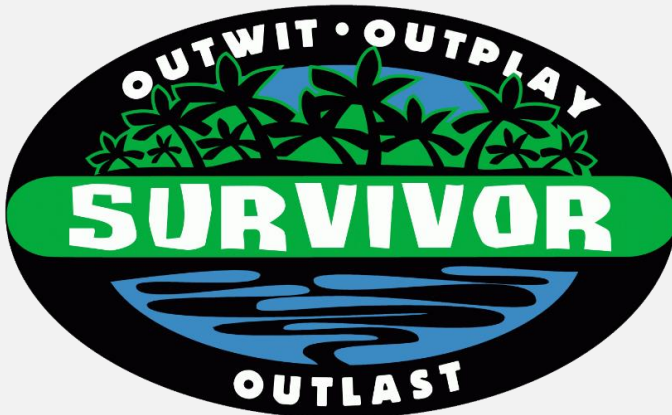


Seventh Sunday of Easter – 2023

Saturday, 5/20 at 4:00 | Sunday, 5/21 at 9:00



Text: 1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:6-11 NAS 1995

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ:

Let's be honest: Those who **were** in Christ, and **yet have now fallen away**, have been ➔ outwitted, ➔ outplayed, and ➔ outlasted by the forces of evil!

Let's understand: *The forces of evil are trying to do the same to you and me!* So, based on portions of **chapters 4 and 5 of 1 Peter**, **may the Lord keep us as SURVIVORS!**

1. **Suffering for Christ:**

- a. Do not be surprised: ^{4:12} **Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. // Why does God permit fiery ordeals into our lives? *To test us, examine us!* When tested, **some will fail** – showing themselves to be hypocrites! **Others will pass** – showing themselves to be in Christ! Since**

the HS uses fiery ordeals to ▶ draw us close and ▶ build us up, *let us NOT complain BUT rejoice!*

- b. Realize you are blessed: ¹⁴ **If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.** // What kind of Christians are reviled for the name of Christ?
Repentant Christians! The Bible says: “...all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim. 3:12). If you are NOT being persecuted as a Christian, what does that mean? Think about 2 Timothy 3:12...
- c. Do not be ashamed: ¹⁵ **Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;** ¹⁶ **but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.** // **If you fall into grave sin, be ashamed and repent! But if you are suffering as a Christian, suffer in a way that glorifies God!**

2. **Regarding God’s Judgment:**

- a. Two reactions: ¹⁷ **For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God** [*repent and believe*]?
 - i. For the repentant: Their **godly response** to God’s current judgments (His fiery trials) *proves* their saving relationship with Jesus.
 - ii. For the unrepentant: Their **persistent rejection** of Jesus *points ahead* to God’s eternal judgment. For all such people, *please repent now!*
- b. Believers and unbelievers: ¹⁸ **AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS [ONE] IS SAVED,**

WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS [wicked] **MAN AND THE SINNER** [the one living in opposition to God]?

- i. Righteous: Is it easy to continue in Christ? By no means! We face ▶fiery trials from God **and** ▶persecution from the godless. We say YES to God's will: ✓ reading our Bibles, ✓ receiving God's gifts, and ✓ serving in God's kingdom. Even though we are being tempted to give up, *by God's grace, we keep cooperating with the HS!*
 - ii. Godless: For all who ▶have given up **or** ▶have never been open to God's word, their lives may seem desirable now, *but they are on a slippery slope!* Sadly☹, they are being ▶outwitted, ▶outplayed, and ▶outlasted by the forces of evil.
 - c. Keep trusting in God: ¹⁹ **Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.... //** No one likes suffering, *but God does permit suffering for our good.* Even when life is hard *and we don't understand why*, let us remember: God ▶loves us, ▶is in control, ▶has a plan, and ▶will deliver us.
3. **Living for Christ**: Now, skipping ahead to **1 Peter 5:6**:
- a. Keep humbling yourself: ^{5:6} **Therefore humble** [lower] **yourselves under the mighty hand of God** [Why?], **that He may exalt you** [raise you high] **at the proper time,** ⁷ **casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.**
 - i. Humble people know: Apart from Christ *they can do nothing* (John 15:5), so they keep ▶trusting in Him and ▶looking forward to the time when God will raise them *much higher than they deserve.*

- ii. Dealing with anxiety: Humble believers keep giving their worries to God – *knowing He* ♣ loves them, ♣ will receive those worries, and ♣ will give them His extraordinary blessing of peace.
- b. Keep resisting the devil: ⁸ **Be of sober spirit** [*Be self-controlled*], **be on the alert** [*keep watching*]. **Your adversary** [*opponent*], **the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.** ⁹ **But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.** // The devil wants to devour us and every believer. So, *by the Holy Spirit who* ♣ lives in us and ♣ works through the Bible, **let us** ☞ keep trusting in God and ☞ keep resisting the devil!
- c. Keep being patient: ¹⁰ **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.** ¹¹ **To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.** // Sometimes our suffering can seem long to us, but, from the perspective of eternity, *it is so very short*. So let us ☞ **be open** to God's work in our lives and ☞ **keep patiently looking forward** to the fullness of eternal life!

Let Us Pray: Lord God, even though the forces of evil are powerful to destroy us, please keep working in our lives to ➔ **outwit them**, ➔ **outplay them**, and ➔ **outlast them** – making us **SURVIVORS**, *until we are finally in Your glorious presence!*

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