Lessons from a Fall

Mt 26:69-75

I. INTRODUCTION.
   A. Many good-intentioned individuals serve the Lord faithfully & then leave him. Thankfully, many of them return to the Lord.
   B. What a blessing it is to serve a God who forgives us when we sin!
      1. Acts 8:22.
      2. 1 Jn 2:1.
   C. Although God stands ready to forgive us when we fall, we need to strive to keep from falling.
      1. Rm 6:15.
      2. 1 Cor 15:34.
   D. Tonight, we want to study the case of Peter's fall and restoration and see what we can learn (Mt 26:69-75).

II. WE LEARN THE DANGER OF TOO MUCH SELF-CONFIDENCE.
   A. Peter told Jesus that he would never be made to stumble, although the other disciples would stumble (Mt 26:31-35).
      1. Peter really thought that he was safe from that sin; he really believed that he would never deny the Lord.
      2. Certainly that's one reason he did deny Jesus—he was over-confident.
   B. We need to be careful about being over-confident.
      1. Scripture warns us about being overly confident.
         a. Prov 16:18.
         b. 1 Cor 10:12.
      2. If we think that we will never commit a certain sin, we will run into serious trouble. We will run into serious trouble, because we'll let down our guard and then Satan can easily tempt us.
      3. Illustration about Icarus from Greek mythology.

III. WE LEARN THAT SIN IS PROGRESSIVE.
   A. Notice how Peter got deeper & deeper into sin—he was over-confident, he followed from a distance, he sat by the fire of enemies, he denied the Lord, he cursed & swore!
   B. We need to realize that sin is indeed progressive.
      1. This is an important lesson in Scripture.
         a. Js 1:15.
         b. 2 Tm 3:13.
      2. This truth is often seen in drug abuse—one begins experimenting with drugs such as marijuana, but when that quits fulfilling his desires, he turns to heroin, cocaine, and similar drugs.
      3. Once one begins on a path of sin, it's difficult for his sins not to grow worse & worse.

IV. WE LEARN THAT BAD COMPANY BRINGS MANY TEMPTATIONS.
   A. Had Peter gone on to the trial or stayed with the other apostles, he might not have denied the Lord.
      1. He surrounded himself with bad company; he was warming himself at a fire when many unbelieving Jews were warming themselves.
      2. They corrupted Peter & he denied that he knew the Lord.
   B. We need to be careful about the company we keep.
      1. Deut 7:4.
      2. 1 Cor 15:33.
      3. We see this truth in many ways:
         a. Young people who get in with the wrong crowd often get into trouble at school, at home, & and in the community.
         b. Christians who marry an unbeliever often fall away because of the influence of an unbelieving spouse.

V. WE LEARN THAT LETTING PEOLE KNOW WHERE WE STAND LESSENS THE TEMPTATIONS.

A. Had Peter told those with whom he was standing what he believed, where he stood, he would not have run into trouble.
   1. But, Peter was not willing to stand on conviction.
   2. Peter ran into trouble another time for not standing on conviction: Gal 2:11-13.

B. We need to stand on our convictions.
   1. Scripture exhorts us to stand fast.
      a. 1 Cor 15:58.
      b. Phil 4:1.
   2. Are you standing fast for your convictions?

VI. WE LEARN THAT THE CONSEQUENCES OF PRAYERLESSNESS ARE HORRIBLE.

A. Mt 26:41.
   1. But, the disciples slept while Jesus prayed (Mt 26:36-46).
   2. Had Peter stayed awake & prayed as Jesus had asked him, he likely would not have fallen into this temptation.

B. When we do not pray, we see disastrous results as well.
   1. We are warned against not praying.
      a. Ps 53:4.
      b. Js 4:2.
   2. Prayerlessness is so very dangerous—if we do not pray: we are not able to tap into God's infinite power, we are not able to depend upon God, & we will not receive help from God.

VII. WE LEARN THAT THE INFLUENCES OF FEAR ARE DISASTROUS.

A. Had Peter not been so fearful, surely he would have admitted to knowing Jesus—he seems to be afraid that he might be thrown into prison & executed; he was trying to save himself.

B. Fear is disastrous.
   1. The Bible makes it clear that fear & Christianity do not go together.
      a. Prov 29:25.
      b. 1 Pt 3:14.
      c. Rv 21:8.
   2. Fear will keep us from doing what we know is right—we're afraid of what other would think, so we're not baptized; we afraid of hurting someone's feelings, so we don't share the gospel, we're afraid our accountant will think we're crazy, so we don't give as generously as we should.

VIII. CONCLUSION.

A. Even though Peter denied the Lord, he was able to do great things: he preached the first gospel sermon, preached the first sermon to the Gentiles, & he wrote two NT books.

B. If you have fallen away, you can do great things if you come back to Jesus. Do you need to come to him tonight?

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