

5You 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.

6Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. 8Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. 10After 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. 11To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.

12Through 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! 13She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does my son, Mark. 14Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Peace be to you all who are in Christ.

Last week we took some time to consider our adversary, the devil. And we focused on his network, his army of demons, and his strategy to destroy anything that God has separated out of this world unto Himself.

That's what adversary means. Enemy. Satan is the enemy of God, and anyone that belongs to God. Satan and his forces are in a war with God and his desire is to destroy anything and any one who belongs to God.

That's why I love to remind you that we are enemy combatants dwelling in enemy territory. That modern idea fits what this ancient book teaches us.

That means he is enemy of God's chosen people Israel who God has yet to fulfill promises to, and also the church. True believers, called out of this world and set apart. Christians from every nation on the planet who are born again by the Spirit of God to a living hope; eternal life with

Christ our Lord.

And this week, we want to take a bit of time to talk about our defense. And not only defense, but sometimes, offense. Our enemy has schemes and strategies to destroy us. How do we survive? Satan is a potent enemy. What is our survival strategy?

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 says, resist him. So my first thought was; Is this the same word, resist, that we looked at two weeks ago in vs. 5. *God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.* Where the word opposed is often translated resists. *God resists the proud.*

And that word we said is a military term. You array your forces to keep the enemy from advancing. In football they build a human wall to keep the opposing team from advancing. That's the resistance in vs. 5.

But the word in our verse is different. And the picture for this word, *resist the devil*, is like those pictures of a hurricane blowing 120 miles an hour sideways and a palm tree that is leaning and the branches are battered, but that tree is resisting the onslaught of that storm.

This resist is like that tree. The fierce winds blow against it, but it is firmly planted, and when the hurricane is over, it's still standing.

Jesus used this idea in his parable about the foolish man and the wise man that we sang in Sunday school. In Matthew 7:24 *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 “And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. 26 “Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 “The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”*

That picture is the equivalent to our word here, resist the devil. The devil is like a fierce storm, a cloudburst that causes a flash flood. And that flashflood slams against the house. Can the house resist it? Will it still be there when the storm is gone?

Only if it has a foundation with depth. The palm tree resists because it is in good firm ground and its roots are solid and deep. The sailboat doesn't sink because it has a heavy keel in the water that can counteract any side force. It leans but it comes back up.

And that foundation, those deep roots, that heavy keel, is Jesus. A personal one on one relationship with Jesus. He is the rock.

Now then, when we read the rest of Peter's instruction to these saints that are in the middle of a fierce storm, it makes wonderful sense. We say, of course.

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.

In a parallel teaching, James says, *Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.* Same word, same idea.

9 But resist him, firm in your faith, Satan comes like a storm. A sideways hit. He wants to knock the wind out of you and knock you off your feet. And Peter says resist that onslaught, how, by being firm in your faith.

And this is what we need to spend some time understanding. How do I get firm in my faith. What causes me to be firm in my faith so I can resist the storms hurled at me by Satan?

We've already answered that question. Jesus did. *Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them*

Paul says the same thing. Romans 10:17 should be familiar to every one

of you. If not, go there, circle it, highlight it, and memorize it; *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*

The ability to resist the storms of Satan is inextricably connected to; **this book**. We said it last week Hosea 4:6 *For lack of knowledge, my people are destroyed.*

If you are ignorant of the words in this book, you are a sitting duck. You're a fat sheep on the edge of the huddle when the wolf comes. How's that for mixing metaphor's. Ducks and sheep in the same paragraph. The sheep who read the book said, I better get in the middle of the huddle. That wolf wants to eat me. The sheep that didn't read this book says, everybody's getting in a huddle. Guess I better go over and see what it's about.

And Jesus in his illustration of the house in the flashflood, He doesn't stop at head knowledge. He says; *Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them*

You meet these people who are like walking Bible encyclopedia's and they don't obey any of it. It's all in their head, but it doesn't have any authority over what they do.

But mostly I meet people who claim to be christians and go to some church and they're clueless. They think Joan of Ark was Noah's wife. They think Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day and a pillar of fire by night. Jesus enunciated the Golden Rule, which says to do one to others before they do one to you.

It doesn't bode well for the evangelical church that Satan, the devil wants to destroy the church and the church isn't too sure if the devil is real. Many christians think these are mythological concepts.

Jesus said the person who withstands the onslaught of the storm is the one who built his house on a deep foundation by hearing and doing what this book says.

That word *hearing* in Jesus story about the house that stands means we

understand most of this book in it's literal sense. Satan is an angel. A living being. Not a concept. He isn't the dark side of the force. He is a created being who has a lot of power. And he is our enemy. And he would like to destroy us. And he would but God is sovereign over all.

But within those boundaries, if you don't take any of what this book teaches about combatting and surviving in this war, you're pretty much fair game. We see him demanding to sift Peter. Peter had a pride issue and the Sovereign Lord granted Satan permission to knock Peter for a loop.

Let's look again at Peter's words of advice. *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.*

The idea here is exactly what we've been describing. Satan is going to come at you like a hurricane. 120 mph side loads. And the overarching idea is, will you still be standing when that storm is over?

We loved that movie with Helen Hunt about the tornadoe chasers. That scene where they can't get out of the path, and they go into a well pump shack and tie their wrists to a 4" pipe that goes underground. The storm comes and it blows the shack away and it blows them upside down, literally like a suction, but their wrists are tied to that pipe, and when it passes, they're still there.

That's a good picture of what Satan wants to do to you. How is your foundation? When the storm passes, will you still be standing?

And that's the set-up for the apostle Pauls full expansion of this idea. So turn to Ephesians chapter 6, and we'll spend just a couple of minutes looking at what Paul says about surviving that onslaught. Being firmly planted so when the storm passes, you're still standing.

We looked at the first part of this last week when we were describing Satan's armies.

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

There's the literal description of our enemy. This isn't greek mythology. These are real created beings who have a hierarchy and a plan. They work under orders of their commander, the devil. They are an army who have a plan to destroy what belongs to God

Then Paul proceeds very logically. Based on that information;
13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

Same picture. The storm is going to come. It's a storm with awesome power. And ultimately, we want to be still standing. Paul uses our same word. *so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm*

It's like there's an echo in the room. That's exactly what Peter said. Resist and stand firm. But Paul expands the idea of how we're going to be able to do that. Paul says there's armor you need to put on, so that you can ride out the storms and still be standing when the storm passes. *Therefore, take up the full armor of God*

What's the full armor of God?

Vs. 14 Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH,

Here we go again, like a broken record. That's the same thing Jesus said. And it's the same thing Paul said to the Romans. The book. The book. The book. This book is what protects our vital organs in this war. Knowing and understanding and obeying the truths of this book, is the armor that you wrap around your loins and protect your most vulnerable organs with.

I'm over-stressing this truth because it seems like every church I walk into is ignoring this.

The evangelical church in America is locked down to pragmatism. You do what works. And teaching this book will empty the place. People won't tolerate it. They don't want to come and have some white haired guy teach them out of this book. That's a formula to empty the place.

We've seen it here. People will come for a few weeks and poof - - they gone. Never to be seen again. And it's natural to think, maybe if Jim would lighten up just a little bit . . ?

But Paul says, this is serious business. The real christians need to have this book. It needs to flow in your veins. It needs to be there when that storm comes. That's why I told you at the beginning, I'm a one trick pony. Teach this book. One verse at a time. That's all I've got. After I empty the place, you can go find an ear tickler.

Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,

What's the breast plate of righteousness? Well, that's what Jesus said. *Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them*

Hearing the book isn't enough. It's important, but if you stop there, you don't have a breastplate. And the breastplate is what protects your heart and your lungs. Obedience to the words in this book is our breastplate.

We learn it, and we do it! We understand God's will, and we obey. This book has authority over us. We modify our actions based on what we learn in God's book.

That's a terrifying concept to secularists. The ancient book is scary, but the idea that someone would take it seriously and modify their behaviour based on things they believe a sky God reveals in an ancient book. That just pushes them over the edge.

Those folks are lumped together. That concept sends up every red flag.

People who believe an ancient book, believe some sky God wrote it, and modify their behaviour because of it . . those folks are dangerous radicals.

It won't be long before we make the same lists as radicalized muslims. The secular mind has no way of separating the two. We're radicalized people. They can't make the separation. The muslims read their book from their sky god and kill people.

Christians read their book from Creator God Almighty, and in their obedience, formed western civilization that is currently slipping away from us.

Vs. 15 and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE;

It's no accident that Paul incorporates the part of the armor that enables your feet not only to stand, but to advance in battle, with the gospel.

Isaiah says; How lovely on the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who announces peace And brings good news of happiness, Who announces salvation, And says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" Isa 52:7

And there's that scary word, preparation. The gospel needs first to be understood. You need to know why you're saved and how you're saved so that when the wind is trying to suck you off the ground and your wrists are tied to a pipe with leather belt wraps, you aren't saying to yourself, maybe that guy who told me I'm saved because I signed the card at the rally and that I should never question it, maybe he was wrong.

You need to understand the mechanics of the gospel. How Jesus was born of a virgin so that He did not have Adams fallen seed. How Jesus lived a sinless life so that He could be a viable substitute. How Jesus substituted His perfect life and used that perfect sinless life as payment for my debt when He died on the cross.

How God the Father takes that payment for sin, Jesus perfect life, and imputes a righteousness not my own, the very perfect sinless righteousness of Christ is imputed to me, and my sin is imputed to Christ on that cross.

How Jesus rose from the dead, victorious over death, and how He leads His chosen ones to life eternal. How Jesus clothes His bride the church in spotless clean linen, acceptable and perfect in God's presence.

Those truths need to be there when the storm has turned us upside down. And they need to not only be there, but we need to have them prepared to explain to someone else.

Part of our footwear is being prepared to give every man an answer regarding the hope that is in us. There's that echo in the room again. This time it's Peter echoing the same thing Paul says. 1 Peter 3:15 *always **being ready** to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;*

That's the preparation of the gospel of peace. That's our footwear in this battle. Ready to stand firm, and sometimes even ready to advance.

16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

Satan fights dirty. What are the flaming arrows. Easy. Satan is ridiculously predictable. He does the same thing he's been doing since Eve. Eve?? Remember his strategy with Eve. *Hath God said?* Satan is going to twist the word of God and turn it into confusing lies. And not only is the wind going to blow 120 mph sideways, he's going to throw flaming arrows at you. He's going to twist the word of God and turn it into lies. Religious sounding lies. Yikes.

How do we combat that? We have a sheild and we fend off those arrows with it. What is it. Broken record again. The sheild is faith. Where does faith come from? Where do I get that? *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.*

He throws every kind of twisted lie at me, and my shield is that I know the truth. That's why Jeff can sit in the religious service in the mormon church at Mike Seifferd's funeral and his brain is systematically going, truth, truth, truth, LIE! Satan doesn't make it easy. He parades as an angel of light. You have to have the real truth understood and in memory.

17 *And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION,*

The battle is real. And we see the casualties. People that we were sure were christians. And like the seed that fell on rocky soil or was choked out by weeds, we look one day, and they're gone. Casualties in the battle.

Why? Did they lose their salvation. No, no that's never the picture the Bible gives us. The apostle John says, *They went out from us . . . why . . . because there were not of us.*

Salvation is your helmet. If you don't have real salvation, the broadsword of Satan may find your neck and take your head off.

It can be really confusing. Think about the two houses sitting next to each other on a lovely fine day. One is anchored to rock. One is sitting on top of sand. They're nearly identical, as far as what you see. It's the storm that reveals that one was built on rock and one was built on sand.

It throws us for a loop when someone we were sure was a christian, who worked and played along side us and gave every evidence that they were a true believer, then one day a storm comes and they vanish.

We were looking at the house on top, and the foundation or lack of one is hidden to us. It's hard when it happens to people you love. Gone. They didn't have the helmet. Their so called salvation wasn't real.

Finally, this armor has one more piece, and this weapon, unlike the others is offense. All of the others with possible exception of the shoes, are defensive. This last weapon is offensive. We can gain territory in

this battle. We can gain territory for our King!

and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

The Bible is so much of our defensive weaponry, but it is also that which the Spirit uses with us, to gain new territory. To actually advance against this enemy and take what he thought was his.

Paul says something very familiar. You all know this verse by heart. Romans 1:16; *I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to all who believe.*

The power isn't in Paul. The power is in the words of this book.

In 2 Cor. 10 Paul says; *3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. 5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,*

We not only weather the storms and stand, we gain territory for our King. It's amazing to think that God can use these earthen pots to advance His cause. Doesn't that make you want to destroy some spiritual fortresses?

That potential is there in every christian. But don't try it unless you're fully equipped. The seven sons of Sceva went charging in ordering demons around and the demons said, Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are you? And they barely escaped with their lives.

You've got no power to make advances in Satan's territory, but if God indwells you, John says, *greater is He who is in you, than he who is in the world.* The power belongs to the Holy Spirit. With Him we make advances into Satan's territory, by His power, not ours.

And finally one last armor in Paul's list. Vs. 18

18 *With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,*

Pray, always, for all of us. We pray for ourselves and we pray for each other. We are so limited. But God is moved to do this work, by our prayers.

In the Lord's prayer, there is a specific provision for resisting and withstanding the onslaughts of our enemy, the devil. How many times have you repeated the words and not thought about the implications.

*Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name,
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,*

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

*For; Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever.
Amen*

We just prayed for His ultimate victory over Satan, and our protection in this time while Satan rules this world. *lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*

We need to pray that often as we walk through this world. We are enemy combatants in enemy territory, and there are minefields all over the place that would blow us up.

So we return to Peter's words, and as we read them now, they are full of wonderful meaning to us. *9But resist him, firm in your faith, **knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.***

I keep telling you, we are the anomaly, not the norm. It's normal for christians to be going through what these christians were going through. It's not normal to leave peaceably with no pressure from Satan. Actually, that should worry us.

2Tim 3:10 *Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, 11 persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! 12 Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*

Oops? What about American evangelicalism in the 21st century Paul? It doesn't cost anything to be a christian. No one cares. As long as we're like the coexist bumper stickers that make my skin crawl. Live and let live. Don't you dare judge me.

What really makes my skin crawl are Pauls words to Timoty in the preceeding paragraph to the one I just read.

1 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power
hmmm. Does that make anyone else uncomfortable besides me.

I keep asking myself, is Satan's lack of pressure against the lukewarm church of the 21st century . . one of his schemes? One of his strategies?

Who are all those people who get spewed out of His mouth because they were neither hot nor cold. They were lukewarm. Who are all those people who say, *'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'* 23*"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'*

Now, I'm not going to go looking for suffering on purpose. Go irritate someone until they persecute me. But if the day comes and the lukewarm church is going happily up the wide road to avoid it, I want to

be informed enough to think twice.

I think the church is ripe for this. The muslim religion tells us that someone named Jesus is going to show up and he's going to be able to do miracles and the whole world, which is looking desperately for a messiah, since they rejected the real one, is going follow him like the rats and the children that followed the pied piper of Hamelin.

The church is ripe. We love miracles. We follow false prophets when we know good and well their miracles are phony. What will happen when they're real.

The false prophet is going to do real miracles. Does anyone else besides me think that this ridiculous infatuation the church has with miracles which dis-appeared in the 2nd century and never re-appeared until 18 centuries came and went, then supposedly returned is a scheme of Satan?

Well, I've done it again. This last couple of weeks has turned into a mini-series about our adversary, Satan. And I still didn't finish 1 Peter. But I think what we're learning is imperative. Next week we'll finish. IF the Lord is willing.