

TITLE: "Faithfully Fighting the 'Fight of Faith' to the Finish" (Part 3)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 5:9b-14

THEME: Humble dependence on God's sovereign will is that which carries us through the sufferings of this life to the finish line of faith

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{{Read Passage}}

I. How to Persevere Through Suffering (6-11)

Humble dependence on God's sovereign will is that which carries us through the sufferings of this life to the finish line of faith.

"Faithfully Fighting the 'Fight of Faith' to the Finish"

Here are 4 things that we need to do if we are going to persevere through suffering // or if we're going to be faithful in fighting the 'fight of faith' to the finish.

Last week we noted our first point in that regard. The first step in persevering through suffering is to ==>

A. Humble Yourself Before God (6-7)

Peter quotes here from Proverbs 3:34 (LXX)

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that He may lift you up in time: (or *exalt you at t/proper time* - NAS)

I. How to Persevere Through Suffering (6-11)

A. Humble Yourself Before God (6-7)

You do that by recognizing His sovereignty and casting your anxieties upon Him knowing that He cares for you.

Second Point ==>

B. Be Aware of your Adversary (8-9)

Be sober, be alert; your adversary, the Devil prowls about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.

1. Peter uses two present imperatives ==>

Be sober, be alert . . .

Why? What's the danger?

. . . your adversary, the Devil prowls about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.

2. Last week I mentioned a few dangers (things we need to be aware of as it relates to spiritual warfare)

a. We can over-emphasize Satan's power and influence

Deifying Satan (omnipresence / omnipotence). Fall prey to dualism & demean God's sovereignty over all creation.

b. We can under-emphasize Satan's power and influence

c. Question: How do we know?

How do we know if we are being attacked by Satan? How do we know if there is some demonic attack or influence going on in our lives. Perhaps we struggle w/some sin // some situation comes along to tempt us or trip us up. Is that our own sinfulness? Our flesh? Is it simply living in a fallen, sinful world? Or is it Satanic?

The World the Flesh and the Devil.

(1) Principles / guidelines . . .

Esp. the ? *"How do we know if an attack is sin in general or demonic?"*

(a) Balance!

Some people blame everything on demons. They have a faulty view of sin and depravity. Others blame everything on depravity and have a weak view of the powers of darkness. How do we know? Sometimes, this side of eternity, we can't.

Do you think Job knew what was going on in heaven between God and Satan? *"Have you cons. my servant Job?"* ||| *"Skin for skin - if you cause him to suffer, he'll curse you to your face!"* Satan goes to work on him. Job loses family members, his health, many of his possessions. His friends accuse him of being in sin. He's miserable and suffering and wishes that he had never been born.

Did he know what was going on? No. But that doesn't mean that all of your trials are caused by Satan either. Often, we don't know. In fact, it could be a combin. of the forces of evil in concert with a sinful world.

Was Hitler demon possessed? Maybe. Were demonic forces at work in his life? Certainly. But was he also an evil, depraved, megalomaniac hell-bent on ruling t/world w/a master race while he syst. exterminated millions of Jews? Yes!

There are other times when we can be fairly certain we are under Satanic assault. Satan doesn't waste his energy on menial sorts of things. He focuses on contereifing God's K.D. and attacking t/Gospel of grace.

He wants to persecute believers & cause them to fail (context here). ["Persecution is the roar by which he tries to intimidate believers in the hope that they will capitulate at the prospect of suffering."](#) [Schreiner, 242]

At the worst he wants those who confess X to falter in their walk & witness; at best he wants them to deny their Lord.

Additionally ==> He wants to see CH's torn apart by dissension. He wants to see CH leaders fall prey to adultery and false doctrine.

J.I. Packer ==> "The devil is malicious and mean, more so than any of us can imagine, and he marauds constantly with destructive intent. Though he is, as Luther said, God's devil, and is on a chain (a strong one, though admittedly a long one), he is tireless in opposing God, and sets himself to spoil and thwart all the redemptive work that God ever does in human lives. As one means to this end, he labors to ensure that preachers' messages will be either misstated or misheard, so that they will not have the liberating, invigorating, upbuilding effect that is proper to the preached word." (to that we would add false doctrine and perversions of t/Gospel – these are legion in t/Evang. CH today). [J.I.

Packer, "Why Preach?" Introduction to The Preacher and Preaching, edited by Samuel T. Logan (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1986), p. 27-29.]

During my first and previous pastorate in Arizona, some men sought to commandeer t/CH. I was t/center of their attack. I walked into a meeting one night and had these men, some of which were very close friends, begin to fire off accusation after accusation against me. Things that were totally unfounded. It was so bizarre, that I thought they were kidding and I almost told them that, "C'mon guys. I know you're joking around w/me." Good thing I didn't say that. They weren't. I went home that night completely shell-shocked. But, in the aftermath, more than one of the men in t/room that night would confess to me later that they had no idea what happened. There was something else going on, something clearly spiritual, deceptive, and demonic. I was forced to resign. Sadly, word got out as to why I was resigning and people left en masse and the church closed it's doors several months later.

But, what Satan meant for evil, God meant for good. During the 2 years that followed I finished my master's degree, we had Giana, and I got a call from CCC. So if that had not happened, I would not be here today.

(2) Important: All men are always accountable no matter what

You can't say "*The Devil made me do it*". No excuses. All men are responsible, whether they're regenerate or not.

Not long ago a televangelist was on TV (why he's a televangelist); and he was contending that Satan can make people do things they don't want to do, even Xns.

When I heard that, I thought 'How convenient. This particular man was one of those caught up in the televangelist scandals of the 1980s. He was immoral, got caught, and now he can look back and say, "Gee, the Devil made me do that." IOW - I'm not really responsible.

Another age-old issue: Do whatever you can to shift the blame away from yourself. Goes back to the GOE (*The woman you gave me; The serpent tricked me*).

You've heard of no-fault divorce? No-fault insurance? Ever since t/fall we have been living in a 'no fault' world! No one's to blame. How many of you have gotten into a fender bender and it was clearly the other person's fault, yet he tried to blame you!

Like==> *Well, if you would have stayed home today I never would have made that left turn in front of you.*

Listen: Buck up and be responsible. When you sin, don't blame someone else // don't blame demonic forces. Blame yourself.

i. Take a look at James 1:12 -16 . . .

Yes, Satan prowls the earth like a hungry, roaring lion, seeking to devour you. He may tempt you and try you. But you have every means at your disposal to resist him and walk worthy before God.

Satan is on a chain – BUT t/Sovereign of t/universe holds t/end of it.

a. What Shall We Do?

(1) Don't Run, Resist!

Resist him . . .

You don't run; you resist and let him run ==>

Ja 4:7 **Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil & he will flee from you**

The word for 'resist' is used several times in t/N.T. ==> Elymas t/magician's resistance to t/Gospel in Acts 13:10; Used of Paul's opposition to Peter's hypocrisy in Gal. 2:11. Active, not passive.

Don't Run, Resist! How do we do that? ==>

(2) Stay firm in the faith: Guard Your Heart and Your Doctrine

..firm in the faith . . .

Cont. believing & trusting & learning more & more of God's precious Word. God's Word and sound doctrine are t/fuel for a firm faith.

If you're not spending time in God's Word you are walking around naked – w/o your armor. The enemy will eat you alive.

..firm in the faith . . . [guard your doctrine // devotion]

Revelation 12:9-11 **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. 10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. 11 "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of t/word of their testimony, & they did not love their life even to death.**

I. How to Persevere Through Suffering (6-11)

A. Humble Yourself Before God (6-7) (*cast your anxiety on Him*)

B. Be Aware of your Adversary (8-9) (*resist him firm in t/faith*)

Thirdly ==>

C. Know that you Don't Suffer Alone (9)

Resist him, firm in the faith, KNOWING THAT THE SAME SUFFERINGS ARE BEING ACCOMPLISHED BY YOUR BRETHREN IN THE WORLD.

1. "World" != "World" as John uses the term Cf. Col. 1:4.

"World" = "all of the Greco-Roman world at that time. Today, that "world" is much larger, and includes most every region of our globe.

Peter's point is that t/Christian family (brethren) suffers t/same sort of attacks and persecutions and sufferings no matter where they live.

2 Timothy 3:12 **And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.**

2. We suffer together

When someone mocks you or gives you a hard time because of your relationship to X – you are experiencing t/same thing that believers have experienced for nearly 2k years!

As Peter said earlier (4:12-16)

Listen – pagans don't like it that you don't live and act and believe like they do. They hate it! Go to 4:3-5.

Behind your persecution is t/hand of Satan who wants you to become weary, timid, falter in t/race.

Hebrews 13:3 Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.

When one member suffers, all suffer.

a. Also speaks to the need for being in the life of the body

IOW - mandate that every believer be an active part of a local CH.

If you are a Xn & you know you are born again, & you have every means available for you to be part of a local CH (are not a shut-in). You have CH's nearby that may not be perfect, but they preach t/Gospel. And you choose to sleep in or do your own thing on Sun. You are in sin.

In fact, let me throw this out - most of you know at least one person who does that. I can think of several myself. They would profess to be genuine believers, but they only occasionally or rarely bother to attend CH, much less get involved in one. They are sinning and should be warned. And if they refuse to heed your warning – you should consider separating from them.

Sin is even greater if you are a believing man w/a wife and family. You as priest of your household, are not leading your family and are actually impeding them from all t/benefits of serving and worshipping X.

(1) I just don't understand it

One of t/great mysteries of life for me. I don't see how any Xn can let week after week go by, sleeping in Sunday after Sunday, and not be part of a local CH. I don't get it.

There may be times when someone gets hurt in a CH, or feels t/need to be anonymous. Maybe that person takes a few weeks to get his / her head in order. That I can understand. But to let a few weeks turn into months and years. That I don't.

You say, "*I don't have to go to CH to be a Christian.*" That may be true. But you do have to be part of t/body to be an obedient Xn. And if you're not concerned about being obedient to your Lord/Master, something is wrong.

I fear that we, as Reformational Evangelicals, fallen prey to dismissing t/CH out of response to Romanism. T/RCC made being part of t/institution of t/CH mandatory for faith and salvation. We've adopted t/attitude, "*My salvation isn't about t/institutional CH.*" That's well and good, but don't throw t/proverbial baby out w/the bath water. That doesn't mean that t/local CH isn't important, even essential.

Don't think that listening to or watching some preacher is a substitute. There are literally thousands of Xns who listen to people like John MacArthur or John Piper and think, "*Man, this is all I need. I have one of t/best Bible expositors at my disposal at t/touch of a button or click of a mouse at my own convenience.*" I don't need to go to CH and listen to some second-rate hack. (no one here would say that, right?!)

If J.M. or J.P. knew that you were doing that, they would be t/first to cancel your tape subscription or confiscate your computer!

The CH is precious in God's eyes. He paid for it w/His own blood (Acts 20:28). We are commanded not to forsake our gathering together (Heb. 10:25).

"Is going to church really all that important?" Not simply "going to CH" as if you were checking something off a list of things you have to do, but being part of t/life of t/body. That includes corporate worship and hearing God's Word expounded from t/pulpit, partaking of t/Lord's Table, but also being involved in times of prayer and study, serving and exercising your ministry gifts, and interacting w/other believers.

T/CH stewards the ordinances // place where Xns fellowship together and are held accountable to one another by way of personal relationships, pastoral encouragement and the practice of CH discipline // rightful platform for the preaching of God's Word // where ministry gifts are to be practiced (cf. 4:10) // where Christ shepherd's you by way of His under-shepherds, t/local CH elders.

But I may have to be accountable?! // find people I don't really like?!
Amen! How can you grow w/no accountability? How can you learn to love those that may not be so lovely in your eyes if you avoid them?
Colossians 3:13.

How can I challenge you and encourage you and help you during your times of suffering if you're not around? I fear many will stand B4 God on that day in great sadness knowing that they failed to do something they will never have t/opportunity to do again. Once your life is over, you can't go back & correct your neglect of Christ's CH or your failure to lead your family as your ought. Will be too late.

To whom much is given, much is required.

Maybe t/problem is that we have had it too easy. We in t/US have had a life of ease. We don't know persecution like so many others have and do know it. We don't think we need one another so we escape into some sort of rugged-individualist long-ranger Xn life.

Things are changing. One news outlet reported last week that hostility against Xns is increasing in this country. That in response to the murder of 2 Xn men in FL who were shot to death by a man they were sharing t/Gospel with.

C. Know that you Don't Suffer Alone (9)

... KNOWING THAT THE SAME SUFFERINGS ARE BEING ACCOMPLISHED BY YOUR BRETHREN IN THE WORLD.

I. How to Persevere Through Suffering (6-11)

A. Humble Yourself Before God (6-7) (cast your anxiety on Him)

B. Be Aware of your Adversary (8-9) (resist him firm in t/faith)

C. Know that you Don't Suffer Alone (9)

Lastly ==>

D. Focus on the Finish Line of Faith (10-11)

Keep your eyes on the prize! Run w/endurance w/your eyes fixed on t/Author and perfecter of your faith.

And the God of all grace, the One who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, He will perfect, confirm, strengthen, [and] establish [you].

What a contrast! Satan is a roaring lion seeking to devour you.

God cares for you. He invites you to cast all of your troubles and anxieties upon Him. He will protect you. And He will perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

1. He's the God of all grace

PSA 84:11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

2CO 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;

a. Note this ==>

And the God of all grace, THE ONE WHO CALLED YOU TO HIS ETERNAL GLORY IN CHRIST,

(1) God called you

This is His sovereign call to salvation.

(a) There is in theology what we call the external and internal Call to Salvation

The external call of the Gospel is that which goes out to everybody. IOW - when a preacher preaches t/gospel to a mass of people everyone who is listening is subject to the external call.

The internal call is that work of t/HS on the heart that causes the sinner to respond in faith.

i. Example of both is found in Acts 16

Apostle Paul (Silas, Timothy, Luke) is in Philippi. They find no synagogue there, so in keeping with the practice of the Jews during the exile, Paul goes to t/river & finds a group of women who were there gathered for prayer. He preaches the gospel to this group of women. That's the external call; each & every one of them heard. Then in v. 14 we read that God opened t/heart of a woman by name of Lydia so that she could respond to the message & be saved. That's the internal call.

What Jesus referred to in Matt. 22:14 when he said that **many are called but few are chosen.**

There is an external call to repent and believe the Gospel; and there is an internal call whereby God opens t/ears and heart enabling one to believe.

ii. We've seen this t/o 1 Peter

1:15 **but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all {your} behavior;**

2:9 . . . God called us out of darkness into His marvelous light;

2:21 - called to suffer

3:9 called for the purpose of inheriting a blessing.

Here ==>

. . . the One who called you to His eternal glory in Christ,

That's salvation. It is unto eternal glory and it only comes in Christ.

That's the prize we fix our hope on. BUT

. . . after you have suffered a little while, He will perfect, confirm, strengthen, [and] establish [you].

First comes suffering. To quote John MacArthur: "We're to live with the understanding that God's purpose realized in the future requires some pain in the present... It may seem intense and it may seem long but it's really very brief, just a little while."

b. These thoughts bookend (inclusio) to Peter's thoughts in 1:1-7 (turn there)

From 1:7 (back in May of 2005) ==> I gave you 5 basic principles related to trials and suffering.

(1) Suffering is Unavoidable (Principle of Necessity)

Trials are a necessary part of life, yes, even for t/believer in JC.

(2) Suffering Doesn't Last Forever (Principle of Temporality)

. . . though now FOR A LITTLE WHILE, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,

Peter begins and ends his letter on this same note. Same phrase that's used here is used in the same way in 5:10==>

And after you have suffered **FOR A LITTLE WHILE**, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you.

(3) Suffering is Many-Faceted (Principle of Complexity)

There are different kinds of trials. They run t/gamut & include just about everything that life can throw our way.

... you have been grieved by VARIOUS TRIALS,

They were "diverse" // "various" (ποικίλος) Word used in ancient lit. to describe a leopard's spots, various colors/shapes.

Peter's wording strongly parallels that of James==>

JAM 1:2 **Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various** (ποικίλος) **trials,**

(4) Suffering Can't Preclude Rejoicing (Principle of Joy)

Verse six looks backward and forward ==>

In this you rejoice (*looking back to the blessings of vv. 3,4,5*) **though now** (*in the present*) **... you [suffer grief with] various trials,**

In [all of] this you [are rejoicing] ... (Pres. tense)

ἀγαλλιαω A word used in NT to describe great or lively joy. Could call it "salvation joy." Joy t/Philippian Jailer experienced when he found salvation (Acts 16:34).

There's a connection between this point and the next one. If trials and suffering were at t/whims of chance & had no purpose we would all be fatalists wouldn't we? What will be will be.

(5) Suffering Has a Purpose (Principle of Beneficiality)

As a Xn you never go through t/trials of life, t/pain, t/sadness, t/affliction, alone. You never go through these things w/o purpose.

in order that the testing of your faith, being more precious than fine gold which is perishable, being purified through fire, might pass the test and be found [true] to the praise and glory and honor of Jesus Christ at his coming.

c. Back to 5:10 ==>

And the God of all grace, the One who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, He will perfect, confirm, strengthen, [and] establish [you].

Those 4 different verbs overlap to make a point. The God who called you and cares for you will Himself ==>

perfect, confirm, strengthen, [and] establish [you].

As JND Kelly writes in his commentary: "[The permanent vindication and blessedness which God will ensure for \[us is\] hammered home in four powerful verbs in the future indicative.](#)" ^[213]

καταρτίζω = to restore, make complete, perfect. Medical sense, "to mend." Cf. Mark 1:19 (mending fishing nets); Gal. 6:1 (restoring a fallen brother or sister).

στηρίξω = to establish – translated "strengthen" in Luke 22:32 where Jesus predicts Peter's being sifted like wheat by Satan and how he would be restored and would "strengthen" his brethren.

σθενωω = to strengthen – word only used here in t/N.T.

θεμελιωω = to establish, set as a firm foundation.

What a promise! Keep your eyes on the prize; don't be distracted by the trials and sufferings of this world!

John Calvin writes that Peter gives his readers a reminder "that they were called to eternal glory [and that] His purpose . . . was to confirm them in the conviction, that the work of their salvation, which he had begun, would be completed." ==>

To Him be the dominion for all eternity. Amen!

Faithfully Fighting the 'Fight of Faith' to the Finish"

Humble dependence on God's sovereign will is that which carries us through the sufferings of this life to the finish line of faith.

I. How to Persevere Through Suffering (6-11)

A. Humble Yourself Before God (6-7)

1. It is a Humility that Bows to God's Sovereignty (6)

2. It is a Humility that Looks to Eternity (6)

3. It is a Humility that Forsakes Worldly Anxiety (7)

4. It is a Humility that Rests in God's Care (7)

B. Be Aware of your Adversary (8-9)

C. Know that you Don't Suffer Alone (9)

D. Focus on the Finish Line of Faith (10-11)

II. Concluding Words of Peter

Verses 12-14 really serve to summarize the entire letter. Peter wrote to encourage these suffering believers and to testify of God's grace.

A. Verse 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!

1. Silvanus

This is another variant for "Silas". It was S. who is mentioned often as Paul's co-laborer in ministry (Acts 15:22,27). Likely t/same Silvanus as in 2 Cor. 1:19; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1.

As we noted back in our intro. t/mention of S. here does not mean that he was the secretary (amanuensis) who penned t/letter for Peter.

The use of the prep. δια (lit. "through") in conjunction w/his name refers to t/fact that he was the one who carried t/letter.

Often t/one who carried a letter is commended by the author.

We see that here ==>

Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard him) . . .

Gave credibility for t/carrier and served as a way for the author (Peter) to say, "Listen to him. He can speak for me." If they would have had any questions regarding the meaning of some of t/contents, S. would have been able to clarify.

. . . I have written to you briefly, (105 verses! But note a similar phrase is used of Hebrews).

. . . exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it! Grounded in Grace.

B. Verse 13

She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings . . .

In the 1st c. Babylon was becoming a symbolic title for Rome in both Xn and Jewish circles. B.G. in t/O.T. where literal Babylon was a proud, immoral, and godless city. In t/first c. ancient Babylon was in ruins. They had Rome. In t/N.T. Rome is as Babylon was in t/Old.

Cryptic title for t/city of Rome.

...and so does my son, Mark.

This would be John Mark who abandoned Paul / Barna. during t/first missionary journey in Acts (cf. Acts 13). Paul didn't want to give him a second chance; Barna. did and that resulted in a split between t/2. Barna. took JM and went to Cyprus while Paul & Silas went to Syria. Paul later regrets his sternness and writes in 2 Tim. 4:11 . . .

Picture of failure second chances.

Peter sends his greetings from the elect / CH in Rome. He mentions Mark who was w/him.

Closes ==>

C. Verse 14

Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.

Let his words to these 1st c. believers, be God's Word to us today.
{read vv. 12-14}