

I Am Being Hunted

Ryan Goodwin

“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

You are a targeted man or woman. You have a bullseye on your back, especially if you have a significant influence in the church. In the same way that assassins target important people, Satan has his eye on pillars in the church. He understands well the following truth: *“Strike down the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered” (Matthew 26:31)*. Of course, this does not mean that the best way to defeat him is to hide in the corner or become an inactive, dull Christian! If that is the case, you have already lost. Do not let the fact that your faith makes you a “marked man” inhibit your work and zeal. Simply use that danger to “keep yourself on your toes” spiritually. Always be ready to defend the faith, to fight off a temptation, or to throw water on any doubts taking a spark. The Bible confirms this idea, as we see that Satan repeatedly singles out and targets God’s people:

- *“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers” (Luke 22:31-34)*. *“There are several things to notice in this interesting aside between Jesus and Peter. One is that Ephesians 6 is not whistling Dixie when it says there is spiritual warfare in high places going on over your soul. This is no poetic drivel. As Francis Schaeffer said in True Spirituality, the supernatural world, though not normally seen, is as real in our lives as the person sitting on the other side of the door from you right now” (“Sifting”, www.worldmag.com, Andree Seu)*. This story presents Satan as a very real, very menacing influence on our lives. He is not an allegory or an idea, but a personal nemesis who knows our weaknesses.
- If you are going through a “sifting” right now, try to find some comfort in the fact that Satan must think you are worth his time. He sees your faithfulness and godliness as a threat to his own agenda. He knows that your downfall will be productive to his malicious ends. Like Peter (whose downfall would be quite a feather in the devil’s cap), you are seen as an invaluable piece of Christ’s kingdom. We see the same concentrated effort against the apostle Paul: *“There was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me” (2 Corinthians 12:7)*.
- Much of the hardships we read about in the Bible have a very personal touch to them, as if Satan tailor-makes situations that hit each person in a soft spot. Judas, Nehemiah, Job, Adam and Eve, King Saul – all of them faced the devil with varying degrees of success or failure. But all of them were attacked in personal ways.

This makes it all the more imperative that we each have examined our own lives and made certain that we are wearing our armor. *“Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11)*.

Continuing, Paul explains that the armor of God is made up of real, practical habits and attitudes, not vague concepts. One who has his or her armor on:

- Takes it as a whole, not in pieces;
- Accepts and embraces absolute truth (**6:14**);
- Wears righteousness with pride, and never hides his moral objection to sin (**6:14**);
- Knows that knowledge of the Gospel prepares us for spiritual combat (**6:15**) – He is not prepared because of human wisdom, superficiality, or feigned religion;
- Uses faith as a *shield*, not a *crutch* – there is a big difference between defending yourself with your faith and hiding behind it;
- Acknowledges the Spirit's influence in his or her life (**6:17**) – he is not ashamed of the Spirit working through the “word of God” and will turn to the Bible for guidance without hesitation;
- Leans heavily on prayer (**6:18-19**), fully assured that God hears our cries and will deal with us bountifully and with lovingkindness.