Introduction: What do you believe about Satan? Do you believe he is real? Do you believe in both heaven and hell? Do you believe that Satan is alive and at work in the world all around us? How can we stand firm?

God will keep you alert!

As Christians, it is vitally important that we stay spiritually alert, that as Peter says in 5:8, we “be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” Peter has just told us to cast all of our cares and worries on Jesus, since God cares about us. One of the main reasons we must do so is the fact that Satan is alive and active in the world. There are different images used for the devil in the Scriptures, such as a deceiving serpent (Genesis), the accuser or slanderer, or a beast and suffice it to say that all of them are negative. The word satan means adversary and the word devil means accuser or slanderer. Satan then is our enemy, who seeks to harm and destroy us. We must be awake and alert and we must let God be in control of our lives, actions, thoughts and words. This is a recurring theme for Peter, for in 1 Peter 1:13, Peter says, "Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed." and in 4:7, "The end is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled, so that you can pray." Being God controlled then means that we are focused on prayer and hope.

Malcom Collins, an African missionary has shared with churches what to do when encountering a lion. First, don't flee, as the lion is much faster and will outrun you. Second, try to look very brace and stare right into it's eyes. If succesful, the lion will back down and run away. Third, be prepared for attack. Have your spear ready and waiting in front of you. The lion will land on the spear and be impaled. Satan is a bully who backs down when confronted by Jesus and the cross. We cannot defeat Satan on our own. The good news is that Jesus has already done so. What God asks us to do is to be alert, to choose Him and to choose Jesus. The key question is whether we take God and Satan seriously? Too pftem we are not fully aware of the reality of the spiritual warfare all around us.

God Will Enable You to Stand Firm

Peter, in 5:9, says we must “resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.” The key here is to do so relying on Jesus, rather than on what we can do on our own. In Ephesians 6, Paul makes it clear that we can only stand firm if we are rooted in the Lord. Paul says in 6:10-13, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of
God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the ruler, authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand." In addition, we can only stand firm in God if we know His word for in Matthew 4:1-11, Jesus counters every temptation of Satan with Scripture. As James says in 4:7-8, "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you." We need God, we need His presence and protection, we need Jesus to be our sure and solid foundation if we are to stand firm.

**God Will Restore You**

Not only will God watch over us and strengthen us, God will restore us as we trust in Him. Peter says in 5:10, "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. To Him be the power forever and forever; Amen." The term restore is that in Greek, is katartizo, or to mend one's nets, to complete thoroughly. God wants to restore in our lives what our sins have damaged and harmed, to complete His recreation of us in the image of Christ. The word strong, or sthenou, means to give vigor to. The word for firm is sterizo, which means to make something as solid as granite. The word steadfast, themelioun, means to lay the foundations. God does all of these things for us. We cannot do them or even dream of doing them ourselves. God wants to bless us with more of Him and more of Jesus. As we see in Psalm 23 and Psalm 51, God is in the restoration business. David says in 23:1-3a, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, He restores my soul." He also says in 51:10-12, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me."

Where are you broken this morning? Where have you become bogged down in sin, fear and distrust? How does God want to restore you today? He can do so if we are willing to stand firm in the faith.