

MY FLESH

1 Peter 3:4

4) But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

Romans 7:24

24) O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

I recently was investing time studying the seawalls and dikes around the nation of the Netherlands. Twelve provinces, or what we would refer to as twelve “states,” comprise this uniquely built nation once referred to as Holland. (Holland is simply one of the 12 “states” or provinces of the Netherlands.)

As we already know, the Netherlands is either right at or much below sea level. The “highest part” is in the north. The marshy southern part of this vast region called the Netherlands is located around Holland. The natives named this marshy part of their nation such because it was originally so unbelievably swampy. “Hole-land” was the original concept behind naming it such.

The Netherlands was once a vast area of swamp land that continually held seawater and could rightfully be described as a giant topographical bowl. The nation historically and often tragically suffered from the perils of the sea.

The original farmers of this nation decided too much wealth could be made in agriculture if only they could keep the North Sea out. Thus, we now have the world’s most elaborate system of sea walls, dams, dikes, and barriers of all kinds, thanks in no small part to these prestigious, innovative, and ambitious farmers.

But in studying this nation below sea level with its intriguing vast area of seawalls and barriers, I discovered a surprising reality of life for them. The thousands of windmill stations around this vast landscape are continually working around the clock day and night to sustain the pumping station’s energy to pump thousands of gallons of water out of their cities a day. Vast man-made areas were dug out to empty this pumped-out water into. From there, the water is carefully dispersed and carried through strategically built canals and man-made river channels - to the farmers. All excess water is then regimentally pumped back into the North Sea. This laborious cycle is a continuous one. The way of life for the inhabitants of the Netherlands depends on these pumping stations to do their job daily. It’s truly a matter of life or death in the long run.

Since these elaborate state-of-the-art and extremely high built sea walls, along with floating dikes, hundreds of high-tech gates, and world-renowned flood control systems are faithfully working to protect the inhabitants from the deadly sea floods by keeping the sea from burying them alive underwater, where then is all this pumped out water coming from?

I discovered that the real concern for the Dutchmen is not the North Sea rushing in over their high-tech walls and barriers to destroy them as in times past, seeing they have finally settled that problem once and for all. Little, if any, water at all can now compromise their superior walls, barring some phenomenon not yet recorded in history. Their financial investments and hard work have, to date - paid off. The Dutch government finally figured it out and fixed their problems of the sea rudely invading dry land.

Subsequently, water coming over dams, dikes and barriers of all kinds is not the reason they pump so much water a day out of their nation. Their main concern is the water coming up from the bottom. Yes. The bottom. More sea comes up from under the seawalls and dams, through the ground, than ever comes over their high-tech barriers. Once again, they are currently safely separated from the raging sea.

Many miles of this nation, however, continually fight underground water rising to the surface. If not for the high-tech pumping stations strategically placed throughout the country and energized by windmills day and night, along with the careful irrigation and daily maintenance programs via man-made canals and rivers, we would soon witness entire cities underwater, but not because of the sea breaching the external barriers, but from the continuous seeping up of the sea through the ground.

Through the creative forces of nature, we witness much in the invisible realm of the Spirit. There is a spiritual principle to consider. Any external man-made effort, though mandated and necessary, and certainly God ordained to keep the world and the devil out of the church, we must each consider our most vulnerable area - the hidden man of the heart, our flesh.

We can institute the highest of external standards, with the most scripturally detailed of statutes and judgments to separate us from the world. We can draw the lines pristinely clear through the most biblically based distinctive of spiritual and moral living requirements needed to fight off the outward evil forces of hell. We often highlight the exclusive nature of a Holy God as confirmation of our superior defense systems against our two notorious enemies, i.e., the world and the devil. But if we are not careful, we underestimate our third and oftentimes hidden enemy, yet the enemy that has claimed more souls than the world or the devil ever has, the flesh of man.

The underground network of these earthen vessels known as our inner man, seeping in large volumes of the self-life and eventually flooding our minds unto corruption, and not the overt waves and outward attacks of demonic activity, have historically led the souls of men to destruction.

Once more, we can set the highest and most noble of outward defense systems against the world and the devil through Bible-based standards of holiness and righteousness, but we must never forget nor neglect the hidden man of the heart. That old man. That old nature. We may have power to cast out devils, but no one person has ever cast out the flesh. That renowned and hidden enemy of man must be continually crucified. How? By daily dying through the bearing of a daily cross. By daily renewal. By daily bread. By daily prayer. Day by day, we must confront our old nature. We must be renewed in our mind's day by day. Be more concerned about the little leaven of the inner man and not nearly as obsessed with the big devil of hell. Crucify the flesh daily, and the power of this world ultimately loses its tormenting influence over a man.

Layer upon layer until the flood of too much flesh, or self-life, and not the devil nor the world, buries the spiritual man alive. No overt sin is responsible for our initial collapse, but somehow, we just managed to become too busy to pray. The world has swallowed up her multitudes. The devil has slain his thousands, but it's un-consecrated and un-submitted flesh that has notoriously claimed its tens of thousands.

I, for one, am not nearly concerned about worldliness. That wall is high, strong, and secure. My focus is not fearing the devil because the barriers of protection are very stable and very high in these areas of spiritual discovery. Almost 40 years of wall building in these two areas find me steadfastly secure today. To God be all glory. But I am constantly and acutely aware of my most vulnerable area of concern—MY FLESH!!

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