

SPIRITUAL DEPRESSION – ITS CAUSES AND CURE

CHAPTER 10 - WHERE IS YOUR FAITH?

LUKE 8:22-25

- I. REVIEW AND INTRO
- II. THE NATURE OF FAITH
 - A. GIFT OF FAITH Ephesians 2:8-9
 - B. WALKING IN FAITH
- III. NATURE OF CHRIST
 - A. GOD
 - B. MAN
- IV. REBUKE OF THE DISCIPLES
 - A. THEY'RE JUST LIKE US
 - B. CHRISTIANS SHOULD NEVER BE IN THIS CONDITION

I do not care what the circumstances may be, the Christian should never be agitated, the Christian should never be beside himself like this, the Christian should never be at his wit's end, the Christian should never be in a condition in which he has lost control of himself.

C. THE CONDITION - A LACK OF TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN GOD

It is a lack of faith in His concern for us and in His care for us. It means that we take charge and are going to look after the situation ourselves, feeling either that He does not care, or perhaps that He cannot do anything. That is what makes this so terrible, but I wonder whether we always realize it. It seems obvious as we look at it objectively in the case of these disciples; but when you and I are agitated or disturbed and do not know what to do, and are giving the impression of great nervous tension, anybody looking at us is entitled to say: 'That person has not much faith in his or her Lord. There does not seem to be much point in being a Christian after all, there is not much value in Christianity as I see it in that person.'

- V. TRIAL OF FAITH
 - A. SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES
 - I. HEBREWS 11

Every one of those men was tried. They had been given great promises and they had accepted them, and then everything seemed to go wrong. It is true of all of them. Think of the trial of a man like Noah the trial of a man like Abraham, the trials that men like Jacob and especially Moses had to endure. God gives the gift of faith and then the faith is tried.

II. PETER 1:6,7, PHILLIPIANS 1:29, JOHN 16:33, ACTS 14:22

Our faith will be tried, and James goes so far as to say: 'Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations (trials)' (James I. 2). God permits storms, He permits difficulties, He permits the wind to blow and the billows to roll, and everything may seem to be going wrong and we ourselves to be in jeopardy

B. GOD SEEMS UNCONCERNED?

Why does He allow me, a Christian, to suffer at the hands of a non-Christian?' says many a person. 'Why does He allow things to go wrong with me and not with the other person?' 'Why is that man successful while I am unsuccessful? Why does not God do something about it?' How often do Christian people ask such questions. They

have asked it about the whole state of the Church today. 'Why does He not send revival? Why does He allow these rationalists and atheists to take the ascendancy? Why does He not break in and do something, and revive His work?' How often we are tempted to say such things, exactly as these disciples in the boat were!

VI. NATURE OF FAITH

B. CHRIST ASSUMES THEY DO HAVE IT

here is the key to the whole problem. You observe our Lord's question. It seems to imply that He knows perfectly well that they have faith. The question He asks them is: 'Where is it? You have got faith but where is it at this moment? It ought to be here, where is it?' Now that gives us the key to the understanding of the nature of faith

C. FAITH IS NOT FEELING

But faith is not a matter of feelings only, faith takes up the whole man including his mind, his intellect and his understanding. It is a response to truth, as we shall see.

D. FAITH IS NOT AUTOMATIC

Many people, it seems to me conceive of faith as if it were something similar to those thermostats which you have in connection with a heating apparatus, you set your thermostat at a given level, you want to maintain the temperature at a certain point and It acts automatically

E. FAITH IS AN ACTIVITY

i. WE NEED TO BRING IT INTO OPERATION

The first thing I must do when I find myself in a difficult position is to refuse to allow myself to be controlled by the situation

ii. REFUSAL TO PANIC?

With me, faith means perpetual unbelief kept quiet, like the snake 'neath Michael's foot (Bishop Blougram's Apology by Robert Browning)

iii. REMIND YOURSELF OF WHAT YOU BELIEVE AND WHAT YOU KNOW – NO BUTS

Faith says: 'I cannot believe that He who has brought me so far is going to let me down at this point. It is impossible, it would be inconsistent with the character of God'. So faith, having refused to be controlled by circumstances, reminds itself of what it believes and what it knows.

F. THE VALUE OF FAITH (NO MATTER HOW SMALL)

However poor and small and however incomplete the faith of these disciples was on this occasion, they at any rate had a sufficient amount of faith to make them do the right thing in the end. They went to Him. Having been agitated and distressed and alarmed and exhausted, they went to Him. They still had some kind of feeling that He could do something about it, and so they woke Him and said: 'Master, are you not going to do something about it?' That is very poor faith you may say, very weak faith, but it is faith, thank God. And even faith 'like a grain of mustard seed' is valuable because it takes us to Him.