

BE NOT AFRAID (1)

During the time when Paul preached in ancient Corinth, the Lord spoke to him one night and said: "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee. ..." {Acts 18:9-10} There were those in that city who blasphemed against the gospel message and who appeared to be a threat to Paul's safety; but the Lord said, "Be not afraid. ...I am with thee. " The same kind of assurance is found in Hebrews, chapter 13, verse 6. "So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.'. The Psalmist wrote, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear: the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" Psalms 27: 1

The thought of these passages is that we are not to be afraid to do what is right. Even in the face of opposition, we are told, "Be not afraid. " Don't be a coward! Have courage to live for God.

In the parable of the talents, Jesus said that the man who received one talent hid his talent rather than using it as his master had intended. When the master came and questioned him about it he said, "I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth." The Lord called him a wicked, slothful and unprofitable servant; and commanded that he be cast into outer darkness. But notice especially the servant's excuse: "I was afraid. " Here was a man who was afraid to use what he had. The lesson for us: **DON'T BE AFRAID TO BE USEFUL IN GOD'S SERVICE.**

There are a number of reasons why men are afraid to use their talents in serving the Lord. Some fear "what others might think." They note that generally people are mediocre in their religious practice. They are afraid someone might think them fanatical if they really devote themselves. Rather than submit wholly to God, they yield to what they think is the pressure of society.

Others hesitate to let themselves be used in doing good for fear of "getting involved. " One of the things God requires of us is that we use what we have been given in assisting others. The Bible says, "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." {Galatians 6:10} But we are often afraid to get involved. This was tragically demonstrated in a number of recent news stories. A girl was killed in New York while several people who heard her cries refused help. A man suffered a heart attack and fell just a few feet from a busy sidewalk; but hundreds of people passing by would not stop to help him. They did not consider it to be their problem. These events remind us of the condemnation our Lord said would be heard by some in the judgment: "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." (Matthew 25:42-45) **DON'T BE AFRAID OF GETTING INVOLVED IN DOING GOOD.**

Jesus said we must love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We must hold back nothing of ourselves. Our bodies must be presented as living sacrifices in His service. Our prayer ought to be that God will give us courage to overcome any fear of letting ourselves be used in His service.