

## “RESISTING THE ROARING LION.”

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First Christian Reformed Church, Lynden, WA

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### Text for the Sermon: I Peter 5:8-9

**Prayer:** Holy Father, thank you for your Word, the life giving truth of Scripture. Thank you for your Holy Spirit who inspired it and has preserved it all these centuries. Thank you for the folly of preaching by human preachers, which is always an opportunity for you to display your power and glory, so may your wisdom increase in us to your glory and our spiritual edification and benefit. Help us in the name of Jesus.

### Introduction.

There is a war on out there. In fact it's all around us. I saw a warrior on the sidewalk in front of our house last week. I saw some more on the big pier in White Rock Friday night. I hear church parking lots are especially popular places for this battle. The war I am referring to is Pokémon Go. Millions of people are playing, running all over the place using their smartphones to track down all the Pokémon characters they can catch.

A lot of people think Pokémon characters are lot more real than any war with demons out there. And those demons aren't waiting to be captured; they are out seeking us.

### We have a fierce adversary, vs. 8.

**I Peter 5:8** Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

We live in an open universe. That means a universe that is not only material but spiritual, a universe in which there are tangible, seen material and physical realities and a universe in which there are intangible, unseen spiritual realities.

We can see enemies like terrorist and armies. These physical realities should be a reminder to us of spiritual realities that are easy to forget.

This is why Peter uses the two exhortations, two imperative commands, *be sober minded and be watchful*. If we forget this we will become slothful and fall asleep and be easy prey.

All of you parents do this with your children. If you are walking along a busy highway or crossing a busy street you are reminding them to pay attention, to look both ways. If your children are using the internet or social media you are warning them to be careful with whom they share information.

What we do in the physical realm or the technology realm, if we are truly wise and loving we will do in the spiritual realm. All of us must be warned to be sober minded and watchful. God is not the only personal spiritual being in our universe. We have an enemy and we are at war.

The devil is a real, personal, spiritual being, a fallen angel. He is over a legion of other demons under his authority. He is committed to one mission, to actively rebel against God and God's purposes and God's people. He hates God and everything about God.

Satan is an evil, cunning, deceiving person who is out to destroy all that is good, to stir up all the evil he can and to attack and harm Christians.

Satan is no common, garden variety enemy. He is a fierce foe, the most powerful of all possible enemies. Just as a lion is considered the king of the jungle, so he is a savage beast, a wild animal. There's nothing tame about him.

Like a hungry lion, Satan is dangerous. We must have a sober respect for Satan or we will not take him seriously. This lion seeks prey, someone to devour.

***How does a lion attack?*** Two ways. He attacks *silently*, quickly and unsuspectedly, he catches his victim by surprise, with his guard down.

How many times have you said something or done something and afterwards realizing it was sin and wondering how in the world did I do that so quickly and so easily? Where did that come from? Why do I keep doing that and not seeing it ahead of time?

He lurks, hides, sneaks up when the victim is busy minding his own business, busy in his own daily routines.

Satan waits to get us when we are most vulnerable, he never plays fair. Remember he waited to tempt Jesus until Jesus had been 40 days without food. He is whatever he needs to be to deceive you and trick you.

A quick read through the NT gives a pretty good picture of his various means and activities.

Satan stirs up irrational and evil behavior; he stirs up malicious talk and lies and falsehood and deception; he stirs up resistance to the truth and promotes false doctrine; he stirs up sudden thoughts and emotions of hatred, anger, pride, lust, greed, selfishness, impatience.

He seeks to keep us in bondage to self-destructive behavior. Think of those things in your life that you do over and over, that are unhealthy, unhelpful, emotionally, physically, spiritually unfruitful, that derail you

Satan can also attack through a ***loud roar***. He attacked Job through death, loss of income and livelihood, through his family, loss of health, through natural disasters. This adversary attacks with every possible adversity, sickness, diseases, pains, natural threats, persecution.

Satan can cause great suffering, to the point that our faith is overwhelmed and we begin to doubt God cares for us. It can make us doubt God has any power to help us.

***Peter had first-hand experience with the devil.*** I wonder if he was ever able to completely get that nightmare out of his mind. Jesus warned him ahead of time of spiritual drowsiness and he still fell into the devil's trap.

**Luke 22:31-34** "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, 32 but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." 33 Peter said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death." 34 Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me."

**Mark 14:37-38** And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? 38 Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Peter was asleep, he was not prepared for the battle he would soon face. In fact as soon as the first temptation came at the hand of a little girl, he caved in.

If Peter had followed this advice he might have resisted. If Peter had just taken Jesus' words seriously and not argued with Jesus he might not have failed. He resisted Jesus and submitted to Satan. He was proud and foolish.

Peter wants us to do better than him. No wonder Peter warns us not once but twice, be sober minded and be watchful. Be doubly on your guard.

Don't miss the clear implication of what Peter is saying. If you make God your friend, you will have Satan as your enemy, there is no other way. If you love God, you will be hated by the devil.

Satan is the sworn enemy of every Christian, of every godly saint on earth, of everyone who loves and worships God.

So to have Satan as your enemy as your enemy in one sense is a good thing. It means you have the right enemy and the right friend. To have Satan as a friend means God is your enemy. To have Satan as your enemy means you have stood for something good and right and holy.

You cannot be a Christian and not be at war. If you love Jesus and desire to live for Him, your life will be hard, you will be at risk, you will face difficulties not faced by those who don't know or love Jesus. Don't be naïve about this, don't be complacent.

Having said all of this could have the effect of striking terror into our hearts and make us shrink back in fear. After all who can stand up to so great an enemy? What hope can we have of victory? Can a true Christian actually be devoured by Satan?

Peter doesn't leave us with this fear, with this threat of violence against our souls, he gives us hope and help.

**We can resist him with a firm faith, vs. 9.**

**I Peter 5:9** Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

Please pay attention to this verse, it's an encouraging word. Don't separate it from the previous verse. We are not helpless before so great an enemy. The fact is we are not in a losing battle, we are not in a war with an unfavorable outcome. By faith in Jesus we can resist this defeated foe.

True Christians cannot ultimately be devoured by Satan. The promise in I Peter 1 is still true, "by God's power [we] are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed" (1:5). God promises to deliver those who resist with faith.

Remember our last text from I Peter, "humble yourselves, therefore, under the *mighty hand* of God" (I Peter 5:6). God has all power and all authority, Satan is not his equal. Our faith rests in the superior power of God who is able to control and crush Satan.

Just to remind you of what I have preached before, Satan is a created, but fallen angel, he is not omnipotent (all powerful), he is not omniscient (all knowing) and he is not omnipresent (all present). Like any angel he can only be in one place at a time, his knowledge and power are finite and limited.

Our faith is in the greater lion, the lion of the tribe of Judah who has conquered.

**1 Corinthians 15:57** Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

When we stand and resist we don't do it in our own strength but in faith in the victorious name of Jesus Christ. *Faith* is our victory. Faith defeats fear, faith defeats Satan, faith defeats death.

How are saints referred to in Scripture? As sheep. And what are a sheep's chances against a lion? Yet the weakest saint is more than a match for Satan through a firm faith in the great shepherd of the sheep who will not suffer even one of His own to perish.

**John 10:27-29** My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

**James 4:7** Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

*Resist him.* How? Use all the resources Jesus gives you as a Christian, prayer, the Word of God, faith, the help of other Christians. Verbally rebuke Satan and tell him to leave you alone, seek holiness in life which will strengthen your faith.

Resist him the way Jesus did, with Scripture, with faith in the Word of God, with the truth.

**1 John 5:4** For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

Victory is not guarantee, victory requires that you actively engage the battle and resist the enemy. Resist and then the enemy will flee. Resist and you will increase in faith and holiness and victory. Resist and God will turn Satan's attacks into good for His glory and our benefit. Resist and God will glorify Himself by showing Himself present and strong.

Resist his roar with faith. Resist his subtle temptations to sin with fleeing.

*Flee* is a strong word in the Bible. It doesn't mean walk away or wander away or even trot away. It means turn tail and run. Run like you are running from a dangerous enemy. Run like your life depends on it. Run like you really understand the power and deceitfulness of sin.

The Bible uses the word flee from some of the most serious sins.

I Corinthians 6:18 flee from sexual immorality.

I Corinthians 10:14 flee from idolatry.

I Timothy 6:11 flee from the love of money, from all materialism, greed, desires for things.

II Timothy 2:22 flee from the evil desires of your youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love.

Running from particularly tempting sins is not a sign of spiritual weakness, but of spiritual maturity, of a person who is being sober minded and watchful.

Flee from tempting places and flee from tempting people.

*By places* I mean flee from tempting circumstances and situations. If alcohol is a problem don't have lunch in a bar. If you are tempted in airport bookstores don't go in them. Block channels, stop subscriptions, delete addicting websites or social media. Be wise, think about when and how and where you are tempted to a particular sin and then avoid it.

*By people* I mean flee from tempting associations, people who pull you down rather than pull you up. If they are leading you more away from Christ then you need to stay away.

**I Corinthians 15:33** Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."

**James 4:8** Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

We do not live in a peacetime. We live in a war and we should adopt a warfare mentality.

**II Corinthians 10:3-4** For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

There is a battle waging all around us and we must be willing and ready and able to fight. We are not powerless. We have the Holy Spirit, Scripture and prayer, our faith.

## ***Knowing that you are not alone in your sufferings.***

Is this any consolation to you? Does it help you knowing you are not alone, that this struggle, this battle is fought by your brothers and sisters all over the world?

One of Satan's tactics is to isolate us and get us alone and to think we are alone. But nothing is happening to us that isn't happening to countless other Christians.

In fact, consider that many Christian's around the world are enduring far greater temptations to sin than we are, and if they can endure by faith, so can we.

I bit ago I said we need to avoid people who lead us into temptation. On the opposite side we need to surround ourselves with people who help us remain strong in the face of temptation. Don't go it alone, don't stay isolated, surround yourself with at least on other person you can talk to and engage the battle with.

One of Satan's tactics is to make us proud and by being proud we don't admit our needs or weaknesses or sins to anyone else, so we stay isolated and weak.

But the truth is all of us face the same or similar kinds of temptations all the time, none of us are immune or alone.

### **Implications and application.**

**Brian Kok** has been an example of the power of sin and how to flee from sin and defeat it. He took responsibility for himself and took action to resist and flee from his sinful addictions, but he also humbled himself and asked others help him. I am amazed at how freely he talks about it, he pushed through the shame and is now walking in victory.

Of course, Satan is always lurking and would love nothing more than to get Brian to fall. Brian will tell you the battle never stops, there are triggers every day to fall. So we must stand together, we pray for one another, we hold each other accountable. We all need help.

Let's get serious and take Satan and his subtle attacks and his loud roars seriously. Let's do all of this in the power of Jesus and the victory of the cross, by faith.

**Psalm 91:1-3, 9-13** He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."  
3 For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence.

9 Because you have made the Lord your dwelling place—the Most High, who is my refuge—  
10 no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent.

11 For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

12 On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

13 You will tread on the lion and the adder;

the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.