



The Tri-Cities Edifier

Volume 5

October 21, 2018

No. 42

Following Each Command

Coaching the boy's baseball teams when they were very young was quite comical at times. A little boy would hit the baseball, but instead of running to first base he would take off for third base. Another boy would field the ball but then just stand there holding it not knowing exactly what to do with it. The boys needed to be taught the basics of baseball and it took a lot of patience on my part as their a coach.

One rule that must be learned is that each base much be touched before a run can be scored. If a runner skips a base or fails to touch a base, a run will not be scored. Even when a batter hits a home run, he must "round the bases", touching each base in there proper order.

The same thoughts can be applied to God's plan for one's salvation. To be saved, a person must do all that God commands. If one fails to obey all that God commands to receive forgiveness of sins, he will not be forgiven.

Here is what God commands.

Belief in Jesus - John 8:24, Acts 4:12

Repentance of sins - Acts 2:38, Acts 17:30

Confession of one's belief in Jesus - Romans 10:9-10, Matthew 10:3-33

Baptism for the remission of sins - Acts 2:38, Mark 16:16, 1 Peter 3:21

Each obedient act is important and necessary to be saved. A failure to obey any part of God's plan is to fall short in God's plan for your salvation from sin. Just like it takes a lot of patience to teach the basics of baseball to little boys, so it takes a lot of patience to teach the gospel to those who are in error. "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,; 2 Timothy 2:24-25

Stacy

Safe

By Tim Jennings

"Safe" is a precious word whether you are playing baseball or living life. We look at our chaotic and unjust world and we want "safety!" We look at the weakness of our bodies and the uncertainty of our future and we want "safety!"

Please know that our desire for safety is healthy. God made our hearts to long for safety, so we might find it in Him. When we pursue safety correctly it makes us stronger people and brings us closer to God.

For example, Paul felt safe in a Roman prison with an executioner looming in the shadows because he knew, "The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:18). David slept safely surrounded by enemies because he knew, "In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety" (Psalm 4:8).

Where can we find this ability to sleep sweetly during the scary circumstances of life?

Before we tromp off in search of safety we need to be aware of some dead-ends! You see, the devil also knows of our desire for safety and uses it to lure us down his well-worn paths to despair.

One of the most commonly traveled paths to security is possessions. After all, we call our financial investments, "securities!" All the signs on this path say, "***If you have enough your future is secure.***"

We comfortably think, "That is not us!" Yet, if you had the choice today between receiving ten million dollars or growing more into the character of Christ, which one would make you feel more confident about your future? Perhaps we find our safety in possessions more than we realize.

Jesus told a story about a man who reached the pinnacle of his profession with a fully funded retirement. The man said himself, "Soul, you have enough goods laid up for many years, relax!" It is every worker's dream! Have enough stuff and you can finally relax in the sun. However, one small phrase from God eclipsed the man's dream and sent him into eternal darkness, "Fool! This night your soul is required" (Luke 12:15-21).

Don't believe the propaganda, possessions do not provide lasting security (Poverty-stricken Lazarus was more secure than the Rich Man, Luke 16:19-31). In truth, possessions quickly fall apart and tend to make us selfish (Matt. 6:19; 1 Tim. 6:9-10). Laying up your treasures in heaven is where true security is found.

Others believe the adage, "**There is safety in numbers.**" That is why there is a constant desire to be popular, to be a part of a movement, and to fit in. It makes us feel "safe" to be a part of a crowd.

It is a desire to belong to something big that led the people of Babel to build a city for their own glory and security, but they were not secure from God (Gen. 11)! God wants people like Abraham who go out live like sojourners in the world (Gen. 12; 1 Pet. 1:11-12).

The clear testimony of Scripture is that God's people are often few (Matt. 7:13-14; 22:14). We are setting ourselves and our children up for failure when we measure our faith in terms of numbers! Well-meaning parents try to help their children by saying, "Look at how many young people believe like you do." Christians and churches validate their faith by pointing to how many people attend their events, support their causes and follow their media.

Is God impressed by our numbers? Candidly, if we find our security by being a part of a crowd we will always compromise our faith (John 12:42)! We must watch our hunger for crowds for false religion will always be more popular than "picking up your cross and following Jesus." There is no safety in numbers!

True safety requires walking down a path that is rarely traveled. The One who blazed the trail overcame all the fears that overwhelm us. He had no earthly riches, his closest friends abandoned him, and his enemies killed him. Yet, there wasn't a moment he wasn't perfectly safe. Now he shares his safety with us (John 14:27; 16:33).

This security begins by knowing how much you are loved by God. The number of your friends may swell or shrink, but his love is steadfast and secure. Paul had you in mind when he wrote, "God who is rich in mercy because of the great love with which he has loved us...made us alive together with Christ...and seated us with him in heavenly places" (Eph. 2:4-6). Your life can't be more secure (John 10:27-28)!

So, dear friend, **dare to hope in God**. Ask yourself, as David did, "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall praise him again" (Psalm 42:5,11; 43:5). He preserves you from evil, provides for your needs, and guards you from overwhelming trial. Dare to trust him with your safety (Psalm 121:7). In the end, He alone can preserve your soul.

Safely anchored to his loving care, you are **free to live for God**. Every prized possession is destined to be destroyed with the world. Only the things we do for the Lord will last. So, "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:58). Life is not about finding the best things for me! That is the path to insecurity. Life is about doing the things that honor the Lord. Those things last eternally.

I wish I could make all your anxieties about your future disappear!

The future is a scary place to live in the present. Our sinful minds are adept at imagining the worst possible outcomes. However, God knows our future and sees nothing that is too great for his love and power toward us. So, tell your soul, "Hope in God." You are safe.