



Sermon – March 24, 2019
Wes Wilkinson

Verses Covered

1 Peter 5:5 – 11

Romans 8:31-32

Psalm 37:8

Luke 21:34 – 36

2 Corinthians 10:3 - 5

Amen. It's a joy to be back. We've been gone the last two Sundays in the College Ministry. We've been up in Seattle on a mission trip. And I just want to say many of you, the Wednesday before we left, prayed for us. And I want to say thank you for your prayer. And I asked many of you, that anytime you thought of us, to pray for us. So I know you did. Thank you. Our trip was wild. We had all our flights cancelled. The group did not arrive for two and a half days late. But in spite of the difficulty getting there, we had a rich time with wide open doors. Sharing the gospel with students at the University of Washington. Which culminated in a little over a week ago, the last Friday we were there, a girl from another country who's never heard the name Jesus, giving her life to the Lord. So you have a new sister in Christ today because of what God did through our students in Seattle. And she is at church today there. And I just want to say thank you for praying because God used your prayers to sustain us and open doors. On that, you can be in prayer. Pastor Chris is in Rio de Janeiro. He is spending the week training pastors there how to preach and lead their congregation. So you can be in prayer for him as he travels and he speaks.

Now we live in an anxious world. I think we can all acknowledge that. The world is a broken place. There's anxieties and concerns we have because the world is a broken place where sin abounds. We live in a world that is a dangerous place in that brokenness. And seeming to become more dangerous by the day. And we live in a world that by in large really is hostile to who our God is and what He has done in our lives and the change that that is supposed to bring in our lives. And even more specifically, you and I live in a country that once, at times, honored aspects of who our God is and what He's done in our lives. But today has no sense of honor. We live in an anxious time. Whether it's anxiety over how to pay the next bill or over losing a job or over how well we raise our kids in a world that's so upside down. How will they go to college? There's anxiety all around. Tell you very specifically I, and this is not an important anxiety, but I have never loved flying. I hate flying. Hate it with a passion. Which is ironic being the son of a man who's a mission's minister and travelling all over the places. And as of course as we flew to

Seattle, that was the same week the flight crashed in Ethiopia and as I was flying back on the plane, there was a lot of anxiety rising up. But I had this thought as I looked at the man next to me. And I said, “You know, what, how do I as a believer face this anxiety? Because if I have no way to face it, what kind of Gospel do I have to offer to him?” So that’s the passage we’re going to look at today.

If you’ve got your Bibles, turn with me to 1 Peter, chapter 5. 1 Peter chapter 5. And we’re going to pick up at the very end of verse 5. 1 Peter 5:5. And as you turn there, understand the context. Peter is writing to a group of believers living in what is today modern day Turkey. They are experiencing suffering because they are Christians and they claim the name of Jesus. And Peter has written to them to tell them, he’s written them to tell them who their God is. To tell them who their God is, what He’s done for them, and the life that they are to live in a hostile world because of who their God is and what He’s done in their lives. And he comes to the end, and this is his final exhortation on how they’re to live. And this is what he says; end of verse 5.

⁵for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. ⁶In light of this, therefore 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 sober, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, firm in faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brothers who are in the world. ¹⁰And after 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.

So he writes this group of believers. He comes to the end of a book talking about how they are to live in a hostile world. And here’s what he says. He makes a true statement. God is opposed to pride. He is opposed to those who live in pride. But He gives His grace to those who are humble. So in light of this truth, humble yourselves. Make yourselves low. Submit yourselves under who God is. Recognize God is God and I am not. And I am to humble myself in the midst of trials, in the midst of sufferings, in the midst of a hostile world I humble myself under His mighty hand. Which is an interesting little phrase. It’s a phrase that’s used very specifically to describe God’s power to deliver. It’s used all throughout the book of Exodus to describe God taking the Israelites, a group of people who are nobodies on the world’s scale. And to remove them. To free them from the most powerful and advanced nation in the world without a single drop of blood. Without any warfare. And actually the Egyptians pay the Israelites to leave. He says, you humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. The hand that is mighty and powerful to deliver. So that He, at the right time, will exalt you. You and I as believers living in a hostile world are not to live a life that is trying to prop ourselves up. We are to humble ourselves. To submit to God. To submit to His sovereign hand over our life. And we wait for His exaltation and it says His exaltation comes at the proper time. It doesn’t say when the proper time is. Some of us may experience exaltation this side of heaven. For most there will absolutely be an exaltation coming when the Lord returns. When all is set right. When we see Him face to face. But make no mistake. When God exalts, it is never disappointing. So he says, you humble yourselves. But he doesn’t just say humble. He describes how we are to humble ourselves. He says, casting all your anxiety on Him. Casting. There’s a participle. It’s telling you how to humble. How do I humble myself? How do I do this?

By casting all of my anxiety, all of my cares, literally, anything that could remotely cause concern in my life, I cast it onto God. And that word, casting, is a word that means to forcefully throw something off of yourself and onto another. It is not the idea of casting a fishing rod. It is not the idea that I take my anxieties and I put them on the fishing hook and I throw it out into the oceans of God's grace. And you know what, if God takes it off, great. Then I'll feel better. But if He doesn't, I reel it back in and try again. That's not casting. Because that's you keeping the anxiety. Casting is like when we were in Seattle and we were helping, we were doing some service work to help the pastor there. And we dug up a tree stump. It was about 40 pounds. And I walked it over to the ravine and I didn't keep it. I threw it as far as I could and gave it up to the ravine. That's the idea here. That every anxiety you and I have, we are to take it and to cast it completely and fully upon God. Every anxiety. That is my anxiety of flying on an airplane which is very much a me thing. But that is the anxiety of how will I go to college, students. Who will I marry? How will I get a job? How will we pay for this? There is no mistake that Jesus taught us to pray, give us this day our daily bread. While I'm prone to think of that only in a spiritual context, the reality is, God wants us dependent on Him for everything. And in our materialistic and successful world, we have a tendency to forget the only reason you and I even have air to breathe, is because by His grace, He gives it to us. We are to take every anxiety and to cast it on to Him. Why? It says, because He cares for you. He cares. God is concerned absolutely with His best in your life and my life. He is not concerned with what we think is best for our lives. But He is concerned is the only One who can see the whole plan is the One who knows right from wrong, is the One who is good. He is concerned that we have His best and nothing else. He cares for you and I. He cares and is more concerned about His will being done in our lives and through our lives than you and I do or ever can. He's more concerned that you go to the school He wants you to go to than you are. He's more concerned that you marry who He wants you to marry than you are. He's more concerned that you work the job that He wants you to have than you are. He's more concerned for the ministry that He desires to do through you than you and I are or ever could be. He cares because we're His. It's His ministry. His care is seen supremely in the fact that it's His love that says, Romans 8. Romans 8 says it in this way.

³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³²He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not freely with Him give us all things?

God cares. And if I believe God cares, I take my anxieties and I cast them to Him. Now casting my anxieties doesn't mean that I do nothing. But it means that instead of keeping my anxieties, instead of trying to control the situation and be the solution to alleviate my anxieties, I lay them before God time after time after time. And then I look at how I'm to act obediently and faithfully to Him. And I rest in His control. I entrust them to the power of His mighty hand. And I entrust them to the care of His loving heart.

Here's the irony in all of this. When you and I walk in anxiety, if the act of humbling myself is to cast my anxiety, then to keep my anxiety would be the opposite of humility which is pride. When you and I live a life driven by our anxieties, rather than casting them before the Lord, we are living in pride. We're living in pride because we elevate ourselves to a place of godhood; taking responsibility for things that God has said is His responsibility and our job to trust Him with. And the sad part is, when we walk in anxiety, we keep ourselves from knowing the true depths of His

care, the sufficiency of His grace, and the magnitude of His power. That's why the Psalmist will say in Psalm 37:8

⁸Do not worry; it leads only to evil.

The first thing God tells us as we live and follow Him in a world that is hostile is we are to humble ourselves by casting our anxieties to Him. It's hard to do. We don't like to cast our anxieties. We like to keep them. And this is why. Look at verse 8. This is why it flows right into the next command. Be sober, be on the alert. He gives two commands. Be sober. Do not be ruled by any inordinate emotion or thought. Do not be ruled by emotion or any thought that is less than who God is. And not only that, but don't slumber. Be awake. Be alert. Be in constant readiness. You and I are to think clearly and to be awake. And it makes sense. The connection is there. Because when you and I live a life driven by anxiety, when we live a life walking in pride, we live a life where we dull ourselves to who God is and what He is doing. Listen to what the Lord says in the Gospel of Luke. This is what Jesus says to the disciples; talking about the nearing of the return of Christ. Which we would be nearer to the return of Christ today. It says:

³⁴Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will come upon you suddenly like a trap; ³⁵it will come upon all those on the face of the earth. ³⁶But keep alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.

How are we to live in a world that is hostile against? A world that will certainly provide us with ample reason for anxiety. But we're to humble ourselves, casting our anxiety. And in doing that we are to be sober and alert. We're to think how God would have us think and we're to be awake and alert. Alert for who God is. Alert for what He's doing. But also alert because, look back at the text with me. You and I have an enemy. Your adversary. A word that means hostile enemy. The devil. Which literally means the one who slanders. Prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. You and I have a real enemy. A real enemy who is seeking, the text says, he is presently seeking. He is looking with all of his intent to accomplish his objective. What is his objective? Jesus says, he's a murderer. It says here he's seeking to devour which means to just gulp down in one swallow. If you're a Jurassic Park fan, it's the T-Rex eating anything. This is the heart of our enemy. We do not have an enemy that when we get to the end of all things, Jesus returns, we're not going to walk up after the game to Satan and go, "Hey, good game." This is not an opponent. He is an enemy. And he is bent on you and I's destruction. He desires to keep every man and woman who does not know Christ from knowing Christ. And if we are saved, then his desire in our life is to keep us as believers from experiencing the fullness of who God is and what He has done on our behalf and given us in Christ. Listen to how it describes him. It describes him as a roaring lion. Now I am not a lion expert. And I did not stay at a Holiday Inn Express last night. But I did do a little study on lions. And it's interesting imagery. Because what lions will do, is lions while it's during the day, when their prey can see them, will watch and study. They will study their prey. They will look for who's tired, who's weak, who's young, who's hurting. They don't attack during the day when you can see them coming because most of their prey is faster than they are. So they watch. And at night they begin to roar their powerful roar so that they intimidate their prey. So that they confuse their prey as they're roaring all around. They're

patient and they stalk their prey. They want their prey to be lulled into a drowsiness and not be aware of the danger that threatens them. This is how your enemy attacks. This is how our enemy attacks. Satan is an opportunist in every way. He is wise. He will study. He knows where you and I's weak spots are. He knows when we are tired. He knows when we are walking in pride where we are not dependent upon the Lord. Where we may think things are going great, but we don't realize how dangerously close to the edge of the cliff we are. Rarely will he attack like a boxer coming at you from the front. But rather he will take your momentum and he will throw you on the ground. You have an enemy. I have an enemy who is aim is nothing less than destruction. He will attack in the form of condemnation to discourage us. He will attack with temptation to get us to sin. He will attack with persecution to get us to quit. He will always attack with lies. Jesus says he's the father of lies. He lied to Adam and Eve about God's character. He tried to use God's word in a twisted way to get Jesus to sin. He will lie about who you and I are in Christ, if you are saved. And he will lie about sin saying, "If you will just do what you know is wrong, it will feel so good. It will get you ahead. If you just, just change the number slightly on that tax return. Just stab that person in the back so you can take the promotion." You're having trouble at home and this other person in the office is giving you the love that you want. Satan is cunning and he is swift. And if you and I are not sober, thinking correctly how God would have us think, if we are not alert and awake, we will not realize the enemy crouching at our door who wants nothing less than you and I's complete and utter destruction. And for us who are in Christ, that destruction is not an eternity facing the consequences for our sin, we've been saved from that, instead what he would desire to do is to rob us of the fullness of knowing and following God in light of what God has done to save us.

But scripture's also very clear. Our enemy is on a leash. He doesn't have supreme power. He can't touch our lives if God does not allow that to happen. We see that in Job. We see that in Luke. And so in light of that, he gives the final command. Resist him. Resist is not fight against him, it's literally the idea of to withstand. It's to be unmoved. To be unshakeable. To be, to be marked by firm determination. He says, you and I are to resist. How are we to resist? Well he tells us. Firm in faith. We resist the enemy by standing firm in faith. Which means this is an active battle. You do not passively withstand the onslaught of the enemy. It takes active choice and effort. Well what does that effort look like? Mark this down. 2 Corinthians chapter 10. Paul tells us what spiritual warfare looks like. 2 Corinthians chapter 10, verse 3 says this:

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

This is what it looks like to stand firm in faith. You and I are going to have to examine every thought that runs through our mind. Because what we think becomes what we believe. And what we believe ten times out of ten will determine what we do. The battle of faith is not a battle of feeling strong about your belief. It's a battle of resting firm in what has been clearly revealed to be true and taking captive every thought. So just ask the question simply, do you think about life how God thinks about life? Do you think about raising your kids how God thinks about raising kids? Do you think about dating how God thinks about dating? Do you think about working how God thinks about working? Do you think about helping your child get into college how God thinks

about your child getting into college? Do you think about yourself how God sees you? Or how quick are we to receive every negative, terrible, worrisome thought? How quick are we to run to the experts of this world? How quick are we to recede rather than standing firm in faith? We resist the enemy by standing firm in faith. That's why Isaiah 26, verse 4 says he keeps him in perfect peace. God keeps him in perfect peace. Who keeps his mind fixed on God. It's a battle of the mind. You and I will have to know the truth. We will have to know Jesus. You can't stand in the truth if you don't know Jesus personally. If you've never been saved by His grace through faith, if you've never come to Him in repentance looking to Him to save you, looking for who He is and what He has done to be applied to your life, to reconcile you to God, then you can't stand firm in faith. For you have no faith. But if you and I have responded to Christ's offer of salvation, then we can stand firm in faith, but we won't if we do not know what is true or if we choose not to believe what is true. Can I just offer that it's going to be particularly hard to stand in faith if you know very little of who Jesus is and what He said? I can't stand on what I don't know. But let me also go past that. For many of you who, who maybe grew up, some of you younger who grew up through Awana and you know a variety of Bible verses. You won't stand in faith because you know Bible verses. Because you can't stand in faith if you don't know that you also can't stand in faith if you choose not to believe and trust. Your belief doesn't make it true, but your belief is resting in the truth.

So what do we know? This passage tells us several things. It tells us several truths. It tells us some truths of the Christian life. Look down at what it says. It says, knowing that the same experience of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren in the world. It's an interesting little phrase. Are being accomplished. But it means that your religious duty is being given. And the idea is this. It tells us the truth that that truth of the Christian life is that facing a hostile world and a hostile world giving us trial and tribulation facing an enemy who's going to attack. That's the norm as a Christian. We tend to think that's the abnorm. Because we've lived in a very strange period of human history where the church overall has been tolerated in our country. But that's changing. It is the norm to face suffering. It's the norm. He says earlier in Peter, he says at the beginning of chapter 4, to arm yourselves with the same purpose which is to share in the sufferings of God. He says at the end of chapter 4 in verse 13, to the degree you share the sufferings of Christ. Keep on rejoicing. Paul says in Philippians that he desires the fellowship of Christ's suffering. It is the norm to share in the sufferings in Christ as a believer. It's what our brothers and sisters faced around this world. That's what they faced for all of history. It is the norm. So we should not be surprised. He says back in 4:7. We should not be surprised at the fiery trial that's come among us. The Christian life is one of battle. He says that we're to stand firm. Meaning that you will have to put effort in standing firm. You will not passively. Every command in this passage is an active command. Meaning it's a choice you and I have to make. And if you're in Christ, you and I can make that choice because the Holy Spirit of God lives inside of us to enable us to do it. Doesn't just say truths about the Christian life, but it says even more importantly, truths about who God is. Look what it says with me. Just look over quickly. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace. We've already seen that God is mighty to save. We've already seen that God cares. Now we see that God is the God of all grace. God does not relate to us based on our ability, our strength. But He relates to us on His own sheer goodness. He has given us in salvation, if you're in Christ, that which we do not deserve. And he says, as a believer, in the midst of our weakness, His grace is sufficient. God's grace for you is sufficient for today. The anxiety of what tomorrow brings, His grace today is not sufficient for that because we're not

there yet. The grace that was sufficient for the trial of yesterday, it's not here today because you're not there today. God's grace is sufficient presently. Whatever tomorrow brings, whatever hardship it comes, you will find that God's grace is sufficient then. But today, God's grace is sufficient for today. He is the God of all grace. He is the God who works for His eternal glory. Look what he says. The God of all grace who called you to His eternal glory in Christ. This is God's purpose. God is at work in your life and my life. He is at work molding us. Romans 8. Shaping up. Conforming us to the image of His Son. Taking every circumstance and using it to make us look like Jesus. He is the God who is faithful. It says that He will perfect. He will confirm. He will strengthen. And He will establish all of these referencing the fact that God is going to not just do this work, but He will complete it. He is the God who is faithful. He does not leave us to suffer alone, but instead He suffers with us. For we suffer with Him and He will take that and He will use it. He is faithful. He is faithful to every promise. He is faithful to every word. And last, look what it says. To Him be dominion forever. The word dominion means the power, authority, to direct or determine. Here is the reality. You and I live in a world, a world that is broken, a world that is dangerous, a world that is ruled by a real enemy who seeks our destruction. In the midst of this world, we have things, we have anxieties, we have concerns. Some valid, some may be invalid. But we have them. We're to humble ourselves. We're to cast them before the Lord. We're to think clearly. We're to be awake. We are to resist the enemy by standing firm in faith. And the faith that we stand firm in is we stand firm in faith in a God who has all dominion. The broken world doesn't win. The enemy doesn't win. Christ has already won and He is coming back. So let me just challenge us all today. Will you humble yourself? Will you think clearly and seek correctly? And will you and I lock arm in arm and stand firm in faith in our glorious God?

Pray with me.

Father, thank You so much. God I thank You for what we saw You do, just the me and the students, just a week ago in Seattle in such a dark and broken place. A place where the enemy stronghold is mighty. And even there You save. God every one of us in this room has anxieties. Some are big. Some are small. Some are daily. Some are life altering. Some we may think are invalid, some are valid, God, and You say You want every one of them. So God find us in this place a people who will humble ourselves, who will not walk in pride, but who will depend upon You for everything. A people who thinks like You think. Who sees clearly and, God, find in us a people who will not walk in the way that is dull and numb to You and unaware of the enemy who is attacking. But God strengthen us so that we would resist and stand well.