

***Luke 8:9-15***

*When His disciples asked Him, saying, "What does this parable mean?" And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.' "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. "Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. "But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. "Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. "But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.*

**PERSEVERING IN PURITY**

In December of 1998 the hearts of Canadians reached out in sympathy with the drowning death of Michel Trudeau. That this young adventurer was last seen struggling with the weight of his ski equipment in the icy waters impresses our minds with scenes of panic, as we join with those onlookers in helpless horror. Young Trudeau met his death in a manner common to many in our area where thin ice conditions and heavy clothing conspire to make an end of life.

Christians are called upon to guard against a spiritually parallel tragedy where the weight of sin can stifle the life of Christ within the believer. Christians are urged: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Believers are here reminded first, of the inspiration to be guarded; there are a host of saints in glory (referred to in chapter 11) who are witnesses to the blessings of perseverance, second, of the instruction for being guarded; they are to run with endurance a straight, clean race. Paul states the same in these words: "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize" (1 Corinthians 9:24 NIV). Thirdly, the believer is reminded of the image of guarding; they are to look to Jesus. Jesus persevered unto death, and as the giver of life through faith in him, he equips the Christian with the same power of perseverance he himself possesses. Lastly, the believer is reminded of the incentive for guarding; the joy of labour completed, which according brings eternal reward (see 2 Timothy 4:7-8).

Nevertheless, many believers allow themselves to be bogged down with sin, as they follow the moral slide of society. Robert Bork captures this path with the title of his book "Slouching Towards Gomorrah." Christians are accepting as norm, the moral corruptness of society, forgetting that God's Holiness is changeless, and what He deems sin, regardless of man's sliding standard, is still sin.

Dear Christian friend, God calls you to set aside sin and raise the standard high: "...Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 NIV).

Don't let sin drown your effectiveness for Christ!

***What is my response:***

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