

The Godly Man's Portion & Sanctuary

Lesson 18: Particular Exhortations for the Godly, Part 3

As we pursue a holy and godly life, we must pursue it:

- I. In a holy boldness, Phil 1.28. Don't be afraid to be holy. Don't be frightened out of your duty. And don't be afraid of your adversaries, they cannot hurt you unless they divert you from your duty. To establish your hearts in this holy boldness:
 - A. Consider: 1) the more you fear God, the less you'll fear men; 2) the more you fear sin, the less you'll fear trouble; 3) the less your adversaries fear God, the less you need to fear them.
 - B. Believe, Ps 27.13. Faith is a shield against fears and faintings, Eph 6.16. "Faith will save a Christian harmless and thereby preserve him fearless." The shield of faith is a movable partition to protect us from all assaults. Faith is a shield:
 1. Instrumentally. It holds up Christ Himself by holding up the promises and precepts.
 - a) Sometimes the sense of guilt assails us and weakens us so that we cower from duty and fear trouble. But when faith holds up a crucified Jesus, the guilt is forgiven and the fears are quenched, Rom 5.1.
 - b) Sometimes darkness and uncertainties about the way in which God's leading us raise our fears. But when faith holds up the command of God which put our feet in that way, fear is replaced by boldness and courage, Josh 1.1-11.
 - c) Sometimes we fear we'll falter and fall away from God in the hour of temptation. But when faith holds up the promise of Heb 13.5-6, we find ourselves strengthened.
 2. Formally. Faith not only lifts up a shield but is itself our shield. Faith in God's Christ is the empty hand of the soul that receives from and in Him the thing it believes for.
 - a) "Christians, whatever your duties, difficulties, despondencies, straits, temptations, afflictions, weaknesses are, believe and you shall be carried through. Believe, and you shall be established. Believe in Christ, and you shall dare to follow Christ. Believe in Christ, and you shall go through with Christ and hold out to the end. Believe in Christ, and you shall never fear, faint, or fall. Your faith will both keep you faultless and save you harmless and thereby keep you from sinking and fainting," Jn 10.27-28; 6.35-36, 40.
 - b) Faith will put your reward into your hand and set the crown on your head, even while the cross is on your back, because faith makes future things present, Heb 11.1, 6. Faith gives the good things promised before they are because it's the assurance and substance of things hoped for. Faith looks on God's saying and doing, promising and performing, as all one.
 - c) Faith sees the end of all our troubles. Just faith looks on things to come as come, Heb 11.1, so faith looks on things present as past, Rom 8.28, 37. Faith looks on things to come as they will be when they come and on things present as they will be when past, 2Cor 4.8-11, 16-18.
 - d) And what place can there be for fear or fainting when by faith we look to things as God says they will be and are?
 - (1) Open the eyes of your faith and see the coast already clear. See the Red Sea behind you, the wilderness behind you, Jordan behind you, and yourself already safe in Canaan, already seated with Christ in heavenly places, Col 3.3; Eph 2.6.
 - (2) If you find yourself in a great affliction and tempted to fear, remember that you have no reason to fear what you shall suffer any more than you had to fear what you've already suffered. For all the troubles that lie ahead will work out as well as those which are already behind and shall infallibly work together to yield an eternal weight of glory beyond comparison, Rom 8.28; 2Cor 4.17-18.

- (3) Strengthen your faith in God and you'll strengthen your boldness for God.
- C. Be humble.
1. Your advantage in all straits will be to be on lower ground because he who casts himself down need not fear to be cast down by his enemies. And he who knows himself well knows that whatever his enemies say about him, even if untrue, much worse could be said if they knew him as well as he knows himself.
 2. Also, when we're on our knees, it's not so far to fall when the Lord finds it necessary to cast us down further.
- D. Be peaceable. Patient, peaceable suffering will be the best way to silence your persecutors and embolden your resolve, Pr 20.22; Rom 12.17-21; 1Pet 2.12; 3.13-16.
- II. Three arguments to persuade us to a holy and godly life, Phil 1.28; 4.9.
- A. It'll be a clear sign of our enemies' destruction when they're undaunted and unmoved by the glaring testimony of the gospel of God in the lives of His people in the face of persecution.
- B. It'll be a clear sign of our salvation from God, Ps 50.23; Rom 6.5; 8.17-18; Rev 2.10; 3.21. Therefore press on in holiness, walk with Christ wherever He leads, suffer with Christ whatever He pleases, and fear none of those things which you shall suffer, for it's the promise of God that for those who share in His sufferings shall most certainly share in His glory.
- C. The God of peace will be with you, Phil 4.9.
1. If God is with you, then all will work for you, Rom 8.28-31.
 - a) In the face of your greatest trials, when you're tempted to doubt God's promises and question your salvation, "stay awhile, until the whole wheel of providence comes around, until God finishes His work in that place, and you'll see the providence and the promise meet and kiss each other and you'll be able to say with Solomon in 1Kgs 8.56, Blessed be the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised. Not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke by his servants."
 - b) Therefore whatever may come upon you in this life, never distrust God, nor ever be dismayed, because you will see the day, either here or hereafter, when your hearts will rejoice that all matters went as they did for you. Your heart will rejoice that you were made so poor, brought so low, and stripped of all that you ever put confidence in. Your heart will see how indebted you are to every hardship, affliction, enemy, persecutor, and darkness. Your beauty in heaven will be mysteriously owing to your suffering on earth, 2Cor 4.17; Mt 5.12. Rom 8.17. Therefore encourage and comfort your hearts with these truths.
 2. If God is with you, then you'll shortly be with God, Jn 14.3; 17.24.
 - a) There are two comes or calls of the Lord. The first is "come and work with me, watch with me, follow me;" and the second is "come and rest with me, your work is done, your watch is over, your race is run." The first is "come down from your proud place and walk with me in the wilderness and valley of tears, come suffer with me and die with me." The second is "come up with me, out of the wilderness, out of your prisons, up from your bonds. Put off your rags and put on your robes. Lay down your cross and take up your crown. Leave your prison and enter your palace. You that descended with me into death shall ascend with me to the Father in glory."
 - b) If you've answered the first call of the Lord and can walk with Him through life's valleys of sorrow, then take heart that one day soon, you'll hear His second call and leave all that behind to enter into a glory that is undefiled, unfading, and eternal in the heavens, prepared for you by Jesus Himself, 1Pet 1.3-5; Rev 22.20-21.