

**PREPARED TO LIVE IN VICTORY:
OVERCOMING ANXIETY AND PASSIVITY**

Houses of Light Church • June 24 y 25, 2023 • Pastor Netz Gómez

1 Pet. 5:7-8

“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.”

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Anxiety can be a very overwhelming reality for everyone including Christians because the Bible tells us that there is a lion that is roaring and trying to devour our faith to destroy us if we do not deal with it properly. So the question is not whether these anxieties are real but what we do with them and Peter inspired by the Holy Spirit tells us to hand them over to God trusting in His care to take care of everything including the lion.

B. There are other passages that speak of anxiety, sobriety, and vigilance.:

Lk. 21:34-36 *“(Jesus said:) **But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. ³⁵ For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”***

C. On several occasions Jesus included these words together: watching, the cares of this life along with the word “*drunkenness and dissipation.*” We understand that anxiety oppresses the soul and makes it difficult to be strong enough to stand firm in the midst of things that are happening. Anxiety can lead a person to drink or use drugs or other escape to numb their anguish and that is where we lose our sobriety.

D. Another way that many use to combat anxiety is the deception of riches, thinking that they are the full solution to our problems, but Jesus told us that they are deceitful.

Mat. 13:22 *“As for what was sown among thorns, **this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.”***

E. Many people want to combat their anxiety by accumulating wealth and think: *‘if I could have more money in the bank then my anxieties would lessen and I would not be as miserable, fearful or lose sleep as I do’* but that is a deception. Riches lie to us, they are not the complete solution.

F. According to these passages there are three ways to deal with anxiety.:

1. **Drugs, alcohol and self-indulgence:** Satan can use everything to eat away at our faith and make us anxious and some use escapes that make

them lose their sobriety. When a person is not sober he/she cannot think straight and fails.

2. **Money:** Riches are deceptive because they promise happiness and instead of watching you can be focus on how much money you get as if wealth could completely relieve anxiety.
3. **God Himself:** Leaving all your worries in God's hands because He cares for you is the correct and complete way to relieve anxiety. Jesus emphasized God's care as an effective weapon against care:

Mat. 6:25-26 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

II. GOD'S CARE LEADS US TO OVERCOME PASSIVITY

1 Ped. 5: 7:8a "casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

8a Be sober-minded; be watchful..."

- A. Many people have their own ideas about what it means that God cares for us and what it is up to us to do; and they do not pay attention to this reality: **When we cast our anxieties on the Heavenly Father we are free from worry and the result is not being careless Christians but sober Christians who watch and resist the devil, firm in faith.**
- B. As a Christian who knows that God is with you, you do not fight because you are anxious but because you are alert and you know that God has your back and you fight the good fight of faith. God's grace always leads us to action, not passivity:

1 Pet. 4:10-11 "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: ¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

- C. What we receive from God makes us stewards, not hoarders. If God provides us with strength, what we do is serve; we're not going to bed. The fact that God fights for us and gives us strength makes us active, not passive:

Phil. 2:13 "for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."

- D. Some people think that if God produces willing and doing for His good will, then I no longer have to do anything, but when they think like this, what they are really showing is that they do not have God working in them. **If you want to know if you have the grace of God in you, see if this grace causes you to make war against sin and love others.**

1 Cor. 15:10 "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me."

Ef. 6:10-11 "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil."

- E. When the Lord makes us strong it is so that we can put on all the armor that He gives us to face the wiles of the devil. **Be careful not to have your own ideas about God's care that lead you to think that you do not need to do anything, rather you must allow God in His Word to tell you what it means when He cares for you and fights for you and rather make war to stay sober and vigilant and therefore effective in resisting the devil.**

III. CAN THE DEVIL DEVOUR A CHRISTIAN?

1 Pet. 5:8b-9 "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."

- A. If the devil wants to devour us, why does he roar? When a lion is hunting its prey, it is very stealthy so as not to scare it away and make it escape. In some parts of Scripture the devil is described as a serpent (**Gen. 3:1; 2 Cor. 11:3**), but here Peter is not speaking of the devil as a stealthy serpent but rather a frontal attack.
- B. **The roar of the devil is intimidation**, not a stealthy deception of greed or lust but a mob of people who are threatening to destroy you. **The devil operates in more than one way**; yes it is like a cunning snake that tries to deceive you through sin so that you find pleasure in what you should not and thus ruin your faith but it also threatens you: *'I will destroy you and your family' and I will send a mob against you to scare you and leave you without faith.*
- C. The devil can terrify you by roaring in some kind of suffering or persecution, it is something that happens to all Christians throughout the world, accept it as normal (**1 Pet. 5:9**).
- D. Can the devil really devour us Christians? This text does not say that Christians cannot be devoured, what it says is that the devil is looking for someone to devour and that is why we must resist him by being firm in faith.
- E. **God has given us a strategy to defeat the evil one in his attempt to bring us down and we had better use it.** We can realize that a person did not resist firm in faith when he/she agrees to the pressure and goes to the opposite side. The devil wants us to be unbelievers and say: *'I am not going to fight the good fight of faith; I am going to give in, I am going to have my biblical convictions to calm down those who are threatening me.'* If you do, he already devoured you.

- F. As children of God it is important to know that God keeps us and leads us to the fullness of salvation through faith.

1 Ped. 1:3-5 *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."*

- G. So the way to resist the devil is by standing firm in faith. In conclusion:

1. The lion's roar of the enemy is the suffering that has the goal of intimidating and destroying people's faith.
2. Devouring someone is losing faith, which would be changing sides by agreeing to leave faith so as not to be threatened by the opposing mob.
3. God's protection is the power that He has to keep us, which we embrace by faith, trusting that the Father cares for us.

IV. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. According to this text, what is the correct way to overcome anxiety?
2. What is the danger of not knowing how to handle our anxiety?
3. According to this text, what are the two ways in which the devil attacks us and how can you resist him?

THIS WEEK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. We will have a fundraiser for Holy 58 at "UBATUBA" on Wednesday, July 5 from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. After the services they will be passing out fliers with more details.
2. The Passion for Jesus Conference and Leadership Summit offer a discount for early registration but ends July 10, so register today at www.nhop.la
3. Our Vacation Bible School (VBS) is from July 10 to 14 for children from 4 to 12 years old. Please register your children at the children's ministry office in the building across the street.
4. Level 3 in Spanish online of the Effective Parenting Course begins on Wednesday, July 19th. Please register at the information table or at www.centrodeasesoriafamiliar.org