

Monday, 17 September 2018 Acts 7:51-54

"You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it." Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him.

I don't have to be a member of the Sanhedrin to display an uncircumcised heart. I can be the old stubborn, prideful John. Enraged and grind my teeth? Figuratively. Yes. Sometimes react in anger and mentally envision the pleasure of stoning.

But always a violation of my Lord's words in Matthew 5:21-22. Furthermore, I need to remember that the Holy Spirit frequently sends a brother or sister to lead me back onto the path of obedience.

Tuesday, 18 S September 2018 Acts 7:55-56

But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

What a vision to receive before a martyrdom. Have others been able to lift their eyes and behold the glory of God with the Lord Jesus Christ at His right hand? Even the many who face martyrdom today, this very day, as they testify that they see Son of Man in glory? Did those 21 young Copts experience this blessing as they knelt on the shore of the Mediterranean in the last moments of their lives? Will you and I if we are called to do likewise?

Wednesday, 19 September 2018 Acts 8:14-17

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

What an exciting time in Samaria. Is this the first evidence of the ministry of reconciliation that we are all called to? There is a hint in John 4 as Jesus lays open the gift of the Living Water. Verses 39-43, often overlooked, but so significant as reconciliation begins to happen between Jew and Samaritan, ancient enemies but united by Christ. Is this passage in Acts 8, the prophecy of Acts 1:8 in action?

Thursday, 20 September 2018

Acts 8:18-24

Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."

It didn't take long for Sin in the form of greed to raise its ugly head. A sin that is with us today enshrined as simony. But the critical part of this account is that Peter went directly to the heart of the matter, "your heart is not right before God. Repent, therefore..." However, Simon did not repent; there was no seeking transformation, he put the burden of Peter to pray for him.

Betty and I continuously pray for our children and grandchildren, that they will draw closer to the Lord, but we cannot repent for them. They need to confess and repent individually. We pray for any who have not taken this step and that those who have will daily draw closer to Him.

Friday, 21 September 2018 Acts 8:29-30, 38-39

And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"... And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.

The Spirit directed Philip to go—and he did. When he got to the chariot, his responsibilities were obvious, and he got to the task. When the task was finished, the Spirit removed him and sent him on to other opportunities.

Phillip did not debate his preparation or abilities. He went in faith, trusting the Spirit to lead him in the task as it was revealed to him. Likewise, when the task was finished, no debate at loose ends that needed to be neatened, or additional theology that the eunuch needed to understand. Was this the seed that led to the church in Ethiopia that exists to this day?

Saturday, 22 September 2018 Acts 9:17-18

So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized;

Another example where the Spirit said go and the disciple went. This time with some fear and trembling. Ananias went, into what could have been an opportunity for his imprisonment or worse, wholly trusting in the leading of the Spirit. I sit here, writing this column as a direct consequence of his obedience. Never doubt the leading of the Spirit.

Lord's Day, 23 September 2018 Psalm 119:161)

Princes persecute me without cause, but my heart stands in awe of your words.

It is not princes that persecute me so much as the multiplicity of technological lures that serve as irresistible distractions. How do I keep my mind on Your word as I read when it keeps flitting to the inner workings of the computer, software problems, and fixes, etc. Help me, keep my mind directed towards You and Your great sacrifice for me. Here, I have just finished reading Your great and glorious work on the Cross and find my mind drifting to how the paging works on my computer. Help me, Lord, help me in my unbelief.

VOICES TOGETHER

Daily Meditations from the Scriptures



September 17-23, 2018

Prayer of the week, based on Paul's prayer in: 1 Corinthians 1:4-9

I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way— in all your speaking and in all your knowledge—because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

We thank You, LORD, for the grace, given to us in Christ Jesus. In Him we have been equipped in every way to carry our testimony about Christ; through our speaking, writing and living to those You have given us to serve.

Thank You that we do not lack any spiritual gift as we eagerly await our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. We are convinced that He will keep us strong until the end so that we will be presented to You, blameless and pure on that Day. You, who have called us into fellowship with Your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, are faithful.

Praise You, LORD, God the Almighty. *Amen.*

To fear or not to fear, that is the question.

The fear of the Lord, an expression that occurs many times in Scripture, 142 in the ESV in various forms, is not well understood in the Church today. For many, the phrase represents a weak and flabby description of an overly saccharine spiritual being of some sort. It certainly does not include the concept of the LORD, God the Almighty who spoke all things into being and who controls all things.

Join with me in examining the fear of the LORD and seeking an understanding of life in the Kingdom of Heaven in the here and now as guided by that fear.

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