

## Fear the Divine Resistance – I Peter 5:5-6

### I. Introduction:

- A. In **Acts 7** Stephen was being called to defend his faith in Christ as he stood before Israel's high council.
- Someone had said, *"We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God."*
    - His blasphemy was in declaring that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
    - He must have also said that it is not through obedience to the law that sinners are brought into fellowship with God, but rather it is through faith in Christ.
  - Toward the end of his defense, Deacon Stephen turned to the offence, declaring, *"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye."*
  - That ignited the powder keg, and God's martyr died a horrible death, crushed under a rain of stones.
  - Earlier in that chapter it is said about many of the Jews, *"they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake."*
  - Even though they resisted the conviction of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, they couldn't resist, or answer, what the man of God was saying.
- B. Resisting the Holy Spirit is a subject which comes up from time to time.
- Don't struggle to deny, put down, or resist the conviction of the Holy Spirit upon your soul.
  - Surrender to that conviction. Submit to the Lord and the leadership of the Spirit.
  - 3. Heb. 3** exhorts us: *"To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts,"* as Israel did in the wilderness.
  - Remember that those people died under God's judgment, because they resisted the Lord.
  - If the burden of your sin is weighing heavily on your soul, it is probably because the Spirit is pushing on it.
  - "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation"* while tomorrow may not be.
- C. In all of this, I think we can reasonably conclude that it is a dangerous thing to resist the omnipotent God.
- Holding up your hand isn't going to stop a murderer's bullet.
    - An umbrella isn't going to protect you from an avalanche.
  - Probably 98% of the people of **Acts 7** are in hell today, because they resisted the conviction of the Holy Spirit which they felt through Stephen's message.
  - They refused to humble themselves before the holy God.
  - Resisting God even for one moment is spiritually dangerous and eternally disastrous.
- D. But perhaps something even worse than resisting God is just the reverse – God's resistance of us.
- In the course of **Peter's** instructions to the members of the churches in Asia, he said, *"God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."*
  - James**, while emphasizing God's blessings on humility, said almost the same thing – *"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."*
  - Many scholars think that both preachers got this theme from **Proverbs 3:**
    - "The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked; but he blesseth the habitation of the just."*
    - Surely he scorneth the scorners; but he giveth grace unto the lowly."*
    - The wise shall inherit glory; but shame shall be the promotion of fools."* What is scorn?
  - The definition is: *"the feeling or belief that someone or something is worthless or despicable; contemptible."*
  - The Greek version of the Old Testament – the version which Peter and James were using – translated **Proverbs 3:34's** *"scorneth"* with the word *"resist."*
  - What will happen to the person whom God considers worthless or despicable or contemptible?
  - I can assure you that the outcome will not be good.

### II. Before returning to that, let's consider the exhortations contained in these two verses.

- A. *"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility... Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God."*
- I think Peter uses the word *"likewise"* to tell us he has instructions for younger people as well as the elders.
  - And it appears to me that *"ye younger"* simply refers to people who are not as mature in the Lord as others.

3. I could get some criticism for this, but I don't think that the "elders" of **verse 5** are the same kind of elders that we see earlier in the chapter.
  4. The "elders" of **verse 5** are not necessarily the pastors of the Asian churches.
  5. If they were, I think Peter would have said something like: *"Ye younger, submit yourselves unto your elders"*
- B. There are some commentators who say that *"ye younger"* refers to deacons or some other church office under the authority of the church bishops. But there is no reason to make that assumption.
1. Logically *"ye younger"* refers to people who were not as mature as the older saints.
- C. *"Submit"* and *"be subject"* in **verse 5** are the same Greek word, and they mean: *"put yourselves under."*
1. That word is found eight times in **I Corinthians 15:27-28** – God *"hath PUT all things UNDER (Christ's) feet. But when he saith all things are PUT UNDER him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did PUT ALL THINGS UNDER him. And when all things shall be SUBDUED unto him, then shall the Son also himself be SUBJECT unto him that PUT all things UNDER him, that God may be all in all."*
  2. Peter's idea is something like a new Christian becoming an apprentice under an older saint of God.
  3. It is a mentor/student relationship.
  4. What right does an eight-year-old have in criticizing the grammar of her teacher.
  5. And should she be trying to correct the theology of her Christian father, or her pastor?
  6. *"Ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder."*
- D. Then Peter says, *"Deference, humble respect and submission, should be a part of ALL Christian lives."*
1. *"Yea, ALL of you be subject one to another."* This includes those pastors, bishops and elders.
  2. This takes the elder back to Peter's exhortation not to be a lord over God's heritage.
  3. To be a saint of God is to be part of a chosen generation and a royal priesthood.
  4. Every Christian is peculiar, or special, to the Lord, and they all should be treated with respect.
  5. The Lord's instructions to every one of us, from Peter and Paul down to Zacchaeus and other publicans is: elevate the person beside you and take a seat at the lower end of the table.
  6. This world would be a better place if we would put others above our selves no matter what their public office might be. And the same holds true for the Lord's churches.
- E. Next Peter says, *"Be clothed with humility."*
1. When a sinner is saved by the grace of God, he or she is clothed in the righteousness of the Saviour.
    - a. Figuratively speaking, God looks upon us with our nakedness covered by robe of the Lord Jesus.
    - b. Praise the Lord that each and every day of our earthly lives, Christians are enveloped in the luxurious robe of Christ.
  2. And then when our life's work is ended and we cross the swelling tide, God's saints will begin wearing new Heavenly bodies.
  3. **I Corinthians 15:1** – *"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*
    - a. *For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:*
    - b. *If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.*
    - c. *For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."*
- F. **God** may see all the former prodigals wearing the Saviour's robe, but what does the world see?
1. With respect to the lost world and our struggles here, we need to *"put on the whole armour of God, that (we) may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."*
    - a. After protecting our heads with the helmet of salvation, we need our loins girt about with truth.
    - b. We need to protect our hearts with the breastplate of righteousness.
    - c. We need the shoes of the gospel and we need to firmly grasp the shield of faith.
  2. But Peter adds something to which Paul only hints.

3. Under this panoply of armor, we need to be clothed with genuine humility.
4. And when in the comfort of our ecclesiastical castle, where we might feel at liberty to lay our armor aside, our fellow soldiers & family members should see us clothed with the soft & wonderful garments of humility.

G. Peter may have been thinking back to those last few hours that he and the others had with the Lord Jesus.

1. **John 13** describes Christ finishing the last supper by getting up and laying aside his seamless robe in order to gird Himself with a towel, before humbly washing the disciples' feet.
2. Peter, in our text, may have been thinking about the attire of the servant, and the attire of Christ that night.
3. *"Be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility"* like true servants of God.

H. *"Humble yourselves"* he says.

1. It should be obvious that the Lord knows how to bring us to humility.
2. He knows how to humble us, and He can easily humiliate us.
3. Remember what He did to Nebuchadnezzar, turning him from a king into a beast, to teach him about the sin of pride.
4. Yes, God can and does humble people, but rather than endure that, Peter exhorts us to *"humble ourselves."* *"For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged"* – **I Corinthians 11:31.**

I. Peter's exhortation is for us to humble **ourselves.**

1. For those who are not experienced in such things, it may be a lot harder than they imagine.
2. Have you ever hiked up a steep incline to reach a mountain top?
3. It may take a lot of work – sweat, complaining muscles.
4. If you have made a climb like that, you may testify that going back down was even harder.
5. It's as though our bodies – our feet and our legs – are not designed for the downward walk.
6. Well, our fallen natures are not really designed for descent either.
7. It takes work and the help of the Lord to properly humble ourselves.

J. But it is important for several reasons.

1. Within a church, when every wants to sit in the first seats, so to speak, problems arise.
  - a. Remember when Mrs. Zebedee came to Christ on behalf of her sons, asking that they be given seats on either side of Jesus in His kingdom?
  - b. That request would have caused problems within the Lord's church, if the Lord hadn't dealt with it.
2. Humility is an important atmosphere in which to live, while trying to serve God and to evangelize the lost.
3. But perhaps the most important reason to humble ourselves is explained by Peter.

### III. He reinforces his exhortation with a Biblical explanation.

A. *"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder."*

1. *Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.*
2. *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."*

B. *"God resisteth the proud."*

1. **M.R. Vincent** in his *"Word Studies"* say that this word *"resisteth"* is a particularly strong and graphic word which speaks of God setting himself in array, like an army preparing for battle.
2. This is the only time in God's Word where this is used, so we can't compare scripture with scripture.
3. Nevertheless, we know that pride calls out God's armies.
4. Jehovah hates pride. It is detestable to Him – **Proverbs 6.**
5. No wonder, that pride *"goeth before destruction,"* because God's armies are not going to be defeated.
6. Pride is something which God's people need to learn to fear.
7. It is a weed which can grow up over night, destroying your crop of good works and godly service.
8. If we don't resist it, the Lord will do that for us, but we will likely be cut down in the process.

C. *“God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.”*

1. Isn't there something strange in this thought?
2. What is grace? Isn't it the undeserved, unmerited blessing of the Lord?
3. If that is the case, and it is, how can Peter tells us to humble ourselves in order to earn God's grace?
4. Well, the fact is, he doesn't.

D. Yes, the more meek and humble we are, the more submissive and servant-like we are, the more the Lord may bless us.

1. But the last part of **verse 5** is simply a statement of fact, not a direct part of the exhortation: *“God... giveth grace to the humble.”*
2. In other words, even though we are to strive to be humble, it should not be in order to be rewarded with divine grace. It doesn't work that way.
3. It may be a concept hard to grasp, but the harder we try to be humble, the less likely we will really be humble.
4. And certainly, if we think we have succeeded in being humble, we have surely failed.
5. There is such a thing as to be proud of our humility.

E. I noticed something interesting in the text which probably doesn't have any important significance whatsoever.

1. The **exhortation** is to be clothed with *“humility”* – in this case *“humility”* is a **noun**.
2. Then there is the simple statement that God giveth grace to the people who are *“humble.”*
  - a. There the word is used as an **adjective**, speaking about *“humble people.”*
3. And finally we have another exhortation to *“humble ourselves,”* where the word is used as a **verb**.
4. If I might put it this way, just as humility is to be found in every part of speech, it should be found in every part of our lives.
5. It must be a part of our worship, our service, our treatment of others – everything.
6. The more humility is woven into and throughout our lives, the better off we will be.

F. Peter adds one more thing. Why does he say, *“humble yourselves... under the mighty hand of God?”*

1. Without thinking about it, someone might answer that since God is holy and sovereign, we better be humble to keep Him from squashing us like some offensive vermin.
2. If we don't humble ourselves, He will humble us.
3. While that may be true, that is not how *“the mighty hand of God”* is being used here.

G. Peter says, *“Humble yourselves... under the mighty hand of God, THAT he may exalt you in due time.”*

1. It is the mighty hand of God which can lift the most humble of objects, or people, to positions of exaltation.
2. Look at the elevation of **the prisoner Joseph** onto the throne of the Prime Minister of Egypt.
3. See how **Nebuchadnezzar** was lifted out of insanity to glory.
4. Look at the **fishermen** who became the most important men in the world after the death of the Saviour.
5. It takes the mighty hand of God to do such things.

H. There is great profit in the sacrifice of our pride.

1. Not only will our humility stay the mighty hand of God's chastisement and turn aside God's resistance.
2. But at the same time it will cause the mighty hand to open up to us the great blessings of the Lord.
3. *“Humble yourselves... under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.”*
4. At the right time, the proper time, the blessings of God will be given to the humble.

I. What is the attitude of your heart?

1. How much pride is there in your day-to-day life?
2. *“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up”* – **James 4:10.**