggest to us I'm going to stand firm in the faith drawing strength from what I believe and that's where I'm going to stand and my great example of course is Jesus himself in his temptation in the garden command these stones that they be made bread it is written that man shall not live by bread alone Jesus knew deuteronomy!

He was able to answer the devil he was able to stand firm in the faith by standing firm in temptation because he was throwing strength from what he knew and what he believed and tonight we expose ourselves so much when the time of testing and resisting the devil comes we expose!

ourselves so much because we don't have all the armor and we don't have all the ammunition and our limited knowledge of the Bible leaves us exposed to Satan thriving over us and trapping us and causing our fall we are to resist firm in the faith and today tonight tomorrow let's think about that when the going gets tough and when I'm struggling how am I going to stand I'm not going to stand because my faith is strong and because I'm going to exercise the faith that I've had for years and years no I'm going to stand on the word of God the only firm foundation and it is on my knowledge of the truth of

[25 : 30] God that I'm able to resist the devil when he comes to attack me and to do so successfully so that it's not me that falls it is sin that turns away so reading the temptation of Jesus that he left him for a season he went away and came back at other times but it was the truth the word of God that Jesus used to resist the devil so that he fled from him and Peter goes on to encourage the hearers that knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world there is the example of others in the Bible and these are the examples that encourage us in our faith the examples from which we learn they include the

Lord Jesus they include so many other people of faith and Jesus himself the servant of Jehovah in the words of Isaiah chapter 50 where he is faced with the opposition of the people around him he is the one who has not been disgraced because he listened to the word of God every morning and instead of being disgraced he set his face like a flint and Jesus did that going to Jerusalem he was firm in the direction of travel he was firm in what he believed he knew where he was going and nothing and no one was going to stand in his way he set his face like a flint and that's what resistance looks like we may wobble from time to time because of the strength and the power of the devil as he attacks us but in our wobbling we manage by trusting in

God and by trusting in the word of God we manage to straighten ourselves with his help so that we continue on our journey and I expect that no one has gone through life without some kind of wobble in faith because of the temptation of the devil because of circumstances extraordinary that that that surrounded them faith experiences the wobble from time to time but resisting the devil enables us to continue because we are trusting in the word of God the resistance what do we do when temptation comes what do we do when we sense that the devil is planting doubts in our minds it's so easy for us to feed that doubt and to embrace that doubt and to leave ourselves going down the wrong track ready in a sense to abandon where we were and how often we are too ready to do that if we are fulfilling our responsibility we are able to resist the temptation and to resist the devil standing firm in our faith and finally there is the reassurance that

Peter wants to give to them in verse number 10 and after you have suffered for a little while the God of all grace who has called you to eternal glory in Christ will himself restore confirm strengthen and establish you as he said in chapter one there will be times and seasons when God has purposed that you will go through suffering that you will go through testing it's there for a purpose but after a little while the God of all grace the God who saved them by his grace in verse number 3 of chapter 1 blessed be the God and Father of Lord Jesus Christ according to his great mercy he has caused you to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead the God of all grace whose heart was moved for them and towards them in the person of

Christ to show his loving heart to them and to pour his love into their hearts through the channel of the passion of his son in his death and his God of grace and that God of grace is the God who has given them a summons he has called them and yes there is the calling through which they are brought from darkness to light there is the calling that comes through the gospel where sinners are saved where those who are dead in their sins are brought alive where I can be out in the world in my darkness and in my rebellion and I hear the voice of God and I know it's the voice of God and he captures my attention he convicts me of the truth of the gospel and he summons me from there and

[31 : 36] I come in obedience because I know this is my God I know this is the call of his grace and in the center of that call of grace there is the person of his son and I know that the summons is one that leads me to the enjoyment of his grace and so by that call of grace my heart is changed and I come and I begin to follow the Lord Jesus I come to give my life to him I come to join the Christian community the church of Christ to join with the people of God as they worship and as they serve it's the effectual call of God in the gospel bringing sinners into his kingdom but that call has a particular direction and that's what Peter wants them to lay hold of in these verses who has called you to his eternal glory in

Christ into in the direction of the glory that we spoke of this morning in the glory of God around the throne of God where Christ will gather his church and they will be glorified with them and so tonight our sense of the call of the gospel it includes coming to know the Lord Jesus it includes coming to worship God as we have done together this evening it has that necessary direction in it and that magnetic attracting power in it that's what I must do not because I do it against my will but because I long to do it but Peter wants them to know that as they are suffering in all these places in exile he wants them once more to airlift their thinking and to be reminded that this call is a call that is toward glory and into glory and

Paul writing to the Philippians in chapter 3 speaks of the way in which that there is the upward call of God in Jesus Christ so we come to know the Lord Jesus because of his call and as soon as we respond to that call and come to follow the Lord Jesus we begin to understand that the direction is not so much horizontal as it must be but its main focus is that it has a vertical aspect and that it is climbing all of the time as God calls me upwards and upwards until at last he calls us into his glory and that means that for them for the people of God in the midst of their testing in the midst of the prowling of the devil who is seeking to devour them in the midst of all of that they are entirely secure no one can touch the anointed children of

God no one can take them out of the kingdom of God out of the family of God they are encouraged to be with Christ and God will ensure that they will be there and that's what Peter expands on in that verse he has called you to his eternal glory in Christ will restore you confirm you strengthen you and establish you everything that they have need of and they will stand in the temptation because of the grace of God because of the purpose of the grace of God and because God himself is restoring he is confirming he is giving strength to them and establish them more and more on the rock of their salvation the cornerstone that he describes in chapter 2 they are sure on the rock which is Christ the grace of God that brings us safely home and that ongoing work of God that gives us that reassurance and that gives us all of the restoration and the confirmation and the strength and being established goes back once more to the word of God how does God do this he does it through his word and through increasing my faith in his own promises!

[36 : 46] establishing me in the word of God in such a way that the word of God will be the place where I live and where I stand and from which I emerge to live my life and in accordance with that word I will live and God will do all of the strengthening to ensure that I go safely through this world and safely into his everlasting kingdom and so tonight let's think of what Peter is saying here the Peter who denied a savior let's remember that he's speaking as somebody with experience and let's think of a responsibility the Bible and prayer let's think of what he must do to resist to turn to the word of

God to be able to stand and let's be reassured that we are not on our own that greater is for us and he is against us and that we are more than conquerors through him who loved us that doesn't make the temptation that doesn't lessen the temptation but it reminds us of the place from which our strength comes and in whom is our trust so may God help us to rejoice in the thrive of God's grace even recognizing the powerful strategy of the devil in seeking to devour us and to take us away from our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ may God bless his word as let us pray most gracious God we are thankful to you that we do have your word that it is breathed out by you that it is all that is necessary for our lives in the world for our learning and for teaching and for discipline and for training in righteousness and help us oh

Lord God to learn from it day by day and throw us to it and! help us as we do so that we may hear from you more that we may see you more and more in it and have our hearts enriched and our faith strengthened as we continue to live trusting in your name so help us we pray and bless your word as we ask and hear us we pray these things for Jesus sake Amen so the glory psalm is psalm 106 in the Scottish Psalter it's on page 378 and we're saying at the beginning of the psalm psalm 106 at verse number 1 give praise and thanks unto the Lord for bountiful is he his tender mercy doth endure and to eternity the tune is our guide and we're singing from verse 1 to the verse mark 5 to God's praise!

glory to God's mighty word to! mighty word to God's word to erfahren erfahren glory him Blessed are they that judgment keep, and justly do always.

Remember me, Lord, with that love which thy divine does bear, with thy salvation, O my God, to visit me, O dear, that I thy chosen's good may see, and in their joy rejoice, and may with thy inheritance triumph with cheerful voice.

[42 : 17] After the meditation, I go to the door on my left. With the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.