

May 4, 2014

"Have Questions? Doubts? Strive!" Luke 13:22-30

- I. *Faith means resting, trusting, waiting upon God, even trusting in Christ alone as the only Way of Salvation –*

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (John 14:6 NKJ)

"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12 NKJ)

"In Christ alone my hope is found, He is my light, my strength, my song / This Cornerstone, this solid ground, Firm through the fiercest drought and storm ...

What heights of love, what depths of peace; when fears are stilled, when strivings cease ... / My Comforter, my All in All - Here in the love of Christ I stand ...” Donald Koch & Andrew Craig

- II. *Yet, this passage indicates to me Faith not only “rests” it also moves, agonizes (or STRIVES) presses and fights –*

"Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. (Luke 13:24 NKJ)

1. *There are SO MANY passages of Scripture like this:*

- A. *About Pressing –*

¹² **Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.**

¹³ **Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12-14 NKJ)**

- B. *About fighting – Paul tells Timothy –*

¹² **Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (1Timothy 6:12 NKJ)**

Paul writes about himself at the end of his life to Timothy –

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. (2Timothy 4:7-8 NKJ)**

- C. *About running to win –*

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. ²⁵ And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. ²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NKJ)

2. *The Greek word here translated “strive” means –*

5 ἀγωνίζομαι agonizomai {ag-o-nid'-zom-ahee}

Meaning: 1) to enter a contest: contend in the gymnastic games 2) to contend with adversaries, fight 3) metaph. to contend, struggle, with difficulties and dangers 4) to endeavour with strenuous zeal, strive: to obtain something

- A. *It is the from the same root word translated “agony” describing Jesus’ great prayers in Gethsemane –*

⁴⁴ **And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. (Luke 22:44 NKJ)**

ἀγωνία agonía {ag-o-nee'-ah}

Meaning: 1) a struggle for victory 1a) gymnastic exercise, wrestling 2) of severe mental struggles and emotions, agony, anguish

- B. *Jesus calls us to follow Him, Jesus calls us to a CROSS –*

²³ **Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. (Luk2 9:23 NKJ)**

3. *Old Testament warriors needed “faith” to conquer the Promised Land, yet they also fought –*

¹⁰ **So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. ¹¹ And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let**

down his hand, Amalek prevailed. ¹² But Moses' hands *became* heavy; so they took a stone and put *it* under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. ¹³ So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. (Exodus 17:10-13 NKJ)

4. *Our battle is with spiritual enemies –*

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints-- ¹⁹ and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, (Ephesians 6:10-19 NKJ)

“A war between the Saint and Satan and that so bloody a one, that the cruelest that was ever fought by men will be found but sport and child’s play compared to this.” William Gurnall, Puritan Author of “The Christian in Complete Armour”

5. *We battle even with OURSELVES –*

¹⁶ I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. (Galatians 5:16-17 NKJ)

6. *And our HEARTS are deceitful –*

⁹ "The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? ¹⁰ I, the LORD, search the heart, / test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings. (Jeremiah 17:9-10 NKJ)

7. *For this reason we should not TRUST ourselves –*

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJ)

III. *Don't Be FINALLY, ENDLESSLY and DREADFULLY DISAPPOINTED, HEED Christ's WARNING –*

"When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' ²⁶ then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' ²⁷ "But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' ²⁸ "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. ²⁹ "They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. ³⁰ "And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last." (Luke 13:22-30 NKJ)

1. *The door won't stay open forever - :25*
2. *Many will deceive themselves regarding their knowledge of and relationship with Jesus Christ - :26-27*
3. *There will be for many when they face eternity, weeping and gnashing of teeth*
 - A. *They will see others "in" Heaven*
 - B. *They will find themselves "thrust out" - :28*

There is something especially striking in our Lord's prophecy here. It reveals the awful fact that many may see what is right when it is too late for them to be saved. There comes a time when many will repent too late, believe too late, grieve for sin too late, pray too late, be anxious about salvation too late, and long for heaven too late. Thousands will wake up in another world and be convinced about truths which they refused to believe on earth. Earth is the only place in God's creation where there is any infidelity. Hell itself is nothing but truth known too late. J.C. Ryle

How to be sure to get in the door / gate / entrance – 2 Peter 1:1-11

Arnold A. Brevick