

Have any of you ever heard of the marshmallow test? It's a video that I found on YouTube a while ago. In this test, an adult leads a 3-year-old child into a room and leaves him there with a marshmallow. The child is given one instruction. The adult says, "I will come back. If you haven't eaten the marshmallow by the time I return, you will get another." As time goes on the child may play with the treat, even taste it with his tongue, but all the time trying so hard to resist the temptation to eat the marshmallow. When the adult finally returns, if the marshmallow is still there, the child joyfully receives a second marshmallow that they then get to eat.

This is quite the trial for a three-year-old! No one is watching the child and it's all up to them to resist that temptation. In our text today from 1 Peter, we are also told to resist. As children of the heavenly Father, we are told to resist the devil, who prowls around like a roaring lion.

Quite the comforting picture isn't it? Now we can see ourselves sitting in a room, not with a marshmallow, but with a lion prowling around. That lion, the devil, is attempting to poke into our lives and pull us away from the Father. Satan tries to feed us with his lies and deceptions. In these days in particular, he tells us that we are all on our own to learn how to live in this new normal. He tells us that this will never end and that we might as well just give up.

Our fears and anxieties can rise up and try to overpower us and yet, Peter has a simple message, "resist the devil" he says, "firm in your faith." To resist the lies of the devil is to stand firm in that gift that we have been given. To be firm in our faith is to live with our Father, see who He is and what He is doing. We may face temptation like the child with the marshmallow, but we are not left in a room all on our own. The Father is there with us. It is in the promises and gifts of our heavenly Father that we stand, firm in our faith.

As we stand firm in our faith, we are reminded who our God is. He is truly our Father, one who desires a deep relationship with us. He does not leave us on our own, no matter what the world around us may look like. He speaks His presence into our lives, His protection is spoken into our lives.

In verse 6 Peter writes, "humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God." In our faith we see that we are not alone in times like this, or in any time of our lives. As we humble ourselves in the faith, we acknowledge that we aren't in control but we have a Father who is still in control in our lives. The devil may try and pull us away from the Father, telling us that we are on our own, yet our Father God is there, calling us to take refuge under His mighty hand, a hand that has already conquered over the devil and his lies.

Through the sending of His Son, the Father has already destroyed the works of the devil. That prowling lion knows that he has already been defeated, though it is his goal to try and pull us away from that truth. As children of God, we are under the forgiveness and grace of the Father that is greater than any deception of the devil. We can live in the hope that has been given to us, that on the last day, God will make all things perfect again, just as He has intended

it. In these days we may still have trouble, but on the last day, when Christ returns, we will be brought into that eternal, never fading, inheritance that is waiting for us in heaven.

Yet, even though, we have that promise now, the devil still tries to pull us away from that focus. The focus that must be centered on the Father and what He has done through His Son. The devil is scared of what our Father has done, and is still doing, for us. He may know that he is defeated, but that doesn't mean that he will stop working to pull us away from the Father. The devil is good at slipping little lies into our hearts and minds, hoping to distract us from the truth that has been given us.

In these days, as we live in this new normal, the devil latches onto little fears that can become large anxieties in our lives. He tries to tell us that nothing will ever change. That this life will never get better, that we will always have to live in this fear. The sole purpose of that prowling lion is to tell us that the Father has no control over what is going on and it is only up to us to navigate through this world.

In the midst of those lies of the devil, Peter speaks these words to us in verse 7, "cast all your anxieties on the Father, because He cares for you." Those are amazing words of promise and protection. Words of care that the Father desires to be with you and that He is in control of all things. His control may look different than what we may want or expect, but it is exactly in those times that we are called back to Him. When all else may feel lost. When our fears and anxieties begin to overwhelm us, the Father is there calling us back to Him.

He calls us back to Him, reminding us that He has already defeated the devil. That prowling lion has no place in our lives. All of his work are lies and deceits, while the work of the Father is truth and strength. As we stand firm in our faith, we remember who the Father is and what He has done for us. When He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for the sins of the whole world, He did not stay dead. The Son rose again from the grave, defeating sin, death, and the devil. Because of that glorious resurrection, we can now be in a relationship with the Father.

Because of that relationship, we are not like a child sitting in a room alone with a tempting marshmallow. We are children that walk through this life with our Father God by our side. In all things the Father is there with you, equipping you to stand firm in your faith. In that faith there is a promise. A promise of the Father's eternal presence in your life. He will always come to your aid against the desperate works of that prowling lion. No matter what may be going on in the world around us, remember, stand firm in your faith, cast all your anxieties on the Father because He cares for you.