

The Four Enemies of Faith

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One of the easiest spiritual concepts to ignore in our lives is the subject of faith; that is until we have a trial. Then all of a sudden faith is very important and we want it right now in the middle of a trial. But the truth is the building of faith must be done daily, a brick at a time. We can't just snap our fingers and have faith overnight. Even though it is a gift from God, we have a part to play in that. We also want to be in harmony with God. We've talked a lot about that over the last year or so. We want to be in harmony with God and we want to please God.

There's a warning in Hebrews 11:6. Let's turn over there. God gives us a warning about this subject of faith and our ability to please our Father in heaven.

Hebrews 11:6. *But without faith [it is] impossible to please Him: ...*

Not that it's hard or difficult, it says it is impossible to please God without faith. It goes on to say...

6b) ... for he that comes to God must believe that he is (that God exists), and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (KJV)

The Jewish New Testament says about that first sentence in verse 6: "*And without trusting, it is impossible to be well pleasing to God.*"

We all want to please God and be close to Him, but if we don't have faith, the Bible is very clear, we cannot please God. If we can't please God then He is not going to issue an invitation to His kingdom to us, if we're not pleasing Him. Therefore, to be in His kingdom, we have to have faith.

But the fact is, we are all human. If we're honest, we have all experienced a lack of faith sometime in the past (hopefully not now, but sometime in the past) in our spiritual journey. The fact is, in these end days, these end times, our faith is being tested and will be tested. This is why the subject of faith is so important, because we want to be in God's Kingdom and we want to please Him. It's going to be tested, so it's something that we should pay attention to, because before this is all over, we have to prove to God that we will trust Him and trust Him only. Guess what He is going to do? He is going to put each one of us in a position in our lives between now and the time Christ comes or the time we die, He's going to put us in a circumstance or position where we will have to trust Him and trust Him only, just as He did with Abraham. Remember the knife was coming down on Isaac's neck and God stopped him and said, "Now I know." God is going to put us in a situation where we will have to make decisions as to whether or not

we trust Him or we're going to trust the physical, the world, ourselves or whatever, so that God can say with us, "Now I know."

One of the most effective ways Satan can hurt our relationship with God or distance us from God is to weaken our faith. That's very important. If he can worm his way into our head and cause us to doubt or not have the faith we should in God, then that will hurt our relationship with God. If you study the New Testament, the gospels particularly, Jesus Christ specifically illustrates four ways that Satan can do that; four ways that Satan can harm or destroy our faith. So we want to look at those four ways today.

The title of the sermon is The Four Enemies of Faith. We want to investigate them. We will find out that, yes, Christ warned us that this was going to happen, but we're also going to see that Christ gave us a solution, a way to overcome each one of those enemies of faith.

The first one, probably the biggest, is fear. The first enemy of faith is fear. Fear kept Israel out of the promised land for forty years. They should have had faith because they saw the ten plagues, they saw the miracles, they saw the Red Sea parted, they saw the pillar of fire, and yet because of a lack of faith, they were kept out of the promised land.

Let's go to Deuteronomy, chapter 1. Remember, Deuteronomy is a book that is reviewing the history of Israel. In doing so, right before Moses died, Aaron was already dead and we see here that Moses is reviewing the history of Israel. We will read verses 29 through 32. I'll read out of the New King James.

Deuteronomy 1:29. *Then I said to you (Moses is talking. He said this forty years earlier.), 'Do not be terrified, or afraid of them.'* (NKJV)

He is talking about giants in the land of Canaan. You see, despite all that they saw coming out of Egypt, when they got to the promised land they were terrified of these giants in Canaan. He said, "Do not be afraid of them."

30) *'The Lord your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes (they saw it),*
31) *and in the wilderness where you saw how the Lord your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.'*
(NKJV)

Miracle after miracle, providing food, water and protection from enemies.

32) *'Yet, for all that, you did not believe the Lord your God,'* (NKJV)

They lacked faith and fear kept physical Israel out of a physical promised land for forty years. That's a lesson for us there.

Now moving to the New Testament in Matthew, chapter 8, let's look at an instance where the disciples had fear. They weren't immune from fear and we as human beings are not immune from fear. Matthew 8, verses 23 through 27. This is a situation where Christ got into a boat and His disciples followed Him.

Matthew 8:23. *Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him.
24) And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He (Christ) was asleep.
25) Then His disciples came to [Him] and awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" (NKJV)*

Notice what He says in verse 26...

26) But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, Oh [you] of little faith?" ...

You see, He's tying together fear and a lack of faith. "Why are you fearful, Oh you of little faith?"

*26b) ... Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.
27) So the men marveled, saying, "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" (NKJV)*

So in this first point, Christ very clearly links fear with a lack of faith.

Now Peter also (we won't go through that account), you recall Peter denied Christ three times out of fear. He was afraid of what they would do to him or that they would do to him what they were doing to Christ and he denied Christ three times because he was afraid.

God tells us that fear can keep spiritual Israel out of the spiritual kingdom or the spiritual promised land, the Kingdom of God. Let's go to Revelation 21 and we'll read verses 7 and 8. These were read at the Feast a couple of times. This refers to our overcoming.

Revelation 21:7. *He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. (NKJV)*

But notice the first thing Christ mentions that will keep us out of the Kingdom of God.

8) But the cowardly (fearful), unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

He lumps them all together, but the first one he mentions is those who are afraid. He says all of those, especially the fearful, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

Now it's interesting, the Greek word for "fear" is Strong's 1169. Let me read the definition because it links fear with a lack of faith in the very definition of the word. Strong's 1169, means faithless and the next definition is fearful; lack of faith and fearful at the same time. Coward: it literally means one who runs away or one who runs away at nothing. Christ is telling us that those who are fearful, who run away, who run away at nothing, those who are faithless will not be in the Kingdom of God. They will be in the lake of fire.

Now one of the greatest examples of what fear can do to faith is that of Elijah, so let's go back to 1 Kings 18 and we're going to cover in some detail the example of Elijah. Notice that Elijah went from a state of great faithfulness, a spiritual high to abject fear and running away. This is a lesson for us today. Now the context is the following: God, through Elijah brought drought on Israel largely because of the sins of Ahab and Jezebel. So Israel was in a severe drought. We're breaking into the context now.

1 Kings 18:17. *Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "[Is that] you, Oh troubler of Israel?" (As though it's all Elijah's fault.)*

18) And he answered (Elijah), "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house [have] in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have followed the Baals.

19) Now therefore, send [and] gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table. (NKJV)

What Ahab and Jezebel had done is replace the Godly priesthood with 850 pagan "prophets" and they ate at Jezebel's table, meaning they were totally supported by Jezebel. She picked up the tab for this.

20) So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel.

21) And Elijah came to all the people and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord [is] God, follow Him: but if Baal, follow him," But the people answered him not a word. (NKJV)

They probably knew something big was going to happen. Just summarizing what happened next, Elijah told them to take two bullocks, kill them, put wood under them but no fire. He said, "The God who answers by fire is God." So the 850 priests of Baal began to dance, pray, appeal to their gods, they began later to cut themselves and bleed. They did so from morning until about 3 p.m., and the whole time Elijah was on the sidelines mocking them. "Oh, jump higher! Dance harder! Let more blood flow, maybe your god will be appeased." Can you imagine that? Guess what? During that time, nothing happened, no fire.

Then it was Elijah's turn and there was an altar to God built on that hill and he rebuilt it. He brought stones, rebuilt it and put the wood on it and put the bullock on top of it. He

had four barrels of water brought and poured it over the offering. They had to dig a trench around the altar just to hold it all. He had that done three times; four barrels of water three times. Now remember, water was very precious. They were in the middle of a drought, and he's just pouring these barrels of water over this offering. Then he said one of the shortest and most powerful prayers recorded in the Bible. Let's look at verse 36.

36) And it came to pass, at [the time of] the offering of the [evening] sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known this day that You [are] God in Israel and I [am] Your servant, and [that] I have done all these things at Your word." (I'm not doing this on my own.)

37) "Hear me, Oh Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You [are] the Lord God, and [that] You have turned their hearts back [to You] again." (NKJV)

All the focus was on God, none on himself. Look what happened.

38) Then fire of the Lord fell ...

This is the time of the evening sacrifice. It's starting to get dusk and all of a sudden this fire comes right down from the sky. Obviously there are no clouds because they're in the middle of a drought.

38b) ... and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that [was] in the trench.

39) Now when all the people saw [it], they fell on their faces; and they said, "The Lord, He [is] God! The Lord, He [is] God!" (NKJV)

Well yes, they had an answer.

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)

You remember the rest of the story. God broke the drought and brought a giant rain on Israel.

Now put yourself at this moment in Elijah's shoes. God had just performed one of the greatest miracles in the history of the Bible. He had done this in the presence of all Israel, bringing fire down from heaven. Albeit it was a short term repentance, but Israel repented. Paganism had been crushed. The drought ended.

Now if you were Elijah, you would be on a gigantic spiritual high. Your faith would be solid because you just witnessed this incredible miracle. But guess what happened in less than 24 hours? We've got to think about this.

1 Kings 18:46. *Then the hand of the Lord came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. (NKJV)*

Jezreel was where Jezebel was. Ahab was going back there and Elijah ran ahead.

1 Kings 19:1. *And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. (NKJV)*

These are the ones that she hired and was paying for.

2) *Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do [to me] and more also if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time."*

I'm going to cut you up in little bitty pieces within the next 24 hours.

3) *And when he saw [that], ...*

"Well, God's not going to let that happen! If God does, then so be it like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego." But no ...

3b) *... he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which [belongs] to Judah, and left his servant there. (NKJV)*

So in less than 24 hours after being used to perform one of the greatest miracles in history, Elijah was filled with fear and he ran for his life. He ran from Jezreel to Beersheba which is about 95 miles. It was in a separate nation. He did so to get away from Israel; it was in Judah. The implication is that he ran all day and all night, because 95 miles on foot is a long way. A 50-mile hike in the military, you hike 50 miles and your feet are bloody and your legs are quivering. Well, he covered 95 miles continually because he was so afraid.

Now the question is for us is if fear could damage Elijah's faith to the point that he ran all day and all night in abject fear, what could fear do to our faith? We need to think about that, because (we won't turn there) but in James 5:17, the New King James says, "*Elijah was a man with a nature like ours.*" The NIV says, "*Elijah was a man like us.*"

So we're no better than Elijah and Elijah had the same pulls and weaknesses that we do, and just like us (if we're honest with ourselves), Elijah's faith failed him at a crucial time. We don't want that happening to us, but the good news is that fear can be overcome. God gives us a solution. God is not going to allow us to face problems without giving us a solution. We find that solution in 1 John 4:18. Here is the solution to fear. It's very simple. We talk about the simplicity that is in Christ. God's way is very simple and very easy to understand.

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. (NKJV)*

So what we're being told here is that loving God with all our heart casts out fear. Conversely, if we have fear, guess what? We're not loving God enough. We're not loving God with all our heart if we have fear.

Let's remember an example. We talked about David and Goliath a few weeks ago. Remember what David did in facing Goliath? You recall the Philistines were on one hill, the Israelites were on the other. They were camped and they had a stalemate because this gigantic man, Goliath, came out and began taunting the Israelites saying, "Our armies don't need to go to war. I'm going to fight for the Philistines. You send out a man from Israel and whoever wins, wins. Whoever loses will be the subject of the one who wins." So they were in a stalemate. Saul and the Israelites were in abject fear. Remember David was commissioned by his dad to take supplies to his brothers who were on the side of the hill, and he did. He heard Goliath one day taunting Israel. Remember what he said? He said, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that's going to defy the armies of the living God?" Remember when he went out to face Goliath, what was the first thing Goliath said to him? He said, "I'm going to cut you up in little bitty pieces." Just like Jezebel threatened Elijah. "I'm going to cut you up in little bitty pieces and I'm going to feed you to the birds and the animals." It didn't make a difference to David. He didn't run away at all.

You see, fear makes us scared and it makes us tormented over what might happen. We've all been there. We've been awake at night with our mind going a million miles an hour thinking of all the negative possibilities of what could happen in a certain situation. We've all been there and all done that. But you see, David was not afraid and he wasn't anxious at all because there was no room for fear in his mind because he loved God with his total mind and there was no room for fear. The love pushed the fear away.

Let's look at the previous verse here. 1 John 4:17, notice what we read.

1 John 4:17. *Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is (meaning God, the Father), so are we in this world, (KJV)*

God is love and we, through the power of His Spirit, can be filled with love just like He is, and boldness is the opposite of fear. One of the definitions of fear is being timid. Boldness is the opposite of fear. Again, think about David. Remember what he did when he heard Goliath? He looked around, "Who is fighting this guy?" Everybody kept their mouths shut. He went and volunteered. This teenager went and volunteered to fight this giant and when he approached the giant, did he turn around and run away after the giant said, "I'm going to cut you up in little bitty pieces."? Remember the account? He started running right for Goliath with his sling and let him have it right between the eyes or in the forehead. There was no room for hesitation, no room for

fear, no room for being timid because he had agape love for God the Father and God's love gives us confidence, not in ourselves but in God. David had confidence that God was going to take care of this and God was going to use him to take care of Goliath, because love gives us confidence because we know God is on our side. David said, "This uncircumcised guy; who is he?" He went after him and God was with him.

When we know that God is on our side, we have confidence, not in us but in Him. Look at Psalm 118:6. This is a very familiar scripture. Understand this is essential if we are going to overcome one of the enemies of faith, and that is fear. Notice what David says. He was a young teenager before and he certainly felt this way facing Goliath.

Psalms 118:6. The Lord [is] on my side; I will not fear: ...

No matter what we face, if we are close to God, if we love God with all our heart, we know He is on our side, he says...

6b) ... what can man do unto me? (KJV)

The implication is, if God is on my side, if I love God with all my heart, what on earth can a human do to me? The answer is, nothing, absolutely nothing.

Take an example today. What if this coming week we had a pain in our side and it got worse and worse. Then all of a sudden we had internal bleeding. We went to the doctor and they did tests and scans and the doctor looked us in the eye and said, "You have terminal cancer, no hope, too late." Some of God's people have had that and undoubtedly will have that. Two things occur when that happens. Either the individual is petrified by fear, paralyzed by fear with the stomach in knots, can't eat and can't sleep; has anxiety, fear, worry and all of that, or you just say, "God, You're in control. You love me. Everything you do is for my good, not my harm. I'm going to do what I can do, but if my life is over, so be it and I'll see you in the kingdom, I hope." Peace, calmness and tranquility.

Whatever God does in our lives or whatever He allows in our lives is for our good, not our harm. When we understand that and come to that realization, we love Him more than ever, when we know He isn't going to do anything to hurt us. So there is no reason to fear and therefore our faith can be strong once we come to that realization. So the first enemy of faith is fear, and God provides a solution, doesn't He? Through loving Him with all our being.

Okay, that leads us to the second enemy of faith, and that is anxiety and worry. Now this is different than fear. Fear means being timid or cowardly or having terror or running away versus being just anxious and worried. There is a difference and that's why I'm making two points of this.

Let's go to Matthew, chapter 6. I'm doing this because Christ did this. We're going to read verses 25 through 30 out of the New King James. The context we're breaking into

is that Christ is making the point that you can't serve God and man at the same time. You have to make a choice.

Matthew 6:25. *Therefore I say to you (Christ is telling them), do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?*

26) *Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?*

27) *Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? (Nobody, obviously)*

28) *So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin,*

29) *and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

30) *Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, [will He] not much more [clothe] you (because you have eternal life promised you), Oh you of little faith? (NKJV)*

So what Christ is doing now is linking, equating worry with a lack of faith, just as He did in point number one, equating fear with a lack of faith. Now He is saying that worry is also an enemy of faith. Let's go to Luke, chapter 21 and read verse 34. Christ is telling us that if we worry about things in this life, the physical things, it's going to hurt our faith.

Luke 21:34. *But take heed to yourselves (in other words, He said, 'I'm giving you a warning. Listen to Me!) lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the cares of this life, and that Day (meaning His return) come on you unexpectedly. (NKJV)*

He said, "Be careful of being involved with worrying about, being anxious about the cares of this life." There's one Greek word that is translated "cares of this life." It's one Greek word. It's Strong's 3308 and it's "merimna". It implies fear and worry and all of that, but it adds the idea of a distraction. He said the cares of this life are a distraction. They're a distraction from our worship of God and our getting close to God. The Cassirer translation says, "anxieties of everyday matters and that they come on you unexpectedly," because we are distracted and we are sometimes in turmoil and worrying and being anxious about things of this life, the cares of this life.

Obviously, especially in the last few years, we realize that this world is not God's world. That is one thing that God is teaching us every minute of every day. This world involves many challenges; society at large; and the election and the mess that is with charges and counter charges and accusations and lies and misrepresentations back and forth. This is not God's world. We have many challenges: health, finances, jobs, relationships with family, and relationships with other people. All of those are challenges.

But let's understand, there is a huge difference between being responsible for our life and doing what we can versus obsessing about our life, obsessing about the physical things in our life, constantly worrying about everyday matters. If one is consumed by anxiety over everyday matters, guess what? What does that mean? It means our focus is on the flesh and the physical and God is not in the picture when we have anxiety and we stress and we obsess about physical things. Again you see God gives us a solution. Colossians 3 and the first two verses give us the solution about obsessing in worry and anxiety, turmoil and trouble over physical things.

Colossians 3:1. *If then you were raised with Christ, ...*

Now just stop there. You were raised with Christ. What does he mean? When we were baptized (all of us have been there) we went under the water. The water symbolizes God's Holy Spirit. The water washes us from our sins symbolically through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and His blood, and when we came up out of the water, we were raised with Christ. We've all had that happen, except our kids, of course. Notice what he goes on to say,

1b) ... seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

2) Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. (NKJV)

So the solution, when Christ says, "You worry about clothing, food and worry about this and that;" there's a lot in this world to worry about humanly speaking, but Christ is saying, "Don't do that." When we worry, what is on our mind? Most often it's the physical. Christ is telling us through this letter that Paul wrote, "Set your mind on things above, not on the physical." Perhaps there's no better example of this distinction, setting your mind on things above versus setting your mind on the physical, than the two sisters that were mentioned in Luke, chapter 10. Let's go over there. As I said, it's a perfect example; one has her mind on the physical and one has her mind on the spiritual.

Luke 10:38. *Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house.*

39) And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.

40) But Martha was (what?) distracted with much serving, ... (NKJV)

You can just imagine this. We've all been there. She was thrashing around through the house running to and fro, worried about feeding people, worried about getting food on the table and all of that. Mary was sitting at Christ's feet, listening to the Son of God teaching. Martha was not listening at all. What was she focused on? She was focused on physical bread. Mary was focused on spiritual bread, and it appears, though, that Martha was stressing about it. She had anxiety and worry to the point that in the latter part of verse 40 ...

40b) ... and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? (You can see what's on her mind.) Therefore tell her to help me." (NKJV)

She says, "Get her off of her fanny and tell her to come and help me." So she was stressing. Christ now is putting everything in perspective in verse 41.

41) And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, ...

He read her heart. Only God and Christ can read our hearts. He said,

41b) "... you are worried and troubled about many things." (NKJV)

Not just this thing, but about many things. I'm here to tell you that there are brethren in God's Church who worry about almost everything. They stress and worry about just about everything in their life, just as Martha was here. Notice what He says in verse 42.

42) "But one thing is needed (what is that?), and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." (NKJV)

She is focused on the words of life. You are focused on physical things, running around the house, cooking, cleaning, setting tables or whatever it was. You see, the good part that Mary was focused on is eternal. What Martha was focused on was stuff that's going to go away, it's not eternal at all.

Let's understand that we can get our focus off of God, off of Jesus Christ, off of what's eternal, off of what's important and stress about physical things and that hurts our faith. That's the point of the book of Ecclesiastes. Solomon was the one who "had it all" so to speak if you're talking in physical terms. He had wealth beyond measure, he was king. He had horses and stables and armies and chariots. He had food, he had clothing and he had a palace. He had all of the stuff that we would say today, "he had it all." But in Ecclesiastes in chapter 1 and verse 14, after having all of that and having been through all of that, notice his conclusion. He set out to prove whether this is important or not (the physical things).

Ecclesiastes 1:14. *I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the wind. (NKJV)*

The New International says, "*All is chasing after the wind.*"

What he's saying is "focusing on the physical is like grabbing hold of the wind." You can't do it. It's not there. It goes away. It slips between our arms and fingers because it is vanity and it is futile.

Like fear, Christ said obsessing and worrying about everyday matters is exactly the same. Worrying about every little thing can destroy our faith and the solution to that is

we must trust in God to provide those things. “Seek you first the Kingdom of God, and all these things will be given to you.” We must seek first the spiritual things, the important things. I learned many times over the years, especially these last three and a half or four years, that if we have faith in God, even though sometimes it seems impossible to come out of a trial or see a solution to a situation, God will provide. He always does. God will provide if our heart is right, if our motives are right, if we are seeking the spiritual, the eternal and not the physical, He will provide. Let go. Let God.

So the second big enemy of faith is worry and anxiety.

That leads us to the third one. This is another big one. We see this in the Church too much today. The third one is human reasoning. You see, God gave us a marvelous mind. Scientists can't even begin to fathom the human mind. God gave it to us and we should use our human minds, but it's not up to us to determine right from wrong. That is not our responsibility. It is not up to us to second guess God's instruction, God's teaching and God's law. It's not up to us to choose how we obey or what we obey. That's not up to the human mind. It's not up to a human individual, contrary to what Adam and Eve decided.

It is also not up to us to rationalize our bad behavior. Too many people use human reasoning to rationalize ungodly, disobedient, bad behavior. It's not up to us to use this wonderful mind God has given us to contradict God's law or God's will. It's not up to us to do that. Christ, the God of the Old Testament, says that human reasoning is an enemy of faith. There are plenty of examples, but let's take Saul for example. Saul is a perfect example, because from a physical perspective, Saul should have been a great king. Samuel tells us that he appeared certainly to be charismatic, he was the tallest and best looking of all the people and (we won't turn there) but in 1 Samuel 10:10, we were told he had God's Holy Spirit. God gave him the gift of His Holy Spirit. Yet Saul's legacy is one of using human reasoning, not of having faith. You can turn over to 1 Samuel, but we're going to go to chapter 15. Let me give you an example in 1 Samuel 13. Remember when he offered his own sacrifices instead of waiting in faith for Samuel to return after seven days? He offered his own sacrifices using human reasoning. He lacked faith in God, so he took matters into his own hands and then he lacked faith that God could deliver Israel from the Philistines.

Let's see another example in 1 Samuel 15:1.

1 Samuel 15:1. *Samuel said to Saul, ...*

Look at the opportunity to use human reasoning versus trusting in God.

1b) ... *“The Lord sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel, Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the Lord.*

2) *“Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘I will punish Amalek [for] what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt.’ ”*

We won't turn there, but in Exodus 17, it gives us that account. Rephidim was on the way to Sinai and the Amalekites had to travel hundreds of miles out of the way to ambush Israel, to try to keep Israel out of the promised land.

3) *"Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."* (NKJV)

This is very clear, very specific, no wiggle room here. But guess what? Saul did not follow God's instructions. He used his own mind to figure out a "better" way.

9) *But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all [that] was good (good in their eyes), and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.* (NKJV)

So humanly speaking, Saul used the following logic. He says, "Why burn these things up? Why destroy them, because we can use them. We need these things. We need the animals. We need them for food and we need implements and weapons for war and all of that because that's going to help us down the road." Human reasoning was totally logical. So let's save the things that we can use and let's destroy the things we can't use. What was the result?

17) *So Samuel said, "When you [were] little in your own eyes ...*

Very important, and he was when he started out. He said, "Who am I? I'm from the least of the tribes and I'm from the least of the families of the tribes."

17b) *... [were] you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the Lord anoint you king over Israel?*

18) *Now the Lord sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites and fight against them until they are consumed.'* (NKJV)

Very clear.

19) *"Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord?"*

He used to be humble. He used to be little in his own eyes, but now that he was king, he decided that he knew better than God. He had a better idea. He trusted in himself and he trusted in his own human reasoning. As a result of making that decision, he now was not under God's authority, he was not under God's command and it led to him losing his kingship. What a horrible thing.

You see, when we employ human reasoning over faith in God, it means we are doing what is right in our own eyes. It has happened to many leaders in the greater Church,

getting away from being little in their own eyes and following God versus coming to the point that human reasoning is used and they stray from the plain teachings of the Bible and go in a wrong direction, just like Saul. You can't talk to your husband or wife. You can't talk to your parents or children, totally violating the whole law of love and using human reasoning to do so. That's just one example. There are dozens and dozens of others.

What does God say about putting what we deem as right above what God says? Let's go to Proverbs 14:12. We run the danger of doing what is right in our eyes and contravening and contradicting God's word.

Proverbs 14:12. *There is a way [that seems] right to a man, ...*

It's totally logical, step by step by step, perfectly logical. The outcome is good for me, so that's what we're going to do.

12b) ... but its end [is] the way of death. (NKJV)

Now go over to Jeremiah 10:23. This is something that all of us need to understand, especially leaders of God's Church, especially the ministry, especially anybody in any position of authority in the greater Church. Jeremiah 10:23 should be in the back of all of our minds.

Jeremiah 10:23. *Oh Lord, I know the way of man [is] not in himself;*

We don't have it inside us to know the way we should go. We can't put one foot in front of the other apart from God. Look at the world today. Look at the mess. The four folks including the Ambassador were killed over there. We intervened here, we intervened in Egypt, we've done all of this, thinking we're doing the right thing, we're freeing these people and, guess what has happened? It's going to come and be bitter in our mouth when the Taliban and people like that take over the country, and now the people are worse than they were before. That's human reasoning. The way of man is not in himself. It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps, and the reason that is so is because God has allowed Satan to blind the minds of everyone on the entire earth. Human reasoning will get us into trouble every time.

So what we need to do and what I've learned painfully over the years is when a situation comes up, don't trust your initial thoughts. Don't trust your initial emotions, because in most cases they are human and they are carnal and they are human reasoning. Wait and see and appeal to God for His thoughts, His emotions, His intuition, His instincts to help us see what we should do and where we should take the next step. You see, God provides a solution again for this notion of using human reasoning. Proverbs 3, verses 5 and 6. God always gives us a solution to a problem. In His word the principals are always there. This is the solution to human reasoning. If we will do this, the problem will be solved.

Proverbs 3:5. *Trust in the Lord (we could say, have faith in the Lord) with all your heart; ...*

Just like we love God with all our heart, we have to have faith and trust in God with all our heart.

5b) ... and lean not unto your own understanding.

It's so plain. Don't lean to what you believe, what you feel, what we think is right. John and I were talking about this earlier in the week; where do we go in 2013 for the Feast? I don't want to go where I want to go. John doesn't want to go where he wants to go. The elders don't want to go where they want to go. God says, "I'm going to put My name on a place," so it's up to us to find out where He wants to put His name. That's all. We'll do whatever He wants. Just let us know whatever You want God, and we will do that. Lean not to your own understanding.

6) In all your ways acknowledge him, ...

Don't take credit for anything that happens. Don't let the light shine on me, and yet in the greater Church we have people just rushing into the spotlight. They want to have this title or that title or they want to be called about this or looked to about that. He says, "In all your ways, acknowledge God." God gets all the credit for anything we can do. Every good and perfect gift comes from the Father of lights with whom is no variableness of turning. Every good thing comes from God. Acknowledge Him.

6b) ... He (not us) will direct your paths. (KJV)

God will do it. So using human reasoning gets us into trouble.

We have to understand that (and I've learned the hard way) no matter how much sense something makes to the human mind, like Saul and the spoils of Amalek, if it's contrary to God's word, it's just not going to work. I've seen too many times in my life and the lives of others where human reasoning gets us off track and it destroys our faith in God. You see, we have to have faith to follow what this book teaches us.

We won't turn there, 2 Corinthians 5:7.

2 Corinthians 5:7. *For we walk by faith, not by sight. (KJV)*

So we have to follow God's word and avoid human reasoning and if we do so, we will build our faith in God, brick by brick by brick.

The fourth and the last; this often occurs in a trial, especially a health trial. The fourth enemy of faith is doubt. We can doubt that God exists after all, that science is correct, evolution is true. Those thoughts can come into people's heads. Or that God has somehow forgotten us or God doesn't care because, yes, there is a God, but He has so

many bigger things to look after than little old me that I don't even come onto His radar screen. We can have doubts about that.

We can have doubts that my trial is so big that it is unsolvable. God can't do that.

Let's go to Matthew, chapter 14. Here we have another example of a boat. It seems that faith and boats somehow work together. Dorothy would say, "faith and motorcycle," but boats are what Christ used. We're going to read verses 22 through 32 in the New King James.

Matthew 14:22. *Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and to go before Him to the other side, ...*

That could be either Capernaum or Bethsaida. So He commanded them to go in the boat. "I don't want you to go on with me. Get in the boat, go on to the other side and I'll catch up with you."

22b) ... while He sent the multitudes away.

23) And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.

24) But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. (NKJV)

Which means it wasn't blowing in the direction that they wanted to go.

25) Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.

26) And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea (they had never seen this before, obviously) they were troubled, (they were worried: the second enemy of faith) saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear (first enemy of faith).

27) But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

28) And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

29) So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. (NKJV)

Absolute miracle of faith.

30) But when he saw that the wind [was] boisterous (the Greek means powerful or strong), ...

When he looked at the conditions around him, high waves, high wind, getting splattered with salt and all of that ...

30b) ... he was afraid (Oh, here's that fear again) and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

31) *And immediately Jesus stretched out [His] hand and caught him, and said to him, "Oh you of little faith, why did you doubt?" (NKJV)*

The Greek can also mean waver, to be uncertain. When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. So Christ here links lack of faith with doubt. What happened is Peter, in order to notice the waves and the wind had to take his eyes off Jesus Christ. Before he was looking right at Christ when he stepped out on top of the water and as long as he looked at Christ and as long as Christ was his focus, everything was fine. But then he noticed the wind and waves and felt the salt spray washing over him and that got his mind unfocused. He began to worry and obsess about all the stuff going on around him and he began to doubt. So Peter took his eyes off Christ and the doubt came along.

Doubt can keep us out of the Kingdom of God, because the prince of the power of the air has the ability (we've all experienced it) to plant doubts in our minds. "God doesn't know me. God doesn't love me. God doesn't care about me. Maybe the Catholic Church is right after all. Maybe the evolutionists are right after all." All those thoughts can be planted in our minds by our adversary.

Why does Satan do that? The answer is obvious, but why does he do that? Because you see, in the end when we doubt God, we are telling Him that we don't believe He is God. If we doubt Him, then we doubt everything that's in the Bible and we're saying, "I don't believe You are really God. I don't believe You have this power. I don't believe You can do this" ... when we doubt. "He doesn't know me. He doesn't care about me." We can doubt and those thoughts come into our mind. What we're saying then when we doubt, is something is too great for God to handle; it's too big for God to handle; "I don't believe You have the power to take care of this. I don't believe you have the power to save my life or to resurrect me or get me out of this mess that I'm."

But you see, that is not the case. Here is the truth. Matthew 19:26. The context is Christ just said it is very difficult for the rich to enter in the Kingdom of God. It's not the easiest thing in the world to do. It's difficult. But He didn't say it is impossible.

Matthew 19:26. *But Jesus looked at [them] and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (NKJV)*

There is nothing God cannot do. So doubt should not enter in the picture. We should not allow doubt to enter into the picture. That's why we must have our minds on things above, our minds on things in the Bible because that will dispel doubt. When we start thinking humanly, when we start stressing about physical things, doubt will come in.

Let's go to 1 Peter 5, verses 6 and 7. We have to come under God's authority, God's direction and by doing so, we come under God's love and God's care for us. Notice what Peter says. This is tremendous advice.

1 Peter 5:6. *Therefore humble yourselves under the (weak hand of God? No.) mighty hand of God (all powerful hand of God, can-do-anything hand of God), that He may exalt you in due time,
7) casting all your care upon Him ...*

Let Him handle it. Let Him take care of it when we can't, doing everything we can do, but then beyond that, casting all our cares upon Him. Why?

7b) ... for He cares for you.

It's His good pleasure to give us the Kingdom of God.

So if we understand that and know that, there's no room for doubt. If we understand the mighty hand of God, that all things are possible with God, then there's no room for doubt. That is the solution that God gives us.

Now, let's summarize as we lead to a conclusion. Why does Satan attack our faith? He does so because he does not want us in the Kingdom of God. He does not want us in the family of God and he will do anything he can to separate us from God and to keep us out of God's family. If we don't have faith, then we won't receive the invitation. We won't be a firstfruit. We won't be in His kingdom.

But if we have faith, and we were told in the very beginning that being in God's Kingdom, pleasing God, requires faith. If we have faith, we will be invited into that family. We will be a firstfruit. We will be invited and taken to the marriage supper. As we've seen, Christ highlights four areas that can weaken our faith and can shake our faith:

- 1) Fear
- 2) Anxiety & worry
- 3) Human reasoning
- 4) Doubt

But Christ teaches us in each one of those that we've covered that all four can be overcome. He gives us a solution to every one.

Let's turn to Revelation 14:12. In order to be in God's Kingdom, we need patience and we need the faith that we talked about today.

Revelation 14:12. *Here is the patience of the saints (Boy, we need that); here [are] those who keep the commandments of God (keep the commandments of God; have patience) and the faith of Jesus. (NKJV)*

The Jewish New Testament says...

Revelation 14:12. *This is when perseverance is needed on the part of God's people; those who observe His commandments and exercise Jesus' faithfulness.*

Remember it is not our faith; it is the faith of Jesus Christ. We can't conjure up faith, but with loving God with all our heart and putting our nose in the Bible and trying to be pleasing to God, we can have the very faith that Jesus Christ had on the night that Dale was talking about in the sermonette and the following day.

But rather, what would Satan like us to do? Not build our faith. Trust in ourselves. Use human reasoning. What is the call sign of the Laodicean Church? I have need of nothing. I don't need faith. I don't need God's love. I don't need the faith of Jesus Christ. I've got it all, just like Saul. I've got it all, don't need anything.

What is the end of those who trust in themselves? What is the end of those who have this Laodicean attitude of, we can trust ourselves; we don't need the faith of Jesus Christ? Revelation 6 and verses 12 through 17. Let's go there. The sixth seal is opening, times are really bad and we don't want to be there.

Revelation 6:12. *I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.*

13) And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.

14) Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

Notice this. Notice the attitude of the people that are going through this:

15) And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, (notice what they did) hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains.

16) and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"

17) "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Now which is better: to put our complete faith and trust in God, please Him, become firstfruits and enter into His Kingdom and become part of His family ... or be in a cave and so frightened that you're asking the rocks to collapse in on you because you'd rather do that than face what was to come? That is our choice. That is a choice of God's people today.

One final scripture in Ephesians 2 and verse 8. This is something that we cannot take any credit for ourselves. We cannot boast. Everything is done by God and every good thing is a gift from God. We cannot forget this.

Ephesians 2:8. *For by grace (that's a gift from God) you have been saved through faith (that is a gift from God), and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, (NKJV)*

Both grace and faith, and you see, God is offering us the very gift necessary to please Him, to be a firstfruit and to be a member of His family. We can all completely put our lives and our minds in God's hands. We cast all our cares upon Him, as Peter said.

So let's make sure we do that in the days going forward. We build this faith, a brick at a time, by loving God with all our heart, by trusting Him with all our being and let's not succumb to any of the four enemies of faith.