
Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

July 10, 2016

An Indecisive Faith

*“Elijah approached all the people and said,
‘How long will you hobble back and forth between two opinions?
If the Lord is God, follow God. If Baal is God, follow Baal.’ The people gave no answer.”*
I Kings 18:21 (Common English Bible)

There are multitudes of people today who live with an indecisive faith. In their heart of hearts they want to believe that they are a people of belief. For Christians, they may belong to a local church, worship regularly and participate in the financial support of the church. They possess a Bible – perhaps several – and may read it regularly. But when opportunities are presented for them to take a stand for what they know is right, what they know is a Christian position, they become hesitant. They are afraid to publicly confess that they follow the Lord, Jesus Christ, and intend to honor Christ in each of their decisions. No one who knows them can be certain just where they stand.

This spirit of hesitation is far removed from the heroism of first century Christianity. In the Book of Acts, we encounter another story, the story of Christians who are arrested and beaten for their faith. When they are at last released from prison they are given the express command never to speak of Christ again. This warning does not stop them. Their faith is not dubious, hesitant, or vacillating. Just the opposite is true. We read that daily in the temple and in every house, they never ceased to teach and preach Jesus Christ. They are followers of Jesus Christ who make their life and influence count in the struggle of right and wrong.

Why should we hesitate to affirm our faith as these first century Christians? If we believe in God and are sincere in our desire to follow Jesus as Lord of our lives, why not say so? The conviction of the Christian faith is that the establishment of God’s Kingdom would bring a better world. Only a few hundred Christians with a faith as resolute and unwavering as these first century Christians would have the capacity to stir any local community to its foundations. But what happens often today is that people “hobble back and forth between two opinions.” Either they are uncertain or are ashamed of their convictions as followers of Jesus.

Elijah challenged the people of Israel to take a stand, one way or another. We are similarly challenged by his words. Cease to “hobble back and forth” and, rather, take a stand for something, either for the God we know in the person of Jesus or for something else. Someone once said, “Show me a man’s checkbook and I will tell you the name of his god.” I am confident that Elijah wouldn’t need their checkbook. How we speak, the manner in which we treat one another and the decisions we make – particularly moral and business decisions – demonstrate who or what is Lord of our lives. What a pity that anyone who has ever named Jesus as Lord would be found by others as a person of indecisive faith.

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