

Stop and Think

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Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Galatians 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

1Corinthians 10:12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

There are times in the lives of God's people which try their souls for faith and often leave them shaking their heads in confusion and concern. Things happen that leave us feeling as though the fountains of the deep of woe, sorrow, pain, anxiety and uncertainty have been opened up and all these things are pouring upon us at once. Like Jonah we feel like crying (**Jonah 2:5**) "The waters compassed me about, *even* to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head."

Such times as these come when sickness strikes us or our loved ones, when a death comes suddenly and stealthily and touches those near and dear, when a run of calamities strikes, or these times can come in a dozen different ways. One such way is for a flock to suddenly lose its under-shepherd. This group of saints has come to that place.

It is a sad day when one of God's warriors is struck a wounding blow by the forces of temptation, when he is seized in the carefully laid snares of the devil and is felled by the insidious work of the evil one. It is tragedy when a pastor finds himself in a place where Satan has gotten the upper hand, when that pastor must declare himself to be disqualified to pastor because he knows that he has reached a stage that he cannot minister to his flock?

What do saints do when they find that they are suddenly without the pastor...when their security related to having a spiritual leader is suddenly shaken? **What is the path that they should think about?**

I want to speak today about two things: First, what believers are NOT to do and Secondly, what they ARE to do when such a season comes.

I. WHAT BELIEVERS ARE NOT TO DO

❖ Don't Begin to Think About Abandoning Your Post

- Such crises as these are notorious for causing people to start thinking they ought to leave and try to find somewhere else to worship. Why is that?
 - As humans, the temptation is strong to get away from unpleasant things: But when we flee, let us flee (not away from the place we have found comfort but) to the Lord: **Psalms 143:9** Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me.
 - As humans, the temptation is great to be too dependant on a man and then we are

disappointed when men are just men. That is the very time to put our trust in the Lord: **Psalms 9:10** And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

- As humans, spiritual crises tend to tempt us to do irrational things: 1) Jonah is confronted with a spiritual crises...he goes down to the sea, jumps in a boat and runs off. 2) Elijah tells it like it is to Ahab and slays the prophets of Baal; then Jezebel promises to kill him by the end of the next day (**I Kings 19**), and he flees for his life to the wilderness, stops under a juniper tree and concludes that he might as well die. 3) Thomas hears Jesus talk about Lazarus having died (**John 11**) and he concludes that they should all go to where Lazarus has died and die with him. 4) Peter gets into a spiritual panic, takes things into his own hands and cuts off a man's ear (**John 18:10**)
- As children of God, we know all these responses are wrong when it means abandoning the leading of the Lord: **Psalms 25:5** Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.
 - **Psalms 43:3** O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.
- You have been brought to this place by the Lord; **Psalms 37:23** The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.
- God has a purpose for you here in the place your are:
 - You may claim Gods promise: **Jeremiah 3:15** And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.
- ❖ **Don't Get Involved in Church Politics, Power Struggles, or Cliques**
 - **I Corinthians 1:11-13; Numbers 12:1-10; Numbers 16:1-33)**
- ❖ **Don't Begin to Imagine That the Lord Will Not Be Here and Bless You Here**
 - **Matt. 18:20** "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."
- ❖ **Don't Forget the Word of Truth That Has Been Preached to You**
 - **When the man who preaches to you is gone, the Word is still present and alive**
 - **Matt. 24:35** "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."
- ❖ **Don't Lose Sight of Who Fights Against God to Tear Down Spiritual Works**
 - **Ephesians 6:11-18**

II. THINGS TO DO

- ❖ **DO Conduct Your Spiritual Business in a Spirit of Meekness** (back to text verses)
 - Meek: Gentle or kind; patient and mild; not inclined to anger or resentment; tamely submissive; easily imposed on;
- ❖ **DO Consider Yourself Lest You Also Be Tempted**
 - What kinds of temptations lurk just outside of our vision ready to take each of us?

- What can such temptations lead us to?
- What kinds of temptations can befall us if we don't take heed to ourselves?
- Doubting God (wavering faith)
- Resenting he who may have made us feel let down
- Carnal planning
- Carnal solutions

❖ **DO Fulfill the Law of Christ**

- Bear Your Fellow Believer's Burdens (and conversely, if you have burdens [concerns, uncertainties, misgivings] allow us as your brothers & sisters to bear them with you)
 - Nothing identifies a child of God so much as his/her efforts to be a blessing to fellow believers
 - Nothing builds up the household of faith like brothers and sisters who have genuine concern and give support to each other in time of crises and uncertainty
 - Nothing shows forth Christ in a life more than being full of pity, being kind, being openly compassionate and loving to God's people when they need support.
 - **1John 4:10-11** Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. **11** Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

❖ **DO Reflect Upon Our Own Condition and Who We Are (v.3)**

❖ **CONCLUSION:** Go back to our message text now:

- Let us understand that this verse could be talking about us by sundown today...but
- Let us understand that God is with us today
- Let us understand that we may trust Him to take care of everything today
- Let us understand that we jeopardize the certainty of that if we move away from the good rules taught in our text
- Let us commit ourselves to the Lord today to rise up, go on, be faithful, trust in God, prove how great and powerful He is in times of adversity,
- Let us bind together in a commitment to support one another and let the Lord work His will with us, with this assembly, with our work here.