

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

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

**1 Peter 5:5-14**

#### **Part 5**

We are once more back to 1 Pet. 5 and once again considering fundamental attitudes of Christian maturity. Peter at the end of his epistle shares with us a number of different imperatives that concerns matters of the heart. A series of imperatives that when properly responded to will result in a whole new way of thinking.

If we are ever going to live right these basic fundamental attitudes of Christian maturity must be in place in our lives. What are the attitudes that we have seen so far?

An attitude of submission - **(5) You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders.”**

An attitude of humility toward others and toward the Lord. **“... 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.”**

An attitude of trust - **“(7) casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.”**

An attitude of vigilance - **(8) “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”** We have learned that living free from anxiety does not mean that we are to live free of watchfulness. Why? Because the devil is seeking to devour the righteous. To appreciate this fact is to be of “sober spirit.” Being free from the intoxicants of this world so that we can see clearly that threat to our Christian life should lead us to be alert. To be alert implies a life committed to prayer. Remember the words of Christ to His disciples, “watch and pray that you enter not into temptation.” Hopefully understanding the fact that Satan is prowling about like a roaring lion will lead us to confess all known sin for the purpose of effectual prayer.

Not that he can remove our salvation but he can, if we are not vigilant, weaken our faith. Satan is seeking by attacking our faith to rob us of the victory that we have in Christ. Satan is seeking by attacking our faith to render us powerless and useless in the cause of Christ.

Why would God permit us to be buffeted so persistently and so fiercely by His enemy and ours? Last week we considered a number of reasons.

To prove us - To prove our faith to ourselves as well as to others, even Satan himself.

To perfect us - Not only in respect to our character but also our fruitfulness in ministry. And finally

To even protect us - To protect us from what? To protect us from exalting ourselves. To protect us from getting to proud.

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Though the Lord is prepared to use Satan's attacks upon our lives for His glory, we can be assured that none of God's purposes for our lives will ultimately be thwarted no matter how vicious or effective Satan's attacks might be upon us. I am certain that none of you here this morning want to fall victim to Him. Hopefully, there is no one here who would not want to be victorious against our enemy and to enjoy the fullness of all that God wants to give us but if this is going to be so we must know how to fight him. What has God told us to do in fighting our adversary the devil?

Let us read **V. 9, “But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.”** Peter tells us to resist Satan firm in the faith.

To cower before the devil is to invite sure defeat. Rather than cowering we are being commanded to “**resist**” Satan. The word “**resist**” literally means “to stand against.” We are being commanded by Peter to stand against Satan.

This is quite in contrast to the exhortations that the scriptures give us in respect to various temptations such as:

**1 Cor. 6:18, “flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.”** We see it again in .....

**1 Cor. 10:14, “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.”** And we see it yet again in .....

**1 Tim. 6:10-11, “For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang. (11) But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.”** And finally we see the clear teaching of,

**2 Tim. 2:22, “Now flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”**

Isn't this interesting! In respect to various temptations we are to flee but Peter is here exhorting us in respect to Satan to “stand against him.” Why are we exhorted in one case to flee and in the other case to resist? The answer is very simple in fleeing from various temptations we are choosing not to be involved with various kinds of sinful actions. But remember how Satan is described. He is a roaring lion. If you happen to encounter a mountain lion what do the experts tell us that we should do? We are to give them a big smile and simply stand there. We are not to flee. If we do he will simply see us as prey.

If we are not to flee, then what are we to do? We are not to stand against Satan by speaking words of rebuke or even praying that he might be bound. Who are we that we would rebuke Satan? In **Jude 9** the Lord makes it clear that Michael the archangel of God did not feel the freedom to do that. And who are we to bind Satan the scriptures do not give us any indication that this would be even possible until the Lord does this at the end of the tribulation. Certainly, if Satan could be bound, the apostles of Christ would have done this.

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Rather than rebuking or binding what are we told to do? **“But resist him, firm in the faith.”**

“Faith” may be understood subjectively as denoting our personal confidence in God. Or it may be understood in a more objective sense of denoting our personal confidence in Word of God. Which is it? I believe that both are true. We cannot exercise faith in God’s Word apart from exercising faith in His Word and we cannot exercise faith in God’s Word without exercising faith in God.

How do we resist Satan firm in the faith? It is by knowing the truth, believing the truth, standing in the truth, and obeying the truth.

We are told by the experts that if we happen to be confronted by a mountain lion we are to stand still and give them a big smile. If they don’t choose at that point to leave then we are to look for some kind of weapon. And what is that weapon? The weapon that Peter tells us that we must turn to is our faith.

If we eliminate this as the focus of our lives. Or the focus of our church then we will be in trouble. Consider what has happened to certain Christians and denominations when the Scriptures are no longer their focus.

Some churches have turned to ritualism. They put on a religious form, but deny the power of God. In the most extreme examples of this you will see tall church spires, ornate architecture, lots of candles or the burning of incense, but beyond this extreme we also find it in more simple forms such as the attendance of church or the mechanical reading of the Scripture or the ritual kind of prayer. Peter does not tell us, **“But resist him, firm in your ritual.”** But rather he says what: **“But resist him, firm in your faith.”**

Some churches have turned to good works. Abandoning the emphasis upon the study and application of the Word of God they have substituted the pursuit of good works. This is not to say that good works is bad. Certainly good works is good but not when it replaces the emphasis upon the study and application of God’s Word. Peter does not tell us, **“But resist him, firm in your good works.”** But rather he says what? **“But resist him, firm in your faith.”**

But there is even more. Some individuals and churches have turned “feeling” as the focus and the emphasis of their lives. Certainly we see this in the more extreme branches of the charismatic movement. Some of you may have heard of the Vineyard and the emphasis upon “laughing in the spirit.” People actually go to church to laugh. Certainly Peter is not saying **“But resist him, firm in your laughter.”** But rather he says what? **“But resist him, firm in your faith.”**

Certainly feeling is a very important part of the Christian experience but God never intended that His people would connect with Him apart from truth. **Ps. 32:8-9** says, **“I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you. (9) Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding.”** There is no premium on not knowing.

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Hopefully you and I will come to appreciate the danger that continually surrounds and because of this awareness we will continually be on the alert. Praying in the spirit at all times that we would be righteous in all our ways. And when confronted by Satan we will know not to be intimidated by him and run before him in terror but rather give him a great big smile while we are preparing to defend ourselves **“firm in the faith.”**

The only effective means of dealing with Satan and fending off his attacks is to do what? To resist him firm in the faith. It is by knowing the truth, believing the truth, standing in the truth, and obeying the truth.

Isn't this exactly what we see Jesus doing with the various attacks of Satan against Him in Matt. 4. Each time Satan seeks to move Him to do something, Jesus responds to Satan with the words, **“It is written....”** What was Jesus doing? He was resisting Satan, **“firm in the faith.”** He knew the truth, He believed the truth, He was standing upon the truth, and He was willing to obey the truth.

If we are not saturated with the truth and let that truth richly dwell in our hearts we will not be able to be successful in withstanding the onslaught of Satan. He will punish us for our lack of preparation and watchfulness. But if we will resist him firm in the faith he will, as **James 4:7** declares, he will flee from us.

Then Peter adds in **V. 9**, **“But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.”** Sometimes we might feel alone in our suffering. But this is not so. Suffering is not unfamiliar to the whole of the of Jesus Christ around the world. And certainly Satan is very active in the midst of that suffering, but let us together resist him firm in our faith.

We are now at the end of the line. We have considered the last of the imperatives that Peter shares with us at the end of the epistle. We have considered the last of the fundamental Christian attitudes that are necessary for Christian maturity if we are going to walk successfully based on command. **BUT I WOULD LIKE TO QUICKLY POINT OUT FOR YOU A FEW MORE ATTITUDES THAT ARE IMBEDDED IN THE CLOSING WORDS OF THIS EPISTLE WHICH ARE ALSO IMPORTANT IN RESPECT TO CHRISTIAN MATURITY.**

### AN ATTITUDE OF HOPE

Let us read **V. 10** **“and after you have suffered a while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.”** To perfect means to bring to “wholeness.” To confirm means to “set you fast” And to strengthen just simply means that “he will make us strong.” This promise is added to the exhortation of **V. 9**. God's purpose realized in the future involves some pain in the present. Hopefully this truth will not escape are notice in the midst of our trials and our hope will flourish even in the midst of our pain.

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AN ATTITUDE OF WORSHIP - Let us read **V. 11** **“To Him be dominion forever and ever.”** When we give ourselves to consider hope that we have in Christ how can we remain silent. Hopefully each of us in the midst of our trials while our hope is flourishing to find ourselves breaking forth in genuine and sincere worship. When we have a worshiping heart it will be extremely difficult for us to question God in his dealings with us. But let us keep going.....

AN ATTITUDE OF FAITHFULNESS - Let us read **V. 12**, **“Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard him), I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God, Stand firm in it!”** Silas was a prominent member of the Jerusalem church and was Paul’s companion on most of his second missionary journey. So how did he get connected with Peter. It most likely happened after Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment. It appears that Silas stayed in Rome and that it was there that Peter jointly ministered with Silas. And just as Paul found encouragement in this man so now even Peter as he sends Silas off to Asia minor with epistle. Silas stands as a testimony to another very important basic attitude. An attitude of faithfulness.

AN ATTITUDE OF AFFECTION - Let us read **V. 13-14**, **“She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does my son, Mark. (14) Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.”** The reference to Babylon is a reference to the Church in Rome. The church at Rome and Mark (John Mark) were sending their greetings to the church of Asia Minor.

But then look at **V. 14**, **“greet one another with a kiss of love.”** This was a very socially accepted practice in those times very much like our handshake. Just so you might get a clear picture of what Peter was encouraging you need to know men would kiss men and women would kiss women. We need to understand the importance of the demonstration of affection.

### CONCLUSION

We have now finished this wonderful epistle. Hopefully we will leave this epistle with a better understanding or how to righteously respond to the trials and tribulations of this life all the while looking forward to that appointed time when he will perfect, confirm strengthen and establish us. **TO HIM BE DOMINION FOREVER AND EVER AMEN.**