

May 24, 2020

1 Peter 5:7-11 **Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.** ⁸ **Be self-controlled and alert. 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 your brothers throughout the world are 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.**

Dear Fellow Children of our Almighty God:

What good is a power drill without any power (no battery or outlet)? What good is a curling iron with no place to plug it in? You might as well be camping somewhere off the grid!

Christians need a power source too. Our power is Christ. We need to be plugged into Jesus or we will experience a serious power loss...like a power drill without a battery or a curling iron without an outlet.

The words of Peter encourage us to ***Plug into Christ's Power***, (1) ***When anxieties threaten*** (2) ***When the devil prowls*** and (3) ***When looking for strength***.

1

This Thursday was Ascension Day (40 days after Easter). One of the main themes of Ascension is the power of Christ and how he uses it for our benefit. We can't begin to imagine his kind of power. You and I need a candy bar at 10:00am to rejuvenate ourselves. Christ's power is perfect and available to us anytime. He doesn't have to conserve it or dole it out in little portions. And there's no charge; no power bill to pay. It's ours anytime!

So Peter says, go ahead. Use Christ's power: ***"Cast all your anxiety* (cares and worries) ***on him because he cares for you.*"** When we're young, we do that with our mothers all the time, right? We get an "owwie" and off to mom we run. Why? Because we know she cares! She also knows how to make things better.**

How much more, then, shouldn't we take our problems (whether physical, emotional, or spiritual) to the Lord Jesus who rules not just a household, but a whole universe! He is stronger than titanium yet tenderer than a mother. He invites us, ***"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened"*** (Mt. 11:28). Peter tells us to take that burden, that anxiety, and cast it; toss it his way! Once it's unloaded from us onto Christ's broad shoulders, ***"The peace of God that transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus"*** (Php 4:6,7). If you want peace, real peace that helps you breathe better today instead of hyperventilating and live forever in heaven, then plug into Jesus. How? Hear him in his Word. He speaks to us with a loving, caring voice. Then speak to him in prayer. He's all ears.

2

Peter continues, ***"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."*** What a petrifying picture Peter paints! The devil, a powerful, fallen, evil angel, is stalking, ready to pounce! In an instant he can spring on us like a lion attacking his unsuspecting prey. Satan doesn't just amble up to us and say, ***"Hey there, Mr. or Mrs. Christian. I'm going to tempt you and try to mislead you now so you'll do or say something really terrible and totally mess up your life."*** No, he's a conniving scoundrel. He uses guerilla tactics.

He also knows our weaknesses. If we're impatient people, he'll try to test our patience every day to get us to explode in a torrent of sinful reactions. If we tend toward being materialistic, he'll tempt us to think constantly that the key to happiness and security is having more stuff or all the best

stuff. If we're prone to abusing alcohol or addicted to gambling, he'll find every way he can to splash and flash temptations in our faces so we'll lose the power to resist and then crash and burn.

So what can we do? **Plug in!** If the devil is tempting you, what's he going to do if you're busy reading or pondering God's Word, or if you're pouring your heart out to God in prayer? By ourselves, we're dead meat in the devil's jaws. But plugged into Jesus, the devil will break his teeth on the full armor of God the Savior places on us (Eph. 6).

Peter says, "***Be self-controlled.***" Ultimately, that really means, "Be **Christ-controlled.**" Let the One who smashed the devil on the cross take control of our new creation and direct our words and actions. As John wrote, "***The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work***" (1 Jn 3:8). Jesus' overwhelming victory gives us the plugged-in power to do as Peter says, "***Resist [the devil], standing firm in the faith.***"

3

Peter continues, "***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.***" I don't have to tell you that we live in a deteriorating world. There is much good, but there is also much evil and trouble. And because the evil and trouble are relentless, sometimes we just feel like giving up. Sometimes even Christians feel like the battle is just too long and tough and feel like throwing in the towel. The Word we once adored and rejoiced about in Sunday School gets pushed into the background of our lives as the years pass. The Lord calls on us to swim against the current, but sometimes it just seems easier to "go with the flow."

A mother told her little girl to put on her socks and shoes and get ready to leave. Well, she told the girl ½ dozen times. Finally the mother got more animated: "***Put on your socks and shoes, please!***" The little girl said, "***I can't.***" Mother said, "***Oh yes you can if you want to!***" The little girl replied, "***But I can't want to!***"

That's it, isn't it? Too often we just don't have the power. We say or do something terrible or neglect to do something good; we feel so weak...and then so guilty...and we're tempted to just give up. But that's because we've forgotten the 1st truth of our Christian faith: Jesus loves you. Jesus forgives you and reaches out to strengthen you -- or even help you start all over again if that's what it takes. But the *power* to do that doesn't come from within ourselves. It comes from outside of ourselves. It comes from Jesus who powers the entire universe.

Plug into Jesus! Plug into his power! Peter did, and now he's passed the message on to you and me: "***Cast all your cares on him...he will restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever!***"

Amen.