

1Peter 11-07-29a

This is Friday, the 29th of July, 2011. We're going to conclude tonight our study in the book of 1 Peter. We're in the closing section of chapter 5 and we resume tonight in verse 8. We've actually covered verse 8 and into verse 9, but we have a little bit of fresh material to go over.

So we'll take a moment to prepare ourselves for the study by going to the Lord in prayer. Father, it's a wonderful privilege to spend time together in the study of your word, enjoying fellowship and encouragement and the blessings that come through the blessings, the gifts that you've distributed for blessing in our midst. We thank you for this passage of scripture and for the truth that it contains.

We thank you for the ministry of your Holy spirit that makes it understandable to us. And we ask your aid and enablement as we look at these things together so that the purpose for which you have recorded them in your word will be fulfilled in our lives. We pray it in Jesus name.

Amen. This closing exhortation from Peter is, is introduced with the idea of the nature of how we relate to God. We relate to one another in any sort of a functional situation.

You usually end up with somebody who is in charge or knows what the objective is. If we're cleaning house, I usually defer to the ladies. They know how a Swiffer works.

They understand the composition of various cleansers and, Oh, we use this for this cleaning. We use that for that cleaning. I am no kind of household work expert, but a lot of people are, they know what to use on what service.

This is what you use to clean a shower. This is what you use to clean the floor. This is what you use on a stainless steel sink.

This is what you don't use on your granite countertops or your, your plastic surfaces because it's abrasive and so on. And so somebody has got knowledge, somebody has experience and we naturally defer. And this is a healthy thing.

There's nothing wrong with recognizing that somebody has got some expertise or some past experience that makes them a good source of guidance. And what Peter says here is, place yourselves at the disposal of that knowledge. Put yourself under that authority.

Sometimes it is a structural authority. You've got an employer, you've got a parent, you have a husband, you have an elder, whatever it may be. Somebody actually has formal authority assigned, a superior officer, a teacher in a classroom, officer that just pulled you over to the side of the road for some reason, some infraction, some missing light in your car or expired sticker, whatever they have, they have formal authority and we submit ourselves to that.

We respond. We obey. We recognize that all of this is a part of something larger than ourselves.

So this was the introduction to sort of Peter's closing thought here. And he said, all of you in verse five, be submissive and be clothed with humility toward one another. And this is a specific environment.

We don't have to necessarily be clothed with humility to those who are outside. We don't necessarily need to be clothed with arrogance either. But Peter's point here is toward one another.

Your leading foot should be humility. Don't approach someone and lead with arrogance. Don't approach someone and assume that you need to dominate them or that you need to browbeat them or that you need to somehow impress them.

This is really more often the case. We a lot of times don't want somebody to think less of us. And so we try to make more of ourselves than we should.

But he says, be submissive when submission is called for and toward one another, be clothed with humility, whether you are the elder or you are the younger, whether you are the presbyteros or the neoteros, whichever role you find yourself in, you should be clothed with humility. You can exercise authority with humility, just as you can respond to authority with humility and toward one another. That should be the practice because God resists the crowd, the proud and gives grace to the humble.

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. And what he is doing here is saying, when we practice this attitude toward one another, we are actually humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God. We don't have one situation with each other and then we walk outside and suddenly here's the mighty hand of God coming down from the sky and we say, Oh, time to get humble.

It is in the context of our dealings with one another that we humble ourselves under God's hand because these established authorities, these recognized presbyteros, that is the hand of God. They are the same. And when we do this, he will exalt us.

God resists the proud. God gives grace to the humble. So if we humble ourselves in the situations that he asks us to, he will exalt us when the time is right.

And in order to do this, how can you be relaxed enough to be humble, to be submissive, to be compliant, to be responsive? You know, submissive always sounds like, Oh, I'm knuckling under, I'm belittling myself. This is basically responsiveness, cooperative, supportive, willing to follow the plan and get the thing done. Not cantankerous and obstreperous and counterproductive.

How do we do this? Well, throwing our care upon him, recognizing that he cares for us. And this is still all tied together. God is caring for us in the authority structure.

It is there for our benefit. It's a difficult thing to remember sometimes, especially when the authority is sort of malfunctioning. They forgot to put their humility clothes on and it's kind of abrasive and kind of tough to take.

But we say, you know, that's, I'm not looking at it as this person. I'm looking at it as God's structure and the care that this may impose on me, the burden that it may put on me, I'm going to throw on God. I'm not going to absorb it.

I'm not going to gnaw on it like a bone. I'm not going to let it sit there and fester. I'm not going to make an issue of it.

Whatever care settles on me as a result of my humble attitude, my submissive cooperative attitude, if this puts care on me, I'm going to throw it on God. God's the one that called me to this. God's the one that asked me to do this.

So I'll do it. And any resulting care I throw on him, I'm going to, this is my new word, my new non-word. I'm going to disinvest myself.

I'm going to, I'm going to retract my personal concern in this thing. I'm going to disinvest. I'm going to pull it out.

I'm not going to, I'm not going to put my money there. I'm not going to put my attitude there. I'm not going to hinge my happiness on this.

I'm going to pull out. I'm going to throw it on God, throwing your care upon him because he cares for you. He'll make sure this comes out.

All right. He'll exalt you in due time. The last shall be first.

The first shall be last. The older shall serve the younger. God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise.

So then verse eight, he says, be sober, be vigilant. And if you remember these two verbs in Greek, one of them is nepho and this means be self-controlled to fulfill this command. We have to be in charge of ourselves.

We have to have the ability to rein in our negative impulses. We have to be able to rein in our tongue. Peter went to great lengths to talk about the Lord Jesus, not speaking when he was harshly treated, unfairly treated, abused to a greater extent than just about anybody you can think of.

And he, even though he was like a lamb before it's the slaughter or the sheep before it's shearers, he opened not his mouth. So be self-controlled, be vigilant is Gregoreo. Well, all right.

So Bible class is over. That's that's it. That's all there is.

You can, you can close your Bibles. You can put away your notes. We can all get up, have a little snack and then go home.

And all we have to do is be self-controlled and be vigilant. What, how are you, how are we going to do this? What's the practical steps for being self-controlled and being vigilant? By the way, these often occur together in scripture in the near context, they seem to kind of go together. So if I say be vigilant, be vigilant for what? You don't want to be vigilant for everything because you'd be so nervous.

You can't relax. There are people that jump at the slightest unexpected noise. I wouldn't want to live like that.

I am at the other end of the spectrum. It, I don't know what it would take to make me startle. Once in a great while it happens, but typically I just, I don't know, that reflex is almost turned off.

Maybe I'm just tired. But what is it? What is the means of fulfilling this? These are commands. This is God in his word through his spirit, telling us be self-controlled, be vigilant.

We've got two absolute commands. It's as though God spoke from heaven, do these things. We say, okay, got it.

I'm all, I'm all set. Yes, sir. Or if you're in the Navy, aye, aye, sir.

And we're going to go out and do it. So now what? Tell me how to be vigilant. Well, I asked myself this question years ago when I first got into chapter four of Colossians.

And if you'll turn over there you'll see why you can keep a finger here in first Peter. But if you go to Colossians chapter four, we have a very interesting similarity of context. If you glance over chapter three in Colossians, the Christian home wives submit to your husbands, husbands, love your wives, children, obey your parents, bond servants, obey in all things.

Verse 22, verse 23 and 24, whatever you do, do it heartily as unto the Lord and not into men, knowing that from the Lord, you will receive the reward of the inheritance. Submit yourself unto the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time. Very similar ideas coming from the Apostle Paul here.

He who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done and there is no partiality. If somebody is abusing their authority, just leave it in God's hands. He'll be dealt with.

Then you get to verse one of chapter four. Masters give your bond servants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a master in heaven. Continue earnestly in prayer, being Gregoreo in it with all thanksgiving.

Now, of course, this is the noun form, but I'm just telling you, this is a, this is a form from Gregorio, being vigilant. Meanwhile, praying also for us. So continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving.

Meanwhile, praying also for us. So we see a connection here. One way, one area where we can exercise vigilance is in prayer.

So as we pack up and we leave and we say, all right, God says, be vigilant. One of the areas I can be vigilant in is prayer. All right.

That narrows it down a bit. We don't necessarily have to watch for falling objects from the sky or rabid animals or you know, uneven terrain. We might twist our ankle.

We're going to, we're going to be vigilant in prayer. All right. How are you vigilant in prayer? Well, if you think, and this is, this is your pop quiz for the evening.

Can you think of a passage where vigilance and prayer are mentioned perhaps by the Lord Jesus? Can you think of a time when Jesus talked about prayer and vigilance? I'll give you a hint. Peter, James and John are the audience. It is the night of the Lord's arrest.

They're in the garden of Gethsemane. And if you go to, for example, Matthew chapter 24, I believe it is. You have this account.

You don't need to keep your fingers in either Peter or Colossians for this because we'll turn back there later. 24 in the vicinity of verse 36. The Lord Jesus says of that day and of that hour, no one knows not even the angels of heaven, but my father only as the days of Noah.

So also will the coming of the son of man be. You skipped down to verse 42. Watch therefore for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming and watch is Gregorio be vigilant, be vigilant.

Look at verse 45 who then is a faithful and wise servant who is mastermade ruler over his household to give them food in due season. Well, this was teaching that the disciples had had be vigilant, be Gregorio. They had heard this.

He had taught it many, many times. So when you come to the night of the arrest, if you flip over to Mark chapter 13, look at verse 32, you have a very similar context of that day and hour. No one knows not even the angels in heaven or the son, only the father take heed, watch and pray.

Verse 33 for you do not know when the time is. It's like a man going to a far country, leaves his house, gives authority to his servants, to each his work and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch therefore for you do not know when the master of the house is coming.

Gregorio be vigilant. Look at verse 37. What I say to you, I say to all Gregorio watch.

So we begin to see that this is important. If you look at the next chapter, uh, in Mark, Mark 14, verse, uh, 32 and following, they came to a place named Gethsemane and he said to his disciples, sit here while I pray. He took Peter, James and John with him further.

He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. He said to them, my soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. Stay here and watch.

He went a little further, fell on the ground, prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, Abba father, all things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me.

Nevertheless, not what I will, but what you will. Then he came and found them Gregorio wing up a storm. They were just watching and praying and being vigilant.

Not. He found them sleeping. So who does he address here out of Peter, James and John? Does he say John or does he say James? What does he say? In fact, he doesn't even say Peter, which is the promise name for that disciple uses his old name.

This is like coming up and saying, Jacob, after you've already renamed him Israel, right? Simon, this had to have hurt his feelings a little bit because he's gotten used to Jesus calling him Petras, but he says, Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not Gregorio for even an hour, Gregorio and pray, watch and pray. Lest you enter into temptation. Now of the three disciples, why would he address Peter? Why would he address Simon Peter? Well, we're going to do a lot of traveling tonight.

Keep your finger here and move into Luke chapter 22, 2231, Luke 2231. The Lord said Shimon, Shimon. Indeed, Satan has asked for you that he may sift you like wheat.

What does Peter introduced as a new subject at the very end of his letter? Be self-controlled, be vigilant. Why? Because your adversary, the devil roams about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. What does Jesus say here? Simon, Simon, Satan has asked for you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith should not fail.

Satan has asked for you. Peter says, I'm ready with to go with you, Lord, to prison and to death. Jesus says, I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know me.

Peter has been warned. Jesus knows and has told him Satan is coming after you. He wants to run you through the sifter.

He wants to find out what you're made of. He's going to separate the good parts of you from the bad parts of you. And he's going to try to capitalize on the bad parts.

What does sifting do? Sifting breaks up the lumps. Sifting separates the chaff from the wheat. So when you go back here to Mark, Jesus says, Simon, Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not

watch one hour? You need to be watching this whole evening.

I already told you earlier this evening, Satan has asked for you. And you're going to deny me if you are not vigilant. You've got to watch Gregor.

Oh, this same Peter is now writing to us in chapter five saying, keep yourself control. Keep your vigilance up. Satan is looking for you.

Nobody better qualified to give us this exhortation than the man that Jesus himself gave that very same exhortation to. And he has been through the failure side of it. And in his later life as an apostle, he has also manifestly done the, the, uh, victorious side of it, done the good side of it.

There is a time to sleep and there's a time to stay awake. When Peter was threatened with execution and they had him chained to a guard, he's snoring like a buzzsaw. The angel has to kick him to wake him up and deliver him from the prison because he is not worried.

He has cast his cares on the Lord, but there is also a time to stay awake, to be self-controlled and to be vigilant. So that's what we have here in, uh, Mark. And we have this example where again, verse 39, he went away and prayed and spoke the same words.

When he returned, he found them asleep again for their eyes were heavy. He said, are you still sleeping? It is enough. The hour has come.

Behold the son of man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners rise. Let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.

They had multiple times to practice and notice this is practice. You say, well, Lord, what's the big deal? You're off praying. We're sitting here.

I fell asleep. So what? Jesus gave them this trial. Look, here's, here's a little test.

See if you can stay vigilant. See if you can, see if you can stay self-controlled, watch and pray for an hour. And they failed that test.

How are they going to be watchful and be vigilant and be self-controlled when the real test comes just a few hours later? Well, they're not. And Peter's going to fail that bigger test because he failed the smaller test. He that is faithful in that which is least will be faithful also in that which is much.

We think what's the big deal. If I fail under authority, if I backtalk my parents as a child, if I work around my boss at work because I think he's an egghead or a ne'er do well, or a, uh, doesn't deserve the authority that he has. What if I, uh, you know, give dirty looks to the officer that pulls me over and try to give him a hard time or try to, you know, uh, what if I am not submissive? What if I am not obedient? What if I feel like having an attitude when it comes to authority?

What's the harm? What's the big deal.

It is a big deal because these are the tests for when we need self-control and we need vigilance. And every time we see this so often, we also find prayer. Why would that be? It doesn't say that you're praying for vigilance, but prayer is in the same context with vigilance.

Jesus is praying and he tells the disciples, Peter, James, and John, watch and pray with me. Watch and pray. Peter says back here, throw your cares on the Lord.

Be vigilant. Be self-controlled because the devil is coming. What's the association? What does prayer do? How do you throw your care on the Lord? Prayer is our firsthand awareness of God.

We drop what we're doing and we talk to God. We force ourselves to acknowledge and to focus on his presence and his reality, his personality, his promises, right? So if we want God to be real to us, if we want to be able to throw our care in his direction and let him carry it off, prayer is a great way to do it, right? These are great pieces of practical truth, practical information. It's one thing to hear the Bible say, be faithful, be sober, be vigilant, be watchful, resist the devil.

But how do you do it? What is the means? Well, this is the means. If we find ourselves having trouble with self-control, why would that be? Because the cares are pressing us down. The concerns, we're too invested.

We're having trouble disinvesting, right? We can't let go. We're worried about the consequences. We're worried about the unfairness of it.

We're wrapped up in the injustice. We're wrapped up in what the effect is on us. How do you shake that? What's the practical, pragmatic way to get through this? Take a minute, say, excuse me, I'll be right back.

Go to the restroom and close the stall door. You don't have to be there for any reason other than to get away for a moment and pray. Get by yourself, sit in the car for a minute before you go in or before you get out, find a quiet place.

You know, in the old days, they said, go into your closet, go into the inner room, find a place where you can focus in prayer. If we want to fulfill this command, this imperative from God to us in the context of relationships with others, this is how to do it. We've got to offload our care and concern, those things that drag us away.

What does this vigilance and this attitude of orientation toward God instead of towards circumstances, objectivity instead of subjectivity, what does it do? What is the real enemy here? We've got three enemies. We've got the world, the flesh and the devil, right? And all of them are dragging us away. You remember again what he gave us in Matthew chapter 24 and in Mark chapter 13, we are servants.

The master is a way and we have been given a task. What is the task for the servants? Tend to the master's affairs, maintain his business. It isn't time for the servants to have a party.

It isn't time for the servants to beat one another. He says in Mark chapter 13, that it is like a servant of a master and the master says he's entrusted you with his business. He's gone to a far country in verse 34, left his house, gave authority to his servants and to each his work.

Here's what I want you to do for me while I'm gone. So what is it the devil is trying to do? Why is he roaring? What happens if he successfully swallows us? What happens? We are deflected. We are no longer doing the master's work.

The defeat, the ignominy, the humiliation, the failure is to be deflected from doing God's work, deflected from reflecting the glory of the Lord Jesus. And that can happen when we let our tongue run on, when we start some form of retaliation against what we consider to be unfair authority or unfair circumstances or unjust distribution of work or whatever we think it might be. However, this authority is putting a care on us.

We're going to try to deal with it. That's not the master's business. That's not the master's work.

If the master gives each servant his work in the household while he goes to the far country and he says, look, I want you to repaint the den. I want you to rebuild the stairs. I want you to do the outside lawn and garden maintenance.

Do some, some landscaping for me. I want you to, to put a new roof on. I want you to build some fresh furniture for us.

I want you to restock the pantry. I'm going to be gone for some period of time. And when I get back, each of you I will evaluate and how well you have done this work.

So you've got over servants and underservants in there, and they've been given these tasks. And so the roof guy says, all right, Joab, I want you to go down there and get me some roofing shingles. And Eli, I want you to go get me some nails and, uh, Narowaya.

Why don't you get us some tools and ladders and we'll meet up on top of the building. We'll tear off the old and put on the new. Well, why does, why does he get to go get the nails? And I've got to go carry the shingles.

Shingles are heavy and nails are light. Why are you? Well, you're always making me do the hard work. I got these, you know, it's going to take a long time.

And I'm going to be in the hot sun. He's going to go in a cool place where the, why are you, why are you doing it that way? And how come you're not doing it another way? And what's the problem with that? When the master comes back, what happens when people lose their orientation to authority, when they can not function properly. So what if the guy is always giving

you the hard job? The master, when he comes back had better find everybody minding the master's business.

If you start squabbling in this internecine intramural strife, there will be judgment. There will be accountability taken. The master knows if you're chafing under an unfair authority, he knows that this guy can't lead a group in silent prayer, but nevertheless, he's got him in charge.

There's a reason for it. Maybe he's grooming you because he's going to promote you. And he knows that you'll never do that because you've chafed under it for two or three years.

The master knows what he's doing. The master has put certain people in charge. So do your job.

Be self-controlled, be vigilant. What are we vigilant for? What are we vigilant about? Not being deflected and distracted from the master's priorities, the master's business, the master's work. Our flesh, the world, the devil, the master, the master's people succeed when we are drawn away from that work.

When we are no longer claiming righteousness by faith, we are no longer clothing ourselves with humility toward one another. We instead have got all wrapped around the axle about some momentary light affliction. All of these passages conspire together to give us the solution.

Throw the pressure, throw the care on God. It's his plan. He's the one that set this thing up.

If it creates care, take it to him in prayer. Prayer keeps us objective because we're standing before God, the father, and suddenly, oh yeah, masters have a master in heaven also, don't they? There are books being kept. There's accountability.

There will be a judgment. There will be a reckoning. I don't really need to fix this right now myself.

What I need to do as I stand here before the master in prayer is make sure that I am doing my assigned responsibility and he can find no fault with me. I bring him the care. I leave it there.

I go back and I am watchful. I am diligent. I am self-controlled and I reflect his glory.

I claim righteousness by faith. I am in line for inheritance. I am not going to be swallowed by the devil.

The devil can't swallow anybody. He's got to look to find somebody to swallow. Who is he going to swallow? Who's he going to find? Those that aren't alert.

Those that don't know how to cast their cares on the Lord. Those that don't know how to pray, who don't avail themselves of the privilege of prayer. Those are the ones who are going to be devoured.

Those are the ones that are going to be sifted and never put back together. Humpty Dumpty is

going to fall and all the horses and men are never going to put him together again. That's the picture.

And I don't know how God could have made it any clearer to us. Yes, people are fallible. Yes, authority is unfair.

Yes, we get the short end of the stick. Yes, we get the same crummy job over and over again and it isn't right. That's not the issue.

Any unbeliever can look at it in that light. We can look at it differently. We can be sober.

We can be self-controlled. We can be Gregoreo. And that's the exhortation that Peter closes.

This is really his last great imperative. He's going to lead in from that to resist him and resist is what we're going to look at when we come back from the break.