

Theme: Faith in Exile – I Peter 1:17-19

Title: Standing – I Peter 5:6-14

Aim: Exhort us to stand strong in humility, against Satan & in grace.

Intro: To stand is to “maintain an upright position; to face or encounter, as in standing an assault; stay on one’s feet, to abide, endure.” We urge others to “stand tall” & celebrate those who remain upright & firm as they encounter difficult circumstances. To be “still standing” is a triumph. When I was disciplined by my father for the very last time (probably 12-13), he told me to “stand still & take it like a man,” which I did. Wish I had thought of that before. We’re happy when we can celebrate our team being in 1st place in the standings at the end of the season – means they have done well & have endured injuries & difficult games to be on top. It will happen again, Red Sox & Patriots’ fans. Standing strong is good & important. As Peter concluded his 1st epistle to those exiles scattered in Asia Minor, he exhorted them to stand strong in Christ in the face of opposition/persecution. Theme: Faith in exile. We who are in Christ are indeed exiles in this world that’s not our home. As suffering & persecution in their various forms come into our lives, we too are exhorted to stand strong in Christ. How do we stand strong? Peter tells us & today let’s consider what he had to say. I Peter 5:6-14 [READ]. I) **Stand strong by humbling self before God** – vs6-7. Peter had already exhorted his readers to “clothe yourselves w/humility toward one another” & warned them that “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” The starting place for humility toward each other is humility before God & the starting place for standing strong is humility before God. To humble oneself is to “make oneself low, have a modest opinion of self, devoid of pride/haughtiness.” We’re to have a high view of God & a proper view of ourselves before God. We’re to submit to, commit our way to God. Seems the opposite of standing tall, doesn’t it? But in reality, a person

stands the tallest when he/she kneels before God. You don't have to, but kneeling is a great posture for prayer; it's an act of humility. As Peter indicated, God is mighty & rules over all. The "hand of God" symbolizes "His mighty activity & power, determining & controlling the destinies of humankind" (Strong's). We're to recognize God's dominion over us & over all, & bow before Him, surrendering to Him. On the surface that seems of position of weakness, but it's standing strong, because God gives grace to the humble. If you want grace, humble yourself before God. That can't be iterated enough. If you want God's grace & help in your difficult situation, humble yourself before God. Turn your life over to Him. Believe & obey Him. From this text we can be assured that God will exalt those who are humbled before Him, always at the proper time & in due measure. God's timing is always right, tho not ours. As we humble ourselves before God we are encouraged to "cast all our anxieties/cares upon Him." Cast is an energetic word, meaning to throw away. Part of humbling ourselves is to recognize not only God's dominion but our own weakness. We can't handle this life by ourselves. We need each other, but others can't help us sufficiently either. We need God, who is infinitely able. Let us confess our weakness & seek His help, throwing over onto Him the burdens of this life. David Gudzik wrote, "We cannot do God's work when we are weighed down by our own burdens & worries. Cast them upon Him & then take up the Lord's burden, which is a light burden & a yoke that fits us perfectly." Don't you know that God cares for you, His child? Stand strong by standing humbly before God. II) **Stand strong against Satan** – vs8-11. Peter urges us to be "sober-minded" & "watchful." To be sober-minded means to be "calm & collected in spirit, temperate & circumspect." That means not panicking but seeing the situation as it is, not surprised or taken in by whatever the situation. To be watchful is to be alert, giving strict attention to, being cautious & not

suddenly overtaken (Strong's). Not only do we need to recognize & submit to God's dominion & our weakness, but also Satan's prowess & schemes. We have an adversary, an enemy of our souls. He is the devil; the word means false accuser. Satan has it out for every child of God, for the Church. He can't defeat God, so he turns his attention to us. Peter described him as a roaring lion prowling around, looking for opportunities. He's always seeking someone to devour – swallow up & destroy. Jesus likened him to a thief, who seeks to steal, kill & destroy (John 10:10). You've probably heard it said that Satan is like an old lion, toothless & weak. His roar is all he has left. I'm not sure if that's a perfectly apt description, but Satan was defanged at the cross! His roars are accusations & lies, seeking to cause us to run into our fears or give up. He is no match for God but wants us to think he is. We told by Peter (God) to "resist him, firm in your faith." To resist is to "set one's self against, to oppose, w/stand." Pastor Derek told us last week that it is to set an army against, as God does against the proud. We're to do the same against Satan. May ask, "Where's my army?" May think, "I'm no match for him" – true in one sense – not by yourself. It's suicide to stand up to Satan in your own strength, but you're not alone. We're to stand strong against Satan in Jesus' name, in His strength. Jesus is the commander of the armies of heaven. In Him we triumph! We're told to flee from temptation & evil – run! But we're to resist, stand against, stand up to Satan in the name of the Lord. Be firm in your faith – know what you believe, know the truth of God's word – read it, read it, read it; meditate upon it; memorize it; live it. Don't fall for the lies of Satan. God promises in James 4:7, "**Submit yourselves therefore to God** (same formula as here). **Resist the devil, & he will flee from you.**" He will flee! Not because you are so great & scary but because God's mighty hand is raised against him. When you/I stand against Satan in the power & name of Jesus, that's who he sees behind & before us, & he will flee. 2

things help us to stand against Satan in Jesus' name: 1) Knowing that we're not alone in our suffering or standing. Others have suffered just as we do & others have stood firm in their faith, so we know that by God's grace we can do the same. God has led others to triumph in Christ & He will lead us. We can walk together & stand together against our enemy. If he will flee from one standing against him in Christ, then what will he do when 2 or more stand together? He will surely flee! 2) Knowing the promise & faithfulness of God. Suffering is for "a little while." God will see us thru. He is "the God of all grace," who has called us to His eternal glory. He who called us is faithful & He will do all that He has promised. He Himself – not trusting the task to another – will restore – "render complete, fit out, put in order, mend what is broken, make as it should be;" confirm – "make stable, set fast, render constant;" strengthen – make able; & establish you – lay a firm foundation that will not be torn down. "He will hold [us] fast." Yes, it may be when Jesus comes again that we will realize all of this fully, tho He may & often does deliver us here & now. But He will get us to the Promised Land, no matter the efforts of our enemy! III) **Stand strong & firm in Grace** – vs12-14. Peter concluded this epistle w/some of the usual salutations – informing them that Silvanus was his scribe who wrote as Peter dictated (& as the Holy Spirit led him), then commending Silvanus as a faithful brother. He gave greetings from the church in Rome (Babylon) & from Mark – John Mark it is believed. He urged them to greet one another, especially those who would deliver the letter, w/the kiss of love – a kiss on each cheek as greeting was given in Jesus' name. In the midst of all these greetings he said to them, in essence, "I've been exhorting you to follow Christ & help each other as you suffer together; & declaring to you that this is the true grace of God" – God's amazing grace in causing them to be born again to a living hope, giving them an imperishable inheritance, calling them to be holy

as He is, making them into living stones being built up as a spiritual house of God, even guiding them into & thru suffering for His name's sake, for His purposes, gifting them w/spiritual gifts so they could minister to each other as they stewarded God's gifts, giving them each other – scattered but finding each other, able to worship together & walk together. This was truly God's grace, God's true grace. "Stand firm in this grace." Know who you are in Christ, if you have believed & yielded to Him. Know how He wants to use you, to care for each other & take the gospel to all who will listen. Rely on God's grace, His undeserved favor; rest in God's grace, knowing that His grace is always sufficient & even in your weakness His grace will prevail & His power will be displayed as perfect. Hold on to Him who holds on to you. God will persevere & make you able to stand. Stand strong, humbling yourself before God; stand strong against the devil in the strength/power of the name of Jesus Christ; stand strong in the grace which God abundantly supplies. It will take faith for sure. Faith in exile.