

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Volume: 758 April 11, 2020

He Looked Away and Now He's Drowning!

Bill Brinkworth

Like most of us, there was a time when Peter's faith was stronger than at other times. During one of his "weaker faith" moments, Peter found himself in a boat with furious winds and threatening waves all around him. The craft was tossed helplessly by the mighty sea when he and the other disciples saw a most unusual, unbelievable sight. They saw Jesus walk toward them, and He was walking on top of the waves (Matthew 14:12-33)!

After talking with Jesus, Peter was summoned to the Saviour's side. Without question, the disciple stepped out of the boat and joined Jesus. He also was walking on the water! However, his victory over the laws of nature did not last long. When he looked around, he felt the hard-blowing winds and saw the boisterous waves. He became afraid and began to sink. His lack of faith changed what was happening in his life.

Many believers similarly start their Christian walk, as did Peter when he jumped out of the boat. When they get saved and see the wondrous changes that the Lord has accomplished in their lives, their zeal is great. They get involved in a ministry. They faithfully attend church, read

their Bible, and converse daily with God in prayer, and then something happens to dull the excitement and enthusiasm of their serving God.

Perhaps it was an unkind word uttered by another or a discouraging remark that they may be doing too much. Maybe looking around, they saw that others were not going on church-wide visitation like they were, or they saw that too many lived differently most of the week than they did on Sunday. No matter what got them to question what they were doing for the Lord, they fell the same way Peter did; they looked around, and their faith was weakened.

When anyone looks around and sees what the natural man sees, he will be discouraged and have his faith challenged also. Looking toward a pastor or leader in a church may be a better example than most have, but that leader is made of the same flesh as you and I. There may be a time that he may unintentionally let you down. Following the example of another godly person may also be a bright light to follow, but that person can also make mistakes, and there may be a day when his mistakes will disenchant your zeal.

The only one that is perfect and cannot let you down is Jesus. Do what Peter did for a short time; keep your eye on your Saviour. Look and lean on Him. Do not look around, compare, and criticize what others are doing. We may all let you down one day, because we are no more perfect than you, but look above. The Lord will never leave nor forsake you, nor let you down.

“The astronomer is particularly careful to have his telescope lenses clean and free from all dust. The smallest speck of dust might affect an object’s appearance. It will look different than it is. So should a Christian be careful to have their faith wiped clean of all the dust of doubts and unbelief, lest they should behold the truths of God imperfectly and come to an incorrect judgment. Without faith to guide and direct them, things will look different than they are or could be.” — *John Bate*

Lost Fellowship

Charles Spurgeon

I once asked a Christian how long it was since he had enjoyed fellowship with Jesus. His reply was remarkable. “I feel sorry,” said he, “you have asked me that question, and yet I must thank you. Had you asked me whether I continued in prayer, I would have said, ‘Yes,’ for, with more or less fervor, I do regularly pray. Had you inquired whether I endeavored to walk honestly and uprightly before my fellow-creatures, I should have said, ‘Yes,’ thank God, I hope I have not slipped with my feet; but when you say, ‘How long is it since you really have had fellowship with Jesus?’ I blush to own that many a day has passed since I have known this high privilege.”

Is that so with you, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ? If so, it is very, very sad.

Your excuses for drifting far from God will not stand!

“He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.” *Isaiah 40:29*

Blow on the Embers

Bill Brinkworth

To supplement our heater, we use a wood stove. With the right fuel, it produces a roaring fire, and with the damper set just right, a load of wood will burn most of the night and heat the house.

After a night-long burn, the fire seems to have gone out by the morning, but there are still embers. After some poking and attention are given to them, they will easily ignite new fuel and continue to burn the rest of the day. At first, there seems to be no hope of rekindling the night's fire, but, after the burned-out ash is pushed aside to expose hidden embers, kindling is laid on top of them, gently blown on; and it is not long until a blaze results from the revived embers.

A born-again child of God can likewise lose the “blaze” for the Lord he once had. There may have been a time when prayer, church attendance, Bible reading, and other spiritual activities were a priority. Slowly, however, the fervent, spiritual-fire burning and encouraging one's life was reduced to a smoldering, hardly-remembered ember.

If one is genuinely born-again, the embers are still there. The embers never completely went out. There is no loss of salvation, as some unbiblically suppose is the reason for no spiritual activity and more involvement in sin. The Bible does teach once saved, always saved (II Tim. 1:9, Eph. 2:8-9, John 10:28-29). Since salvation is still there, if one is really saved, there may be just an over-covering of “ash” from sin’s participation.

Involvement in sin will not chase the indwelling Holy Spirit away. It will, however, grieve Him enough that He will not speak or move in one’s life until the sin is repented of. It is the Holy Spirit that does the work in one’s life. It is He that speaks to one’s heart, does the convicting resulting in changing one’s life, and is responsible for spiritual growth in one’s life. When the Holy Spirit is no longer working, it is His refusal to work that often reflects our non-spirituality.

“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” Eph. 4:30 (Also: Prov. 28:13, I Thes. 5:19,).

Like the seemingly defunct fire, a saved person can once again be the spiritual person he was, or even be closer to God than he was before. There is the hope of rekindling spiritual fires again!

The first necessary step to get back to where one once was spiritually or to have any spiritual growth, is to want change! One can feel guilty all they want or be

depressed about one's condition, but if they do not want to change, nothing will ever be altered in one's relationship with God. The fire in my stove would never be re-started unless I wanted it to be. A person has to desire an alteration before anything will change. As much as others wish a person to change, their efforts will not be long-lived or not result in any modifications unless the person himself desires to change.

Secondly, the person himself must know what made the spiritual fires cease burning fervently. Was there not enough fuel to keep it burning? Was there no Bible-reading? Was there no prayer life? Was there no spiritual food to feed on? If one feeds fleshly desires with worldliness, how can one expect the spiritual part of one to grow? Whatever part of us that is fed the most is the one that grows!

Another reason spiritual fires could be gone out is sin may be covering the embers. Sin will quench any desire to live for God. It will sadden the Holy Spirit so much He will not be able to work in one's life. The only remedy is to admit (confess) what one has allowed to hamper his relationship with the Lord, ask the Lord to forgive him for his transgression, and, with God's help, purpose not to err that way anymore (Psalms 51:2). If an attempt to get closer to God again fails, one can just start all over again. He is a second-chance God, and third chance, and fourth....

After this truth is realized, the Lord is faithful and just to forgive and forget, and one can get back to where he should have been in his relationship with the Lord. Once again, the Holy Spirit will blow on our “embers,” and a “blaze” can be resumed.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

I John 1:9 (Also I John 1:7)