

Looking for the Ram in the Thicket

Genesis 22:1-14

Looking for the Ram in the Thicket

- What kind of faith must you have in order to go on and make the sacrifice when there is no ram in the thicket for you?
 - Heb. 10:38-39 - “For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.”

The Adversary's Cycle Of Faith

Abundance

Liberty

Self-Orientation

Courage

Complacency

Apathy

Faith

Dependency

Bondage

Bondage

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- Begins where we all begin, slaves to sin
 - Rom. 3:9 - "...For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin."
 - Gal. 3:22 - "But the Scripture has confined all under sin..."

Faith

- We become informed and transform our life view
 - Rom. 10:17 - “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
 - Heb. 4:2 - “For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.”

Courage

- Conviction moves us to change our lives and undertake challenges we would not have before we developed faith
 - Heb. 11:32-37

Liberty

- By the courage of conviction, we overcome the obstacles that bind us in slavery to sin
 - Rom. 6:17-23

Abundance

- Now that we are free, we are enabled to enjoy the blessings that come with freedom
 - Eph. 1:3 - “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ”
 - Israel in Canaan
 - The wealth of Solomon

Self-Orientation

- The problem with abundance is that it often tempts one into materialism, self-interest, and even greed
 - Ezek. 33:30-32 - “As for you, son of man, the children of your people are talking about you beside the walls and in the doors of the houses; and they speak to one another, everyone saying to his brother, 'Please come and hear what the word is that comes from the LORD.' 31 So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain. 32 Indeed you are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them.”

Complacency

- After one gets what he believes to be enough to keep him in abundance, he forgets his need for God
 - Prov. 30:8-9 - “Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches-Feed me with the food allotted to me; 9 Lest I be full and deny You, And say, Who is the LORD?...”
 - Deut. 6:10-12 - “So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, 11 houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant-when you have eaten and are full- 12 then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.”

Apathy

- It isn't far from forgetting one's need for God to forgetting God
 - Rev. 3:15-17 - “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. 17 Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' --and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked--”

Dependency

- When one's faith becomes a shadow of what it was in the past, it lacks the strength to maintain liberty and hold onto blessings; he becomes dependent on others to sustain him.
 - Heb. 5:12 - “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.”

Bondage

- In this weakened condition, they no longer have the strength to fight off temptation; they become re-enslaved to sin.
 - 2Peter 2:20-22 - “For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. 21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: A dog returns to his own vomit, and, a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”

Self-Inquiry

- Do you find a conflict between what God said and what you want?
- Are you looking for a compromise that allows you to escape the challenge to your faith given by the word and will of God?
- Stop! If you find it, it will lead you to the next step in the decline of your own faith.