

Unnecessary Defeat – 1 Thessalonians 5:19-28 – February 23rd, 2020

- I want to talk with you today about why it is that we as believers live our Christian lives unnecessarily and needlessly defeated.
- The reason I'm saying it in this way is because we already have the victory in Christ, and no longer have to live defeated lives.
- What follows are three ways that we forfeit the victory that's already ours, and needlessly suffer defeat in our walk with Christ.

1. We quench the Holy Spirit (Verses 19-22)

19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not treat prophecies with contempt 21 but test them all; hold on to what is good, 22 reject every kind of evil.

- I don't know if it's possible to overstate the importance of what Paul is saying here concerning our quenching of the Holy Spirit.
- This because, there are two ways we as believers can put out the fire of the Holy Spirit, either by extinguishing or neglecting.
- In so doing, we're rendered powerless in our Christian lives by virtue of the power of the Holy Spirit being quenched in our lives.

2. We try to do it ourselves (Verses 23-24)

23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

- What Paul says here could be easily missed at first read when he basically says that God Himself is faithful and He will do it.
- In other words, we in and of ourselves are incapable of doing anything apart from Him, which is why it must be done by Him.
- While I realize this may come off as a firm grasp of the obvious, the truth of the matter is, it's God Himself that sanctifies us.

3. We won't humble ourselves (Verses 25-28)

25 Brothers and sisters, pray for us. 26 Greet all God's people with a holy kiss. 27 I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters. 28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

- What I find so striking about what Paul says here at the end of his letter, is his willingness to humble himself and ask for prayer.
- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the main reasons we as Christians live such defeated lives, this would be it.
- Namely, our spiritual pride, which robs us of power that comes to us, when we humble ourselves and ask others to pray for us.

Bible Prophecy Update – February 23rd, 2020

- For today's update I want to share with you something the Lord has been ministering to me over the last several months now.
- I've noticed it in my own life personally, but I've also seen this play out on a broader scale both nationally, and even globally.
- What I'm speaking of is when times are good, we don't think about eternity future like we're more prone to during the bad times.

Ecclesiastes 7:14 - When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider this: God has made the one as well as the other. Therefore, no one can discover anything about their future.

- I know I run the risk of being misunderstood when I say this, but I say it none-the-less, all the bad things may actually be good.
- This because, when times are bad, and the future bleak, people are more likely to turn to the Lord in their fear and uncertainty.
- I am personally of the belief that all of the perils and plagues in the world today, are shaking up and waking up many people.

Here's a list of just a few:

1. The Coronavirus continues to spread and some fear it could be the worst global pandemic since the 1918 Spanish Flu
2. The H1N1 Swine Flu, H5N1/H5N8 Bird Flu and the African Swine Fever now pose a new threat in a terrifying resurgence
3. The swarms of locusts have devastated Africa and are now spreading throughout the Middle East even reaching China
4. The notable increase of volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and floods have taken place simultaneously with extreme weather
5. The crisis in Syria has escalated and reached a horrifying level of 900,000 Syrian's displaced just since last December
6. The tensions in the Middle East today, are, described by experts as the likes of which we have never seen before in history
7. The polarizing political discourse in America today is so divisive and destructive some fear a complete collapse will ensue

- One would think that after going through a list like this, the vast majority of people would see what's coming and do something.
- However, many people don't, and sadly, even many professing Christians don't see the prophetic iceberg that's on the horizon.
- Instead they continue, rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic, if you will, wasting invaluable time on the world's sinking ship.

Several years ago, I watched a 2012 Smithsonian Channel documentary, "Titanic's Final Mystery." In it, historian Tim Maltin presents his theory that the Titanic's fate was not due to human error, rather, refractive mirages, which created an optical illusion. This unusual phenomenon explains why the Titanic struck an iceberg and received no assistance from a nearby ship. Atmospheric conditions in the area that night were ripe for super refraction, which prevented the Titanic's lookouts from seeing the iceberg in time and the freighter Californian from identifying the ocean liner and communicating with it. Maltin presented his findings in his new book, "A Very Deceiving Night." <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/did-the-titanic-sink-because-of-an-optical-illusion-102040309/?no-ist>

- I believe we're in a very deceiving night, and people can't see the iceberg due to an optical illusion vis-à-vis a strong delusion.
- Like those on the Titanic they believe it's unsinkable and are not convinced they should get into the lifeboats before it's too late.
- Very few will be saved and many will perish, as with the Titanic, they believed staying right where they were at, would be safer.

- This is why we do these weekly prophecy updates and end with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the simple ABC's of Salvation.
- However, before we do that, I want to share with you one of the responses to our challenge to move someone closer to Jesus.

Move Them Closer To Jesus Story - "I love watching your weekly prophecy updates and being reminded that His return is at the door. I really found encouragement in Barry's message, along with your paraphrasing, that we don't have to try and seal the deal each and every time we share the Lord...I think I sometimes put pressure on myself to do that and it carried a lot of weight. It feels freeing to do something so small but impactful, such as what you did at taco bell and the flower shop and see what the Spirit would like to do with it in the moment. I would get confused on whether I should wait for the Spirit to guide me to share Jesus with somebody, otherwise I would sometimes question whether or not I was doing it out of my own will or "strength". I left my partner a few years ago to follow Jesus after He revealed Himself to me; He extended His love to me and reassured me there was no condemnation awaiting me for my past if I was to trust in Him and turn from everything I'd previously put false hope, pleasure, and security in. I had recently watched a couple of ...interviews, with a gay hairstylist that created the #walkaway movement, and I felt many parallels in not only our lives, but also in the change of thought patterns when the Lord was first pursuing me. ...After watching your update, I sent an email to [him] explaining how the Lord had changed my life and that I felt God was after him too. Thank you for the renewed perspective and encouragement to do this."

The ABC's of Salvation

- The A is for Admit you're a sinner and your need for the Savior, (Romans 3:10, 23 – 6:23).
- The B is for Believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord and God raised Him from the dead, (Romans 10:9-10).
- The C is for Call upon the name of the Lord and confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, (Romans 10:9-10, 13).