

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

### **Fundamental Attitudes of Christian Maturity**

**1 Peter 5:5-14**

#### **Part 3**

“As a man thinketh in his heart so is he” (**Prov. 23:7**). We will not live right until we think right. It is therefore of paramount importance that we understand the fundamental attitudes of Christian maturity. And Peter in this regard gives to us a great deal of help at the end of his epistle as he gives us a series of commands that address this very important area of attitudes.

An attitude of submission - Let us look at **V. 5** “**You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders.**” Paul addresses the younger men because they would be the ones who most likely will stumble over the exhortation that he is about to give. And what was that exhortation? “**.... be subject to your elders.**” Peter is commanding the young men to line up under (HUPPATASSO) their elders. The elders are not the older men of the fellowship but rather those who Peter addressed in **VV. 1-4**. The elders that these young men were to be subject to were the local church leaders who were exhorted in **VV. 1-4** “**to shepherd the flock of God.**” Peter is saying that just as the elders were “**not to lord it over the flock**” or in other words to use their authority to serve themselves the “**young men likewise**” were not to serve their own ends or purposes but rather to serve the fellowship by making themselves “**subject**” to the elders. This is a very basic fundamental attitude that we must have in place in our lives if we are going to live right. What was another fundamental basic attitude that we saw last week?

An attitude of humility - Let us continue to read, “**you younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. (6) Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.**” The word “humble” means “to bring low.” And as we looked at these two verses we saw first of all that we are to put on this particular attitude in respect “to others.” “**Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another.**” When we “clothe” ourselves with humility toward one another we are in essence putting on the garment of a servant. This is a very scary thing but Peter gives to us a very powerful motivation at the end of **V. 5** “**God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.**” If we want God in our corner ministering grace to us in the time of our need then we need to purpose in the course of lives to “**put on the garment of humility toward one another...**” ..... I hope that you have been seeking to work this out in your lives this week.

But humility is not only commanded to be expressed toward “**one another**” but also “towards the Lord.” Look at **V. 6** “**Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.**” The phrase “**under the mighty hand of God**” is an O.T. expression used to communicate the sovereignty of God being expressed in the affairs of everyday life. We must not react to the circumstances as if things are out of control. Things are not out of control at all. Quite to the contrary God’s mighty hand is in truth directing the course of our lives. As such rather than grumbling and complaining, rather than becoming angry and bitter we need to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God and join in saying with Job, “**Though the Lord slay me yet I will still trust Him.**” This is our third attitude.

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An attitude of trust - If we in truth trust the Lord we will do exactly what **V. 7** commands us to do. **V. 7** says, “**casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.**” How do we cast our cares upon the Lord? We do this through prayer. But more importantly through prayer characterized by “thanksgiving.” **Phil. 4:6** makes this very clear, “**Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.**” Praying with thanksgiving should not be achieved necessarily by believing that the request you are praying will be answered in just the way you are praying it but rather by believing that the Lord really truly in fact cares for you. We must pray believing that whatever path the Lord chooses for our lives or for the lives of those that we love that it is a path that is strewn with care. It is the path that we need to travel because it is the best path for our lives.

Now we will continue to the fourth attitude.....

### AN ATTITUDE OF VIGILANCE

We see this attitude communicated to us by two commands that are linked together in **V. 8** The verse begins with the exhortation for us to “**Be sober minded**” which is then immediately followed by a second exhortation to “**be on the alert.**” Worry is condemned, but watchfulness is demanded.

Let us look at **V. 8** “**be of sober spirit .....**” This is not new we have seen this encouraged earlier in the epistle. In **1 Pet. 1:13** it said, “**Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**” Then we see Peter making a second reference to this quality in **1 Pet. 4:7** where he said, “**the end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.**” Here once again, we see Peter referring to the need in our lives to be “sober.”

To be sober means that we are free from intoxication or in other words we are “not drunk,” It can be used to refer to being free from the intoxication of alcohol. Or it can be used metaphorically to refer to being free from the intoxicating influences of the world.

In all three references to a sober spirit in this epistle we are compelled by the context to conclude that the word “sober” is being used in a metaphorical sense. To be sober minded is therefore very simply telling us that we are to be free from the intoxicants of the world so that we can see clearly and respond properly.

But going even beyond this exhortation Peter goes on to exhort us “**to be alert.**” We do not simply need to be free from the intoxicants of the world so that we can see clearly and respond properly but we need to be on the “**alert.**” WE NEED TO BE AT BATTLE STATIONS. WHY IS THIS?

Let us continue to read **V. 8**, “**Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.**” Casting all our cares upon the Lord knowing that he cares for us does not mean that we can become lackadaisical. Why? Because we have an enemy and his name is the “devil.”

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Devil comes from the word DIABOLOS which in the Septuagint is used to translate the Hebrew term SATAN, which means “slanderer or accuser.”

Our adversary the devil, the slanderer and accuser is prowling about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. This statement is very reminiscent of Job chapter 1. In **V. 7**, there we read that the Lord asked Satan **“from where do you come?”** Then Satan answered **“from roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.”** Why was he doing this? Why was he roaming about on the earth? **1 Pet. 5:8** tells us why, he was seeking someone to devour. What is so amazing about what we learn from Job is that the Lord Himself points Job out as a possible target for Satan. In **V. 8** He says to Satan, **“have you considered my servant Job?”** When you or I think of the great men and women of faith in the Bible in light of this conversation, you and I would have to put Job high on that list. May the Lord grant us the grace that we would be so worthy.

But it is not as if we do not have similar opportunities. Even at this very moment it would appear that Satan continues to prowl about as a roaring lion seeking victims. Hopefully, if we come under his attack that we might commend ourselves as well as Job did. But I would hope that we would not be flippant about this prospect.

Peter by describing Satan as a **“roaring lion”** communicates to us the openly vicious attack that Satan is prepared to unleash upon his victims. Certainly throughout the book of Acts we see the ferocity of the attack that was mounted against the early church in an attempt to **“devour them.”**

The word means “to drink down” like our English word “gulp down,” it is the verb that the Septuagint used for the great fish swallowing Jonah in Jonah 1:17.

But who is the “someone” that Satan is seeking to devour? Who is the “someone” that Satan is seeking to “gulp down?” Certainly we would not think it is someone who is already under the power and control of Satan. Certainly we would not think it is someone who is already a part of Satan’s kingdom. The “someone” would have to be referring to those who have been set free from his kingdom. The “someone” would have to be referring to those who were no longer under his power and control. This is why we would see Job being attacked. Satan targets people who proclaim the name of God and who are seeking to be faithful to Him.

Satan’s aim is not merely to harass and injure; his true desire is to kill his victims, to gulp them down by destroying their faith. He is seeking to remove from them the joy of their salvation. He is seeking to destroy their testimony. He is seeking to cancel out any positive impact that they might have in the spiritual battle that is presently being waged all about us. Let us take a better look at a historical overview of this spiritual battle. In doing this let us turn in our Bibles to **Rev. 12:1-5**.

Hopefully, as we read these verses we will be able to see more clearly the forces of darkness aligned against us. Let us read **VV. 1-5**, **“And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; (2) and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth. (3) And another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems.**

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**(4) And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven, and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child. (5) And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.** Who is this woman mentioned in V. 1? Reading further into V. 2 we see the woman bearing a child, who would according to V. 5 rule the nations. In light of the context it would appear that we would have to identify the woman as the nation of Israel and the child as Christ.

But in addition to the woman and the child we see another individual introduced in V. 3 **“a great red dragon.”** This great red dragon is seen as sweeping away a third of the **“stars”** of heaven with its tail. Who is this red dragon and what is the meaning of the stars? V. 9 tells us. The **“red dragon”** is the devil. And the **“stars”** would be the angels thrown down to earth with him. Let us go a little further with this thought.

How many angels actually fell with Satan? In order to attempt to answer this question we must determine how many angels there are. In Rev. 5:11 it says, **“And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands.”** Or more literally, 10,000 times 10,000's and thousands of thousands. What is important to understand that there was no greater number than 10,000 in the Greek. John in Rev. 5, is seeking to communicate to us that there are an innumerable amount of angels. And Satan has been actively opposing the Lord and those that have been faithful to Him since the time of Adam and Eve.

Fortunately for us these numbers have been reduced somewhat. Some of these fallen angels or demons have been bound eternally. We read about them in Jude 5-6, **“Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. (6) And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.”** We talked about this particular group and their attempt to start a demon race in 1 Pet. 3:19-20.

There is another group of fallen angels in addition to these who also appear to be constrained but will be released during the tribulation period which is yet future in order to wreak havoc on the whole of the human race. We read about this incident in Rev. 9. So accounting for these we see that the total number of demons that Satan has available is reduced even further.

And yet even though the numbers of demons have been diminished the numbers based on O.T. and N.T. accounts particularly the gospel accounts appear to be formidable. But this still does not fully convey to us that forces aligned with Christ and those who have chosen to follow Him.

Look at V. 4, **“And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.”** And did this in fact happen? And the answer is yes. He attempted to destroy Jesus through King Herod through the destruction of all male babies under two years of age.

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When Jesus was born he came into a hostile world. A world inhabited by Satan, the fallen angels, and a multitude of men and women such as Herod who are fully under his control. And so it is to this very day. At this moment we need to be alert to the fact that we as the followers of Christ are being opposed.

Why is this so hard for us to sometimes see? Because Satan within this age is working by subtly. His workers in **1 Cor. 11:13** come to us in disguises and then in **1 Cor. 11:14** it tells us that even Satan himself comes to us as an angel of light.

This will not always be this way. In fact let us continue to read **Rev. 12:7-17** “**And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, (8) and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. (9) And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.** During the period of the tribulation the activity will be extremely vicious and clearly identified as coming from his hand but for now this is not true.

### CONCLUSION

WE NEED NOT TO BE LACKSIDAISICAL ABOUT OUR LIVES. IF WE ARE WE WILL SURELY BECOME INTOXICATED BY THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD AND FIND OURSELVES FULLY OVERCOME BY AN ENEMY WHO WANTS TO RENDER US USELESS AND FRUITLESS IN THE CAUSE OF CHRIST.