

“Together We Overcome” / 1 Peter 5:6–14

Together We Endure: The Letter of 1 Peter, #9

Well, here we are at our last message on 1 Peter. Next week we are going to take the Lord's Supper together and then the week after, we'll be starting a series that explores the core of Jesus's call to his people. We're calling the series, "Be the Movement." I'm super excited about it.

BTW, I know a lot of you have questions about going to church is going to look like this Fall. As you know, after a lot of prayer and counsel, we've decided--barring some miraculous reversal--to not meet all together each weekend as one body until the end of the year. But we believe we can and should still gather, so we are going to substitute gathering as several thousand with smaller gatherings in other ways—we're still working out the details on all of this and making sure we're aligned with CDC recommendations, but we're figuring out what it would look like to gather in home groups, possibly on our premises with outdoor baptisms, prayer meetings, fellowships, and etc. Hear me: We are going to gather and we want to gather—it just has to look different in this season. And in the next few weeks, each campus will spell out what it looks like at their campus.

Our theme in 1 Peter has been “together we endure”--together, as a church, we press through a tough time. Remember, Peter writes this letter to a church in exile--literally. Persecution and hardship had driven them from their homelands. He talks a lot about suffering, and frustration, and patience. It's clear why this book is so relevant to us.

We come to his final instructions in chapter 5. The whole chapter is great, but we're going to focus specifically on vv. 5–10, because it is his wrap-up to the whole book.

Listen: This might be the most encouraging message you did NOT want to hear. The Christian life is hard. It's far better than the alternatives, but it's not necessarily easier. In fact, following Jesus sometimes intensifies the hardship you live with.

These last verses are about how not to simply survive in a hostile, cruel, chaotic world, but how to thrive. How to overcome. It seems like everybody today loves these survival shows. There's a bunch of them: "Naked and Afraid," which a lot of you watch but never admit to watching. BTW, it's not what it sounds like--it sounds bad, but it is a show where they basically drop two people out in the remote wilderness with literally nothing but a pot, fire starter and knife and see if they can survive for 21 days. First order of business is usually making clothes. One of our small group leaders told me that he and his wife had started to watch a few episodes, and their small group was over one evening and they didn't have a babysitter so they put their kids in their bedroom to watch TV during small group--some kids show. Well, evidently their DVR was set to record that show, and you know how when you do that, it will switch off what you are watching and go to that? Well,

Works consulted:

“Resisting the Devil: How to Survive a Lion Attack,” Chip Henderson

“A Different Perspective in Persecution (1 Peter 4:12–5:11),” Craig Groeschel

“Clothed in Humility (1 Peter 5:1–14),” Jen Wilkin

1 Peter 5:1–5, Bryan Loritts

1 Peter 5:6–14, Bryan Loritts

“Shepherding the Flock (1 Peter 5:1–4),” John MacArthur

“Fundamental Attitudes of a Christian Mind (1 Peter 5:5–14),” John MacArthur

that's what it did for the kids, so, right in the middle of Small Group their 4 year old son ambled down the stairs and said, "Dad, that show you and mom like to watch with the naked people came on." To the whole small group. Group accountability.

Naked and Afraid. Then there's "Man Versus Wild," "Out of the Wild," "Worst Case Scenario," "I Survived," "I Shouldn't be Alive," "Beyond Survival" and maybe my favorite, "**Fat Guys in the Woods.**"

This passage is about how to survive--and thrive and overcome--in a hostile world.

I don't know about you, but I'm tired of just surviving these days. Am I talking to anybody out there? I don't want to **just make** it--I want to look back on this season as some of the best days of my life--even if they were some of the hardest!

Let's just read vv. 5--10:

5 ...All of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble" (Proverbs 3:34).

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you. 8 Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. 9 Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world.

Could we all read these last two verses out loud together? All together, out loud, vs. 10:

10 The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you after you have suffered a little while. 11 To him be dominion forever. Amen.

Here's the first principle for **How to Overcome**:

1. Embrace that waiting is normal.

Waiting on God is a normal part of the Christian life. Every word in these verses points to what to do when you're in a situation you don't like and that you want God to change--you're suffering; you're the victim of injustice, something--and you want God to change the situation and not quite sure why he doesn't. That's the backdrop for everyone one of the rest of these commands: **vs. 5** *Humble yourselves before God (IOW, don't try to get ahead of him).* **vs. 7:** *Cast your cares on him while you wait. If you knew help was right around the corner, you might just hang onto it. But if it's going to be a while, you need to let him shelter the load. My kids, any time they are holding something that weighs more than 3 oz for any length of time, they ask me to hold onto it. We go to Disney World, and I say, "You don't need all that stuff in your backpack. Sunglasses, Binoculars, a metal water bottle, the complete Collector's Edition set of Harry Potter books," but they bring them anyway. And while we're walking through the parking lot they're all excited and bouncing but 3 mins inside the gate, guess who gets asked to carry the backpack the rest of the day? They just can't endure very long. Me.*

*Jesus says, "When it's going to be a long day, let me carry the load. I'll take it." **Vs. 6:** At the proper time, (that is, his proper time, not yours), he will exalt you. When he decides the time is right and his purposes have been*

accomplished, he will restore, establish, strengthen and support you. And after you have suffered, vs. 10, “a little while,” he’ll restore and establish you. And you ask, “How long is a little while?” We don’t know. That’s the point. You’re waiting.

So, I say it again: Waiting on God is a normal part of the Christian life. Can I just be honest with you? I DON’T LIKE WAITING ON GOD. But if our Bible shows us anything, it shows us that waiting is the normal experience of God’s children.

- **When you read the prophets and Psalms**, you are struck with how much of their lives is spent in a posture of waiting. The prophet Jeremiah, who spent many years unjustly imprisoned in a dungeon has a whole book called Lamentations where he cries out, “Why God? Where are you?”
- Throughout the Psalms King David says things like, “I’m in a pit. My enemies have overwhelmed me. My friends have betrayed me. Darkness is my only friend. Why do you feel so far from me, God?”
- Before God performed the Exodus, Israel waited for 400 years in slavery. That’s what? 10 generations? Twice as long as our country has even been in existence? And this wasn’t like a punishment for their sins, either! It was just a “God, where are you?” kind of time.
- He had Israel wait again for 400 years between the last prophet of the Old Testament and the birth of Jesus. 400 years of “God, where are you?” silence. Isaiah described that time as “sitting in darkness.”
- Other Bible heroes like Joseph sat in prison for years waiting on God. Or, Job, who waited for years before God restored his fortunes to him.
- And here in 1 Peter--Peter expects us to wait as well.

Here’s something you don’t want to hear but really need to hear: Waiting on God is a normal part of the Christian life. The prophet Jeremiah said it this way: **“It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.” Lam 3:26.**

- You say, **“Why?”** I don’t know all the answers to that, but I do know there are things you learn in a time of waiting that you can’t learn any other way.
- This is a verse **God has been using** in my life lately. It is good FOR ME to sit quietly and wait for God’s salvation. In a posture of helplessness.

Andrew Murray called waiting the “most essential part of the Christian life;” “the highest expression of salvation;” the “only true expression of Christianity.”¹

And here’s the good news: Just like here in 1 Peter, God’s promises good things to those who wait:

- Look at what Jeremiah says: **“The Lord is good to those who wait for him.” (Lam 3:25)**
- Isaiah says, **“...blessed are all those who wait for him.” (30:18)**
- and, **“...those that wait for me shall not be put to shame.” (49:23)**
- Peter says: God will exalt, restore, establish, strengthen and support you. **No one who ever has waited on God** has ever been let down. Ever. You won’t be the first. He will always come through. And he will for you.

So, let me ask, “Where are you waiting right now on the goodness of God?”

¹ Andrew Murray, *Waiting on God*

- Maybe with a kid you want to see come back to God--and you pray and pray and pray and stand like the Father in the story of the prodigal son and just wait. "It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord."
- Maybe you are being treated unfairly by your spouse; maybe you're being slandered at work and can't get justice: "It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord."
- Maybe in financial duress; or you just really need guidance and support in a situation. "It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord."
- Maybe it is just COVID. When is it going to end? And when is life going to get back to normal? "It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord."

The Lord is good to those who wait for him. He will exalt restore, establish, strengthen and support YOU. BTW, Peter is not only talking about this help as if it is in heaven. He's expecting earthly fulfillment of God's goodness. He's expecting God to show up *in their lives*. Sometimes Christians think, "Well, it will all be better when we get to heaven," but they don't expect anything good down here. Peter expects it to happen on earth. In the Psalms, David said asked pretty bluntly,, "Are dead people able to praise you? Can they proclaim your unending goodness?..."² No, "But I am convinced that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!" (Ps 30:9; 27:13)

Joseph and Job and David all got to see God's goodness break out in the land of the living, and Peter expects that to happen for us, too. If we don't get resolution until heaven, that's ok, but we're eagerly waiting for it now. Jesus was not resurrected in the body on earth so that we, his followers, could manage a slow retreat and make it to heaven by the skin of our teeth. He overcame the powers of death on earth, so we also should be convinced we will look upon some of the outworkings of God's goodness in the land of the living.

Can you wait?

Listen: I want you to personalize this. I'm going to put some time on the screen (30 seconds). Fill in the blank. "God, I choose to believe it is good that I should wait quietly during _____."

Now, let's pray together (outloud): "Lord, it is good for me to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. You are good to those of us who wait for you; to those who hope in your steadfast love. Amen."

2. Humble yourselves (vs. 6)

- This is part of effective waiting. In context, it means a couple of things. The first is simply, "receive it." Receive this time of waiting as part of God's goodness in your life and don't rage against it.
- The second aspect is: "Admit you need help!" Pride says I don't need help. I can get through this. I'll make it. "It's not really an addiction." "It's not a crisis." "I can fix all my own problems."
- This is an invitation just to admit you need help. I love this command: It's not like just a command, "Be humble!" But "stop pretending you don't need help and just admit it."
- Friend, the only thing you need to access God's help is need. ALL YOU NEED IS NEED. In Luke 18 Jesus tells the story of 2 men who went into the Temple to pray. One man was religiously and professionally accomplished, and that sense of self-sufficiency filled his heart as he prayed. Jesus said that God did not even listen to that man. By contrast, a man in the back, a despised sinner with a messed up life, so ashamed to be in church that he sat in the back so no one could see him, that man left with the help he needed.
- All you need is need; without it, you'll never get God's help.

² .e.g. Ps 30; Ps 115.

3. "Cast all your cares on him" (vs. 7)

- I love this verse, too.
- Literally in Greek it means "hurl." Cast it and leave it! He's not just telling us to "Pray about it." A lot of times we pray about our worries and then when we're done we pick them right back up. He is saying, "Hurl it onto me. Actually make me responsible for that problem. Set it on my shoulders. I'll carry it."
- BTW: That doesn't mean you don't ever do anything about it--just that the burden, the responsibility of making it work out is not on you, but on him! It's his problem, not yours--and he may get you to do some things with it, but the weight of solving it is not on you, it's on him.
- Hurl it upon me. Make me the owner of it--where the responsibility of solving it sets on me.
- I had a huge problem with this, btw--I'd pray about a problem but then pick the weight of it right back up as soon as I was done praying about it and start carrying it again: so, a little thing I started to do to help me with this, is saying to God after I prayed about some problem, "God, I trust you with this."
- *What a friend we have in Jesus, all our griefs with him we share; what a privilege to carry, everything to God in prayer." And leave it there.*

- One other thing: Cast in Greek is a participle that modifies the verb, "humble yourselves." IOW, casting is a form of humility. The opposite of casting, worry, is an expression of pride. Worry is a form of pride because it carries concerns upon oneself instead of entrusting them to God.³

4. Be sober-minded (vs. 8)

- See the world clearly. You say, "In what way, Peter?" Because "Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour." (5:8)
- There is an enemy in this world whose goal is to kill, steal, and destroy. He wants to destroy the church. He wants to destroy the work of God in your life. He wants to destroy you and your family period.
- C.S. Lewis in his book *Screwtape Letters* said that Christians make 2 primary mistakes in regard to Satan: Some people give Satan too much credit. Every flat tire is caused by a demon. Any sin in their life, that's Satan. "Satan got me fired." Nope, that was you coming to work late ten days in a row.
- That's one mistake. On the other side, and perhaps even more problematic are those who don't recognize him at all. My son just made some bad choices, got in with the wrong friends. Don't you see how Satan could be at work there? In some temptation you are dealing with. Something your family is going through. Something plaguing our church. Isn't this what Peter is telling us?
- In the book of Job, Satan is the one that causes Job's financial issues, family strife, he makes weather problems, health problems. Some of these things you're dealing with *ARE* from Satan.
- Satan is described as being the prince of the power of the air. He's everywhere.
- Friend, don't we see him roaring today? In problems plaguing our society. In the church?
- In the world: In an average month, over 300 Christians are killed for following Jesus. Today. Over 200 churches get destroyed by vandalism every week. Over 800 Christians will be beaten, tortured, or imprisoned due to their faith. In places like Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Libya, Yemen, Eritrea, China, North Korea, Morocco, even places like Malaysia. We shouldn't forget about our brothers and sisters over there, but we should also realize that Satan has his own plans for the church in the West.
- I can see him at work in how much he's attacked marriages and families in this season. Make no mistake about it: He wants your complete destruction. He's coming for you.

BTW, before I go on to the next thing, the word "sober" meant *then* what it means today--it meant don't be drunk. It's the 3rd time Peter uses the word in this book. That's not accidental. Most people in stress and hard

³ ESV Study Bible, note in 1 Peter 5:7

times drown their problems in alcohol. Peter says, you can't afford to drown your troubles in alcohol. There's an enemy at work in them and he's trying to destroy you. In March of this year, ABC stores reported a 75% increase in the sale of hard liquors.⁴ There's too much happening--your enemy is coming for you. You need to be sober-minded and,

5. Be alert (vs. 8)

- Notice he says Satan "roars." Lions only roar when they feel like they have won. Lions have two modes: stealth and roar. Stealth when they are hunting their prey; roar when they have them. Peter says, "We can hear him roaring in various parts of the world." If you can't hear him roaring in your life, it's because he's in stealth mode.
- Be alert! My burden is that some of you are totally unaware. You compromise with sin, give Satan a foothold in your life; you don't pray much or stay close to God--you act like he's not there. He is.
- I looked up some research. The odds of being attacked by a shark is 1 in 3.7 million. And people still don't get in the water. Grizzly Bear: 1 in 2.1 million. And people still don't go in the woods. Your chances of being attacked by a supernatural lion? 1 out of 1. And yet you don't live aware of that. He's got your number. He's either roaring, or in stealth mode. But he's there.

6. Resist the devil (vs. 9)

- You may feel pretty overwhelmed right now, but Peter says you can overcome! Why? Not because you are stronger than him, but because Jesus has defeated him. On the cross, Jesus said "It is finished." Rev. 20:9 tells us about the final battle between Satan and Jesus and, SPOILER ALERT. It's not a big fight. It's a little. It's a little anticlimactic, tbh. Takes about a second. He speaks and it's like over. The point is, I can bring that confidence into this fight.
- **E.g.** Mark on Henry Stanley looking for David Livingstone
- The point is, you don't need to fear him, but you should also not ignore him. You have to fight him, and not with the weapons of the flesh. Your personality. Your wisdom. Your resolve. That's like bringing a knife to a gunfight.
- You need the weapons of the Spirit: Be frequent in prayer. Stay close to God. Repent and confess your sin often. Memorize his word. Keep faithfully doing the right thing. Don't just give in and go along. Fight.
- Here's one: stay in community. Peter writes this letter to a community.
- I remember hearing a story about the famous Maasai warriors in Kenya. When they are walking around with their sheep, and all of the sheep start acting skittish, and they start seeing some grass that isn't swaying with the rest of the wind, they know there's a lion. So what do they do? Do they run at it? No, you don't run at a lion. You get together with the other warriors, and you start making noise to agitate it. Then, when the lion attacks, you band together. One warrior showed one of our missionaries some scars on his chest from where a lion had attacked him, but the warrior said, "When the lion fell on me, my fellow warriors fell on the lion." The lion was killed. The brothers were not.
- I know some of you are bummed that we can't meet right now all together. I am too. But that doesn't mean we can't gather, and we're going to be promoting some ways in the next few weeks of how we can still gather for worship, and prayer, and baptism, and fellowship. You need that. **You can't podcast community**

7. Embrace grace (vs. 10)

- I love this verse: 10 The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you after you have suffered (just) a little while.

⁴ <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://nypost.com/2020/03/31/americans-drinking-crazy-amount-of-alcohol-during-coronavirus-lockdown/&sa=D&ust=1596571610248000&usg=AFQjCNEa8NM-gTE69QDk6ayXmRqSThi1fA>

- The God of all grace: what a great way to end on. Chances are you haven't waited perfectly. You haven't fully humbled yourself. You haven't trusted God. You haven't been sober and awake and alert. You haven't resisted Satan.
- But Jesus did all those things for you. In the greatest hour of temptation and trial to ever occur on earth, in the Garden of Gethsemane, the disciples slept. Jesus had to wake them up 3 times! But he still went and died for them! He still secured the victory.
- When you sleep, and when you mess up, he's still got you! At any point, no matter how bad you've messed it up, you can turn and say, "I need you! I have messed it up. I am ready to do it your way." The God of all grace stands ready to receive you!
- Living for God is hard. Not living for God is even harder. He's got dominion. He overcame the world. You either belong fully to him or you belong to the world?
- Why not bow your head right now and give yourself fully to him: God, I surrender all my life to you right now, and I receive Jesus as my Savior!
- Let us know at summitchurch.com/guest

I close with the last verse of 1 Peter: **14 Greet one another with a kiss of love.** Let's not do that today. An air high-five instead? The point is not the kiss--but some physical gesture that shows we're family and we're in this together. **Peace to all of you who are in Christ.**