

WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE

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TEXT: 1 PETER 5:1-11

Introduction

In a Peanuts cartoon Lucy demanded that Linus change TV channels, threatening him with her fist if he didn't. "What makes you think you can walk right in here and take over?" asks Linus.

"These five fingers," says Lucy. "Individually they're nothing but when I curl them together like this into a single unit, they form a weapon that is terrible to behold."

"Which channel do you want?" asks Linus. Turning away, he looks at his fingers and says, "Why can't you guys get organized like that?" --*Charles Schultz.*

When all is said and done, suffering, trials, adversity of all types can be a part of serving Christ in a world bent on disobedience and ungodliness. Nevertheless, life goes on and if we remain committed to following Christ there are certain necessities, unity and commitment to one another, to name a few.

In this final chapter, Peter sums up some of the more important aspects of the Christian life and a few *requirements* we must not forget.

I. LEADERS, LET LOVE FOR GOD BE YOUR ONLY MOTIVATION (VV.1-4).

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

A. WE LABOR FOR GOD, NOT FOR OURSELVES (VV.1-2).

B. WE SERVE OTHERS, NOT OURSELVES (VV.3-4).

II. FOLLOWERS, LET HUMILITY BE YOUR TESTIMONY (vv.5-7).

5 In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. **7** Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

A. UNITY AND HUMILITY PRODUCE ACCOUNTABILITY (v.5).

B. THE HAND OF GOD CAN LIFT UP THE WEAKEST CHRISTIAN (vv.6-7).

III. EVERYONE, BE VIGILANT AND READY TO STAND AGAINST THE ENEMY (8-11).

8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. **9** Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. **10** And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. **11** To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

A. BE WATCHFUL WITH A CLEAR MIND AND AN AWARENESS OF DANGER (v.8).

'When people dabble in sin and seemingly get away with it, they gain a false sense of security. They are like swimmers in shark-infested waters.

In an article about the great white shark, which hunts off the coast of central California, writer Tom Cunneff says that sharks return year after year to particular areas and they put a dedicated effort into a single attack. A shark stalks its prey at a favorite location by swimming three to ten feet off the bottom in shallow water (30 to 110 feet), waiting up to three weeks before darting to the surface for an attack. Cunneff described one such attack.

In December, James Robinson, a sea-urchin diver, was killed by a great white off San Miguel Island, near Santa Barbara. Robinson, 42, was doing

what he had done hundreds of times before – treading water as he took off his diving gear and placed it aboard his boat. In an instant, though, the activity turned from the familiar to the fatal as the shark shot up from the depths for a swift kill. Two crew members stowing equipment on the boat whirled around when they heard Robinson scream. “A great white bit me,” is all Robinson, his right leg nearly severed, could mutter once they pulled him onto the deck. He died a few hours later.

Just as the shark stalks its prey, so does the Devil. If you choose to linger in the ocean of sin, you can be sure of this: There is a shark in the waters. And sooner, or later, he will catch his prey.’

B. RESIST THE ENEMY WITH THE STRENGTH OF THE LORD (VV.9-11).

CONCLUSION

Robert Roberts writes about a fourth grade class in which the teacher introduced a game called "balloon stomp." A balloon was tied to every child's leg, and the object of the game was to pop everyone else's balloon while protecting one's own. The last person with an intact balloon would win.

The fourth graders in Roberts' story entered into the spirit of the game with vigor. Balloons were relentlessly targeted and destroyed. A few of the children clung to the sidelines like wallflowers at a middle school dance, but their balloons were doomed just the same. The entire battle was over in a matter of seconds, leaving only one balloon inflated. Its owner was, of course, the most disliked kid in the class. It's hard to really win at a game like balloon stomp. In order to complete your mission, you have to be pushy, rude and offensive.

Roberts goes on to write that a second class was introduced to the same game. Only this time it was a class of mentally handicapped children. They were given the same explanation as the first class, and the signal to begin was given. But the game proceeded very differently. Perhaps the instructions were given too quickly for children with learning disabilities to grasp them. The one idea that got through was that the balloons were supposed to be popped. So it was the balloons, not the other players, that were viewed as enemies. Instead of fighting each other, they began helping each other pop balloons. One little girl knelt down and held her balloon carefully in place, like a holder for a field goal kicker. A little boy stomped it flat. Then he knelt down and held his balloon for her. It went on like this for several minutes until all the balloons were vanquished, and everybody cheered. Everybody won.

Who got the game right, and who got the game wrong? In our world, we tend to think of another person's success as one less opportunity for us to succeed. There

can only be one top dog, one top banana, one big kahuna. If we ever find ourselves in that enviable position, we will fight like mad to maintain our hold on it. A lot of companies fail to enjoy prolonged success because the people in charge have this "balloon stomp" mentality. In the church, the rules change. Jesus Christ gets top billing. We're just here to serve his purposes, and we do that most effectively by elevating others and humbling ourselves.

All the suffering, trials, adversity, and even our enemy, can never defeat us as long as we remain committed to following Christ. As long as we remember the **requirements** of purpose, unity, humility and dependence on Christ, we will prevail.