

# Reveling or Resisting: A Call for the Revival of the Individual

## Is Sin Crouching at Your Door?

*“The Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.’”<sup>1</sup>*

As the days in which we live grow darker and darker, God is still calling us men<sup>2</sup> to rise up and stand firm in the faith. He is calling men to lay down foolishness and child-like behavior in order that we would live godly, holy and in the movements of true piety. To simply say these things and acknowledge the narrow path while living on the broad way must cease. If we are tired of hypocrisy then we must first hate our own hypocrisy and spiritual laziness. For the great majority, including myself, it must be asked, *“Is sin crouching at the door?”*

There is a very real battle. It is not in theological debates, arguments and the flesh, no. Rather, the warring lies in the spiritual realm. It is in this place where we must engage into war and drive forward with a relentless and steadfastness that produces a slaying of our sinful lifestyles. It is in this place we must declare war with our own wicked heart<sup>3</sup> and begin to combat the lost years of slumber and past generations of men who have slept at the wheel of true spiritual Christian leadership in the church, in the home and in the private life. Against all odds, we must be the ‘David’ of our generation and combat all hell in spiritual realms. We must be the ‘Sampson’ who rips up the gates of sin which often captivate and distract our minds, emotions and actions.

To battle in such ways requires that we get deadly serious about our own sin. So let me ask: Is sin crouching at your door? Have you fallen complacent? Become dormant? Become a slave and lover of your sin? What about adultery, both mental and physical? Idolatry? Lust? Laziness? Pride? Anger? Arrogance? The list goes on. What has taken your thought life captive? Possessions? Sports? Entertainment(s)? Self-gratification of sorts? Or how about sins of omission and commission? In all of this, do you blame God? *“Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God’, for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished it brings forth death. Do not be deceived my beloved brethren.”<sup>4</sup>*

## Reveling or Resisting?

In supposed Christian circles today there seems to be two very distinct groups. There are those who will not speak the full council of God’s Word nor any sort of hard word against personal sin. Then there are those who speak harsh things, using the Word, but without any sort of loving concern and prayerful tear at all. Both are wrong and blasphemous to our great God. Because of these two opposing sides, many people

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 4:6-7 (context 1-8)

<sup>2</sup> Mankind as a whole, men and women; especially the professing believer.

<sup>3</sup> Jeremiah 17:9

<sup>4</sup> James 1:13-16

feel they must choose one or the other, while yet others disregard Jesus Christ and the Christian faith all together. Because these two damning camps exist, we cannot be pulled into either camp ourselves. We must keep our eyes firmly fixed upon the Author and Perfector of our faith.<sup>5</sup>

We must recognize our true position in relation with God. This alone will require humility and the utmost honesty. Once we come to an understanding of our current position, we must move forward on our knees, with tears of passion, tears of love, and present ourselves to God with true humility and a contrite heart.<sup>6</sup> We now must answer the question, “*What is our position with God?*” If we will rightly answer this question, we will have a beginning understanding if we have sin crouching at our door.

Answering the previous question (let me here add, the previous question is in comparison to the Word of God, not ones’ personal beliefs) only leads us to see our current state and is thus a starting point for diving ahead. We must then ask ourselves, “*Are we reveling in or resisting against our sin? Do we desire victory over sin, or are we enjoying wickedness? Are we seeking to ‘master’ our sin and put it to death<sup>7</sup> or peacefully remaining a slave to sin?*” It cannot be both ways. We either serve one master or the other. We are either of our father the devil or of our heavenly Father God. Who or what consumes our thoughts and desires? And what evidence, scripturally speaking, gives light to whose son we are?

## Cross roads

We are either fighting off our sin, in a desire to slay it or we are not. We are either walking by the Spirit having been and continually being convicted by our sin or we walk by the flesh having no concern for our blatant sinful style of life. Reveling in sin or resisting with a violent warring to kill off the old natural man. So, which is it?

### First position with God – Reveling in sin<sup>8</sup>

#### I. The identity we have with sin tells of our identity with God.

There is no friendship between God and sin. He hates all sin. He is not tempted by sin at all. The system by which this world sets out its’ course of living is deeply rooted in sin. “*Do not love the world of the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*”<sup>9</sup> Reveling in sin proves a dear friendship with sin and thereby a bitter hatred for God.

#### II. Reveling and willfully enjoying sin robs of true grace.

“*What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?*”<sup>10</sup> If we indeed are living under the true grace of God, we will be in a training process by which we will strive to “*renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives.*”<sup>11</sup> True grace, if we are truly under such, results in true salvation that leads us away from a reveling in our sin. Reveling in sin robs us of true grace by placing a

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<sup>5</sup> Hebrews 12:1-2

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 51:17

<sup>7</sup> Romans 8

<sup>8</sup> Many more points could be talked about in both the first and second positions with God. These are only a few to spur one to think more deeply upon one’s own position with God.

<sup>9</sup> 1 John 2:15

<sup>10</sup> Romans 6:1-2

<sup>11</sup> Titus 2:11-14

false assurance through a false grace. False grace never brings about conviction of sin.<sup>12</sup>

III. Reveling in sin denies the sacrifice for sin.

Reveling in sin is a willfully blatant enjoyment of the fruits of wickedness and satisfying of the flesh. For this reason, we are warned that if the sinner is willful and intent to do such, and this with no remorse or resisting of sin, then there no longer remains a sacrifice for said sin. *“For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”*<sup>13</sup> Reveling in sin, again if not repentant or in a resisting of sin, ends in death – eternal.

## Second position with God – Resisting sin

I. Resisting sin is normal for a true believer.

This should be a great encouragement for the true believer. Paul says in Romans 7, *“For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am not longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.”* Later on he says, *“...but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin...”*<sup>14</sup> Take heart believer, there is a war in which wages, but to fight this war in the flesh will result in countless failures. This is why we must be looking to our faithful high priest, Jesus Christ, who has himself been tempted as we have been tempted and understands trials, persecutions and convictions.<sup>15</sup>

II. Those who know their God will display strength and take action.<sup>16</sup>

Those who are God’s children will be reprovved by God for their edification, sanctification and more importantly, for the glory of God Himself. Hebrews chapter 12 is a great assurance and promise of our God for those who have been regenerated.

III. Those who live by the Spirit not only resist sin, but put it to death.

In Romans 8 we see those who live by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the flesh. It is here where we can go astray and try to do the work of killing our sin by fleshly means. The flesh cannot perform this holy call. It is only by the Spirit can this be accomplished. One of the most important functions, if I can say such, of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer is the conviction of sin. This is also an earmark fruit that should be seen on every regenerate follower of Jesus Christ.

*“When the Holy Spirit is at work in you and convicting you of sin, do not respond by*

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<sup>12</sup> More on false grace (cheap) grace in chapter 11, Realities of True Grace, from the book Realities of a True Christian. You can download free at: <http://jeremybstrang.com/jeremys-ebooks/>

<sup>13</sup> Hebrews 10:26-31

<sup>14</sup> Romans 7:19-20, 23 (see 7:14-25 for context)

<sup>15</sup> See Hebrews chapters 1-5 for starters.

<sup>16</sup> Daniel 11:32

*confessing that you have a weakness or a short coming, rather name the sin that must be repented of and confess it by name as you beg for forgiveness and seek for those sins that so easily best you to be mortified. Put off those sins that defile you and put on The Lord Jesus Christ who sanctifies you and presents you faultless before the presence of our Heavenly Father. By embracing the Grace of the Lord Jesus, you will be empowered, rather than simply given instruction, to mortify sin in your body.”<sup>17</sup>*

IV. Those who resist sin persevere.

Those who are really seeking to resist sin, not by fleshly means, will persevere. Now this does not mean that there will not be times of failure, times of falling in the mud, times of feeling ready to give up the fight, and such emotions, but the regenerate will be given a desire to return to Christ, return to the cross, get up out of the mud and persevere forward. Ephesians 6:6-20 and 2 Peter 1:2-11 are a good help and starting point here.

*“O, this persevering is a hard word! this taking up the cross daily, this praying always, this watching night and day, and never laying aside our clothes and armour, I mean indulging ourselves, to remit and unbend in our holy waiting on God, and walking with God. This sends many sorrowful away from Christ, yet this is the saint’s duty, to make religion his every-day work, without any vacation from one end of the year to the other. These few instances are enough to show what need the Christian hath of resolution.*

*“This gives us then a reason why there are so many professors and so few Christians indeed; so many that run and so few obtain; so many go into the field against Satan, and so few come out conquerors; because all have desire to be happy, but few have courage and resolution to grapple with the difficulties that meet them in the way to their happiness.*

*“Let this then exhort you, Christians, to labour for this holy resolution and prowess, which is so needful for your Christian profession, that without it you cannot be what you profess. The fearful are in the forlorn of those that march for hell (Re. xxi); the violent and valiant are they which take heaven by force: cowards never won heaven.”<sup>18</sup>*

## Great Needs for the Godly Today

We need...

- ❖ A focus fixed upon, with a singleness of eye, on the Author and Perfector of our faith, Christ Jesus The Lord.
- ❖ An unfading perseverance in Christ
- ❖ A holy resolve empowered by Christ
- ❖ A bitter hatred of all our personal sin and especially of the distractions and idolatry
- ❖ A desire to be holy
- ❖ A continued revelation of God’s glory
- ❖ An absolute surrender and full submission unto Christ
- ❖ An unrelentless drive towards eternal goals
- ❖ A desire to grow in the love of God for ALL people regardless how we think they are acting
- ❖ To be marked by brokenness, a contrite heart, and true humility

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<sup>17</sup> Kevin Turner, Feb 2014

<sup>18</sup> William Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour*, pgs 15-16; Hendrickson Publishers Marketing, LLC; second printing, April 2010

- ❖ A theology that boasts not in itself but in the glory of God and the grace of Christ, yet accepting a call to love and suffer for that love
- ❖ A zeal built not on foolishness but on the wisdom and discernment of God
- ❖ A walking with God by His Spirit and not build on or around temporal emotional highs and doctrines of demons
- ❖ An obedience to do whatever God says, whenever He says it, and however He so commands.
- ❖ We need to simply walk with God, at times shutting ourselves up to Him alone, at times in group fellowship, always praying and giving thanks, even when we are in work, praise, repentance or trials
- ❖ Live today for Christ. We must not long for tomorrow and think that we need to meet with Him tomorrow when by doing such we despise the meeting with Him today.

## Closing Thoughts

God demands our obedience and our obedience we must give if we are genuine. So, are we resisting or reveling? With Him or against Him? In order to prepare ourselves for persecution, or to edify the bride of Christ, or to see the lost converted, or to grow in our own sanctification we must get dead serious with ourselves.

The pathway for the revival of the church at large and the salvation of the multitudes rest upon God, but He will use us if we repent and obey. For holiness precedes power; obedience precedes holiness; repentance precedes obedience; personal revival precedes public revival. Where are we at with God? To know the fellowship of His suffering begins with obedience to make a war with and slay the desires of our flesh. Our flesh will buck and kick, fight and seek for our eternal death, but we must walk by the Spirit. Do we want revival because of fleshly gain and personal comfort or do we want it because no nation and no city has a banner for Christ flying high above as it's symbol?

Be encouraged, God is not a harsh task master. Read what Andrew Murray says, *"I am sure there is many a heart that says: 'Ah, but that absolute surrender implies so much!' Someone says: 'Oh, I have passed through so much trial and suffering, and there is so much of the self-life still remaning, and I dare not face the entire giving of it up, because I know it will cause so much trouble and agony.' Alas! Alas! that God's children have such thoughts of Him, such cruel thoughts. Oh, I come to you with a message, fearful and anxious one. God does not ask you to give the perfect surrender in your strength, or by the power of your will; God is willing to work it in you. Do we not read: 'It is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure?' And that is what we should seek for - to go on our faces before God, until our hearts learn to believe that the everlasting God Himself will come in to turn out what is wrong, to conquer what is evil, and to work what is well-pleasing in His blessed sight. God Himself will work it in you."*<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Andrew Murray, *The Deeper Christian Life and Other Writings*, pg 255