

CLINGING TO THE LORD

Acts 11:22-23; 13:43; 14:21-22

Introduction: To see people come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their savior and be given eternal life is a wonderful thing and that is the assigned mission of every Christian, to witness of their faith. However as a tree that buds out in the spring time and not all the buds turn into blossoms, and as not all the seeds that a farmer sows eventually produces other seeds, so it is with those who hear the Gospel and make "professions" of faith. Becoming a Christian is one wonderful thing, but living the Christian life as one should is an entirely different matter and therefore there are warnings about dangers facing new Christians given in the scriptures.

I. ALL CHRISTIANS, ESPECIALLY NEW CHRISTIANS, FACE DANGER

1. There is danger from the ungodly world from which the Christian has now left.
 - There can be forms of "persecution" from one time friends and even family members.
 - There can be forms of "persecution" from co-workers and those in authority.
 - There can be forms of "persecution" so severe that the Christian's faith is strongly put to test.
 - Paul was abandoned by Christians in Rome because they were afraid they might also be caught up in his trials. (*2 Timothy 4:16*)
 - Sometimes one's friends, instead of "persecuting" him/her, seeks, by kindness to bring one back into the world of sin and ungodliness.
 - It is harder to resist this approach because there is the feeling of not wanting to offend that friend and maybe "just once" it won't hurt, and just "maybe" that worldly friend might be led to the Lord.
 - However, this way brings the danger of wounding one's own conscience and of falling back into the worldly ways.
 - "...*friendship with the world is enmity with God...*" (*James 4:4*)
2. There is danger from one's own corrupt heart.
 - "...*The flesh still lusteth against the Spirit, as well as the Spirit against the flesh...*" (*Galatians 5:17*)
 - One's heart is still worldly, carnal and natural and is only partially renewed when one is saved.
 - Paul complained that he constantly fought the battle of knowing what he should do but there was a part of him that wanted to do the wrong, worldly thing.
 - The cares and pleasures of the world and life can quickly regain control over a person if that person relaxes and stops being watchful.
 - To relax and stop being watchful caused David to end up in deep sin as it led Demas to leave Paul and go back to his old ways. (*2 Timothy 6:10*)
 - Jesus told of "thorny ground" hearers of the Gospel who appeared to be alright on the outside, but didn't have any depth to their roots. (*Matthew 13:22*)
 - Christians must remember that if left to the workings of their own hearts, there is no sin whatsoever that they may not fall into. (*Luke 21:34*)

3. There is the danger from the temptations of Satan.
 - Satan seeks to persuade people that they don't have to go to all that trouble and devotion to live the "divine" life of being a Christian.
 - Satan will also try to tell a Christian that all his/her efforts are useless and in vain.
 - Satan will whisper in the Christian's ear that he/she was never really saved in the first place, that he/she isn't one of God's special "elect" and that his/her sins are just too great for God to forgive.
 - How many Christians has Satan deceived by using these and other tactics and ruined their lives.
4. There is danger from, of all places, members of the Church, itself.
 - Paul warned about false teachers, false members among the membership. (*Acts 20:29-30*)

II. THERE ARE THINGS NECESSARY CHRISTIANS MUST DO

1. Every Christian must be aware of his/her own danger.
 - Never presume that all is fine, going well, safe, secure, at peace.
 - Take a look at any Church and there is within that membership false Christians.
 - Every Christian usually thinks of him/herself as being enlightened, not as worldly as others, not deceived by their own corrupt hearts, not led astray by Satan, not caught up in some sinful practice as are some of the other Church members.
2. Every Christian needs to have a fixed and determined purpose of clinging to the Lord.
 - Peter is an example to every Christian for he exclaimed that even if everybody else deserted the Lord Jesus, he certainly would not, yet he denied even knowing Jesus three times in a single night.
 - Joshua stated that all though all Israel might depart from God, "*...he and his house would serve the Lord...*"
 - Every Christian needs to be determined that with the grace of God, he/she will be faithful to the Lord God and that nothing in life, no terror, not even death will cause him/her to turn from following the Lord Jesus.

CONCLUSION:

1. It was said of Barnabas "*...He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith..*"
2. Has God so highly favored you with His love and mercy that you should ever forsake Him?
 - Has the Lord Jesus Christ shed His blood for you that you should walk away from Him by going back into the world of sin, by being unfaithful to Him?
 - Has the Holy Spirit indwelt you, enlightened you, quickened you, sanctified you that you would despise Him and quench His guidance?
 - Have you found a "god in the wilderness" that you would desert the Lord God for and go back into the world for what "happiness" it says it can offer?
3. Christian, be on your guard for living the genuine, real Christian life is not easy, even with God's help and the Holy Spirit's indwelling. Cleave, cling, hold onto the Lord God with all your might.