

Underestimating the Enemy

Lk. 14:31-32

Introduction:

1. This statement is made in a context dealing with counting the cost of discipleship. Being a disciple is a radical commitment. We should consider it soberly.
2. I fear, however, that we are rather naive about the powerfulness of our spiritual enemy.
3. Thus, we go into battle against him not having considered his strength in comparison to our own.
4. In this war that we are in with the devil and “the spiritual forces of this darkness” there is no option of negotiating terms of peace.
5. We do, however, have a powerful ally in our King, but in order to tap into His power appropriately we need to appreciate what we are up against.

Discussion:

- I. The devil is our adversary and he is bent on our destruction (1 Pet. 5:8-11). Three things . . .
 - A. One, we have an adversary.
 1. Denial doesn't make him go away.
 2. It does make us especially vulnerable.
 - B. Two, he is seeking aggressively to devour.
 1. The suffering of this present age finds its origin in him.
 - a. Suffering as a murderer, thief, evil doer or troublesome meddler (1 Pet. 4:15) comes from our participating in the deeds he promotes.
 - b. Suffering as a Christian also comes as a result of the deeds he promotes (1 Pet. 4:16).
 2. The suffering of the age to come finds its origin in him (Lk. 16:23-31).
 3. All pain and death find their origin in him (Rom. 8:18-23).
 - C. Three, the power for victory through suffering rests in our relationship with the God of dominion (1 Pet. 5:10-11). Cf. Rom. 8:31-39.
 1. Our resistance is successful through Him (v. 9).
 2. It is not that we have no power—we can resist but without God there is no deliverance (Rom. 8:26-28).
 3. Some are angry with God as if He causes destruction. “I could never believe in a God who allows all the evil in the world.”
 - a. Statement is interesting. They refer to God allowing it but actually they are accusing Him of evil and blaming Him for evil (cf. Job 1:22).
 - b. Actually God is in the business of delivering us from evil.
 - c. Evil is not God's fault. Yes He allows it to happen, but perhaps His purpose in allowing it is to bring us to Him (Rom. 8:28). Calamity has a tendency to draw us to God for deliverance (Lk. 16:23-31; Heb. 12:11).
 4. What kind of suffering does the devil inflict (Heb. 11:36-38; Job; et.al.)? Sickness, disease, pain, death.

II. The devil intends to inflict as much pain, for as long a time, with as much severity as he can.

- A. This was the case with Job.
- B. This includes physical, emotional and relational pain.

III. He will use whatever tactics that he is capable and allowed to use.

- A. He will use thieves, murderers and economic collapse (Job 1:15, 17).
- B. He will use the weather (Job 1:16, 19).
- C. He will destroy health (Job 2).
- D. He will deceive us and cause us to believe a lie (Jn. 8:44; 2 Thess. 2:8-12).
- E. He will destroy relationships (Eph. 5:15ff-6:9).

IV. God has given resources (Eph. 6:10ff).

- A. To overcome deception –TRUTH.
- B. To address division—The Gospel of Peace.
- C. Instruction (Eph. 5:6-15) and gifts (Eph. 4:11ff).
- D. Shepherds (1 Pet. 5:1-2; Acts 20:28-32).
- E. He has given us each other (Heb. 10:24; 12:12-13).
- F. To expect some kind of miraculous deliverance when we are not using the resources that God has given us is presumptuous.

Conclusion:

1. Are you underestimating the enemy?
2. Depending too much on your own power and not tapping into the spiritual resources that God has granted?
3. Are you expecting some miraculous deliverance when you are not too enthusiastic about using the resources that God has given?
4. The enemy is powerful. Our strength is in the Lord.