

# Don't Run from His Roar



**Bro. Ricky Cunningham**  
**1 Peter 5:6–11**

You know we raise cattle on our farm. If you drove down Redbud Road or Hwy 1346 and saw the cattle in the pastures there, you would see that the majority of our cattle are black. They're Angus cattle. We have a couple of Charolaise mixed in but the majority are Angus cattle. If you look really, really close, you would notice we also have a donkey that we affectionately called Bob in the midst of all of the cows. My dad bought that donkey years and years ago and he put it in with the cowherd. We all struggled at first to understand why would Pop put a donkey on a cattle farm. We thought maybe as he was getting older, somebody just took advantage of him, but that's not true. See, cattle are actually a prey animal, even though our cows are relatively large—some of them weigh from 14 to 1600 pounds, and we have three male Angus bulls that probably weigh 2200 pounds! But they are still a prey animal, especially during birthing season. We have some predators that roam the neighborhood that we call 'ki-otes,' or coyotes. Coyotes love to get a baby calf separated from the herd. Let me just say it's not good for that baby calf. So Pop bought a donkey, and here's what's amazing...I don't know if you know this about the nature of a donkey but donkeys hate ki-otes. If a donkey sees a ki-ote anywhere on our farm, that donkey chases those ki-otes down and he will do his best to

take a bite out of them. He will do his best to get them down, kick them, and kick them till there's no life left in them. I can't tell you how many nights we're at home watching TV or doing something as a family, when all of a sudden we hear the predators. It's crazy. It scares us almost to death! We open the door and step out on the back deck, but we know we don't have to go check it out because we hear Bob, braying as loud as he can. The next thing you know, he'll be going to the direction of the ki-otes. We don't even go check it out anymore because the next morning everybody is fine. Why? Because of Bob. Bob has a nature to protect his cows, and here's what he knows. Those cows have a predator, a predator that he hates.

This morning, we're going to understand, as we continue what Kory started last week in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter chapter 5, that we are the flock of God. We are sheep and sheep are prey animals—sheep have predators. You and I, spiritually, as the sheep of God, are going to learn we have a predator and we're going to learn how to respond to him this morning. Our message is titled: Don't Run from His Roar. When you hear your predator roar, don't run. Don't run. We're going to learn why and how. Listen to what Peter wrote to the elect exiles scattered throughout the Roman Empire.

## Scripture

***"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time He may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To Him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen."***

Peter is writing to the church scattered throughout the Roman Empire, but now he takes just a paragraph and addresses the pastors, the elders, the

bishops. We here at Hardin believe all three of those terms refer to the same person, the same office. It describes the work the pastor does. But he draws attention to the fact that elders/pastors actually shepherd the flock of God. He brings in that picture that is used throughout the New Testament, even in the Old Testament, of God's people being likened to sheep. As sheep, he reminds us that we are to cement to our leaders, our elders. He tells us that as a church, both pastors and church members, we are to be clothed with humility. He bases this clothing of humility on an Old Testament truth, and the Old Testament truth is God opposes the proud. So when God sees someone who's prideful, He takes a stance against that person...wow. But when He sees a humble person, He takes a different stance. That person who's humbling themselves, He's actually going to exalt that person, lift that person up. So as we begin this next paragraph, it's going to say, humble yourselves. Then he says, "Therefore..." Therefore is one of our favorite words at Hardin, right? It tells us to stop and see what it's there for, so what Peter's going to say next is based on what he just said, so it's based on us being clothed with humility.

Now, I want to go ahead and tell you right up front what we're going to learn this morning about the sheep of God. We're going to learn that the sheep of God are humble. We're going to learn that the sheep of God are sober. We're going to learn that the sheep of God are alert. Then, we're going to learn that the sheep of God are actually hunted. Then, we're going to learn that the sheep of God are resistant. And then, we're going to learn that the sheep of God are knowledgeable. Now, as we walk through this passage, I want you to be looking for humility, soberness, watchfulness or being alert, how we are being hunted by a predator. What's our response to being hunted? We are to resist, and as we resist, we are to be knowledgeable of something. Now, I want you to get this picture. If you are part of Hardin church, you should be clothed with humility.

I don't know about you, but if you walk into my closet, I have two sets of clothes. I have what I call my farm clothes or work clothes, and then have all my other clothes, and generally, I just refer to those as my church clothes. Now, if you had seen me this past Friday, you would've seen at

different times in the day I had different clothes that came from different parts of my closet. Mrs. Shirley Blakely passed away this week, and I had the privilege of speaking at her funeral. So about 10:30 that morning, I went into the closet and I went to that side where the preaching clothes hang and I put on a suit in her honor. I put on my dress shoes and I made sure they were clean, and I put on a belt. Can I just be honest? It changed the rest of my day...because I didn't start the morning off that way. I started the morning off with some farming clothes on because I had some things I wanted to do around the house, so I had gone to that side of the closet, put the jeans on, put the shirts on, and put the shoes on, no belt. And I didn't think about a thing because it did not matter what I was going to do with those clothes on. It didn't matter if I got anything on those clothes because those are just old work clothes. But boy, when I changed and put that suit on, my behavior changed. I didn't eat dinner. I sure didn't go through a drive through and get a burger and French fries, because if I had opened up a little packet of ketchup it could have gotten on my clothes. I didn't eat a thing from 10:30 until after the funeral. Why? Because I was aware of what I had on, and it changed what I did, changed my attitude, changed my day.

Are you getting this picture? What should you and I be clothed with? Humility. Humility is us putting others ahead of ourselves. Do you do that? I'm not talking about just your husband or just your kids or your grandkids. I'm talking about others. Do you put others of the faith, other believers ahead of yourself? See, that's the English dictionary of humility—putting others ahead of ourselves. If we examine Paul and his view of humility, when he writes to the church at Philippi in the second chapter, he wants us as the church to have the mind of Christ. Now get this picture—we're going to have the mind of Christ, and as a church we ought to all have the same mind, the mind of Christ. He said do nothing with conceit or arrogance...Whoa! If you're arrogant and you're conceited, you have your mind on yourself. Then Paul said with full humility make others more significant than yourself. It's one thing to put others ahead of yourself; it's another thing to make the person you're putting ahead of yourself more significant than you.

How are we doing? Are you humble? See, as a church we're supposed to be clothed with humility. Why? Because of who we are. We're the sheep of God; we're the children of God. And now in verse 6, with clothing of humility on, Peter gives a command—humble yourselves. So this attitude that we have of wearing the clothing of humility causes us to be humble. But here we're not humbling ourselves to others; we're humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God, making the hand of God more significant than our hand. Can I remind you about the hand of God? Do you know what the Bible says in happened in the Old Testament? With the outstretched hand of God, just the outstretched hand of God, he led Israel out of Egyptian bondage, led them through a sea where he made a highway out of a sea, led them through a wilderness, and then through another river into the Promised Land. How many of you can do that with your hand? No one. So we're going to humble ourselves, we're going to make God more significant than us, and we're going to put ourselves under His mighty hand so that at the proper time He will exalt us, raise us up.

Now, I want you to watch this. Those of you grammarians have already caught this—we're now going to switch from a verb to a participle. This participle is going to say, "...casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you." Now, you remember from English class that participles modify verbs. So what this is telling us is how you humble yourself. Here's how you humble yourself—you cast all your anxieties on God because God cares about you. Does that make sense? I want to tell you what I think some of us have been led to believe. Some of us have been led to believe that when we worry it's a lack of faith. But in this context, Peter's saying when you worry it's a sign of pride, and being prideful is the opposite of humility. Whoa! How many of you worry because you've really tried to do something but you're just not sure how it's going to go? So you begin to worry; you begin to stress. Peter says humble yourself at that moment when you start to worry. Humble yourself and just cast that thing, that worry, that anxiety over there to the Lord. It means throw it upon Him. It means just get rid of it. Why? Because He cares about you. Wow!

Now, there have been times when I've personally worried about things, and you've personally worried about things. Then someone finds out that

we've been worried about something and they offered to help, and then they get kind of hurt when we wouldn't let them help. Have any have ever been in that situation? Sometimes the reason we don't share our worry is because we don't want someone to know why. Why do we not want someone to know? Because of our pride. Or sometimes it's because we really don't believe the other person could help so we don't tell them. And sometimes, at the bottom of our reason not to share, is that we don't really know if they care. Or, we think they're too busy for us! Yet what is this Scripture teaching? It's teaching God cares for you...so just take that anxiety, take that worry, and cast it upon Him. You will not do that unless you humble yourself, and by humbling yourself, you're showing that your faith and confidence is not in yourself but it's in God! And when you cast it to Him leave it there...don't pick it back up. Let Him handle it. Why will He handle it? Because He cares about you! So let's be humble.

Secondly, let's be sober. Now, every time I see this word in the Bible, I see the opposite of sober and that's drunk, that's intoxicated; somebody has let something in their life influence the way they're thinking now, and their thinking is not good. Therefore, because their thinking's not good their behavior's not good. When you're under the influence of something that you shouldn't be under, you just sometimes do really wrong things. When you're sober you're not being influenced, you're not intoxicated; you're in your right mind, so to speak. You think clearly now. Now, this isn't talking about alcohol or drugs, or something that changes our thought process in that physical form. It is talking about things that do cause us to think wrong, and there are a lot of things that influence us in this world in which we live that distract us from right thinking. Peter's saying to us a sheep because we're a prey animal, be sober. Be sober as a sheep. Make sure in this particular situation you're in at this moment that you're sober—you're thinking rightly, you're thinking correctly.

Then Peter says be alert. This word, alert, means to be awake. It means to watch. So here we are as the church, as sheep—all of us walking around humbly. We've cast our anxieties and our worries on God. We're putting others ahead of ourselves. We're under the mighty hand of God. We're waiting for that moment when He's going to raise us up...we're not going

to raise ourselves up we're going to let Him raise us up. We're thinking correctly. Now he's telling us to keep our eyes open. Don't live drowsy, don't live distracted, but be alert. Now, I don't know about you, but I just kind of sense there must be some danger lurking. Does everyone agree this passage is leading to danger? And then here we see it. See, as the church we're to be humble—we're relying on God, not ourselves—we're to be sober, and we're to be watchful. Why? Because your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. I know we don't like to talk about this in America, and I know we don't like to admit this, but as Christians, as the church, we are the hunted. We are the prey and we have a predator. Look what Peter says, "your" predator. You have someone who's out to get you. He's your adversary. This word, adversary, comes from the law courts of the biblical world, and it's what we would call the prosecuting attorney. Now if you've been accused of something and you go to court, you get to get a defense attorney, but in the court, it's not just you and the defense attorney before a judge. It's you, your defense attorney, and a prosecuting attorney. I don't know if any of you've ever seen our court in real life action but those prosecuting attorneys, they never say anything good about the defendant. They say really mean nasty, hurtful things because they're trying to convince the judge and a jury about this person. But there's this defense attorney who is telling a whole different story. What Peter is saying is you have a prosecuting attorney in life, the devil.

The word devil literally means the slanderer. You have someone who wants to slander you. You have someone that's against you. Now, this word adversary is also where we get our English word Satan from. In other words, you can say your Satan the slanderer, or your adversary the devil. He's yours. He's personal. He's against you. Do you feel that? Guess what he's doing. He's prowling. Some older versions of the English language would say "walks around," or "walks to and fro." It's the picture of him just pacing up and down but he's in stealth mode. You don't see him. He's close to you, but you don't even know he's there. This is why Peter wants the church not relying on their own hand, but the hand of God. This is why he wants us to be sober. That's why he wants us to be alert, because this slanderer is prowling around. Do you know why he's prowling around? He's

seeking someone to devour. This word divine literally means to gulp down; it means to swallow a hole. I like to translate it in Dexter as he wants to eat your lunch, and that's you. He wants to tear you apart. Yeah, he's after you.

Listen to what it says next. He "prowls around like a roaring lion." Are you ready for this? He's not a lion. You know who the lion is; it's Jesus Christ. He's the King of kings, He's the Lord of Lord's, He's the lion of the tribe of Judah, but He has someone who's trying to imitate Him here in this world, in our life, in our community...and it's the devil. It's Satan. He walks around roaring like a lion. Do you know that the lion's roar can be heard from as far away as five miles? Wow! Did you know that in zoos where lions are kept in captivity sometimes when the zookeeper is in the proximity of the lion and the lion roars and he's not ready for it, sometimes those guys faint. Their bodies go into shakes and they literally lose consciousness because of the roar in close proximity of the lion. Lions don't walk through the jungle roaring; they walk through the jungle in stealth mode. It's when they're ready to pounce that they roar. Now can I just be honest with you? Let's suppose you and I were in close proximity to a lion and it roared. What do you think your first instinct would be? To run. Have you ever seen those shows on TV where they meet the lion and everybody looks at each other and they are told, "Don't run, don't run, don't run!" Everybody knows not to run, but the next thing you know, what do they all do? They run. And what does the lion do? He picks out the slow runner and he goes after that one.

That's the picture here. Satan is seeking whom he *may* devour. How can he devour you? He has to scare you, and when he scares you, you run and who you usually run from is your source of safety, and that's the sheep. So you run away and in your scaredness you try to outrun him, you try to be isolated, you do this on your own, and the next thing you know it's over. He's eaten your lunch. He got you, he got your spouse, he got your kids, he got your business, and it's horrible, absolutely horrible what he wants to do. Now, I just want to say something to every person in here. It may not be you, but it could be your wife he's after. It could be your husband he's after. It could be your kid he's after. It could be your neighbor, it could be



your best friend, it could be your employer, or it could be some of your employees. He's prowling; he's in steal mode. Listen to me...when he roars, we don't run. We don't run.

What do we do? We resist him, firm in our faith, Peter says. So can I say this? We are not the hunters, we are the hunted; we are the resistance to what's going on around us. You say, "Hold on, are you telling me I can resist Satan?" Yes, you can resist Satan. You can resist the devil. You can stand toe to toe to him. Let me tell you why...because he is not the lion, he's a defeated prince. In chapter 12, the book of Revelation teaches how life's going to look during the Church Age. In the 12th chapter of that center story of the Bible, it tells us why Satan's after the church. The first six verses of chapter 12 paint a picture of this lady who's getting ready to give birth to this child. While she's getting ready to give birth to this child, there's this big dragon getting ready to divide the child as soon as the child's born. The dragon here is Satan. As soon as the baby is born, Satan tries but can't divide the child and the child is immediately caught up to Heaven. Then in verse 7, a war arose in Heaven. Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back but he was defeated. There was no longer any place for them in Heaven and the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent who is called the devil, Satan, the deceiver of the whole earth! Now where is he at? He's not in Heaven anymore he's been cast down to the earth. He was thrown down to the earth and his angels are thrown down with him. Verses 10–12 say, "And I heard a loud voice in Heaven, saying, 'Now the salvation and the power and the Kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!'" Wow...you get it, right? Heaven is rejoicing! Why? Because Satan's not in Heaven anymore! So he doesn't come into the presence of God and accuse Job. He doesn't come into the presence of God and accuse Joshua. Why could he do that in the Old Testament? Because in the Old Testament,

there had not been a sacrifice that had done away with man's sin. There was not a sacrifice that can make man right with God. All of those sacrifices anticipated the sacrifice of Christ. And when He sacrificed Himself on that cross, His sacrifice once and for all made you right with God and did away with all of your sin, and it brought you into right relationship with God.

So tell me this. What good would it do Satan to be in Heaven talking about you to God bringing up your sin? God would just say...*I don't remember that. It's covered by my Son's blood.* So where is Satan? He's on the earth. What is he doing? He's accusing us. Yeah. Do you know what he does? He whispers in your ear about you, and he whispers in my ear about me...*Did you really? Are you kidding me? Boy, you'll never...* Have you ever heard that? Yeah. See, he's not just whispering in your about you, but he's whispering to your wife about you. He's whispering to your kids about you. He's whispering to your friends about you, and he's doing the same thing to them in your life. Why? He's trying to isolate somebody from the sheepfold so that he can devour them. So what are we going to do? We're going to resist. Why are we going to resist? Because he's a defeated foe, he's a defeated prince; he's not a king.

Then, we're going to be knowledgeable. God's ordained suffering and you're not the only one suffering for right now. Kory made mention that we're not talking about suffering for personal sin, but there are consequences to personal sin. This is being written to a church that's doing right but they're still suffering. Do you see what's behind that? Satan. This is why Paul says "we wrestle not against flesh and blood." Church, get your eyes off the flesh and blood people you think are causing you your problem. They're not the cause of the problem; the cause of the problem is a spiritual being who's out to get you! Yes, you may take them out of your life, but the moment you do there's somebody else going to come into your life because God has ordained suffering. And for this church that's supposed to be humble, supposed to be putting others ahead of themselves, making people more significant than ourselves, Peter just reminds us of this—you're not the only one suffering. This is going all around the world.

Now, I want to be totally honest with you. When I read this letter, I don't even want to complain about anything. Here we whiny Christians are in America whining about how life is. Yet this is being written to a church that had Nero as an emperor and their lives were literally being taken—not their livelihood, their lives! And Peter's writing to them saying you're not the only ones. Brothers and sisters all around the world are suffering because they're standing for right. Then he says for a little while, it's not going to be good in your life when you stand for right and you stand for the gospel. But you need to know this: There's a God who cares, and the God who cares is the God of all grace! We like to say at Hardin, "Grace is God's enabling power. Grace is God doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves so that we can now do what Jesus did, live an obedient life to God." This God of enabling power...as we humble ourselves under our circumstances and we face suffering...do you know what He's going to do? He's going to raise us up at the right time. Wow!

Now, I know the way some of you have been taught and raised about our God that this will blow some of your minds, but here's what our God knows. Our God knows that someone needs to see Jesus in you. And they're not going to really see Jesus in you by how much you raise your hands on Sunday morning, or how loud you sing, or how much money you put in the offering box, or how many chapters you've read. Do you know when they're going to really see Jesus in you? It's when you suffer. And in the midst of your suffering, you make others more significant than you. You don't rely upon your own hand; you rely upon God's hand, and you patiently suffer knowing the God of all grace is going to mend you one day and cause you to stand up. He's going to give you the ability in this situation and He's going to establish you. He's going to put you on the solid foundation. Do you know what someone's going to see? Someone's going to see Christ, and when they see Christ in you, it just might cause them to want to investigate who this Christ really is. Because in that moment, there was just something different about you and you didn't act like everyone else acted. Do you know who you acted like you? You acted like a sheep of God.

Now, Peter didn't go into it here, but let me just remind you what Paul said. Paul said be strong in the power of the Lord and stand against the evil day. And that picture of stand means when the day's over you're still standing, you didn't even get knocked off your feet. How do you do that? By putting on the whole armor of God. He pictures a belt and a breastplate, he pictures sandals, he pictures a helmet, he pictures a shield, and he pictures a sword. So I want to encourage you to put on the whole armor of God that you may stand against the scheming plots of the devil, and at the end of every day, you're still going to be standing. And you know who's going to get all the glory and all the dominion forever and ever. It's going to be God, because it's God raising us up who have humbled ourselves under Him. Now, that day and when it comes, it's not up to us; it's in God's hands. So let's quit trusting in ourselves; let's trust in Him.