

# The Walk of Faith

## Lesson 8: Faith at Work on the Field

- I. Satan envies our peace and fellowship with God. He looks on with malice. It stirs up every infernal temper in him to see the happy believer—who'd fallen like him—restored to what he can never expect.
  - A. So as a sly serpent and roaring lion, he never ceases to tempt us. He's a powerful, malicious, cruel, diligent adversary (cf. *Wiles of Satan*, W. Spurstowe; *Demonology: A Treatise of Satan's Temptations*, R. Gilpin; *Christian in Complete Armour*, W. Gurnall; *The Christian Warfare*, J. Downname; *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, T. Brooks; *The World Conquered by the Faithful Christian*, R. Alleine).
    1. As soon as one wile fails, he has another ready. He plots and schemes night and day, waiting for an opportunity to make a seasonable attack (1Pet 5.8; cp. Prov 4.14-17; 2Cor 11.3).
      - a) If one tool doesn't work, he takes up another. If one temptation disgusts us, he won't urge it, but straightway offers another. Similar to what was said of Paul, Satan becomes all things to all men, that he might by all means, destroy some.
    2. He never tires. He's indefatigable. Job 1.7
      - a) Gilpin, "It's nothing for him to encompass land and sea in his efforts. It's all his business to tempt and destroy, and his whole heart is in it. Hence intermission or cessation can't be expected. He doesn't faint by his labor. Having a strength answerable to his violent impulses, he gladly puts forth all imaginable toil and labor."
    3. He's always tempting.
      - a) Gilpin, "He's not satisfied with either a lower degree of sinning or with one or two acts; but he presses upon us to sin to the height, with the greatest contempt and grievance, with the greatest scandal and offense. And having once caused us to begin, he would never have us make an end. His temptations roll themselves upon us lie the breaking in of waters, which, by the fierceness of their current, make a large way for more to follow. Hence it is that he reaps a large harvest where he's sown but little, and from one temptation, not only wounds the soul of him that committed it, but endeavors to diffuse the venom and poisonous stream of it to the infection of others, to the disgrace of religion, the hardening of the hearts of wicked men, and the turning of the ignorant out of the way of truth."
  - B. He targets the traitor in our heart, 2Cor 11.3.
    1. Satan knows he has an ally within us in league with sin and therefore he still hopes to draw him into sin by surprise and assault.
    2. Gilpin, "Satan takes advantage of our own lusts, and so ploughs with our own heifer, turning our own weapons against ourselves, Js 1.14."
      - a) Gilpin, "Satan is the tempter, but our own lusts are the advantages by which he draws and entices. The corrupt principle within us is called "the flesh" but the way it works, either in its own proper motion or as stirred up by the devil, is that of lust and affection; and therefore he that would stop the flesh's motions must look to mortify it in its affections and lusts, Gal 5.24."
  - C. He targets our natural bent toward legalism.
    1. "How can you be a child of God, and yet be as you are? There's nothing in you for which God should love you. What have you done that's any good? Do you live up to His will and is His image renewed in you? You have grace, but do you live up to it? Are you like Christ? How are you duties? Are they as they should be? You know they're not. So how

can God be pleased with them, when you're not even pleased with them? How's your walk? How's your warfare?"

2. This is Satan's reasoning because he knows how strongly we're attached to the covenant of works by nature. He coaxes us to question our worth and our works because he knows we naturally want to be praised and rewarded for what we think is good about us. So Satan seeks to puff up our pride and self-righteous hopes. Likewise, he targets our sinful enmity toward a hand-out and our natural contempt toward the needy and helpless.
3. We take the bait... we falter... and we stagger... as we set out to try and find something good in ourselves for which we can recommend ourselves to God.

## II. But...

- A. The Spirit defeats the designs of Satan and turns the event to our good, Jer 32.40; Jn 10.28
  1. Though we may fall, the Spirit of God preserves us from utter ruin, rescues us from Satan's snare, and sets out feet again on solid ground, so that in the end, nothing is lost but unwanted chaff, unwelcome dross, and unhelpful drags.
- B. The Spirit teaches us the gospel again.
  1. The Spirit reminds us that the Father's love to His children is not based on any merit in them, but only upon a love for them in Him. Grace doesn't follow works; because then grace would not be grace, but wages, Rom 11.6. Election is not of him that wills, or works, but of God alone, who shows mercy, Jn 1.12-13
  2. The Spirit reminds us that the objects of God's love are not the worthy, but the unworthy; not the innocent, but the fallen; not the righteous, but sinners—the lost, the helpless, the ungodly, even the chief of sinners, even open enemies and rebels against God, Rom 5. 6, 8, 10
  3. The Spirit reminds us that we're not saved by works of righteousness which we've done, or can do, lest we should boast, since boasting in self is absolutely excluded in this scheme. Salvation was so contrived, and so worked out, and so applied, that he who glories shall have nothing left to him to glory in but the Lord, Eph 2.9; 2Cor 10.17
  4. The Spirit uses a passage like Ps 103.17 to show us where we departed from the gospel by supposing that the love of God follows merit.
    - a) He directs us to the mercy of God, showing us that God's mercy has no motive but His own will, Rom 9.15; Eph 1.4-5
    - b) He shows us that God's mercy endures forever; it will not expire; it cannot be exhausted; it will never be revoked.
    - c) He shows us that every blessing is a fruit of the Father's mercy and not dependent upon how well we do, how fast we run, or how far we make it, but only on His own hearty desire to bless us, give Himself to us, and bring us into the eternal enjoyment of His love for us.
  5. The Spirit uses the narratives of Scripture to show us that salvation cannot and has never been earned, but flows strictly out the heart of God to sinners (cf. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Peter, Rev 2-3).
- C. And so our faith regains its footing on the covenant foundation of God's truth as the Spirit applies all these truths of Scripture to our mind and heart.
  1. Faith's reasoning and prayer: