

SOMETHING TO CHEW ON

Margaret Thatcher (a past Prime Minister of Great Britain) had the saying "You may have to fight the battle more than once to win it." No doubt the iron lady was speaking about politics, but her statement applies to us as we fight to overcome sin. At one point, Peter was willing to fight a whole band of men who had come to take his Lord by force. A few hours later he was so weak that he denied three times that he even knew Jesus.

We must also continue to fight the battle to overcome the temptations that surround us. Sometimes we are able to resist with ease and come away unscathed. At other times we are weak and vulnerable to the very same temptation.

It is important for us to recognize that the battle must be fought over and over and that sometimes our temptations are easier to overcome than at other times.

For this reason we need to get up mentally for the fight against the flesh. Paul said, "I die daily." He also said, "Fight the good fight of faith." We need to recognize that the battle must be fought over and over again and each day we have to mentally get up for the fight of faith. Paul, at the end of his life, was able to say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." He could only say this because he had died daily, he had kept the faith one day at a time, every day.

All too often we fight the battle and win, we resist the temptation and temporarily it is gone, and then we let our guard down, and here it comes from the other direction.

The Lord Jesus was tempted to eat when he was starving. He resisted. He was tempted to use his God given power to protect himself in a fall. He resisted. He was tempted to take a short cut to glory and power. He resisted. But this was not the end of his temptations. These same temptations came back to haunt him over and over again during his ministry. He had no sooner resisted the challenge to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple and land safely, but his own people in Nazareth "took him by force and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong." This time he could simply have allowed them to push him over the edge and used his God given power to float gently to the ground. He resisted again.

The lesson we learn is that every day there is a "battle to be fought, an onward race to run." Every day we must be prepared to face the temptations and trials of the day, knowing that we will never be "tempted beyond that which we are able to bear."

We must not rest on our laurels and think we can win today's battle with yesterday's score.

"This is the day which the Lord has made." "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

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It has been said that we cannot control the wind, and some recent devastating hurricanes have proved this. We can, however, set the sail, and we can nest in the gale. We cannot control the wind but we are in control of our response to it. Those who heeded the early warning signs of the coming storm were better prepared to ride it out than those who refused to believe it was coming when the sun was shining and all appeared to be fine. The storm was coming. People could either prepare for it or ignore it, it was coming just

the same. Those who evacuated, those who stored water, those who went down into the storm shelters to nest in the gale survived and lived to see the sun shine another day.

There is a powerful spiritual lesson for us to learn from the devastating hurricanes that have swept across many countries. We can prepare, we can set the sail, we can nest in the gale or we can ignore all the warnings and say "Where is the promise of his (the storm's) coming? ... All things continue as they were." It seems that more people believe the weather man's predictions than they believe in the promise of the Son of God who has told us to prepare for his second coming.

The weather man is frequently wrong. The Lord never is. The storm that many thought would miss their area often turned around and hit head on. Sometimes the reverse is true and the storm headed for land suddenly veers off and misses populated areas that were bracing for it.

The Lord is coming. We may not believe it. We may not live like we believe it, but he is coming. Are we setting our sail? Are we willing to nest in the gale? No doubt a great many people who have not prayed in years did pray for a few hours during the storms that recently struck Florida. Did they stop praying when the wind stopped blowing?

Many people's lives will never be the same again, although they did survive, the storm destroyed all their worldly possessions. Our Saviour warned us to "beware of covetousness: for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses."

Many people lost all their worldly possessions, home, cars, keepsakes, all blown away and destroyed. It will eventually happen to every living person although they may never experience a hurricane or an earthquake. "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord." This true statement of Job's applies to all of us. Are we wise enough to believe it, and live like we believe it?

In the days of our Lord, people paid more attention to the weather than they did to him. It is still true today. He told them, "When it is evening, you say, it will be fair weather, for the sky is red. And in the morning, it will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and lowering. O you hypocrites, you can discern the face of the sky; but can you not discern the signs of the times?"

We need to prepare before the wind blows, before the earth shakes, before the Lord comes. So many people live like there is no tomorrow and, perhaps for them, it is true. What about us? Are we seeking first the Kingdom of God?

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O, pray for the Millennial reign, a thousand years of peace,
When men shall live as brothers, and wars and strife shall cease.
Our blessed Lord shall reign as King, the Jews their homage pay
To Him whom once they crucified, but soon shall hold full sway.
When justice shall be meted out to every man his due,
As Jesus said, when here on earth, two thousand years ago.
Our coming Lord will usher in that holy, blessed time,
When all the earth shall worship Him, from every race and clime.
So won't you pray for that blest reign, when sin will hold no sway