

Single-mindedness Versus Double-mindedness

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Today we are going to begin with a story of two young men who lived about 2000 years ago. Both are Greek and both are from the same city of Thessalonica which is on the Northern coast of modern-day Greece today. It appears both of these young men came from families of prominence. Possibly both of their relatives might have been high up in local government at the time. They were probably in their late teens or early twenties. One was named Aristarchus and he was a Jew—a Greek Jew. The other was named Demas and he was a Greek Gentile. The Bible doesn't say so we don't know if they knew each other at that time but they came from the same city so there is a possibility that they might have.

The year is 50 A.D. roughly and it's nineteen years or so after the death of Christ. The residents of Thessalonica start hearing things from a couple of towns further over, named Philippi and they start hearing news from a neighboring town. There are these amazing stories of this man named Paul. He's preaching a new religion about the Messiah having come, the Messiah died and the Messiah was resurrected from the dead. These stories began filtering into Thessalonica. Paul was preaching this and as we know, the rumor mill—a little slower at that time than it is today—people traversed the roads back and forth and these stories began to come into Thessalonica.

In Philippi there was a demon possessed slave girl—we won't go there—but the story is in Acts 16. She could tell people's future and she made her owners—she was a slave—a lot of money. When Paul cast the demon out of her, she lost the ability to tell fortunes. Of course, that upset her owner because it deprived him of a great deal of income so the owner had Paul and his companion Silas beaten and thrown into jail. I think we remember that story. That very night in Philippi when they were thrown in jail, there was an earthquake that caused the doors of the jail to be opened and the chains to fall off Paul and Silas. The jailer was about to kill himself because he assumed that all the prisoners escaped and he would be executed by the authorities for dereliction of duties for such a thing. When he went inside the jail, Paul and Silas were waiting for him. Paul told him, don't hurt yourself—don't kill yourself—rather believe in Jesus Christ and if you do so, you and your family will be saved. In short order the jailer was baptized. That story and many other stories began to filter into Thessalonica about this man named Paul. Now Paul is heading their way.

So now we come to the story in Acts 17:1, about these two young men. Paul and Silas and of course Luke, who wrote the book of Acts, were traveling together and maybe there were others.

Acts 17:1 *Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:
2) And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures ... (KJV)*

It's interesting the Greek word for *reasoned* is Strong's #1256 and it is *dialegomai* and it means "to say thoroughly" or "to discuss". So, Paul didn't go into the synagogue and start yelling at people, he began to discuss the scriptures and how they were fulfilled by Jesus Christ. Then in verse 3:

3) Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. (KJV)

Who is the Messiah.

4) And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas [meaning they joined Paul and Silas]; and of the devout Greeks, a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. (KJV)

The question is, would these two men have been among this multitude? Probably so. The Bible isn't specific but it seems logical. These two men would be among the group who believed and were converted. These two men—young men—just didn't believe, they were so moved by Paul's teaching that they apparently gave up everything; they gave up their lives and whatever status they had and their families and began to travel with Paul.

Now let's fast forward twelve or thirteen years and take a look at Aristarchus and Demas. Both are now in their thirties and they are both counted among Paul's loyal companions. We have to remember that joining Paul—Paul would have personally trained them just as he trained young Timothy. Paul referred to Timothy as his "son"—certainly "son in the faith"—I think at this point it's safe to assume that Paul was just as close to these two young men as he was to Timothy. They were "sons" to Paul. Let's go to Philemon and look at chapter 1:1. We don't often go there, but this was written from Rome to Philemon by Onesimus he was the scribe and a servant.

Philemon 1:1 *Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ [he was in Rome, this was his first imprisonment in Rome], and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow laborer ... (KJV)*

Now go to verse 23.

*23) There salute thee Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus;
24) Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow laborer. (KJV)*

So here, Aristarchus and Demas are mentioned. The Greek word for *fellow laborers* is *synergos* and we get our English word *synergy* from that. It means "a companion in labor". It implies working closely together as partners. We see by this time, Aristarchus and Demas were companions of Paul, following him wherever he went, ministering to him and doing whatever he wanted them to do.

Today what we are going to do is follow Aristarchus and Demas to see how they ended up and to see a contrast between the two of them. Because we are going to see a contrast of single-mindedness on the part of one and double-mindedness on

the part of the other. Being single minded or double minded is very relative for us today. As we get close to the end, it is very, very relevant. So, the title of the sermon is:

Single-mindedness or Double-mindedness?

There will be five points today.

1. The first thing we want to do is to look at Aristarchus.

We're going to break into an account where Aristarchus was caught in a kerfuffle with Demetrius the silversmith. Remember Demetrius made idols to the goddess Diana and Paul was preaching "Your gods are nothing, your idols are nothing, they are just wood and stone and carved by men". Of course, people began leaving the temple and were attracted to Paul's preaching and it hurt the silversmith's business. Let's go to Acts 19 now and read verse 29. We're now in the city of Ephesus and because of Demetrius, the whole city is now in an uproar.

Acts 19:29 *And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre. (KJV)*

We see here that they are part of Paul's entourage and they got grabbed and they, Aristarchus in particular, was suffering some of the consequences of following Paul. We also see Aristarchus was with Paul in Asia. Let's go to the next chapter, Acts 20:4.

Acts 20:4 *And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. (KJV)*

Aristarchus as of Acts 20 now is continuing to work with Paul, continuing to minister to Paul and is so dedicated that he is following Paul wherever God's Spirit takes and leads Paul. A couple of years later, after writing to Philemon, Paul is accused by Jewish leaders of sedition. They wanted to get rid of him just like they wanted to get rid of Jesus Christ. Paul was accused of attempting to incite the Jews to rebel against Rome. It was a trumped-up charge, as we know. We know Paul made the decision to directly appeal to Caesar, which required Paul to travel directly to Rome to meet Caesar or Caesar's appointed representative in Rome. We will go to Acts 27 now and Luke is writing about Paul's voyage to Rome. I'll read this out of the New King James.

Acts 27:1 *And when it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to one named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment.*

2) So, entering a ship of Adramyttium, we put to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia. Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us. (NKJV)

We see that Paul is being accompanied by Aristarchus as his assistant and helper. Let me read from a book that was written in 1895 by the New Testament scholar Sir William Ramsey. He wrote a book titled, *Saint Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen*. I had never run across this or heard this before, but Sir William Ramsey says that the only way the Roman government would have allowed Luke and Aristarchus to travel with Paul to Rome was if they actually became his slaves. He couldn't have companions, but he could have slaves. If this is true—of course we don't know or have any documentation to verify that—it speaks to how loyal Aristarchus was to Paul, both to his own calling by God Almighty and also to Paul, that he would be willing to become a slave to Paul in order to make that journey and to continue to help him. Aristarchus was with Paul in Rome when the book of Colossians was written. Let's go there, Colossians 4:10. Paul is writing back to Colossae from his imprisonment in Rome and he's giving greetings from Aristarchus.

Colossians 4:10 *Aristarchus my fellow prisoner saluteth you ...* (KJV)

If he was Paul's slave, then he would most likely be in prison with Paul. Going to verse 18.

18) The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen. (KJV)

Remember the fact that "I am in prison and Aristarchus is with me." This is the last that God's Word has to say about Aristarchus. We don't hear anymore from him but it appears he was loyal to the end. Being a prisoner with Paul and then Paul, as we know, was subsequently executed. The fact is, Foxes book of Martyrs lists Aristarchus as one of those martyred by Nero. If Fox is true, then Aristarchus remained in Rome and got caught up in what Nero did to the Christians and probably died a very ugly death, but faithful to the end. The point is that from all we know, Aristarchus was single-minded to the very end. He was faithful, he was loyal to his calling and he served Paul and he served His Father and Jesus Christ by doing their bidding and he paid for that with his life.

Now the second point:

2. Let's look at the end of Demas and see how he faired.

We read in Philemon that Demas was also among Paul's most trusted companions. Like a son, he was a fellow laborer and co-worker. Demas was with Paul by his side for thirteen or fourteen years. As we're going to see Demas also followed Paul to Rome. Remember Demas was a Greek Gentile so before meeting Paul he would have worshipped all the Pantheon of Greek gods. He left that, he left his family, whatever wealth or status that his family had, he left behind because of his conviction of Paul's message. He felt so strongly about it that he left everything and followed in Paul's footsteps. That now brings us to 2 Timothy 4. This is written four to five years after Paul wrote Philemon and Paul is near the end of his life. He is writing from Rome as he is waiting for his appeal and Aristarchus is there with him and most likely, this is the last letter that Paul ever wrote. I'll read this out of the New King James.

2 Timothy 4:6 *For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. (NKJV)*

He had run out of appeals; he knew his life was shortly going to be at an end. This is what we want to say when our life is at an end.

*7) I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.
8) Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (NKJV)*

In verse 9, this is addressed to Timothy—the whole Epistle is addressed to Timothy.

*9) Be diligent to come to me quickly;
10) for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world ... (NKJV)*

Aristarchus and Demas were probably converted at the same time, they both followed Paul, thirteen to fourteen years and we see now that Demas has a different ending than Aristarchus. The word *forsaken* in the Greek means “to abandon, to desert, to leave helpless” or “to let one down”. He certainly left Paul helpless in prison. So, Paul is confirming that Demas abandoned him in Rome and he did so at a time when Paul needed him most. That’s why he said to Timothy, come quickly because Demas is gone; he’s not here to help me. Let’s stop here and think about everything that Demas experienced firsthand, saw with his own eyes from the time he was converted.

Thousands of people were converted by Paul’s preaching and he was part of that. He saw many miracles performed by Paul and maybe some of the other apostles. In Acts 20 he was there when a young man was raised from the dead—Aristarchus was there and probably Demas also. Then undoubtedly, Paul told Demas as well as Aristarchus about the manner of his conversion, how he was taught in vision for three years after being struck down on the road to Damascus, blinded by Jesus Christ. Remember what Paul said, he heard from Jesus Christ, things not to be told. That were private and probably beyond our comprehension. That was in 2 Corinthians. The example of Paul was foremost in Demas’ mind and what he did was follow Paul single-mindedly—up to a point. He was loyal to God Almighty, loyal to his calling despite the trials but at some point, something changed. What could have possibly caused Demas to abandon Paul when he was most vulnerable and needed his help the most. By that time Paul was in his sixties and he had left him all alone and helpless in Rome. Demas was in his thirties and just walked away. That’s a sad, sad situation. Not only did he walk away, but he probably went back to the life of paganism in Thessalonica which he had given up ten or fifteen years earlier. He experienced the exact same calling as Aristarchus and he had the same experience that Aristarchus had as a companion of Paul. Aristarchus remained faithful and was martyred probably and yet Demas walked away.

That leads to the next point.

3. Why did Demas walk away? Why did he abandon Paul when Aristarchus stayed loyal to the end?

What happened to Demas? The answer is, we don't know. The Bible doesn't tell us but we certainly have some clues if we look into scripture. I'm sure you've heard of the name of Polycarp. He was a disciple of John. We know John lived to about 100 A.D. and Polycarp was one of his disciples. Polycarp appears to have held onto the truth and approximately forty years after these events that were described after Paul's death, Polycarp wrote a letter to the church in Philippi and in that letter he listed the martyrs who had died up to that point, prior to that day when he wrote this letter to Philippi. Let me quote from his letter, listing the martyrs.

Ignatius, Zosimus, Rufus, Paul and other apostles and said that all these had not run in vain [Polycarp said they did not run in vain] because they did not love this present world.

That is Polycarp writing, forty years after the death of Paul. It's interesting that the language is just identical to what we just read about Paul, saying that Demas left because he "loved this present world"—identical language. The implication is, I think we can safely imply, there is a point at which Demas saw down the road that Paul was going to be martyred. There was persecution against the Christians in Rome and you have this nut case for an emperor so his end wasn't looking so good. So, he did not want to be a martyr apparently and left Paul in Rome. This was just before Paul was executed. So, I don't think it's too great a leap to say that being a companion of Paul for all those years and Paul being within days of being executed Demas, as part of that decided, enough is enough. I bought into it for this much but I'm not going to buy into it for this much—meaning "my life".

We don't know what the exact catalyst was that caused Demas to walk away and abandon Paul and his calling, but we do know that the broader issue was that Demas was a term we use today, double-minded. There's no other conclusion we could draw. He was a pagan before, then for ten or fifteen years he had a complete change of life, a complete change of belief. But then, at the end he went back and left Paul. So, you could say he was double-minded. He wasn't single-minded.

What *double-minded* means is "having two opposing opinions at the same time". We say today, he has "one foot in and one foot out". Or you could say, "He's riding the fence on this one." My wife and I had a situation in 1995 when the Worldwide Church of God was falling apart and they had all the changes. I spoke every Sabbath and I kept preaching the truth about the Sabbath and the Holy Days and the truth about God and Christ and that there wasn't a trinity. We got ourselves disfellowshipped for that and the Yakima church was disbanded. I've talked about this before. The regional manager in Worldwide at the time—the guy who did the disfellowshipping—was chiding me about,

"Why can't you preach the trinity? I can preach it either way, depending on who I'm trying to please that day".

Well that is the definition of a double-minded person. I can go this way or I can go that way. I can preach three or I can preach two. Just tell me what to say and I'll work up a sermon on it.

The term *double-minded* is only used twice in the Bible, both by the Apostle James. Both times it's used in context of the church—not the world—in context of the church. Therefore, it is relevant for us today as part of the church today, as part of God's people. Let's go to James 1:1 and investigate the first use of this term *double-minded*. It opens our eyes to what probably happened with Demas and why he left. James calls himself a *doulos*, it's translated "servant" in the King James, it means "a slave".

James 1:1 *James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. (KJV)*

Now let's go to verse 5 and I'll read this out of the New Living Translation.

5) If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. (NLT)

That's verse 5. Now we'll go back to the King James for verse 6.

6) But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. (KJV)

The Greek word for *wavering* is Strong's #1252 and it means "to doubt" or "to stagger". Meaning you're staggering between two different opinions. When somebody staggers, they go left and right as they stagger down the road. The implication is you're staggering between two different opinions—you are wavering.

*7) For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.
8) A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. (KJV)*

The Greek word for *double-minded* is Strong's #1374 and talk about a definition that nails it, it means "two spirited". Having two spirits at the same time. Or by implication it means "vacillating in opinion or purpose". But a person who is "two spirited" has one in the world, one in the church possibly. Jameson, Faucet and Brown's Commentary says this of this word, *double-minded*.

"The word for double minded is found here for the first time in Greek literature." [That's interesting]. "It's not a hypocrite that is meant, but a fickle, wavering man as the context shows."

So, wavering between two opinions is double-minded in a religious context. Obviously having one life directed towards God Almighty, which was Aristarchus. What he did was single-mindedly. Or two minds, another one focused on something else other than God Almighty and in this case, Demas as we are told, his mind was on this present world. So, Demas was double-minded. He had part of his mind on God and following Paul and following scripture and doing the work that Paul was doing, but at the same time, Paul said he was part of his—Paul's—present world. Demas was indeed double-minded.

That leads to the fourth point.

4. What we will do now is examine in the Bible, examples of being double-minded.

We're going to look at three examples in the Bible of being *double-minded* and none of them are good; none of them have a good outcome.

4A. Let's look at Judah living under the reign of King Ahab.

Think about this: We know King Ahab, as we are told, was the evilest king that Judah ever had. We know—we won't take the time to go through the scriptures—he replaced the temple in Jerusalem with shrines in Dan and Bethel, so that people had a convenient place to go. He made high places on every single hill, he reinstated child sacrifice, he replaced the Levitical priesthood with the prophets of Baal and he murdered the prophets of God Almighty. We also covered in a sermon, a year or so ago, the instance where he murdered an entire family simply to get a garden that he lusted for and coveted. Then, this from the Jewish Encyclopedia: Ahab had inscribed on all the doors of the city of Samaria the words,

“Ahab has renounced the living God of Israel”.

He had that inscribed on people's doors, so that people understood where their king stood and if they didn't follow their king, they would be in jeopardy. Because of Ahab's example it's easy to believe that during that time, Judah was very corrupt, corrupted religiously by his example. But Judah also had the prophet Elijah. With that in mind, let's go to 1 Kings 18 and we're going to pick up the narrative in verse 20. You know where we're going, this is the encounter between Elijah and the prophets of Baal.

1 Kings 18:20 *So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.
21) And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? [That's the definition of double-mindedness] if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. (KJV)*

Why? Because the people were double-minded. They wanted to see which way the wind was going to blow before they made a decision. It wasn't because they had no conviction in the matter, it was a matter of self-preservation. Let's see what happens and then we'll follow whoever wins this battle between Elijah and the prophets of Baal. After Yehovah sent fire down to consume Elijah's sacrifice in verse 38, let's begin in verse 39.

39) And when all the people saw it, [this miracle from God Almighty, after they soaked the wood and the offering] they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God. (KJV)

Verse 40 I'll read out of the New King James.

40) And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there. (NKJV)

We see that the people were double-minded. They briefly became single-minded after they saw this miracle and saw the prophets of Baal hacked to death. So they got off the fence for a while, but it didn't last long, as we know. This example of double-mindedness isn't good.

4B. Let's look at the Apostle Peter and see Peter's example.

He was obviously a contemporary of Paul's and what we've written about Paul Peter was also preaching the gospel contemporaneously with him. Let's go back to the last night of Christ's life after He has washed the disciples' feet and instituted the symbols of the bread and the wine. In Matthew 26, remember what Christ said. He said every one of them was going to be offended. This is after the bread and wine, after the Passover symbols and the foot washing. He told them that this is not going to end well in this particular regard.

Matthew 26:31 *Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: (KJV)*

We see the King James says *offended*, the New King James says *stumble*, the New International says *fall away*. They fell away for a time.

31 continued) ... for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. (KJV)

The Greek word for *offended* is Strong's #4624 and it's the Greek word *skandalizo* from which we get our English word "scandalize". It means "to trip up"; figuratively "to stumble" or "to entice to sin" or "entice to apostasy". Christ is saying to them, all of you are going to stumble tonight. All of you are going to fall away tonight.

33) Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.

34) Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

35) Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise, also said all the disciples. (KJV)

They all agreed. I'm sure when Peter said this at that moment in time, he was being 100% sincere in his mind. He was with Christ and said he was going to go all the way with Him, he will die with him—he was 100% sincere. He wasn't being hypocritical; he was being sincere. I think he believed in his mind that he would never deny Jesus Christ. He thought he had singleness of mind here. The fact is, as we know, he did not. What happened a few hours later? Look at verse 56.

56) But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled. (KJV)

Verse 73.

73) And after a while came unto him, they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.

74) Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. (KJV)

Peter went from being single-minded, to a few hours later, being double-minded. He was totally dedicated in his mind to following Christ but when pressure was applied, in front of this crowd, and Christ had been taken captive—when pressure was applied—Peter became double-minded. As astonishing as it might be, he cared more about what complete strangers thought about him than staying loyal to Jesus Christ. That's an example, that if the Apostle Peter could do that, it's something we might be very careful about. It's true that at that moment, Peter did not have the Holy Spirit living in him. Remember what Christ said in John 14? He says you have the Holy Spirit with you and it shall be in you—that moment hadn't happened yet. Peter's example shows that we need the power of the Holy Spirit, otherwise we will deny Christ when the chips are down.

We've seen this example before Peter had the Holy Spirit residing in him, but what did he do later down the road after receiving the Holy Spirit? Did he overcome being double-minded or was it something that Peter struggled with for the rest of his life? Paul's letter to the Galatians was written about 52 A.D., which was roughly twenty-plus years after Peter denied Christ. What we're going to see is that Peter acted one way in Gentile company but acted another way when the Jewish converts showed up. In Galatians 2:11 Paul is writing obviously to the church in Galatia. I'm going to read this out of the Complete Jewish Bible.

Galatians 2:11 *Furthermore, when Kefa [Peter] came to Antioch, I opposed him publicly, because he was clearly in the wrong.*

12) For prior to the arrival of certain people from [the community headed by] Ya'akov [James], he had been eating with the Gentile believers; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, because he was afraid of the faction who favored circumcising Gentile believers.

13) And the other Jewish believers became hypocrites along with him, so that even Bar-Nabba was led astray by their hypocrisy. (CJB)

The Greek word for *hypocrisy* has a very interesting meaning because it comes from the Greek theater. If you were acting in Greek plays, instead of dressing up in elaborate make up and all of that, Greek actors would hold a mask on a stick in front of their faces. Then they would act the part and speak with the mask over the face. So, the Greek word for *hypocrisy* literally means, "someone acting under a mask". Meaning the mask gives one appearance, but the person behind the mask is somebody entirely different. This is a perfect example of a hypocrite because you have the mask and then you have what's behind the mask. So, we see that Peter was still susceptible to being double-minded twenty-one years, approximately, after denying Christ. We know Peter is going to be in the Kingdom of God, we know he overcame this. The point is, if Peter was at risk of doing this, what about us? If the Apostle Peter could do this, we could too and it's something we need to pay attention to.

The third example is an example yet future.

4C. Is being double-minded only exclusive to the past or is it going to continue to our day?

Is it something we should be concerned with right now? Let's look at something that is prophesied to occur shortly before the return of Christ. Let's go to Revelation 3:14. This is the letter to Laodicea and the angel of the church is writing from Jesus Christ, from the Father, to Laodicea. This is out of the New King James.

Revelation 3:14 *And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:*

15) "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. (NKJV)

Something hot, whether it's a bath or a drink, has some benefit. Something cold, whether it's a bath, a drink or jumping into cold water, it has a benefit one way or another.

16) So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. (NKJV)

This is nearly identical to what Elijah told Israel. If God is God, follow Him. If Baal is god, follow him. Hot, cold, don't be straddling the fence—don't be in the middle. Christ says, hot, cold, pick one—commit one way or commit to the other way; don't be in the middle, don't be lukewarm—commit to obviously what God's Word says, to what the Father reveals to us—commit.

We've seen some examples of double-mindedness, the fifth and last point, let's ask ourselves:

5. What lessons can we learn from all that we have covered thus far?

Aristarchus, Demas, Israel, Peter, Laodicea—what lessons can we learn from these examples? We're going to cover three.

5A. Our Father requires us to be single-minded.

It's a requirement, not an option, it's not negotiable. In Matthew 4:8 we are breaking into the account of Christ's confrontation with Satan. Christ had fasted for forty days and forty nights and this was coming to a climax—the culmination of it all. This out of the New King James.

Matthew 4:8 Again, the devil took Him [Christ] up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

9) And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." (NKJV)

You can have it all, if you worship me.

10) Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve." (NKJV)

We're told here that Christ was saying,

"My Father is the first priority, My Father should be the focus of your devotion, your worship, your obedience. Nothing else."

During His time on earth, Christ had a lot to say about having two conflicting opinions. We are in Matthew 4, so let's go to chapter 6 now and read verse 24. I'll read this out of the Amplified Version. It adds some color to it and some detail to it.

Matthew 6:24 *No one can serve two masters; [Christ is saying you can't be double-minded] for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stand by and be devoted to the one and despise and be against the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (deceitful riches, money, possessions, or whatever is trusted in). (AMP)*

You can't serve that and please God. What Christ is saying, at some point you have to choose. You can be double-minded for a time, but at some point, our Father is going to put us in a situation where we have to choose. It's not just a onetime event, He does it over and over and over during our walk in this life. We have to choose. We are put in a situation where we have to choose. Demas eventually made a choice, didn't he? In the beginning, he had the love of God Almighty His Father, he had a love of his calling, he had a personal love of Paul, he was committed, he was convinced, he gave up his life in Thessalonica and followed Paul for twelve, thirteen, fifteen years. He had that commitment because he would not have endured the ten plus years of hardship with Paul if he wasn't committed at that point.

But all that time, somewhere in Demas' mind, he still loved the world because that is what the Bible says—that's what Paul says. He ultimately returned to that world when the trials, temptations, pressure and stress became severe. He did exactly what Christ said—you can't serve two masters and up at that point where he had been serving two—maybe one repressed—but when the pressure came, he made a choice and he went back to his present world.

Let me ask the question, what if we pick the wrong one? As we would say today, "We ride the wrong horse." Let's go to 2 Peter 2:20 and see the end result of double-mindedness. When we make the wrong choice; we allow two opinions to co-exist in our minds and at some point, when pressure comes, we make the wrong choice.

2 Peter 2:20 *For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome [as Demas was], the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. (KJV)*

Peter is speaking from experience. He denied Christ, he withdrew himself from the Gentiles and sat with the Jews to please people, so he has had a couple of

examples in his life that show us he struggled—he wrestled—with double-mindedness. Double-mindedness was exhibited by Demas and he wound up leaving. Peter overcame it, Demas did not. We see that double-mindedness is a huge spiritual threat to all of us because there is going to come a time when the pressure is going to get jacked up to levels we have not yet experienced in this life.

Our Father wants us to be single-minded. Aristarchus was single-minded, Demas was not. This kind of sums up one part of our Christian calling, that we are required to be in the world but not part of it. We're told we can't come out of the world. But while we are being in the world, we are required to make our priority the things that are above and not the things that are below. Demas had priorities both above and below, whereas Aristarchus had only one.

The second lesson is:

5B. Our Father requires us to prove what is true and then commit to it.

1 Thessalonians 5:21, we know this by heart,

Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good. (KJV)

The Greek word for *hold fast* means “to keep in memory” or “to seize”. Keep in memory what's good—hang on to it, seize it, grab it. We've all done that; the Sabbath, the Holy Days, clean and unclean foods. We have proven what's true, we've held onto these all these years. The question for all of us is, do we still have the same commitment that we have had to the Sabbath and Holy Days and not eating pork and all of that and to the two great commandments? To love God Almighty with all our being, to put Him first in everything in our lives—do we have still that same commitment? Do we commit to loving our neighbor as ourselves? What about what Christ said in Matthew 5:44, that we have to love our enemies. That's the hard part. Loving our enemies? Are we as committed to that as we are to not eating shrimp? We are being watched to see.

In these last years, all in Pacific have proven who Yehovah is, Who the God of the Old Testament is and we have held to that no matter the cost. And there has been a cost. We continue to do so. So, the second lesson we can learn from all of these examples is the Father requires that we prove what is true and then commit to it, follow it, obey it, make it part of us.

The third lesson that we need to learn, and this is the one we are going to be tested on in the future and we have been tested on in the past.

5C. Our Father requires that we trust in Him.

It's a requirement. Let's go back to James 1:6, where we were before, but let's read this in context of the Father requiring that we develop trust—absolute, total trust—in Him. Demas didn't trust. He looked out for himself and saw what the future held and he left. Aristarchus did not, Paul did not. I'll read this out of the New King James.

James 1:6 *But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.*

7) *For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;*

8) *he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.* (NKJV)

We are being told that being double-minded is being tied to a lack of faith. Being double-minded is directly tied to having doubt. Because if you doubt, you're holding two opinions at the same time and you don't know where to go, you don't know what to do, who to believe, what path to go down. A doubter is praying to God, not because he really believes but because he hopes. "I hope He'll do this or I hope this will happen" rather than actually, firmly believing.

Let me give you the perfect example of this and you'll know when we go there. What is Abraham called? The "Father of the Faithful". If anyone ever had a challenge to be double-minded, it was Abraham. You know the account in Genesis 22:1, but think about it from Abraham's viewpoint. A miracle occurred so that he could have a son, his only son, at that point Isaac. Think about it from his viewpoint.

Genesis 22:1 *And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.*

2) *And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering ...* (KJV)

Now think of the picture that comes into your mind. Your son on a fire being burned. I'm sure that's what came into his mind.

2 continued) ... upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. (KJV)

Abraham is saying, I want to obey God but God wants me to murder my son. Now I am wrestling with two things; I want to obey God and He tells me to murder my son and I don't want to murder my son because I love my son, but I love God too. Can you imagine what's going on in Abraham's mind? Talk about a good reason to have conflicting opinions—that's this.

6) *And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.*

7) *And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?* (KJV)

Notice the reply. "I don't know?" Or, "I don't have a clue?"

8) *And Abraham said, My son, God will provide* [he didn't say might provide, or hope he provides or I wish He would provide] ... (KJV)

This is the exact opposite we read in James about being double-minded. Abraham said, "I don't know what the outcome is going to be, that's irrelevant. God will take care of it, if I obey God. Abraham knew Yehovah would provide somehow, some

way. He didn't have the specifics, he just knew that if he obeyed Yehovah, the living God, God Almighty, the Most High God, it will all work out. I'm sure the knife was right at the jugular, he was ready to draw it across, verse 11.

11) And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

12) And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. (KJV)

The Hebrew word for *fear* means "to be morally reverent". In other words, to have a deep, solemn respect for Yehovah that will drive us to do whatever He says and to have absolute trust in Him. To put Him first and in this specific case with Abraham, he had to put Yehovah's command before himself and his desires and certainly before his only son. He was required to do that. The point is, no matter how strong the temptation is to focus on the physical, to focus on the world—and in Abraham's case the world was his son right there, his only son—the Father must be our first priority. Because of our love for Him and our respect for Him, we will put Him first. Abraham trusted His Father, that's why he is the "Father of the Faithful". No matter how dire the situation could be, he did so because he revered Yehovah. All of us are going to be likewise tested. We've been tested before, we are going to be tested again and my suspicion is, as we get closer to the end and moral conditions get more dire, the stakes are going to get higher and the Father is going to want to know, will we trust in Him?

All of us have to be absolutely committed to Romans 8:28. We won't go there; we know it by heart.

We know all things work together for good to them who love God and who are called according to His purpose.

All things work together for good, if we will just follow, if we will just trust, if we will just obey. Do we believe that? Aristarchus did, Demas obviously did not.

Let's conclude now with a question. How do we conquer double-mindedness? How do we do that? James gives us the answer in the second reference to *double-mindedness*. That's in James 4:8; James brings up the subject of double-mindedness in chapter one and gives us the solution, the antidote in chapter 4:8.

James 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. (KJV)

God is waiting for us to draw near to Him and the promise is, He will draw near to you.

8 continued) ... Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. (KJV)

The Greek word for *heart* is the Greek word *cardia*. That's where we get our English word "cardiac". If someone has a cardiac arrest, they have a sudden loss of heart function. The Greek word *cardia* means so much more than just this pump in our

chest that's pumping blood around our body. It means "the seat of your feelings, your impulses, your affection, your desire"—it's "the seat of it, the heart of it". It's not something physical. James is saying, to overcome double-mindedness, we have to purify that heart, that seat, our inner core, our inner being. In Psalm 51; we know David's sins and they were indeed horrible and for a time David was indeed double-minded in the situation with Bathsheba, knowing what God commands and lusting over Bathsheba, he was indeed a double-minded man for a period of time. Notice Psalm 51:10, notice David's focus, I'll read this out of the New King James.

Psalm 51:10 *Create in me a clean heart* [just what James was saying in James 4:8], *O God; and renew* [the Hebrew can mean "repair" and in David's case both "renew" and "repair" are applicable] *a right spirit within me.* (NKJV)

The Hebrew word for *heart* is Strong's #3820 and it's the Hebrew word *lev* and it means "the inner person, the seat of thought and emotion, mind and will". So, David is saying,

"I want a new center, I want a new heart, I want a new seat of thought, emotion, mind and will."

It's interesting, the first word of verse 10, *create* is the Hebrew word *bara* and it's the same exact word in Genesis 1:1 where we are told that God created the heavens and earth. If God can create the heavens and earth, he can create a new heart in any of us and at that moment, David needed it really badly. It's not something we can do on our own. Our Creator, our Father must create the heart in us. When we get sideways, like David did, when we get double-minded, we go to our Father and ask for Him to create in us a new *cardia*—a new heart in us. David, the man who sought the heart of Yehovah is praying for a new inner being, a new heart, so that he would not repeat that sin, he would not give into temptation.

Let's close with one final scripture in 1 Chronicles 12:33. We're breaking into the context where these are those who defected from Saul and were loyal to David. I'm going to read it out of the Complete Jewish Bible.

1 Chronicles 12:33 *Of Z'vulun, 50,000 men were fit for military service, experienced in war and able to use all kinds of weapons; they were brave, and none was doubleminded.* (CJB)

Verse 38.

38) *All these soldiers who were experienced in war came to Hebron wholeheartedly to make David king over all Isra'el, and all the rest from Isra'el were single-hearted in wanting to make David king.* (CJB)

Those who followed David had *singleness of heart*. Our Father is looking for exactly the same in each one of us—*singleness of heart*. Demas was double-minded and returned to Satan's world. We cannot do that. Aristarchus was single-minded and he stayed faithful to the very end. We must be like Aristarchus, we must focus on single-mindedly putting our Father first in all matters and if we do so, what awaits us is to be eternally with, eternally in the presence of the Father and the Son.