



# MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

February 4, 2024

Pastor James Enderle

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

First Lesson: [Isaiah 40:27-31](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 103 CW

Second Lesson/Sermon Text: [1 Peter 5:6-11](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Mark 1:29-39](#)

## From Jordan's Shore to Mountain's Glory The Devil's Work Undone Protection from the Enemy

1. The \_\_\_\_ is the enemy
2. Be \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
3. You are not \_\_\_\_\_
4. The God of \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ for you

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

If you know anything about history and the history of warfare, you know wars have changed quite a bit in the last few decades. Think back to the Civil War and the Revolutionary War. How did enemies fight battles? Even going back to WWI, things started to change a little bit then, but back in the day, one side would wear one color of uniform. The other side would wear another color of uniform. They would often go up and line up against each other. Before guns, they would go and chase after each other. Now with guns, they just shoot at each other but you would know exactly who the enemy was.

Now when we look at warfare, like Russia and Ukraine and the Middle East, things are quite different. As they go into cities and they are trying to find out who the enemy is, sometimes it's pretty hard. They'll go in and there are civilians there and they have people who are trying to attack them in the next house. How different do they look? Are they even trying to disguise themselves so that you don't know who the enemy is?

As we look at 1 Peter, we are going to see how God gives us protection, how He gives us **protection from the enemy**. We are going to see what that warfare is like and how

God protects us, but then also what He tells us about this enemy and why the battle is difficult for us.

As we look here, Peter writes to Christians. In previous chapters, he describes them as strangers in a foreign land. These were Christians who were strong in their faith but they were meeting a lot of opposition. People didn't like Christianity. They didn't like what they believed and were teaching and doing, so things were very hard for them. Peter wants to encourage them and help them in this difficult time.

The first thing he notes that we want to point out is what he says in Verse 8. ***“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”*** Why is that important to note? Sometimes we forget who the enemy is. He tells us that the devil, this roaring lion, this enemy, this is who we have to watch out for. He's not just some tame kitten. He wants to devour us. Do we often forget that the devil is the enemy? We talked a little bit last week about how often we like to forget that the devil is active and we pretend that he doesn't exist. Think about in life how often the devil is our enemy but we make other people and other things our enemies.

You might hear this is pre-marriage counseling or even later in marriage counseling. When there is a problem, a situation, what do we often do? We kind of attack the other person in the marriage. When people talk to you about how to handle situations, they say you don't talk about the other person as the problem but you talk about the problem so that both of you can talk about the thing and you're not enemies because you are trying to work together on an issue. But so often in those close relationships, we sometimes see the other person as the enemy instead of the devil, who is trying to put a wedge in your relationship.

Think about relationships in church. Do you think the devil is the cause of disagreements and issues and all the problems that we have when we say “Why are they doing that?” or “They did this” or “They hurt me”? Is it that person, that other Christian that is your enemy? Are they trying to take you down? No. It's the devil that is trying to cause division.

Luther wrote that wherever there is a church, the devil wants to build a chapel. He wants to work his way in there and cause division. When you have disagreements with other people and you don't see them (especially in the church) as equity, know that this is the devil's work trying to separate. He is trying to hinder the work of the Gospel.

Then take it outside of those close relationships and the church and think about the world. The world is extremely divided today. We can think about all those people who believe something different than us or those that may be pushing things we don't agree with and we say “They're our enemies!” Are they? Or is it the devil that is leading them

astray and telling them lies? Think about those people that we don't get along with, that we have so many things to disagree with. They are not your enemies. *The devil is the enemy.* The devil is leading them astray and if you think about them as people who are loved by God and they need the Gospel just as much as we do, can you show that compassion and care that they need?

Think about all these ways that the devil is trying to get us to think that he's not the enemy. He wants you to make all these other things your enemies and to not see that he is leading you away from God or hindering the Gospel or causing division among people. See that the devil is the biggest enemy. He is looking to devour you and others.

How do we then resist him? Peter writes in Verses 8 and 9. ***"Be alert and of sober mind." "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."*** Let's also jump back up to Verse 6. ***"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time."*** God wants us to resist the devil. But He tells us how to do it in a few different ways. He says to *be self-controlled, alert and humble.* A different translation for "of sober mind" is self-controlled. We don't really use "sober mind" so much in our language. Why is it important to be all those different things? As Christians we can struggle with these things just as much as anyone else, but when we are looking at the temptations that the devil has for us, I think you can easily see why it's important to be self-controlled.

If I can't control my behavior, if I can't control the situations I put myself in, it will be easier for the devil to tempt me. You need to understand what things you can't control and know that the devil knows you more than anyone else, other than God. He knows how to tempt you and he knows what you like to fall into. So he says to be self-controlled.

He also says to be alert. Why should we be alert? There are a lot of things that are leading us astray and cause us to think different things, to be tempted, to think differently about God in the world. If we're not alert, if we're not discerning, it can soak into our lives and our way of thinking. We should be careful of what friends we associate with. What are they teaching you and telling you and encouraging you to be like and to do? Are they telling you God is not important? Are they telling you that God's Word is not true?

Then think about all of the things that our world and culture teaches. We are surrounded by it. We are in it all the time. We are inundated by it from TV and movies, from media of all sorts, social media, and it's very easy for us to not see how that affects us. So God says to be alert and watch out for how the devil gets his teachings in and tempts you and takes you away from God.

Finally, humble yourselves. To understand that the situation that you are in is difficult and often if we don't have humility, what do we do? We have pride and we say "I can do this! I can do it on my own! I don't need God's help. I don't need the help of others." That's exactly what the devil wants us to do; to cut us off and to say "You don't need God. You don't need others. You can handle this." Or even to cut you off and say "God doesn't love you because this has happened." To humble ourselves and to understand that in these difficult times, in these persecutions, that God is still with you and He loves you and will continue to be with you.

That's what he then says; to humble ourselves to see who is around us and that God is with us. He says that in Verse 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."*** He says *you are not alone*. This isn't saying that it might be bad for you but there are other people who have it worse. He is encouraging us that in the same way that you have difficulties and God is going to be with you and help you, God is with others who are going through many similar things. God wants you to see and to know that He gives you other people to strengthen you and to help you; to be in worship; to be in Bible studies; to gather with Christian friends who can encourage you and to lift you up.

A bigger thing of understanding that you're not alone is to understand who is watching over you. As he says to humble yourselves and that God will lift you up at due time, he says ***"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."*** And in Verse 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."*** Why also are you not alone? You are not alone because *the God of grace cares for you*. He promises He is with you and that after a little while, after these difficulties, He will lift you up. He says all the things that He will do. He will restore you. He will make you strong, firm and steadfast. He called you and He is the one who does this. He is the God of grace, not the God of "you need to do this on your own." He gives us the forgiveness and the love and the mercy to know that in temptations, when we stumble, we are forgiven. And in the trouble that we face, He will strengthen us. He does that through His Word. He does that through Christ. As we grow in the Word, it says the Holy Spirit is with us and will strengthen us and Christ lives in us and daily we are renewed and know that we are never alone. The God of grace cares for you.

As he says, after a little while, you'll suffer for a little while, but then you are called to eternal glory. What does that look like? A couple years ago at the Men of His Word Conference (that is coming up soon), at one of the presentations they said to write out some of the most important events of your life on a timeline. Do the past and then mark out a couple future events that are really important to you that are coming up. You can see your whole life in some real important events from birth to death. Then on

a second timeline right underneath the first, there is a dot and then on the other side it has eternity. Now you put those events and your timeline into eternity, and where does it go? It's like a little tiny dot on that line of eternity.

It's not to say that the things we go through and the things that we suffer in this world are not real. There are things that are hard. He says to cast all your anxiety on Him. It's not to downplay and to say that it's not real but to say that the grace and the glory that awaits us is far greater than anything we face in this life. As the devil assaults us to say "You're not worthy" or "You have fallen short too many times," we cling to God's grace. We cling to Christ, who has done all the work for us. Tempted in every way but He stood firm.

So we see life isn't always going to be easy but if we know what we are going to face, if we know the enemy and we can fight him, not on our own but in these ways of being self-controlled, alert and humble, God helps us do those things. Know your enemy, but most of all, know that your God, the God of grace who cares for you, will care for you now, strengthen you now, and will take you home to be with Him for eternity. Amen.

***And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*** [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.