

• *Peter's further words of advice to his friends*

Peter has further words of advice to his friends who are on the edge of severe persecution. *'Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil roaring like a lion walks around seeking someone to devour'*¹. *Resist him, firm in faith, knowing that the same experience of sufferings are required of your brothers and sisters throughout the world'*². *And the God of all grace, the one who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little, he will himself restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you'*³. *To him is the might for ever and ever. Amen'*⁴.

1 5:8

2 5:9

3 5:10

4 5:11

**1. A command:
Be sober, be watchful**

1. First, there is a command. *'Be sober, be watchful...*' The first word (Greek: *nepho*) means to be sober; it is the opposite of being drunk. The second word (Greek: *gregoreo*) means to be wakeful; it is the opposite of being asleep.

• *Self-control*

The Christian is to be a person who is in control of himself. Although his joyfulness may at times be ecstatic and intoxicated, he is not to be so intoxicated that he loses his thoughtfulness altogether. Unlike the drunk he can walk straight and talk straight.

• *Awake and alert*

The Christian is to be a person who is wide awake, like a sentry on guard-duty at night-time. He or she knows that they live in a sinful world, and that he himself is full of foolishness and could make a disastrous blunder if he does not stay awake and watch what he is doing and where he is going. Godliness does not take care of itself. The Christian must be in control of himself and stay wide awake.

**2. An explanation:
The devil seeks someone to devour**

2. Next comes an explanation: *'Your adversary the devil roaring like a lion walks around seeking someone to devour'*¹. The Christian has an enemy. His title is 'the devil' – a word that means accuser or slanderer. Like a lion which creates terror when it roars at its prey, so Satan brings about situations which initially terrify us, so that we are ready to yield immediately. But a Christian who is alert and wakeful knows that the roar is itself deceitful and Satan is not as powerful as he would like to pretend.

1 5:8

• *Like a lion looking for the weakest creature*

Like a lion he wanders around looking for the weakest creature that can be easily devoured, seeking one of the herd which is straying from the rest of its companions, weak or maimed in some way and therefore easily captured. Like a lion his desire is to devour and kill. Alertness and wakefulness are needed.

**3. Another command:
Resist him, firm in faith**

3. Another command: *'Resist him, firm in faith...*' The good news concerning Satan is that he is resistible. He is not as powerful as his roars might suggest. Even a lion can be resisted. (A group of wide-awake wildebeest can chase away a lion! Only sleepy stragglers get devoured!)

• *With faith*

The Christian resists Satan first by knowing that he can be resisted. The lion's roar paralyzes its victim, and Satan's roar is the same. But the Christian resists Satan with faith. It means that we simply continue to believe God, no matter how great the lion's roaring may be. We stay cool; we remember God's promises; we stand where we are; we do not run away. And the lion goes away! It is faith that defeats Satan.

• *Remembering God's promises*

Faith that what God has told us to do, we can do. Faith in God's protection. Faith in the power of the Holy Spirit within us.

4. An encouragement: Knowing that the same sufferings are required of your brothers and sisters the world over

- We are not alone

4. An encouragement: '...knowing that the same experience of sufferings are required of your brothers and sisters throughout the world'¹. The lion was roaring with special brutality and fearsomeness. Persecution was about to break out. Peter wants his friends to know that what is happening to them is not so unusual. There are Christians all over the world – for Peter that was the Roman empire – and many of them are going through the same kind of troubles that face his friends in Roman Asia Minor.

1 5:9

In troubles and sufferings it is good to know that we are not alone and we are not the first to experience these harassments from Satan. It has been the story of the people of God for a long time, but there is no way Satan can prevent the progress of the kingdom of God.

5. A promise: He will restore and strengthen you

- Trials come to an end
- God's grace keeps us

5. A promise: '*And the God of all grace, the One who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little, He will himself restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you*'¹.

1 5:10

The trials and testings that come from God – with some help from Satan! – do not go on for ever. They come and go. Amidst the fearful oppositions that may come we stand firm in faith.

We are helped by God's purpose of grace. It was grace that saved us. It will be grace that keeps us. God has called us; He is determined to bring us to glory. Persecution cannot defeat us for long, and does not have to defeat us at all. If we stand firm we shall come out stronger. God will restore us. The persecution will be defeated.

6. A doxology – praise to God

- Forever

6. So Peter concludes with a 'doxology' – an expression of praise to God: '*To him is the might for ever and ever. Amen*'¹. This is really the end of the letter; only a few concluding comments remain². Peter's last word is one of praise and worship to God. It was God who chose us, God who sent a Redeemer to rescue us. It will be God who keeps us. Peter's words are a statement: 'To him is the might...'. It is a sheer fact that God is mighty. Peter rejoices to know that this 'might' of God is still at work. The grace that took hold of Peter when he was a fisherman will be with him and his people, and it will be with us who believe in Jesus, until it brings the entire people of God to glory. It will stay with us forever.

1 5:11
2 5:12-14



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