

Attacks against Our Faith

Attacks against our faith seem to come in two forms. One form is theological and the other psychological or emotional. Our faith is attacked by bad theology when we hold to things that are not true. Combine that with the infirmity of our own minds and our emotions may lead us far from the comfort of our Lord.

Theological Attacks

The greatest theological attack we face today is cheap grace. I am using that term to refer to the thought that salvation is possible apart from the lordship of Christ. Jesus clearly taught that salvation came at a cost. The rich young ruler is an example of this teaching.

“Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, ‘Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?’ So Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one [is] good but One, [that is], God. You know the commandments: Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and your mother.’ And he answered and said to Him, ‘Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.’ Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, ‘One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.’ But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, ‘How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!’” (Mark 10:17-23)

The error of cheap grace is contrasting the wrong things theologically. Those who hold to cheap grace rightly contrast grace and works. Salvation is a work of God’s grace. Without a man first being regenerated by the Holy Spirit he will not live. However, they then contrast God’s grace with the effects of grace denying the very power responsible for regeneration. Jude warns us to be on guard against such men.

“For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Jude 1:4 NKJV)

If grace had no affect on the moral character of the believer, why would Jude warn us about those who turn grace into lewdness? If salvation may be had without submission, why would Jesus call it a narrow way and a hard way, which few would find (Matt. 7:14)? In fact, He says "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able." (Luke 13:24 NKJV)

This distortion of the grace of God is the greatest attacked against our faith because it causes us to be lulled asleep in the war against the flesh. “For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” (Romans 8:13-14 NKJV)

Psychological or Emotional Attacks

Now we turn to something more personal, and perhaps more difficult to deal with than theological attacks. Believers have enemies within and without. Within we fight against the flesh and without we fight against the devil. Paul in Romans 7 explains in some detail how the flesh makes him do things that he doesn't want to do, and how it keeps him from the doing the things that he wishes to do. In Ephesians 6, he calls believers to put on the armor of God that they might be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the devil.

Let's consider these internal and external attacks together as they usually work in unison. Examine the following passage.

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare [are] not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NKJV)

Those strongholds often exist in the form of unresolved guilt, distrust of your own motives, and pet sins in which you secretly delight. These gnaw away at your faith as your conscience is tormented. Then these self-condemnations are exploited by the accuser leaving you in a desperate condition of mind.

Clearly, our flesh is allied with the forces of evil. As the passage intimates, victory will not come by fighting the flesh with the flesh. This would be like asking the thief to lock the storehouse door for you. Instead, we must enlist the forces of heaven to tear down the enemy strongholds and secure the soul. Paul put it this way.

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” (Galatians 6:7-9 NKJV)

Therefore, the secret is to sow to the Spirit. This tends to be over simplified as it will be here, but I hope to look at that in more detail in the future. Put simply, what we put into our lives is what we get out. As the passage says, we shall reap in due season if we do not lose heart. Sow to the Spirit through reading, meditation, and prayer. There are no shortcuts here. “For everyone who partakes [only] of milk [is] unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, [that is], those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” (Hebrews 5:13-14 NKJV)