

## BEWARE THE WEAK MAN

***Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. (Matthew 26:41)***

In our present-day society, there exists a common stereotype that leads one to visualize the evil source of corrupting power as someone who is a powerfully animated firebrand brandishing deadly javelins in both hands – corrupting and collapsing all things holy within his reach.

That kind of stereotyping causes one to look over the heads of average men in search of a towering figure who must be the cause of such reported horrendous evils. However, it is not always the head-and-shoulders-above-his-peers' type of character who ought to cause us the most concern – no, often, it is the weak, sometimes diminutive man of whom we should beware!

As truly as the “weakest link” causes the initial failure in a supporting chain – so it is that the “weakest life” can cause the “corruption of good manners,” or as one translation has it, “Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company ruins good morals’” (1 Cor. 15:33).

Judas does not come across, as does the apostle Peter, as one of the strong leaders within the band of the twelve disciples of the Lord. Judas seemed to always be in the shadows — a man whose greed proved to be what ultimately led to his subsequent betrayal of Jesus. Judas was a man who suffered from an internal erosion of his character produced by the ever-trickling waters of his covetousness. It was Judas' weakness that brought the armed Roman soldiers into the place of prayer seeking to seize Jesus Christ. It was the clink of thirty pieces of silver that once was sweet music to Judas' ears – that proved, in time, to be his dirge of death.

It was not the powerful lion nor the towering elephant who accosted Adam and Eve in the Garden. No, it was the frail and lowly serpent who became the tool of choice, of satan. The rather weak and unintimidating animal became the vessel of temptation who lured Eve, and then Adam, into sin, causing not only their fall but all of mankind as well.

The two men who brought Saul's son's head in a sack to David seeking reward were such weak men that they slipped into Ishbosheth's quarters while he slept and slew and beheaded him. David rewarded not the brothers Baanah and Recab, with their sought after wealth and position but a revengeful sword for their cowardly deed. (See 2 Sam. chapter 4).

The 25 feet high and 13,171 miles of the Great Wall of China was a formidable barrier to invaders seeking to breach it. While the eager hordes were unable to overcome the length and breadth of the Great Wall, they were able to bribe certain gatekeepers who were responsible for guarding the gates of the wall. Thus, they invaded mainland China due to weak men who sold their integrity and responsibilities for personal gain.

The apostle Paul realized that the work of the ministry could never be fulfilled on the shoulders of weak men in the faith. Paul admonished his young son in the gospel, Timothy, "I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." (2 Tim. 4:1-5)

Paul concluded his admonition to Timothy (Verse 5) with a solemn charge for Timothy to "keep his head [mind of Christ] in all situations, bare up under hardships [don't compromise], do the work of an oracle of God [preach the Word] and make certain he fulfilled all the obligations of his ministry [be faithful to the call of God]!" In other words, "refuse to be weak."

Weak men in positions of pastoral responsibility spells doom for the flocks over which they were to be overseers. Churches without holiness preachers cease, in time, to be chaste and holy. Since God chose to save those who believe by the foolishness of preaching, it stands to reason then that without correct doctrinal preaching, men cease to believe.

How shall they hear without a preacher – and how shall they believe if they do not hear? Weak preaching simply ceases to be preaching in the Biblical sense and becomes only tinkling cymbals and sounding brass. Beware the weak man who preaches a weak gospel!

Paul understood that a man should only be weak in his assessment of his own abilities and his own wisdom – “for when I am weak then am I strong,” Paul confessed. Then Paul flipped the coin and stated that he could do all things through Christ which gave him strength. The man that is weak in his flesh and looks to God as his only source of strength will never be the man who is weak in the flesh and caters to his flesh. Weak men act to satisfy their lusts; stronger men do their duties. Too easily do weak men in high positions turn to low living.

“Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake...” (see 2 Cor. 4:1-18).

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore...” (Eph. 6:10-14).

Strong men understand that standing is best done sometimes upon the knees.

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