

In Christ we are victorious

Do you wonder why your life is often a struggle? Do you wonder why your problems don't just evaporate even though you go to church and pray? Do you groan because of the carelessness, lovelessness, or recklessness of people in your family? Do you wonder why you still find certain sins so fascinating even when you've been burned by them before? Well, says Peter, wake up and realise what you're up against in your life. ⁸ *Be self-controlled and alert! Your enemy, the Devil, is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour,* (1 Peter 5:8). You have a fearsome enemy, one of the greatest of the spirit world, a dragon whose spiky tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky, that is, seduced other angels to join his rebellious conspiracy (Revelation 12:3-4). What a dreadful thought - this evil, worldwide, powerful spirit is committed to dragging you off to hell too.

But here is the good news: the Descendant of the woman, prophesied in Eden, has crushed the serpent's head. His power to accuse (that's what the name devil actually means) is broken, for Christ has forgiven **all sin**. Satan's power to control and manipulate is broken, because the Spirit of the Lord lives in the believers and shares His strength. And now comes the great promise - Christ shares with you His power to rebuke Satan, and Satan has to obey you! As James says, "*Resist the devil, and he will flee from you,*" (4:7). One little word can indeed fell him, the word of the gospel, that there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. Stand firm in that faith, and remember that as you suffer, it doesn't necessarily mean there's something wrong with you. ⁹ *Be strong in your faith, and resist him, knowing that your fellow-Christians in the world are undergoing the same kinds of sufferings!* (1 Peter 5:9). Remember that your brothers and sisters in faith all over the world are suffering too as they wait for Christ to return and create a new heaven and a new earth.

The same God who called you to eternal glory through the gospel will not let your sufferings go on one minute longer than He allows, and He already has His plan of relief ready to go. From God's point of view, your sufferings last just a little while, for at just the right time our loving Father will come with strength and restoration. He will make the hurtful times serve you and the church by making you strong, firm, and steadfast. And you in turn will be a good counsellor for other people who struggle. Just thinking about the Lord's promises of restoration leads Peter to burst into another doxology of praise, "to Him be the power for ever! Amen."

Fighting, we shall be victorious
By the blood of Christ our Lord;
On our foreheads, bright and glorious
Shines the witness of His Word.
Our safe shield
On the field
Is His name, we cannot yield.

