

Living Hope:
Living Hope in The Battle
1 Peter 5:5-11

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Text Introduction: We are returning to 1 Peter. “Living Hope” is a phrase that we find in 1 Peter 1:3. Jesus is our Living Hope. This is the Gospel. Our salvation rests in the resurrection of Jesus. Our hope in this life rests in the resurrection of Jesus. We have examined in this book that Jesus is not only our Living Hope, He is our only hope. Because of that, we are to live holy, we are to live with hope in a hopeless world, we are to live this hope together as the church, and we are to share this hope with others. We have further learned that this Living Hope calls us to embrace even our suffering. We have talked about how this hope is to be lived forever.

Today, we come to the end of this book. As most letters do, this letter ends with a list of exhortations that are the sum total of what Peter has said throughout the letter. The book ends on a crescendo of exhortation of how we should withstand all forms of opposition.

One of the things that I have loved about this series, that has been illustrated by the personal testimonies of our members, is that our Living Hope works. This is real! These principles are not just textbook hypotheses, but are instead the practical solutions to the struggles of this life.

I have been blessed by these stories. Maily was blessed by the story you have heard today. Maily is the housekeeper for Eric and Gizell. You saw her in the background. After the filming, Maily inquired about Eric’s statement, “I am in a win/win situation.” Eric shared with her the Gospel, and Maily prayed right then to trust in Christ for salvation.

Jesus Christ—our Living Hope. Well, let’s see these closing exhortations today as we consider the subject, “Living Hope in the Battle.”

Text: In the same way, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. All of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because

**God resists the proud
but gives grace to the humble.**

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

¹⁰The 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. ¹¹To him be dominion forever. Amen.

Introduction: For several weeks we have explored this idea of Jesus being our “Living Hope.” We come to the end of 1 Peter today and consider some exhortations in the closing words of Peter’s letter. This is incredibly helpful to us. That is, the exhortations are incredibly helpful to us. We need to examine the balance between the theological truth and the practical application. By that I mean to say that Living with Hope does not mean that there is not sometimes a battle, and even more importantly, that we understand that though we rely on Christ as our Living Hope, He also calls us to engage in the battle. Living the Christian life by grace and faith is not a call to be passive, but instead to be engaged actively in the battle. This is the call of this passage before us today.

What do we do when we find ourselves in the battle?

Stand Firm against Pride!

- Be Humble toward Others

The phrase, clothe yourself, communicates a servant’s apron. I read again this week in John 13 of Jesus at the Last Supper washing the disciples’ feet. The Bible says that Jesus took off his outer coat and tied a towel around himself. This towel would have been this servant’s apron. That helps us understand how surprised the disciples would have been at this action. The disciples were there. Judas was there. And Peter was there. This act of Jesus’ humility made a forever impression on Peter.

- Be Humble toward God

The ultimate evidence of our trust in Jesus to be our Living Hope is to act in humility. Notice as we humble ourselves, we cast our cares upon Him.

Chuck Swindoll gave this formula:

Submission to others + Humility before God – Worry of the World= Genuine Relief

Humility is a tricky thing. It is a virtue which, if you think you have it, you probably don’t. It is said that D. L. Moody used to pray, “Lord, make me humble, but don’t let me know it.”

Even though we can’t define it very well, we all know humility when we see it. And we know it when someone doesn’t have it either. C. S. Lewis has some helpful words at this point:

There is one vice of which no man in the world is free, which every one in the world loathes when he sees it in someone else...If anyone would like to acquire humility I can tell him the first step. The first step is to realize that one is proud...If you think you are not conceited, it means that you are very conceited indeed (Cited by Brian Bill, “Developing an Others Orientation”). (From sermon by Ray Pritchard, <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/a-survival-kit-for-tough-times/>)

Stand Firm against Satan!

Notice the descriptions of Satan—adversary, prowling, roaring lion, looking for anyone, and devour. Every single word ought to scare us.

Getting started—Be alert! And resist him. How do we resist him?

One of Aesop's fables is entitled "The Lion in Love." Only five sentences, it goes something like this: A lion demanded the daughter of a woodcutter in marriage. The father, unwilling to grant, and yet afraid to refuse his request, came up with this plan to deal with the lion. He expressed his willingness to accept the lion as the suitor of his daughter on one condition: that the lion should allow him to extract his teeth, and cut off his claws, as his daughter was fearfully afraid of both. The lion cheerfully assented to the proposal. But when the toothless, clawless lion returned to request to marry his daughter, the woodman, no longer afraid, set upon him with his club, and drove him away into the forest.

I'm not exactly sure what the moral of Aesop's story is, but I want to just remind us that Jesus' coming extracted the teeth of the devil and cut off his claws. The cross and resurrection drove him away into the forest. That devil that keeps tripping you up has no power over you. He is a lion roaming to and fro seeking someone to devour, but because Jesus is our Living Hope, Satan is a toothless, clawless lion. He is a liar, and the truth is not in him. Let's live like we have victory over Satan.

Martin Luther used to overcome temptation in a very graphic way. He said, "When the devil comes knocking on my door and asks, 'Does Martin Luther live here?' I just get as close to Jesus as I can and I find that when I am surrendered to Him that Jesus, Himself, answers the door, saying, 'No, Martin Luther used to live here, but he has surrendered control of this residence to Me.'" Martin Luther said, "When Satan sees the face of Jesus and sees the nail-prints in His hands, he turns and runs saying, 'Whoops, I must have the wrong address!'"

Stand Firm in the Faith!

Be strengthened by the testimony of others who have experienced suffering. (Verse 9)

Be strengthened by the Gospel. Keep preaching the Gospel to yourself. (Verse 10)

So What?

- **James 4:7-10**

Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.⁸ Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.⁹ Be miserable and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

- **Ephesians 6:10-14**

Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength.¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil.¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens.¹³ For this reason take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand.¹⁴ Stand, therefore . . .

- **2 Chronicles 16:9**

For the eyes of the LORD roam throughout the earth to show himself strong for those who are wholeheartedly devoted to him. You have been foolish in this matter. Therefore, you will have wars from now on.”