

A Faith That Will Not Shrink

Introduction

1. It would be good if every Christian would have a faith that wouldn't shrink in the face of persecution, discipline, or evangelism.
2. Each of us should be able to understand the meaning of the song that we just finished singing – “Oh for a Faith That Will Not Shrink” in light of the scriptures.
3. It is my hope that every Christian will be motivated to be faithful in the face of any challenges that may come before us.

Hebrews 6:9-12

4. We recall that the book of Hebrews was written to exhort Hebrew Christians to be faithful to Christ.
5. The writer speaks concerning those who had fallen away from the Lord in verses 4-8.
6. But then he turns to the faithful in verses 9-12.
7. He exhorts them not to be sluggish in regard to maintaining their faith, but to be diligent.
8. He exhorts them to imitate those who came before who through faith and patience inherited the promises.
9. They had a faith that would not shrink and so also must we have one today.
10. May we all possess a “faith that will not shrink” in the face of.....

Persecution

1. If we live godly in Christ Jesus we will face persecution.

2 Timothy 3:12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

Matthew 5:10-12 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

2. Some certainly fall away when they are faced with persecution.

A. Jesus spoke about some of these in the parable of the sower.

Matthew 13:20-21 But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

B. Some Hebrew Christians had fallen away most likely due to persecution.

Hebrews 6:4-6

3. Others, however, remain faithful even under severe persecution.

A. These are the righteous individuals.

Hebrews 10:38-39 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

B. Notice what the apostle Peter says:

1 Peter 5:8-10

C. James writes:

James 5:10-11 My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord--that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

4. These individual possessed a faith that would not shrink – even in the face of persecution!

Discipline or Correction

1. The child of God must expect to receive some correction in his life.

A. Notice the following passages of scripture:

Proverbs 10:17 He who keeps instruction is in the way of life, But he who refuses correction goes astray.

Proverbs 12:1 Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, But he who hates correction is stupid.

B. The scriptures are there for our correction in life.

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

2. The Bible teaches that those who refuse correction are foolish.

Proverbs 13:8 The ransom of a man's life is his riches, But the poor does not hear rebuke.

Proverbs 15:5 A fool despises his father's instruction, But he who receives correction is prudent.

Proverbs 15:32 He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, But he who heeds rebuke gets understanding.

3. **One must wonder why is accepting correction so difficult for many of us?**
- A. **We live in a society where the only sin is to say that someone is wrong.**
 - B. **We don't want to hurt anyone's feelings or pride.**
 - C. **And because of our own pride we don't want to admit that we are wrong.**
 - D. **This is merely a reinforcement of pride.**
 - E. **As a result, some fall away from the faith when someone dares to tell them that they are wrong because they are not prepared to accept correction.**
 - F. **It may be that we have done a poor job of teaching on this subject.**
 - G. **Consider for a moment 1 Timothy 6:3-5:
1 Timothy 6:3-5**
4. **May we all possess a "faith that will not shrink" in the face of correction.**

Evangelism

1. Jesus wants us to be involved in personal evangelism. Notice His very words concerning this subject:

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Matthew 9:37-38 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

A. Even after witnessing the stoning of Stephen, it was said of the disciples that "those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4).

2. One must wonder, what is standing in our way?

A. Could it be ignorance? – I don't believe that.

B. Could it be a lack of love? – I really don't think so.

C. Could it be fear? – Yes, I think that this is the culprit!

1) Most are just afraid that we will be rejected; that we might offend someone; or that we might not be able to think of the right words to say when we are asked about our faith.

2) We cannot be afraid to speak the truth of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to others.

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

1 Peter 3:13-15 And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

Hebrews 13:6 So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

3. Oh for a faith that will not shrink in the face of personal evangelism.

Conclusion

- 1. Let this be our prayer that we would have a faith that will not shrink in the face of.....**
 - A. Persecution**
 - B. Discipline or Correction**
 - C. Evangelism**

