

SERMON FOR MAY 21, 2023

TEXT; 1 PETER 4:12-19, 5: 6-11

THEME: LIVING AMIDST TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS

12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. **13** But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. **14** If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. **15** But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. **16** Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. **17** For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? **18** And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. **6** Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, **7** casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. **8** Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. **9** Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. **10** And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. **11** To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

In the name of Jesus:

Last month I went to Seattle on a whale watching trip with my daughter Emily. On the whale watching boat we were able to see several gray whales, which even from a distance looked to be quite large. And yet, even though

these whales are massive in size, they are still subject to being attacked by yet another type of whale called an ORCA. The ORCA is a predatory whale and is also known as a killer whale. These killer whales got the name of ORCA because ORCA literally means the kingdom of the dead. They are always on the prowl, seeking to kill anything in its path. And they are the one whale that the gray whale fears, for ORCAs will seek out the gray whale and attack the gray whale ultimately resulting in the gray whale's death.

There is a spiritual predator that seeks your destruction and mine, and his name is Satan. He is on the prowl, seeking to attack and devour all who bear the name of Christ and to destroy all who believe in Jesus. He lives to cause mayhem and bring our faith to ruin each and everyday of our lives. This is why the Apostle Peter warns: "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." Peter pictures the devil as a roaring lion, but the Bible also says that Satan also masquerades as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14). He will do anything and everything to drive us away and keep us away from our Lord Jesus Christ. So the question for us is how then do we deal with the Devil? He will send us trials and temptations that will truly test our faith in order to get us to deny

our faith. So how are we then to live in the midst of such trials and temptations?

First of all, the Bible tells us to resist the devil. The Apostle James writes: “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you,” and Peter also admonishes us by writing: “**9** Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.’

So we are to resist the devil, but he is a strong and mighty and wily foe. He is a tricky devil, and we are poor miserable sinners. If left to our own power and devices, we would most certainly fail in our attempts to resist him. But you and I are not powerless. We are not without hope. For God’s only Son, Jesus, came down from heaven to be a human being just like you and me. Jesus lived His life resisting the temptations of the Evil One, for Jesus was tempted as we are tempted yet never sinned. As the sinless Son of God Jesus allowed Himself to be tempted and tortured by the Devil, ultimately offering up His life by dying on a cross for the salvation of sinners. Christ died, and then rose again and now sits at the right hand of the Father. Jesus has defeated Satan and his evil army, making the Devil and his allies His footstool. And even as Satan now seeks to lay to waste everything that is good and honorable from God, Christ has won an overwhelming victory for all who

believe in Jesus. This victory is yours through faith in Christ. In Holy Baptism you have been transferred from the kingdom of the devil and darkness into the Kingdom of Christ and His light and salvation. You are now in the Lord's army and the Holy Spirit has been poured out into your heart and life so that you are not only enlisted in the war against Satan, you are now called to live your life to the glory of God.

That new life you are called to live for Jesus will certainly be a struggle. Suffering will take place as Satan will unleash his fury against you. There will be trials and tribulations that will come your way because you believe in Jesus. Just as Jesus said, if the world hates you, understand that the world hated Me first (John 15) and that the servant of Jesus is no greater than the Master (Jesus). So as trials and tribulations come your way, be ready for them. But how can you be ready?

Peter writes: "Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.' First of all live in repentant faith in Jesus each and everyday of your life. Come to an understanding and realization that you can not live for Jesus alone or by

yourself. So many Christians today try to go it alone, by regularly staying away from worship and Bible study. They neglect the very means by which God gives to fight temptation and to remain strong in the midst of trials. God gives strength in and through His word. His Word will never return to Him empty but will accomplish what the Lord wants. So daily repent of your sins, confess your sins, daily turn to the Lord asking Him to forgive you for the sake of His son Jesus and to renew you by the power of the Holy Spirit. Then receive the Holy Spirit as you week after week come to the Lord's House. The Lord reminds us to "not forsake the assembly of the saints." Come to worship to be forgiven, renewed in Christ and refreshed by the Holy Spirit. Receive the Lord's Supper for the forgiveness of your sins and the strengthening of your faith. Pray without ceasing, casting your anxieties and cares upon the Lord knowing that He cares for you. Commend yourself to the Lord, trust in Him for He is your ever present Help in times of trouble. He has delivered you and has been your Help in the past, and He will deliver you and be your Savior even today.

So live with a holy purpose. Keep your eyes and ears open. Look around and note that Satan is on the warpath. He will seek to attack and ambush you. He wants you to live your life with your guard down so that he can catch you

unawares so that you will fall away from Jesus without even being aware of it. But God has won the victory for you in Jesus. Christ is your King and Savior. He has defeated Satan and comes to your aid in His Word, prayer, and Sacraments to give you help in your time of need. And in the end, Jesus will call you home to be with Him in everlasting glory. That is why Peter concludes by writing: “after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.” That is His promise, and Christ keeps His promise to the end. **11** To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.