

The REMINDER

The weekly newsletter of the church of Christ in Bellaire, TX

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Number 13

THE FORTRESS OF FAITH

As an encouragement to Christians living under the constant threat of persecution, the apostle Peter writes of a "living hope" made possible by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. With such hope the faithful persevere in anticipation of an eternal inheritance reserved in heaven (1 Peter 1:3-4). The source of their hope and the key to their endurance was faith. It has always been so with God's people and ever shall be. "And this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

It is in keeping with this idea that Peter writes of being "guarded through faith" by the power of God (v. 5). This word "guarded" is a military term used in the sense "of providing protection against the enemy, as a garrison does" (Vine). So, our faith is our fortress for providing protection against all enemies of righteousness. This protective aspect of faith is also suggested in Eph. 6:16 under the figure of a shield: "Wherewith we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one." Elsewhere, it is pictured as a breastplate (1 Thess. 5:8). Such references show plainly that faith is our protector. Faith is our strength and help in the quest to overcome and to gain the great victory.

But behind all this, as suggested in the employment of these military terms, is the recurring allusion to a great conflict. If not, why the need for being guarded? Why the talk of such things as shields, breast-plates and victory? Too, conflict implies an enemy. In an earlier noted passage, Paul identifies him as the "evil one." In 1 Pet. 5:8 he is referred to as "your adversary the devil." This is why Christians are encouraged to "put on the whole armor of God" - that we "may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11). Here it is: the enemy; the conflict; the protection. The battle is real. So are its casualties. And so is the need for protection.

Hence, the need for a strong faith. Old Testament history tells of great fortified and walled cities such as Babylon, built out of concern for physical safety. We need such concern for our spiritual safety! For the protection of precious souls. There is a sense in which every Christian is building his fortress of faith. How well we are able to withstand the testings of trials and temptations depends on the measure of our faith - the strength of our fortress. And be sure of this, the assaults will come. In our context Peter writes of their "manifold trials" and later tells them to "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which comes upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened to you" (4:12). Knowing the trials will come, we must fortify our faith.

To this end we assimilate more and more of the word of God, our only source of strength and growth (1 Pet. 2:2). This means not only knowing it, it means respecting it and applying it to every circumstance of life. As Jesus, we can face and repel the tempter with, "It is written..." Of him Peter says "stand steadfast in your faith" (5:9). How strong is your fortress?

Dan Shipley

Bulletin Board

KEEPING OUR VISION



AM Lesson - Steve - "Fear Factor"
PM Lesson - Jack - "Dealing With Pain & Suffering"

Please keep the following members in mind who have difficulty being with us due to prolonged illness: **Dee Boyd, Doris Norman, Billie Glitsch and Don Hurd.**

NEWS AND NOTES: Other than a few out with seasonal problems (flu and allergies), we're all doing well. Logan had tubes implanted in his ears on Thursday. He did fine thru the procedure. Hopefully no more ear infections.

There are quite a few meetings in the area this month, Check the bulletin board for details. Steve will be in Columbus next weekend preaching in a meeting there.

This being a holiday weekend, we'll have quite a few out of town. Pray for a safe journey and a joyous homecoming. There is a gathering at Barbara's house this afternoon for any who can come.

We were saddened to learn of the death of several this week. Marty Pickup, a gospel preacher from the Tampa area. John Ray, an elder in the church where Don Truex preaches. John and his family have been long time friends of mine and Anita's. Also the Mike Hardcastle's son. Mike is Anita Washington' boss. Life is filled with joy and hardship. Pray for those who are suffering.

About 350 years ago a shipload of travelers landed on the northeast coast of America.

The first year they established a town site.

The next year they elected a town government.

The third year the town government planned to build a road five miles westward into the wilderness.

The fourth year the people tried to impeach their town government because they thought it was a waste of public funds to build a road five miles westward into a wilderness. Who needed to go there anyway?

Here were people who had the vision to see three thousand miles across an ocean and overcome great hardships to get there. But within a few years they were not able to see even five miles out of town. They had lost their vision. With a vision of what we can become in Christ, no ocean of difficulty is too great or too vast. Without it, we rarely move beyond our current boundaries.

Eric Snyder

"Middle age is when you stop having emotions and start having symptoms."

"Ignorance has something to be said in its favor. It gives rise to about nine-tenths of the world's conversational output."

"Many people were down in the dumps before they were educated. Now they are depressed and despondent."

Assignments for today

Sunday, March 31, 2013

Morning Service

Announcements.....Mike Pharris
Hymn Director.....Weston Hodge
Scripture Reading.....Hebrews 2:5-18
Scripure Reader.....Harrison Banks
Opening Prayer.....Matt Miles
Closing Prayer.....Mike Pharris

Evening Service

Hymn Director.....Michael Robinson
Opening Prayer.....Jim Carithers
Closing Prayer.....Mike Pharris

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Schedule of Services

Sunday:

9:30 AM Worship
11:00 AM Bible study
5:00 PM Worship

Wednesday:

7:30 PM Study and Devotional
Minister and editor
Jack Smith and Steve Garrett

The Reminder is published weekly by the church of Christ in Bellaire