

SPIRITUAL DEPRESSION – ITS CAUSES AND CURE

CHAPTER 11 – LOOKING AT THE WAVES

MATTHEW 14:22-33

I. REVIEW AND INTRO

II. STILL TALKING ABOUT FAITH – IN WHAT?

There is no Christian message apart from that which starts by saying that Jesus of Nazareth is the only begotten Son of God, that He is the Lord of Glory, the Lord Jesus Christ; and here you see Him standing out in this effulgence of His glory, the Master of the Universe, the Lord of the elements. He manifests it, He demonstrates it...It is also absolutely vital in any consideration of our subject to demonstrate that it is a failure in some shape or form to realize what He is that accounts for all our troubles.

III. PETER

A. MENTALITY (TEMPERAMENT)

The hot-tempered person has to watch that temper very closely, and equally the phlegmatic and lethargic person has to be careful, because he is so flabby in his whole mentality that he tends not to stand when he should stand. In other words, we all have our particular difficulties and they generally arise from our own peculiar temperament which God has given us. I can indeed go further in this context and say that probably the thing we have to watch most of all is our strength, our strong point. We all tend to fail ultimately at our strongest point.

B. PETER'S TEMPERAMENT

MATT 26:33, 75

JOHN 21:7-8

ACTS 10 VS GALATIANS 2 (11-14)

He had no excuse, because he was the first man to admit the Gentiles into the Christian Church. You remember the Cornelius incident. As you read the account in the tenth chapter of Acts you will see Peter rising to a magnificent height. It was a tremendous thing for a Jew to bring a Gentile into the Christian Church. But he went back on that at Antioch and when those messengers came down from Jarnes, he dissembled, and Paul had to withstand him to the face. What was the matter with Peter? It was the old trouble, he accepted a position without working out all its implications.

IV. DOUBTS

A. WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

We often lead ourselves into depression, we lead ourselves into doubts by dabbling with certain things which should be avoided. I am referring to certain types of literature, or to the folly of venturing into certain arguments which will take us beyond our depth

B. COMPATIBILITY WITH FAITH?

I would go as far as to say, (at the risk of being misunderstood) that if anyone has never been troubled by doubts in his or her Christian life such a person would do well to examine the foundations again and make certain that they are not enjoying a false peace or resting in what I would call a presumptuous believism.

C. WHAT'S IN CONTROL?

If doubts again control us, it is an indication of a weak faith... doubts will attack us, but that does not mean that we are to allow them to master us. We must never allow that.

V. THE ANTIDOTE

How do we avoid it? The antidote is -great faith. It is little faith that allows men to be mastered by doubts, the antidote (must) therefore, be a great faith, a big faith. That is the thing that is emphasized here above everything else. What are the characteristics of this great faith?

A. KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST

The first is this-it is a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and His power) with a steady trust and confidence in that.

There is no value in any feeling unless it is based upon this. Christianity is Christ) and Christian faith means believing certain things about Him and knowing Him, knowing that He is the Lord of Glory come down amongst us, knowing something about the Incarnation and the Virgin Birth, knowing why He came, knowing what He did when He came, knowing something about His atoning work) knowing that He came, as He said Himself, not to call the righteous) but sinners to repentance

B. REFUSING "AFTER-THOUGHTS"

Doubts are very foolish, and it is good for us to see how foolish and ridiculous they are. So the next time we are tempted let us remember this man Peter, who should never have looked at the waves at all. Why not? For this reason, that he had already settled that question before he went out of the boat!

That is always the trouble with weak faith, it comes back again to questions which it has already solved and answered. If you have ever believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, you must, in some shape or form, have met with and dealt with the difficulties or you would not have arrived at faith. Well, why go back? It is sheer folly. Not only is it a matter of unbelief, it is a question of conduct and behaviour. Why sit down and face troubles again that you have already met and solved before you stepped out of the boat? I would repeat that this negative aspect of faith is very important. Having believed on Him you must shut the door to certain things and refuse to look at them. If you have dealt with them already, do not go back over them.

C. PERSISTENTLY LOOKING TO CHRIST AND AT CHRIST

PHILIPPIANS 1:6

We can only conquer our doubts by looking steadily at Him and by not looking at them. The way to answer them is to look at Him. The more you know Him and His glory the more ridiculous they will become. So keep steadily looking at Him. You cannot live on an initial faith-that is what Peter seems to have been trying to do. He started off with great faith and then instead of going on with faith he tries to live on it. You cannot live on an initial faith.

VI. FINAL THOUGHTS

May I say a final word of consolation? It is all in this one incident, and it is that He will never let you sink.

ROMANS 8:38,39

JUDE 24,25