

The Heart God Desires

1 Peter 5:5-10

April 1-2, 2017

Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3, “Unless one is born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.” If you have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior you have been born-again... into the kingdom of heaven. In other words, you’re living in the kingdom of God now and there is a completely different set of principles that operate in the kingdom of God.

Everyone has a set of principles that guide their lives. Living in the world, it’s easy to adopt the principles that operate in the world. But those principles are not of God and they don’t bring life, those things result in death. The problem is that we brought a lot of our old thoughts and our old ways of doing things with us when we came into the kingdom of heaven.

Peter shows us what it means to live in the kingdom of God and the heart God desires in those who come to Him. He wants to bless and strengthen and help us, especially through the troubles and difficulties of life.

Those who received this letter from Peter were going through persecution and trouble and needed to understand God’s help and God’s heart for them. They needed to understand the character that God desires in the heart of those who live in the kingdom of God.

I. **Clothe Yourselves with Humility**

- He begins this chapter by speaking to the elders and leaders that they should be examples to those they are leading and not lord it over those they lead. That requires humility.

Matthew 20:25-26, Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant...”

- He then turns to the younger men, likewise, and told them to be subject to their elders. That also requires humility... and maturity, because it’s the nature of youth to resist authority.
- Notice that he emphasizes the importance of humility toward one another. How you treat other people is extremely important in the kingdom of God; and he tells us why – it has everything to do with faith.

A. God resists the proud

- Pride has been the problem from the beginning. It’s a principle of the world and

those who achieve great status in the world often have pride as their driving force and are very proud of their accomplishments.

- But God is opposed to the proud; He resists them.
- Why is that? What is it about the proud that causes God to resist and oppose them?
Answer: because it's the opposite of living by faith and faith is everything when it comes to our relationship to God.

Habakkuk 2:4, Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within them; but the righteous will live by his faith.

Hebrews 11:6, Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

- Anyone with any kind of faith at all would believe that having God against him is not a good idea at all. Right? I would much rather have God for me than against me, because when it comes to a wrestling match with God, there is a high probability I'll lose.
- In other words, when it comes to a wrestling match with God, I don't stand a chance.

Illus - I was on the junior high wrestling team and at the final tournament of the year I was

selected to wrestle the most powerful, accomplished wrestler on the opposing team, none other than the famous Fred Nordgren, who would go on to become a professional football player for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Why was I asked to wrestle Fred? Because no one else could beat him? No, the coach knew that no one on our team could beat him, so why waste someone good, let's ask Rich to wrestle him.

Isaiah 2:12, For the Lord of hosts will have a day of reckoning against everyone who is proud and lofty and against everyone who is lifted up, that he may be brought low.

B. God gives grace to the humble

- Verse 6 – humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.
- It's about faith; you're in the kingdom of heaven now, having God lift you up is the outpouring of God's favor and blessing on your life.
- Having said that, we need to define humility because it is often misunderstood. Many people believe that humility is thinking poorly of themselves, but that's not humility at all, that's frustrated pride.

- If a person thinks poorly of himself, or feels sorry for himself, there is still a distinct lack of faith, and that person is still focused on himself.
- CS Lewis said of humility, “Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it’s thinking of yourself less.”
- The other extreme, of course, is thinking too highly of ourselves. The human condition is such that if a person isn’t thinking poorly of himself, he’s thinking too highly of himself...

Illus - to quote the famous American philosopher, Mac Davis, “Oh Lord, it’s hard to be humble when you’re perfect in every way. I can’t wait to look in the mirror, I get better lookin’ each day.”

- Actually, if pride is the foundation of all that is sinful, then humility is the foundation of all that is godly and honorable.

Philippians 2:3-5, Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 23:11-12, “The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.”

Illus - Jesus noticed people picking out the places of honor at the dinner table, so he said to them, “When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor...”

C. Cast all your cares upon Him

- Godly humility is actually a very important part of faith. Instead of having confidence in self, by faith we have confidence in God and we trust that He will accomplish what concerns us.

Psalm 138:3, 6-7, 8, You made me bold with strength in my soul... For the Lord regards the lowly... Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me... And Your right hand will save me. The Lord will accomplish what concerns me today; your loving kindness, O Lord, is everlasting.

- The word in the Greek is better translated ‘anxieties.’ In other words, cast all of your worries, your fears, and anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.

Matthew 6:27, 33-34, “And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?... But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you. Do not worry about tomorrow...Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

- The point of faith is that you trust that God cares and that He will accomplish what concerns you, that He will surround you with songs of deliverance.

Psalm 32:7, You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble; You surround me with songs of deliverance.

Illus - When the Assyrian army surrounded Jerusalem, the Assyrian king sent a letter to Hezekiah, the king of Israel in Jerusalem, taunting him and insulting Jehovah, so Hezekiah took the letter and spread it out before the Lord – and prayed.

2 Kings 19:20, Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah saying, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Because you have prayed to Me about Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard you.’”

II. Be Spiritually Alert

- Verse 8 - Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.
- You're in the kingdom of God now, but you're also living in a very evil, broken world. We need to be spiritually alert in order to be spiritually victorious.

A. Be of sober spirit

- That's kind of an unfortunate translation because it makes you think he's speaking of staying sober by not imbibing in alcohol. That's not the point here.
- Peter is telling us to stay spiritually alert, we have an adversary, we are in spiritual warfare and anyone in a battle would be wise to stay alert.
- Peter himself has personal experience. The night Jesus was betrayed He took His three closest disciples, Peter, James and John with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane to spend the night in prayer. He asked them to be on the alert and to keep watch while He went a little beyond them, praying to His Father.

Matthew 26:40-41, And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter,

“So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

- Peter understands the weakness of the flesh and so he writes for us to stay spiritually alert. Be aware there is a conflict between our flesh and our spirit and though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak, therefore, you have to stay spiritually alert.

B. You have an adversary seeking to devour

- Verse 8 - your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour...
- When lions are on the hunt, they prowl about looking for those who are weak, who are separated from the group. In other words, they prefer to attack those who are most vulnerable.
- Therefore, stay spiritually alert, stay spiritually fresh, spiritually alive, seek after spiritual revival.
- It also shows the strength of being together as a church, encouraging one another. If the enemy can draw you off so you are alone and discouraged, he has found someone to devour. We need each other.

➤ Some have wondered why Satan bothers if he's a defeated foe; if his destruction is certain.

➤ Two reasons: first, it's his nature to destroy.

John 10:10, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

➤ Second; he knows his destruction is certain, but he'll take as many with them as possible.

Illus - When I was going to Bible college, Jordi and I managed apartments that had a pool. Jordi, being the mischievous person that she is, snuck up on me while I was working next to the pool and gave me a shove. My destruction was certain, but 'if I'm goin' in, she's goin' with me.'

➤ That being said, we are not to be afraid. God has given us authority and given us the armament for victorious battle.

James 4:7-8, Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

Matthew 16:18, "I say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell will not prevail against it."

- That verse suggests that God wants us on the offensive spiritually. In the armor of spiritual battle in Ephesians 6, there is no mention of any armor to protect the back.

Illus - I was studying how lions attack and happened upon a story of a buffalo that became separated from the group. As he was coming back toward the herd he came upon a pride of lions sleeping. He lowered his head and charged! They immediately scattered and he continued safely toward the herd. *“Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”*

C. Resist being firm in your faith

- The most important thing you can do to be spiritually victorious in spiritual warfare is to be firm in your faith.
- The battle is for your soul; the enemy would love nothing more than to destroy your faith and drive a wedge between you and God. After he has drawn you away, he has found someone to devour.
- Resist him by being firm in your faith; the best way to do that is by drawing near to the Lord because it's the nearness to God that strengthens the soul.
- Someone came to Jesus and asked what was the highest, the first, the foremost of all things

that God has ever said. When Jesus responded, he didn't say, "You shall hate the enemy with all your heart." No, Jesus said that the highest and foremost of all things is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.

Ephesians 6:10, 13-14, Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might... Take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything to stand firm, stand firm therefore.