

August 24, 2010

...Praise Him with the timbrel and dance. (Psalm 105:4)

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Hiding In Thee

William Orcutt Cushing

1. O safe to the Rock that is higher than I,
My soul in its conflicts and sorrows would fly;
So sinful, so weary, Thine, Thine, would I be;
Thou blest Rock of Ages, I'm hiding in Thee.
2. In the calm of the noontide, in sorrow's lone
hour,
In times when temptation casts o'er me its power;
In the tempests of life, on its wide, heaving sea,
Thou blest Rock of Ages, I'm hiding in Thee.
3. How oft in the conflict, when pressed by the foe,
I have fled to my Refuge and breathed out my woe;
How often, when trials like sea billows roll,
Have I hidden in Thee, O Thou Rock of my soul.

Chorus:

Hiding in Thee,
Hiding in Thee,
Thou blest Rock of Ages,
I'm hiding in Thee.

•t&dw

Quote of the Week

John Brown 1784 - 1858

“Perfect happiness is not to be expected in this world. It is too full of sin to be free of sorrow. ...Many of the privileges of Christians in this present state... are precarious and transient; and it is of great importance that they should be habitually aware of this, that they may escape the shock of being suddenly and unexpectedly deprived of them... Communion with our Lord, in the truest, widest, best sense of that word, is a privilege of which...we can never be deprived. ...But there is a *sensible* fellowship with him... that cannot be enjoyed without interruption in the present state” [emphasis mine.]

•t&dw

Feature Article:

The Trouble with Sin

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. 1 John 1:8-10

Wherefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 1 Corinth 10:12

From time to time I have run into men from a *holiness* background who have believed in total sanctification. I once was praying with a older man who insisted he had arrived at sinless perfection. In the middle of our prayer time his wife, who was unaware that we were praying, innocently came into the room to ask him a question. Clearly upset, he snapped at her in an awful tone of voice, telling her to “get out of here now!” When I later questioned him about his outburst he insisted that his action was not sinful, but was righteous indignation at his wife’s foolishness.

The trouble with sin is that it can be a master of deceit and disguise to both saint and sinner. Though the true Christian has a new nature, indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, this side of the resurrection the flesh is still corrupt. *In me, that is in my flesh, there dwells no good thing (Rom 7:18). The flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh (Gal 5:17).* Because of this, the deceitfulness of sin can be very powerful. It may cause the believer to continue to labor under the *guilt* of sin, while the unbeliever rests securely in his “good works.” On the other hand, such deceit may enable the believer to completely justify any particular sin in his own life. Many Christians see their own case as a special exception. An affair, divorce, uncontrolled anger, substance abuse, slothfulness, and a myriad of other sins are, for them, not sinful because “God understands their circumstances.” But the worst case, I think, is the believer, who in the name of *holiness*, has convinced himself that he has no remaining sin. *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

Holiness would be easy if our “hatred of sin” were not accompanied by the flesh’s affinity toward sin. We are loath to admit that we hate sin most of all precisely because we still love sin. Though it may be only for a moment, sin is still quite pleasurable to the flesh. Consider the pleasure that is derived from sharing a juicy bit

of gossip with a kindred spirit. Self promotion always feels good. A compliment ignites the joy of pride stroked. When feeling low, a trip to the dress shop, electronics store, or car dealer with our "plastic" can produce an intoxicating high. Unleashing anger satisfies the flesh while it is destroying those around; holding anger in is excruciating. The momentary ecstasy of yielding to sexual temptation has plagued the greatest among us. There is a dark sensation of pleasure found in demonizing our opponents. Hating our enemies feels so "right" to the flesh, while loving them is hard and painful. These, and a million other indicators, are stark reminders to the *objective* soul that the remaining corruption of the flesh is ever present, and its deceit can fell the mightiest oak.

There is great danger in thinking that advancement in holiness equals a lessening of the flesh's corruption and deceit. The greatest saint may, in an instant, fall into the worst of sins. The Apostle Paul was wise enough to know that he had not yet arrived, and that he must strive to keep his flesh in check, lest having preached to other's, he should be a "castaway" (*1 Corinth 9:27*). If perfection of the flesh could come by our most zealous efforts then there would be no reason for the resurrection.

Salvation does not come by the reformation of the flesh, and neither does holiness. Our pursuit of holiness is the pursuit of communion with Christ. Our desire is the glorifying of God through Christ in us, as we serve Him by exercising the gifts He has given by the Spirit. Walking in the Spirit, He promises that we shall not *fulfill* (complete to the fullest) the lusts of the flesh (*Gal 5:16*). He never promises the *eradication* of the lusts of the flesh prior to the trumpet's call. *Then this corruptible shall put on incorruption once and for all, and then we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is* (*1 Thess 4:16-17; 1 John 3:2; 1 Corinth 15:51-53*).

My friends, the closer we get to Christ, the more vivid our remaining corruption will appear. This both keeps us in true humility, and magnifies the grace and glories of Christ. This makes us merciful lovers of fellow sinners. If we each truly see ourselves as "*the chief of sinners*" then self righteousness will flee; critical, judgmental attitudes will dissolve; and love will cover a multitude of sins (*1 Peter 4:8*).

So, what about the problem with sin? It has been conquered in Christ - not in our flesh. Robed in His righteous-

ness, complete in Him, our sins are washed in His blood, and His grace bears us along, causing us to persevere in *faith, hope and love* (*1 Corinth 13: 13*). ●ejr3

Walking with Jesus... a devotional minute.

Why Are We Fearful?

Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. So the men marveled, saying, "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" Matt 8:23-27

The disciples were in a boat in the midst of the Sea of Galilee. They were being heaved violently up and down, and side to side, as the wind sent waves crashing over the bow, filling the boat with water. And Jesus is sleeping! As they awaken Him, He asks what appears to be a dumb question: "Why are you fearful?"

However, we should not overlook the significance of the disciples request. They woke Jesus saying, "*Lord, save us! We are perishing.*" They clearly believed that Jesus would be able to do *something* about this pending disaster - *if He was willing* - if He really did care that they were perishing (*Mark 4:38*). But, if he cared, why then was He sound asleep in the back of the boat? They had faith in Jesus' *ability* (though His power still shocked them when they saw it), but they did not yet have **faith to trust in how much He loved them** - that He really did care for them, and that He always knows and does what is best for His children. Their circumstances trumped their faith.

As Christians, it's never His *ability* we question - it's His willingness to help us. It is the failure to completely *trust* in His love that stresses us with fear and anxiety in the troubled seas of our circumstances. Yet He says, "*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus* (*Phil 5:6-7*).

Cast all your anxiety upon Him, for He cares for you (*1 Pet 5:7*). ●ejr3

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