

Be Not Weary

BY CHARLES C. RYRIE*

That these are days of great stress no one will deny. Perplexity prevails and its accompanying question, "What's the use?" One is not surprised that this is so for the unredeemed man who is without hope, but the sad thing is that this contagion is contaminating the outlook of the Christian in these days. How timely, then, is the reminder of the New Testament: "Be not weary"; and especially in these days, since we who believe dare not become lax in any way at all.

But it is far more than laxness that is warned against, for the Greek word, *enkakeoo*, which is the subject of our study in this article, does not simply mean physical weariness. It is more of a mental disinclination which may even approach cowardice. Indeed, in the example which Moulton and Milligan cite from the papyri, *enkakeoo* has this meaning of cowardice. However, this is probably too bold a translation for the New Testament uses of the word; likewise, "be not weary" is a bit too weak. We feel that J. N. Darby has caught the significance well by his translation, "lose heart."

This is a very practical message for these times, for the Holy Spirit, in the seven times that He uses this word, has put His finger on four areas of our lives in which we need to take heed lest we do lose heart. With each warning comes also a gracious word of encouragement and promise. In other words, we are told *when* and *why* we must not lose heart. Shall we listen to His Word?

I. Persecution—Renewing

American Christians know very little about persecution for the sake of the Gospel. Nevertheless, to be forewarned is to be forearmed, and thus we can learn much from the example of the Apostle Paul in order that we, too, faint not when times of distress come (II Cor. 4:16). But more applicable to most of us than this future possibility of per-

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sonal persecution is the very present exhortation of the Word of God not to become disheartened because of the persecution of our fellow-believers in other parts of the world (Eph. 3:13). How little we know of this sort of suffering, for such presupposes the kind of interest in the whole household of faith which makes us suffer with them just as the Ephesians did with Paul. For those who suffer persecution, whether in person or by proxy (if we may use such a word and fill it with all that it means to belong to the *one* body of Christ), God has promised daily renewing of the inner man even though the outward man be perishing (II Cor. 4:16). It is this resource of daily, infinite strength of the abiding presence of the indwelling Christ that is God's reason why we must not lose heart in the midst of persecution.

II. Praying—Receiving

The second area in which we are so prone to faintheartedness and in which God is deeply concerned is our prayer life. Our Lord taught that men should always pray and not lose heart (Luke 18:1), and the Lord was teaching this in connection with the coming kingdom (cf. 17:20 ff.). Although the reference is to the remnant of Israel in their last days before the coming of Christ, this passage is none the less appropriate by application to those of us who are living on the very brink of the rapture of the Church. Sometimes we who have this blessed hope in our hearts are justly accused of becoming lazy in the Lord's work while awaiting His coming. It is a shame that such should be so; rather we should be the more zealous, working not with the hope of delaying His coming as the motive of many seems to be today, but working because of the assurance from the Word that His coming is very near (I Cor. 15:58). *And the most essential part of any Christian work is prayer.* Do you remember how the days in the upper room were spent by the gathered disciples before the coming of the Holy Spirit? Yes, in prayer; and so should it be by disciples in these days before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Saviour gives us a promise in connection with this exhortation—it is the assurance that our prayers will be

answered. There are two considerations which assure us of this promise. The first lies in the contrast between the *unjust* judge and the *loving* heavenly Father (Luke 18:6, 7). If the unjust judge hears and acts for the defenseless, whatever be his motive, will not God, who is all-loving, do the more? The second is the realization that these affections of God are toward His own elect (Luke 18:7). What will He withhold from those who are in this privileged position? With such a guarantee, how can we lose heart in the ministry of intercession?

III. Praiseworthy Acts—Reaping

How well the Lord knows the weakness of our frame! Here He puts His hand on a very sensitive area of our lives, for He knows how prone we are to give up even in that which is praiseworthy just because praise is not received. And so the exhortation comes: "Let us not lose heart in doing good" (Gal. 6:9; II Thess. 3:13). We need to keep ever before us the example of Christ Himself, whose entire life was characterized by praiseworthy acts (Acts 10:38) even in the face of opposition (Heb. 12:3). The servant is not greater than his Lord.

The promise in this connection is that of reaping in due season, but in the meantime we need patience (Heb. 10:36) and perseverance (Gal. 6:9). The fainting, in the latter part of this verse, is physical weariness which follows as a result of the mental disinclination of the first part of the verse. When the will is affected, the physical powers will become unstrung. Let us bend every effort, therefore, to do good, always recognizing that the power to do so comes from the Holy Spirit, and always looking for that day when all accounts will be settled and when the Lord will put His appraisal upon all deeds done in the body.

IV. Proclaiming—Redoubling

A life of doing good must be coupled with the direct and positive proclamation of the Gospel of the grace of God (II Cor. 4:1). If we lose heart in this realm, how desperately tragic is the case! Every effort must be redoubled to get the message out before it is too late. We have two very

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good reasons stated in this verse for proclaiming the message far and wide. The first is the message itself. It is a message which, according to the third chapter of Second Corinthians, brings life, glory, righteousness, liberty, and transforming power. With a message like that, how can any true believer keep silent? If it should be so, it is likely due to ignorance of the full meaning of salvation. Study the Book and you will see more and more of the glories of this Gospel of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. The second reason is that we ourselves have experienced this transforming power of Christ, and knowing experimentally what it means, we are impelled to tell others. Let us not faint, then, in this respect, because we *know* the message and because *we* know the message.

The message preached brings glory to God in the salvation of souls, and this is the promise we have in connection with the faithful proclamation of the Gospel (Eph. 2:7). Do not lose heart, then, for surely these are things of eternal value. Rather, gird up every faculty of being to pray the more, live the more, preach the more in every circumstance of life, to the praise of the glory of His grace. Do not lose heart, fellow Christian; we shall be renewed, we shall receive, we shall reap, and we, sinners saved by His grace, shall redound to His glory.

A CALL TO SERVICE

The Lord Jesus Christ is coming in glory to take an account of His servants. Then, if you have been called to the blessed privilege of Christ's service, "Why tarriest thou?" Are you waiting for opportunities? Are your opportunities not enough in the midst of the millions of souls by whom you are surrounded? Do you say there are so many difficulties and obstacles in the way? I ask: "Are you not in the service of God, and cannot He remove the obstacles?" Are you waiting for power? Then I ask you: "Has not God sent the Holy Ghost?" Do you say you are waiting for strength? Has not God said with His own lips: "I am thy strength"? Is not the strength of God sufficient? The Lord grant that His children may understand what their calling is. Before we are asked to go into service we are put on the platform of eternal salvation; and then we are told to press forward, and stretch forth a hand to those who are perishing. God grant that those who know Christ, the Rock of Ages, may also know that peace and power which He gives to all engaged in His happy service.—*Lord Radstock.*