

CAN ONE'S FAITH DIE?

Heb. 11:1

1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen

Intro

A. QUESTION: Is it possible for faith to die, if so, how?

1. A Christian must be on constant guard concerning his faith.
2. Eph. 6:10 - 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.,
3. We must use every opportunity to strengthen our faith and be constantly aware of ways by which it may die.

I. First: Faith may die by a deliberate decision to stop believing in Christ and his saving work, thus renouncing the Christian faith.

II. Second: A second way faith may die is through slow spiritual starvation.

A. Faith does not come into existence full-grown.

1. It begins with a stage of infancy often tender and fragile and definitely in need of maturing and strengthening
 - a. 1 Peter 2:2 - Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—
 - b. 2 Peter 3:18 - But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
2. Thus faith must constantly be nurtured and nourished and exercised Hebrews 5:14. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.
3. To this end, God had provided us with spiritual disciplines such as those in Acts 2:42; "the apostles' teaching."
4. Or in post apostolic times, Bible study; "fellowship," which includes an active church life: "breaking bread," or consistent and faithful participation in the Lord's Supper; and "prayer."
5. These are the means by which faith is nourished; to neglect them allows faith to weaken or even to die.

III. Third: The third way that faith may die is through strangulation by sin.

A. After conversion, if a Christian allows sins to continue and to flourish without fighting against them, they will sooner or later choke the life out of his faith.

1. In the parable of the sower, Jesus spoke of seeds that "fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out" (Matthew 13:7).
2. Jesus explained, "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choked the word, and it becomes unfruitful" (Matthew 13:22).
3. The presence of faith is not an absolute guarantee that one's salvation is eternally secure.
 - a. Now, we know that God will indeed protect us.
 - b. Peter tells us this in 1 Peter 1:5. We are a people who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
4. But, we must make a deliberate effort to keep our faith alive and strong.

B. Because, YES we can depart from the faith

IV. "DEPARTING FROM THE FAITH"

A. The Apostle Paul warned the younger man Timothy about those that would depart from the faith in 1 Timothy 4:1-2. The warning provides us with a concise and clear definition of what it means to "depart from the faith."

1. The passage says, "Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils: speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron."
2. In this passage, "departing from the faith" consists of three things:
 - a. Listening to the wrong things,
 - b. Saying the wrong things, and
 - c. Becoming unwilling to tell the difference between right and wrong.
3. Notice that the text uses the words "*giving heed*."
 - a. This expression includes the idea of *listening, agreeing and accepting and then doing something as a result*.
 - b. A person that gives heed "pays attention."
 - c. The word also has in it the concept of "turning the mind to" one thing or another.

4. You can see the problem with this.
 - a. If we give heed or turn our minds to good things and ideas, good consequences will follow.
 - b. On the other hand, if we allow ourselves to listen and heed bad things, bad consequences will result.
 - 1) Paul spoke of seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.
 - 2) Some ideas are not worth listening to.
 - 3) If indeed we listen to foolishness, even innocently, there is the danger of being beguiled by it.
 - 4) In other words, bad ideas can seduce an innocent unwarned listener.
5. This passage gives precise information about the nature of the process of departing from the faith.
6. Good Bible students will read and learn.
7. Good Christians will determine to be faithful unto death and thus receive that crown of life (Revelation 2: 10).

Conc.

A. The fact is that: faith lives, it flourishes, it grows – or it dies.

1. Each one of us is responsible for our own faith.
2. Can your faith grow and flourish and become what it needs to be? Yes it can.
3. Can you depart from your faith
 - a. Can it wither away and die for the reasons we talked about or for other reasons? Again, the answer is yes.

B. I ask you tonight to look at your faith.

1. Is it growing? Is it flourishing? Is it building day by day.
2. Because the fact of the matter is: if it is not growing, it is dying.
3. Faith cannot stand still.
4. Faith cannot remain neutral with sin.
5. You are either moving forward with your faith or you are dying.
6. Tonight, if you are not a Christian, you need to develop a faith that will move you to obey God's word.
7. As a Christian, if your faith is not what it needs to be, you need to strengthen your faith through the study of god's word and adjust your life accordingly.

IF SUBJECT, COME