

First Baptist Church Merritt Island  
*Resist your Enemy by Resting in our Savior*

1 Peter 5:8-11

September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018

### **Main Point**

*The enemy of God is seeking to destroy our lives. We resist him by resting in the promised work of Jesus.*

### **Getting Started**

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

*How do you know when you are being spiritually attacked? Of which indicators do you take note?*

*What have you learned from your successes and failures in defending yourself against the devil's attacks?*

Legendary Green Bay Packers football coach Vince Lombardi famously said, "The best defense is a good offense." That tells us a lot about his philosophy of football strategy—as long as your offense controls the ball, the other team can't score. But the concept is far from being original with Lombardi, or football for that matter. General George S. Patton observed, "In war the only sure defense is offense." Going further back in history, the first President of the United States George Washington wrote in 1799, "Offensive operations, often times, is the surest, if not the only ... means of defense." Though Peter didn't use the same language as the above influencers of American history, in his first letter he vividly describes the process of defending oneself against spiritual warfare. One of the best ways we can take an offensive position in spiritual warfare is to embrace the promises of God's Word. As you study this passage, focus on biblical promises that help us weather the attacks of the enemy. We resist the devil by actively resting in the promises of God's Word surrounding the person and work of Jesus Christ!

### **Observation**

ASK a volunteer to read 1 Peter 5:8.

*What do you gather from Peter's warnings to "Be serious! Be alert!" (v. 8)? What about his explanatory statement exemplifies the importance of the issue of which he speaks?*

*Why do you think Peter compared the devil to a lion? How does the devil devour a person?*

*What methods does the devil use to devour believers?*

Lions roar and lions prowl, but lions do not roar while they prowl—they quietly and stealthily sneak up on their intended prey. Likewise, the devil will not announce to you that he is coming after you. He will at various times roar to intimidate you. But when he has you in his sights, you won't hear anything from him until he pounces. If you don't want to be his next meal, Peter urged that you to "Be Serious! Be alert!" (v. 8). Peter used the word translated here "be serious" also in 4:7, where it is translated as "disciplined." To avoid becoming "devil's food," we need to be disciplined in keeping an alert watch for his deceitful tricks. Standing firm in your faith means taking the offensive in scouting out those areas in your life where the devil might attack. It also means trusting in the promises of God's Word about the person and work of Christ which ward off the attacks of the devil.

*What is the connection between spiritual disciplines and spiritual defense?*

ASK a volunteer to read 1 Peter 5:9.

*How does one resist the devil? Is resistance of the devil futile? Explain.*

*What is the significance of Peter's admonition, "knowing that the same sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world" (v. 9)?*

Some believers mistakenly believe that faith is passive. Yet Peter called for action—resist the devil, stand firm in the faith. While it is true that we cannot defeat the devil in our own strength, God will not secure the victory to us if we ourselves do not put up a fight. Resistance can be tiring and discouraging. The devil would like for resistance to be isolating, as if we're the only ones in the battle. But Peter reminded us we are not the only ones. Our fellow believers throughout the world have joined the battle. Be encouraged—you are not on your own. Put up a good fight by placing the full weight of your faith in the promises of God's Word.

ASK a volunteer to read 1 Peter 5:10-11.

*Verses 10-11 contain a title of God, an action of God, and a characteristic of God.*

*What does the title of God, "the God of all grace" (v. 10), say to you about your efforts to defend yourself from the devil?*

*How does the action of God, that God "will personally restore, establish, strengthen, and support you after you have suffered a little" (v. 10), motivate you in your efforts to stand firm in your faith?*

*What is the significance of the characteristic of God, that "the dominion belongs to Him forever" (v. 11), amid spiritual warfare?*

Hall of Fame football coach John Madden once said, "All that a prevent defense does is prevent you from winning." If you attempt to just play defense against the devil, you will lose. An inferior team against a superior team must have and execute a superior strategy. For the Christian, that superior strategy against the devil is an offense of humbly turning to God, taking the initiative to notice Satan's points of attack, and

resisting him when he comes. Indeed, the best defense against our enemy the devil is a strong offense of standing firm in our faith in the promises of God's Word.

### **Application**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

*In what areas are you relying on your own strength to deal with the devil rather than humbly turning to God?*

*How can you be more attentive to scoping out the devil's efforts against you? Where does he tend to attack you?*

*What are some spiritual disciplines you need to adopt to resist Satan's attacks in particular areas of your life?*

*Read Ephesians 6:10-17, James 4:7-11 and Titus 2:11-14. What do these passages teach us about dealing with the enemy's attacks? What do they teach us about turning away from the lures of the devil and trusting in Christ alone? Commit to trust in the promises of God's Word as a way to resist the devil before he attacks.*

### **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, please help us cling to and then rest in what your Word teaches us about your finished work at the cross! Remembering your word is the essence of resisting the devil. Draw our attention to passages you want us to use in defending ourselves spiritually.

### **Commentary**

5:8 Be sober minded; be watchful. Believers need to be spiritually vigilant, watching for attacks from the devil, the enemy. Peter uses the graphic image of a lion to describe Satan's destructive threat: he prowls around seeking someone to devour. He hopes that believers will be terrified in their hardship and persecutions, or that they will be deceived and fall into sin. Though the devil may threaten to 'devour' believers, they nonetheless have assurance that God will help them.

5:9 Believers need not fear the devil, for the Lord has given them power to stand against him by being firm in the faith. Trusting in God's promises, believers know that suffering is not the final word and that ultimately they will be exalted. The suffering experienced by the believers in northern Asia Minor is not unique to them, for it is the portion of believers everywhere. Hence, they can take courage that they are not alone. Though 'throughout the world' does not indicate an empire-wide decree against believers in Peter's day, believers who suffer in any age can rest assured that they are not alone!

5:10 'a little while' This includes the period of time beginning with Christ's ascension until Christ comes again at the end of the age. From God's perspective, one's time in this world is notably brief. Thus, no matter how long or intense one's suffering may be, it will be short compared to the joys of eternity. Four verbs (*restore, confirm, strengthen, establish*) remind believers that God will eventually restore whatever they have lost for the sake of Christ. though suffering will come first, it will be followed by eternal glory. The God who effectually called believers by his grace will fortify them with his strength, so that they are able to endure to the end.

5:11 Because God is sovereign and rules over all, believers have nothing to fear.