

“ANYONE WHO GOES TOO FAR” – A Study of 2 John 8-9 (part 4 of 4)

In this concluding segment, our focus will be on Peter, as an example of someone who went too far in the aftermath of his Savior’s death and resurrection. The apostle’s three-fold denial of Christ upon Jesus’ arrest would certainly qualify as that, prior to the substitutionary sacrifice of our Lord. But our emphasis will be on Peter’s decision recorded for us in John 21:2-3 –

“Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, ‘I am going fishing.’ They said to him, ‘We will also come with you.’ They went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing.”

In light of the discipleship Peter had received in the presence of his Savior and Lord, is it actually possible he was ready to return to his previous occupation as a fisher of fish rather than his calling to be a fisher of men? Would he not be guilty as someone who was, at that moment, failing to abide in the teaching of Christ? And the fact that they caught nothing after a long night of fishing, no doubt, serves as a reminder of what Jesus said in John 15:5, “. . . **for apart from Me you can do nothing.**” But as Peter and the other disciples follow Jesus’ instruction given from the shoreline, their net becomes so full of fish, they can’t haul it in (21:5-6). Peter then experiences a public restoration from his Lord and a recommitment that would launch him into a very fruitful apostolic ministry (21:15-17). Years later, in 2 Peter 1:5-11, he encourages his fellow believers to pursue a path of progressive sanctification (vv5-7), which results in a spiritually fruitful life (vv8-9) and is fully rewarded upon their entrance into the kingdom of God (vv10-11).

For those who have followed our online ministry outreach all these years, you know what kind of current application is about to be made in regard to going too far, by failing to abide in the teaching of Christ. All of us are responsible for abiding in such teaching when it comes to learning sound doctrine, and by the grace of God, living it out in our everyday lives, in order to avoid the pitfall of 2 Timothy 4:3-4. But have we? When we pursue the myth of political activism as a means of advancing the cause of Christ in our world, have we not gone too far? Where in the teachings of Jesus do we find an endorsement of such a strategy? When we embrace the teachings of Sigmund Freud as a means for spiritual growth and personal development, how can we justify such an undertaking when secular psychology bears no resemblance whatsoever to the principles for a victorious and fruitful Christian life, described for us in the New Testament?

The modern-day movements of Christian Psychology and Christian Political Activism are NOT of God. They do not have their source in the Word of God, nor do they carry with them the approval/blessing of God, and will accomplish absolutely nothing positive for furthering the cause of Christ in our lost and fallen world. These movements are the by-product of men and women who have gone too far, in foolishly attempting to combine the secular with the sacred; believing that by adding the wisdom of man to the wisdom of God, it would result in something better. It hasn’t. Instead, it has produced heretical hybrids which are leading Christians astray.

If you have allowed yourself to be naively caught up in either of these popular trends within American Evangelical Christianity today, you are no different than Peter, out in that boat all night long, accomplishing nothing of eternal value on the Sea of Galilee. Even though Peter, ever so briefly, went too far and turned his back on the will of God for his life; his Savior did not turn His back on Peter. He pursued him, provided for him and restored him. He will do the same for you. But not until you come to your senses, cease and desist from your captivity with the things of this world, and get back to the basics of a Christ-centered life.