

1 Peter 5:5b-11 | “Humble and Watchful”
Preached on August 8, 2021 by Pastor Matt Brown

Turn in your Bibles to 1 Peter 5, verses 5 through 11.

We are getting towards the very end of this book, as we see Peter’s concluding commands to his readers.

And in his commands, he gives a good summary of what’s needed in the Christian life. *[pauseee]*

Have you ever heard someone talk about what characteristics are needed to do well in something?

Like, if you are going to take a long trip in the car, you will need to be alert and awake.

If you are going to climb up the side of a cliff, you are going to need to be courageous and calm.

If you are going to be a teacher you probably need knowledge and patience.

Well, what characteristics do you need in the Christian life?

What characteristics will help the Christian persevere, even through the hard times? *[pause]*

What do *you* think?

What are some of the first things that come to your mind?

There are probably many needed, but Peter points out a couple critical characteristics that we definitely need to endure as he finishes out his letter.

And the first is this - humility. For he shows us that we should...

I. Be humble, for you have a mighty, yet caring God! (5b-7)

I’ll read verses 5 through 7...*[pause]*

I was thinking about how our world would answer this question of: what characteristics are needed to persevere in hard times?

They would probably say to look inward to find the courage and endurance.

They would say, “You are enough.”

And sadly, this is exactly what many churches and Christians in our time are saying, too.

They are telling people that they are valuable, priceless, strong, courageous, and enough so people should just recognize their worth and find courage there.

But this is the complete opposite of what Peter tells us!

We must not be duped into this kind of deceptive talk. *[pause]*

The dangerous trend today is to look inward for strength and greatness, but the Bible calls us to look outward to God. *[pauseeee]*

If you think about it, if you keep telling people that they should just look inward for strength and greatness, what does that lead to?

Really think about it.

When you keep saying to someone, “You are great. You are courageous. You are strong. You have everything within you to do this.”

What does that lead to in their life? *Pride.*

We don’t need people telling us to look at our own greatness, for in our sinful pride, we already *think we are great.* *[pause]*

So Peter doesn’t say, “You know what guys, you are enough. You have everything within you to succeed, so just be strong because you are strong, be courageous because you are courageous.”

He doesn’t say, “Just love yourself more and recognize your potential.”

No, he says, “*Humble yourself.*” *[pause]*

‘Peter! What are you doing?’

‘Humble myself? Humbling myself is going to help me in my Christian life to persevere and endure?’

And God speaking through Peter’s letter says, “Yep.”

‘Well, what about the strength and courage inside of me? What about my greatness to overcome hard situations? What about my ingenuity? What about me?’

And God says, “*Humble yourself, clothe yourself with it.*” *[pauseeee]*

Now before we go any further, what exactly is humility, according to the Bible?

Humility is not self-hate, but rather it’s a modest view of yourself, and putting others before yourself.

It’s assessing yourself rightly, and it’s the opposite of pride and arrogance.

It’s not pretending you are unworthy, but rather, it’s realizing that you are unworthy of anything in this life, but for the grace of God.

That's the truth, for what do we have that we did not receive from God?¹ *[pause]*

In Philippians 2, Paul gives us a great look into humility as he says, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."² *[pause]*

So someone who is humble doesn't put him or herself above others, and they don't think too highly of themselves, but they count others more significant than themselves. *[pause]*

After this, Paul gives the prime example of Jesus' humility in how he humbled himself by taking on flesh, being a servant, obeying, and going all the way to the Cross and dying for us.³

That's humility. *[pause]*

Pride has a high view of self and puts oneself above others.

Humility has a modest view of self and puts others above itself. *[pauseeee]*

So Peter says in verse 5b, "Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another."
[pause]

He commands each Christian to have humility when it comes to other people.

The image of 'clothe yourself' is the image of putting on clothing.

It means to put humility on like a piece of clothing; attach it and fasten it on, sorta like an apron.
[pause]

Peter may have gotten this picture from what Jesus did in washing the disciples feet.

Jesus took a towel and tied it around his waist, and then proceeded to wash his disciples feet in an amazing display of humility and service.⁴ *[pause]*

That's the idea, here.

Each of us are to choose to put on humility, like we choose to put on a piece of clothing, as we interact with each other.

We should not put ourselves above them in our mind or actions, but rather, we are to humbly serve them. *[pauseeee]*

So when it comes to others, do you show humility or pride?

¹ See 1 Corinthians 4:7.

² Philippians 2:3-4.

³ See Philippians 2:5-8.

⁴ Story found in John 13:1-5.

Do you put yourself first or others first? *[pause]*

Here's an evaluative question for you: do you expect people to serve you, or do you seek ways to serve others?

We should never think anything is too low for us to do, and we should never think any person is lower than us, either. *[pause]*

So what's your mindset when you are with others?

Do you ever think, "I can't talk to *them*." Or, "I'm better than that person." Or, "Why won't they serve *me*?" *[pause]*

That's not being clothed with humility towards others, but that's prideful living.

We should instead be thinking, "How can I serve others today?"

What about reaching out to someone totally unlike you and helping them in some way?

That's a beautiful display of humility because you aren't thinking that you are better than them, but you are treating them as more significant than yourself, even if they are different. *[pauseeeee]*

But what's the reason?

Peter gives us some motivation, as he says, "for God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." *[pause]*

Do you see the motivation here?

He uses God's stance and attitude toward the proud and humble, in order to help us see the importance of humility in our lives. *[pause]*

God opposes the proud, arrogant, and haughty person.

The proud person considers themselves superior to others and more important than others.

They have an inflated view of themselves. *[pause]*

But why does he oppose them?

Because proud people are self-reliant, self-trusting people.

Their pride actually pushes God out of the picture.

This is because they seek their own glory over God's. *[pause]*

It was pride that made Satan fall and he deceived Adam and Eve into being prideful as well.⁵

⁵ Story found in Genesis 3.

Pride vs. humility is a major theme woven throughout all of Scripture. *[pause]*

God opposes the proud, he's in opposition to them, set in array against them.

That's some strong language here, isn't it?

To have God oppose you is not a good predicament to be in.

He's not pleased when we live in pride, but rather, he gives grace to the humble.

It is the poor in spirit who enter into the kingdom of heaven.⁶ *[pause]*

He cherishes those who recognize their unworthiness and humbly call out for grace.

He gives favor, blessing, and help to those who are humble.

If that's God's stance towards the proud and the humble, why would we want to have *anything* to do with pride?!

If God Almighty opposes the prideful, why would I seek to be proud?

If God cherishes and gives help to the humble, I want to be humble! *[pause]*

You see, the prideful trust in themselves, the humble trust in God.

The prideful seek their own glory, the humble seek God's glory.

And this is important because God is the great Creator and we are his sinful creatures.

So he deserves all the glory, and we deserve none. *[pauseeee]*

The truth is this: God delights in being trusted in and being glorified.

And when we trust and glorify him by being humble, then he gives grace to us.

But when we sinfully stick up our nose in pride, he opposes that.

So Peter says, "Humble yourself, therefore, under the mighty hand of God!" *[pause]*

Realize that He is the Mighty One, and you are so low compared to him.

Humble yourself.

Stop thinking that you are all high and mighty.

Stop thinking that you are better than others, but as commentator Douglas Moo says...

⁶ See Matthew 5:3.

“Recognize your own spiritual poverty, acknowledge your desperate need of God’s help and submit to his commanding will for all your life.”⁷ *[pauseeee]*

The Lord delights in and gives grace to the humble, and this is seen by the fact that he will exalt the humble.

At the proper time, he will exalt us when we humble ourselves under his mighty hand. *[pause]*

This proper time is most likely when Christ comes again.

Though we are humbly low now, he will lift us up!

Either you will be low now and be exalted by God later, or you will exalt yourself now and be brought low by God later.

In a great reversal of the world, God will reverse the positions.

The proud brought low, the humble raised up. *[pauseeee]*

What better motivation is there to be humble? God’s attitude towards the humble and the proud!

So humility comes from remembering what God delights in and rewards.

It’s seeking to submit to him, and what he desires, and we know that he gives grace to the humble. *[pauseeee]*

Not only does God's stance towards the humble make us humble, but also God’s power and care should make us humble.

Notice how in verse 7, the word is “casting” and not “cast”.

That’s because it’s a participle, showing us how we humble ourselves.

We humble ourselves *by* casting all of our anxieties on him.

You get it?

Giving your worries to God is humility, while holding onto your worries is pride.

But how?

Because when you keep worrying about something, you are acting like you can control the situation.

In your pride, you think that you can take care of it.

⁷ Slightly changed for smoothness in relation to my context.

While humility says, “I know I don’t have the power to do anything, so I’m trusting the One who does.” *[pause]*

He has the mighty hand, we don’t!

He is the Great Sovereign One, we aren’t.

So cast your anxieties on him in humility!

Hurl them onto God!

Don’t just slowly lay them, but toss them on the Lord! Let your anxieties fly!

Chuck them onto God! *[pause]*

He’s capable, so why are you trying to carry them yourself? That’s pride!

You are thinking, “I can handle this weight. I can carry all of these anxieties and try to do all that I’m called to do.” *[pauseeee]*

This casting your anxieties on him is simply letting them go and trusting them with God.

It’s trusting in his mighty hand to care for you, for the truth is that he cares for you!

Give all your cares to him, for he *cares* for you. *[pauseeeee]*

Sometimes people keep their anxieties to themselves because they think that God wouldn’t care about such little things, but look at what Peter is saying...

“Cast *all* your anxieties on him, for he cares about you.”

He cares!

He loves you, he wants to help you, you are important and relevant to him. *[pauseeee]*

When you say that you don’t care about something, what are you saying?

You’re saying that it’s unimportant to you and you’re not interested or concerned with it...

Well Peter says that you are important to God, he takes great interest in you.

Not because you are this super, spectacular, amazing person, but because He is.

Because he is a loving and caring God. *[pause]*

You are a care to God, so he’s saying, “Give me your anxieties. Toss them on me, for my hand is mighty.” *[pause]*

This is going to take humility.

It's going to take humility to take the anxiety you are feeling and fling it away from you because you want to control it.

You are fearful, you are scared of what happens next when you cast it out of your hands, but that's pride speaking.

You are looking inward to your strength, wisdom, and capabilities, but in humility, realize that you can't handle it.

Give it to the One who can handle it. *[pauseee]*

Right now think of an anxiety that you have, I mean it, think of something that you are anxious about.

Is it that situation at work? Is it a money situation? Is it a confrontation you might have with someone? Is it a health issue?

Whatever it is, think about it right now. *[pause]*

Now I want you to cast it on God in trust - hurl it, toss it!

Trust him with it!

Don't keep clinging to it, don't carry that weight anymore, but CAST IT ON HIM, come on!

Humble yourself, and let it fly!

Remember that God cares about you! He no longer wants you to feel that burden.

He no longer wants you weighed down with that anxiety, but he wants you to feel the relief of simple trust in Him. *[pause]*

Now trust Him, feel the burden lifted, and the weight of anxiety off your shoulders.

It's in His hands, now keep it there.

Don't go and get it again, but trust him fully with it.

He's in control, so rest in His powerful, mighty hand. *[pauseeeee]*

We must humble ourselves under God.

We must submit to Him, the powerful One, and realize that we are dependent creatures, dependent wholly on his grace and provision.

Always remember that when you feel anxiety coming on. *[pauseeeeeee]*

Humility is important as we live the Christian life.

We have a battle raging in the inside of us, and it's our own pride seeking ways to rise up at every opportunity.

So humble trust in God is the key to victory against pride.

And this humility comes from trusting in the mighty and caring Lord, rather than yourself.

[pause]

Will you humble yourself towards others and towards God?

He gives grace to the humble, but opposes the proud.

He will lift up the humble, and cares for His children, so trust Him.

Stop pridefully desiring to control it all and depending on yourself, but in humility, cast it all on the Greatest One in the Universe.

That's where true peace, joy, and relief are found. *[pauseeee]*

Sadly, our world tells us the opposite of these truths.

They say, "You are enough. You are worthy. You deserve it."

In preparing for this sermon, I looked up self-love accounts on Instagram and I found one with 3 million followers.

It was called, "My self love supply".

And all over their posts there is a plethora of messages about loving yourself, praising yourself, and being enough.

Really cultivating humility, right?

And guess what they said when it comes to being anxious.

They gave a post about things to remind yourself when you're anxious, and one of them was this: Remind yourself that, "You are so much more powerful and worthy than you realise."⁸

That's the complete opposite of what Peter is telling us to do.

Don't be deceived! Though this sounds all good, it leads to greater despair and dissatisfaction!

[pause]

When you are feeling anxious, the cure is not thinking about how powerful and worthy you are, it's thinking about how powerful and worthy God is!

⁸ Instagram account: @myselflovesupply. Post from July 27, 2021.

It's not trying to muster up the strength to control it all and solve it, it's giving it over to the One who can. *[pause]*

Living the way that they call you to will swallow you even deeper in a swamp of anxiety because anxiety comes from thinking you can control it with worry.

But you aren't powerful enough to handle it all!

And you will feel the increasing weight of the burden of it all and it will not be good. *[pause]*

Pride is the path to self-destruction, and humility is the path to grace and relief.

Cast it all on God!

You aren't strong enough. You aren't worthy enough. You aren't enough, but thankfully, you know the One who is and he cares for you.

That's where you find true love, not by self-love, but by the love and care of a God full of grace. *[pauseeee]*

So Peter tells us that we need to humble ourselves in trust in God in order to persevere, but also, he tells us to...

II. Be watchful and ready, for you have an enemy on the prowl! (8-11)

I'll read verses 8 through 11. *[pause]*

Peter knows that this humble trust is critical, but he wants to make sure that we don't go into a mode of carelessness.

For the Christian life also needs watchfulness. *[pauseeee]*

The Christian life is one of dependent trust in God, but it also involves being vigilant.

We don't just go into cruise control and float down a lazy river with our heads in the clouds. *[pause]*

He tells us to be sober-minded and watchful!

It's to be clear-headed and alert.

We are not to have any fuzzy thinking inflated by inordinate emotions, but like a sober person, we are to look at the true reality around us without any distortions.

And what's the reason that we are to be sober-minded and alert? Because the devil prowls around like a roaring lion. *[pause]*

We are to be clear-headed and vigilant because we have a dangerous enemy!

When you have an enemy nearby, you don't slack off and then go to sleep, but rather, you make sure that you are clear-headed and alert to the movements of the enemy. *[pauseeee]*

Christian, we have an enemy on the prowl, so be clear-headed and alert!

Don't become lackadaisical, careless, or lax in your Christian life or else you will be devoured by the roaring lion, the devil. *[pauseeee]*

There is a major peril in our time and it comes from neglecting to emphasize the reality and work of the devil in our world.

The devil is real, and when you minimize his role in the world, you become less vigilant against him, and you open yourself up to attack. *[pause]*

Brother or sister in Christ, this is so important!

You have an enemy, an adversary, who is the accuser and slanderer.

He is not a nice, friendly lion that you can play around with - no, he is a hostile, aggressive, violent, wild, ferocious, and hungry lion ready to consume anyone that he can.

So be alert, be vigilant, be sober-minded, be ready, for he's prowling around.

He will devour people, that is, he will bring them to destruction and ruin. *[pause]*

For an unbeliever, who claims they are a Christian, he will lead them to apostatize, and lead others down that path.

For the believer, he will ruin your effectiveness, and try to tarnish the reputation of Christ. *[pause]*

Don't be caught off guard, but be ready, and Peter says, "Resist him!"

Oppose that lion, stand up against him, don't let him have even an inch!

There should not even be a hint of friendliness or receptiveness towards him, but you should resist him.

You should want *nothing* to do with him, but be fully against him. *[pause]*

When it comes to the devil, we are not called to fear, panic, or even go out searching for him, rather, we "resist him, firm in the faith".

This is the key to your resistance against Satan: being firm in your faith.

It's not to trust in our own power to beat the devil, or outscheme him, but we stand firm in what we believe.

We rely upon God more, and trust His promises. *[pause]*

Like Jesus was firm and used Scripture to battle Satan's temptations, so we must stand firm in the faith and use Scripture against him. *[pause]*

We need unwavering trust in Christ.

As Paul says in Ephesians 6, "Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil."⁹ *[pause]*

Your faith should be solid, resolute, steadfast, and unshakable.

Not because you are strong, but you are clinging to God, who is strong. *[pauseeee]*

This is what you need to know...

If you are not growing in your faith and standing firm on the promises of God, you are not going to be able to resist the devil.

You see, a growing, firm faith is like a fence around you that prevents you from being mauled by the roaring lion, the devil.

But when you just carelessly go through life, living for yourself, not being in the Word or growing, then you don't have that fence up.

And the devil will have a field day. *[pauseeee]*

Adam and Eve weren't watchful or resistant and that is precisely why the devil was successful.

So be sober-minded, watchful for him, and resist him, firm in the faith. *[pauseeee]*

I like this quote by Charles Spurgeon, as he shows us how resisting the devil can lead to an even closer relationship with Christ.

He says, "Resist. Be more prayerful every time he is more active. He will soon give it up, if he finds that his attacks drive you to Christ.

Often has Satan been nothing but a big black dog to drive Christ's sheep nearer to the Master."¹⁰ *[pauseeee]*

Peter also tells us that we should remember that Christians all around the world are going through the same sorts of things.

This isn't just you; you aren't alone in this.

⁹ Ephesians 6:10-11.

¹⁰ Charles Spurgeon. Found at: <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/1-peter-5/>.

That would be discouraging if you were the only one facing suffering, but Christians across the globe are experiencing suffering.

We are all going through this together. *[pauseeee]*

And we see in this verse, the devil is behind at least some of our suffering.

For suffering is often what the devil uses, think about how he tried to use suffering against Job.

He wants believers to curse God in their suffering.

So he incites people to persecute Christians, and does a myriad of other things that cause us suffering with a goal of destroying us and our witness.

But God gives a precious promise, for “after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.” *[pause]*

There is suffering in this life, but there is also the God of all grace. *[pause]*

We have a God of grace, who loves us so much that he has called us to his eternal glory in Christ.

What hope-giving reminders!

We have a great God, who has promised us Heaven, so we look with faith and hope-filled hearts as we go through suffering. *[pause]*

But that’s not all, for he restores, confirms, strengthens, and establishes us.

He will mend what is hurt and broken in us from suffering.

He will strengthen us and make us more firm and established. *[pause]*

The words used here make it sound like an image of restoring, strengthening, and making more firm a building that has gone through a storm. *[pause]*

Though we face suffering, our suffering is not the final word, for it is only for a little while, and God will restore and strengthen us.

We are actually made more firm and strengthened by God through suffering.

He will not leave us defeated, deflated, or destroyed, but he mends, restores, and strengthens us so that we can persevere in the Christian life. *[pause]*

We have all that we need in this Christian life because the God of all grace is on our side!

He is the Mighty One whose hand is mighty.

To him belongs dominion forever and ever! *[pauseeeee]*

There is a battle against you from the outside, and it's the devil.

He prowls around, so be watchful and ready, don't put down your guard, but be vigilant, firm in the faith.

And this enemy will try to use suffering to get you to give up, but don't give up because you have a God of all grace, who strengthens and restores you.

Resist the devil and look to God in firm faith, knowing that He will care for you, will give you the strength needed, and he promises an eternal glory to come. *[pauseeee]*

This morning, we can walk away with this big idea...

Humility and watchfulness are needed in the Christian life, and they take a firm trust in the Lord. *[pause]*

Why does Peter say that humility and watchfulness against Satan are important characteristics for Christians?

Because pride and a lackadaisical attitude about Satan are a recipe for disaster in a Christian's life.

Pride pushes God out in self-dependence, and Satan devours those not on guard against him. *[pause]*

You see, if Satan can get you to think you are great and you have the power to do anything you set your mind to...

...Then you will be devoured because you are not powerful enough and you are not looking to God, who has the real strength. *[pause]*

If Satan can get you to not think about him much, then he has free reign to do what he wants.

He knows that he has no hope against a humble, vigilant, and God-trusting Christian because their hope is in God.

But if he can get people to be consumed with self-love, pride will rise and humble trust in God will diminish.

If he can get people thinking that faith in God is lame, outdated, boring, and worthless, then resistance against him will diminish.

These are the schemes of the devil, and he's at work in our world even now.

Will you recognize it? Or will you be caught off guard? *[pauseeee]*

Humility and watchfulness take a firm trust in the Lord.

Our present time involves these things, but in the God of all grace we have all that we need!

So will you continue trusting the One who humbly came to this earth, took on flesh, and died on the Cross for your sins?

In grace, he forgave our sins and gave us eternal life.

Everything we have is from him, and we deserve none of it, so humility should be our natural disposition.

And let's be on the lookout for the enemy who prowls around, let's take up the shield of faith, which can extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one.¹¹

And all the while, knowing that we can cast our cares on our Mighty God, and he will give us what we need all along the way to persevere through suffering.

¹¹ See Ephesians 6:16.