
Words of Truth

In Time Of Temptation Fall Away

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When presented with the Gospel it is an easy decision to obey and become a Christian when one doesn't fully consider everything expected of them (i.e. Luke 9:57-62 and Luke 14:25-33). When presented with the question of whether you'd want to spend eternity in Heaven (John 14:1-3) or Hell (Mark 9:42-48) there is not much to think about. It is logical to choose obedience to the Gospel to get to Heaven. Throughout our days here on earth we will see people make the logical choice in becoming a Christian. That is not the hard part.

The hard part pertaining to being a follower of Christ is following through with that decision. To be saved you have to continue in the faith until the end (Colossians 1:23 and Hebrews 3:14). The Scriptures record this: *"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed"* (John 8:31).

The best teacher ever on this earth lost the majority of His disciples. Notice: *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him"* (John 6:51-66).

In the text above there were those whom were willing followers of Jesus that misunderstood something He taught. Their misunderstanding led them to be discouraged and walk away. It was that simple for them. Just a misunderstanding led them from our Savior to the ways of sin. Now let's turn this on ourselves (II Corinthians 13:5). What would happen to you in a time of temptation? Just because you are faithful now, do you think that translates into guaranteed, continued faithfulness?

Just Because You Believe For A While

In the midst of a parable when Jesus was teaching about different kinds of soils [hearts] that are presented the Gospel, He said this about one type: *“They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away”* (Luke 8:13). As stated at the beginning of this article, the start is not the hardest part. The continuation and ultimately the faithful finish are the challenges. Continuing faithful is not impossible (I Peter 5:12). Finishing faithful is not impossible (II Timothy 4:6-8). However, both continuing and finishing faithful are very difficult. The righteous are hardly saved (I Peter 4:17-19).

A good start does not mean very much. You can see people who will start off on fire, but then err shortly from the faith when tempted (Acts 8:12-24). It is not a good thing to start and not finish. In fact, it is worse to fail than to never start. Notice these Scriptures: *“Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him... For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire”* (Hebrews 10:38 and II Peter 2:20-22).

The lack of being rooted is what causes one to be easy prey for the world. Without roots one is tossed to and fro (Ephesians 4:14). Such is why we have to be rooted and built up in Christ (Colossians 2:5-7), through knowledge (Colossians 1:10). This requires growth (II Peter 3:18). Growth requires us all to properly study the word of our Lord (II Timothy 2:14-18 and I Peter 2:1-2).

Then we have to discuss temptation. Temptation begins with what you want (James 1:13-16). That is where we each have to examine ourselves and know what areas of life we can be weak in. Thus, know what to avoid so you don't fall (Matthew 26:41 and I Peter 2:11). Now, all of this also needs to be applied to us collectively as a congregation.

This Is Applies To Congregations

Yes, a whole congregation can fall away (Revelation 2:1-3:22). We see that in the book of Galatians (Galatians 1:1-9). When talking about starting well, the congregations in the area of Galatia did just that. The record says: *“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth”* (Galatians 5:7)? They started fine but later failed. Brethren, what about this congregation? If we are not rooted and grounded what will happen if a time of temptation comes to us as a congregation? The answer – we'll collectively fall away!

Conclusion

Faithfulness requires work (Romans 2:7, Galatians 6:9, Hebrews 6:9-12, and Jude 1:21). Times of temptation will arise. Nothing will arise that God has not already equipped us to overcome (I Corinthians 10:13; cf. II Peter 1:3-4). Stay faithful (Hebrews 10:23)!