

**Date:** 27.09.2020

**Time:** 6pm

**Service taken by:** Rev Gavino Fioretti

**Psalm:** 62:7-12

**Reading:** 1 Peter 5

**Text:** 1 Peter 5:6-11

**Outline: God's mighty hand**

a) Introduction

1. God's mighty hand

2. God's chief enemy

3. God's wonderful grace

4. God's deserved worship

### God's mighty hand

- Introduction

We have looked previously at the description of good elders. We read that every Christian should be characterised by humility.

#### 1) God's mighty hand

**Requires understanding:** Peter uses an expression – by talking about the mighty hand of God, he talks about God's will and God's providence – what He has ordained and cannot be changed. We're to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. Behind all that happens to us is God's doing. When we understand all that is part of His plan, we accept it all. All that we experience is for a time, an appointed time according to God's plan. We require understanding that what happens to us isn't by chance. There is a time for everything ordained by God. There are difficulties in the Christian life – understanding that God allows them to happen for the good of the church helps us to endure them.

**Requires humility:** We can resist God's leadership and authority or we can surrender to God and like Jesus say "not my will, but yours be done". The whole life of Christ was humbling Himself under the mighty hand of God. Jesus surrendered to the will of God. We've to remember that every aspect of our lives is from God, even what we struggle to understand. We humble ourselves, trusting and knowing that He knows best.

**Requires faith:** A theme present in this letter is faith. Our response to suffering must be faith. We cast all our cares on God and all our anxieties on Him, believing that He cares for us. His providence can be hard, but the difficult things are for a time. Even when God allows the devil himself to attack us, that's more reason than ever for us to respond with faith. If we don't humble ourselves to God's will, then we're doubting His wisdom and care. God's plan is perfect. He does care for us. We humble ourselves under God's mighty hand.

## 2) God's chief enemy

The devil is described as a lion seeking to devour the people of God. Some over emphasise the devil, and attribute every sin to him. In response to this extreme, we can neglect to speak about the devil but we mustn't do that.

**Our enemy:** The devil is above all God's enemy, but as children of God, the devil is also our enemy. He's not the enemy of everyone, but of us. He only loves himself and hates the world. He has a special hatred for the people of God. The devil causes damage when we're not ready to fight, when he makes us forget or doubt his existence. He's always trying to attack God's people. Be always watchful, he can attack any time – he can attack us individually, as a family, as a church. His work is to harm and destroy the people of God. The devil uses our weakness against us as he wants to take us with him to a lost eternity. We're in a spiritual battle with a cruel enemy.

**Active enemy:** He prowls around like a roaring lion seeking to destroy. He's a mighty enemy and we should be careful. Jesus is stronger than the devil, we're not. We shouldn't play with the powers of the devil.

**Subtle enemy:** The devil doesn't come in a fearful way, but as an angel of light. There is fear and a beauty about lions – but there's no doubt that they are dangerous. We have to be watchful and sober-minded. The devil tries to devour us – he wants to hurt, damage and kill us physically and spiritually. If he can't get us to reject Jesus, he'll want us to suffer physically and to endure persecution. Everywhere that God is at work, the devil will try to spoil and destroy.

## 3) God's wonderful grace

**He cares:** God cares for us (vs 7). Sometimes God's hand is so heavy upon us, we wonder if God is loving and if He really cares about us. We might think that He's left and forsaken us. We experience anxieties, trials and difficulties. But God is not indifferent to these things – we're to cast our cares on Him. We're to speak to Him, call on Him, to unload our burden on Him because He cares. Good parents and friends listen to the anxieties of their children and friends. God cares for His people.

**He calls:** God has called us to eternal glory in Christ. We're called to share, to enjoy His eternal glory in Christ Jesus. We were among His enemies, allies with the devil. But by God's grace, He came to us and made us joint heirs with Christ of His eternal glory. Salvation is more than forgiveness and justification, but also to be recipients of His grace and glory. He'll share His glory with none but His people.

**He delivers:** God's mighty hand can be heavy, causing anxiety and concern. Those sufferings are for a little while – the time will come when God Himself will deliver you. God Himself will deliver His people from all their afflictions, wiping away their every tear. You're precious to Him. He'll give us all that's good for us.

**He promises:** We'll be exalted at the right time if we humble ourselves as Jesus did. God promises us exaltation. This life can be difficult. God's providence can be difficult. But it's for a time. God will deliver us. We'll be exalted. We should be exalting and glorifying God. But God in His grace is willing for us to enjoy the exaltation and glory that is only His – it's almost too good to be true, but God's willing to give us so much.

#### **4) God's deserved worship**

There is a pause in Peter's writing after saying these things to praise God for who He is.

**Exclusive:** The worship is exclusive – to God alone and to Him alone be the glory. In response to His care and grace, should be worship. He's the only one we should praise and worship. We don't worship other people but God alone.

**Eternal:** The worship that God deserves is eternal. The Lord must have all the glory forever and ever.

**Emotional:** We should say "amen" – saying from the heart, "so be it – let your Name be praised". It's passion from Peter's heart that leads him to say "amen". He agrees that God is worthy to be praised. "Amen" is not just a full stop at the end of a prayer, but what we believe should be done – we want God to be praised.