

Let The Bible Speak Series

Ronny F. Wade, Speaker

I Cannot Come Down

Over in Nehemiah 6:3 we read "So I sent messengers to them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?" This verse explains why Nehemiah was unwilling to compromise the work in order to talk and reason with the enemy. Unfortunately today we see compromise almost everywhere we look. People compromise their name, reputation, job, marriage and a host of other things in order to get what they want or think they need. It is hard to get people to take a position and stand there. During the war between the states the Confederates wore gray uniforms and the Union forces wore blue. One man wanted to be on the safe side so he wore a blue coat and gray trousers. If he met a Union soldier he would say "I'm a Union soldier, see my blue coat?" If he met a Confederate soldier he would say "I'm a Confederate don't you see my gray trousers?" He was a compromiser. Life is full of compromise. It's not easy to stay on the heights. People want to lessen your price and cheapen your product. The cry is to "come down." They want you to take less or they ask "What will you take?" Joseph heard that cry. In wanton mischief and burning with inordinate desire, his employer's wife wanted him as her lover. But "Joseph was a godly person, and well favored. And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph...And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her (she kept the pressure on)....then one day she caught him by his garment...and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out" Gen. 39:6-12. The story could have led to violence and murder. Some have...

But he replied "There is none greater in this house than I...how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Gen.39:9. He was willing to face a penitentiary sentence rather than compromise God's will for his life. Today I want to talk to you about compromise. Nehemiah, one of history's great believer-statesmen, sent word to his hecklers that he could not afford to come down to compromise his work or his vision. "So I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?"

Five times they tried to get him to come down and compromise his work. Five times he refused. He was engaged in the work of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

A work so great that it dare not be compromised at any cost. The problem of compromise casts its shadow across the entire spectrum of our lives. It affects every facet of our conduct and activity. Let us notice some areas, where compromise is taking place:

I. Compromising Preachers:

Simon Peter, became a compromising preacher. A fisherman, by trade, who had lived a rough outdoor life. His brother Andrew had introduced him to Christ, and once he met

him, life was never the same. Both brothers left their fishing business and followed Jesus. (Jesus was popular for a time, the people laid palm leaves in his path.) Soon, however, the feeling mounted against Jesus, because he claimed to be the Messiah. He was arrested and rushed away for trial. What did Peter do?

1. He followed afar off: Luke 22:54--No man can follow Jesus afar off for long without finally losing sight of him.(compromise begins) The greater the distance between us and the Master, the greater the chance that we will stumble. Its a bad sign when a Christian begins to follow Jesus afar off. A bad sign when he follows him on Sunday morning and afar off during the week. A bad sign when he is at church one Sunday and gone the next Some today, if they follow him at all, follow "afar off"

2. He warms at the fire of the enemy. Luke 22:55 (compromise grows)

Now Jesus is taken for trial, and a crowd gathered outside. Someone built a fire, and soon Peter is warming himself there. Its a bad sign when a Christian warms by the enemy's fire A Christian ought not to have to go into the world to find the warmth and fellowship that the heart craves. A Christian doesn't need to give himself to worldly organizations to be happy or useful. A Christian doesn't need to go to a nightclub to satisfy the hunger of his soul. He doesn't need to chime in with sinners to get some happiness out of life.

Peter didn't belong in the camp of the enemy, but no doubt felt the pressure generated by being there. Evil influences overcame. That's what happens at the devil's fire.

Sitting down with the enemies of Christ, you can't tell him from another sinner.

When you look at many "Christians" today, you can't tell them from other sinners. The act like them, they talk like them, they go to the same places, the dress in the same way. Christ calls us to a separated life. "Come ye out from among them..." 2 Cor.6:17

If we are truly separated, the world will see the difference Christ has made in our life.

3. Peter denied, cursed and swore. Mt. 26:69-74 (compromised his honesty and integrity).

a. A maid saw him and declared that he was with Jesus--he denied "I know not what thou sayest." b. He went out into the porch. Perhaps the change in location was an attempt to remain unrecognized, but alas another maid saw him and said "this man was with Jesus..." He denied with an oath. c. to deny was hopeless for soon another saw him and said "of a truth thou are one of them, thy speech maketh thee known."

"I know not the man"---How sadly do those words burn upon the sacred page.

Peter, who had announced his faith in Christ in Mt.16:18 Now denies that he knows the Lord. "Then he began to curse and swear, I know not the man, and the cock crew, And Peter remembered the words which Jesus said." Hot tears streamed down his face, he had compromised himself and his convictions, and he knew it.

Preachers often compromise today:

1. The Message--they preach soft things, failing to state the case as it is.

Isa.30:10 "Who say to the seers, Do not see, and to the prophets, do not prophesy to us right things; speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits."

2. Compromise their courage--they fail to stand and be counted.

(You can find a preacher, if you look far enough, who will condone whatever you want to do.)

II. Compromising Families.

Lot was Abraham's nephew. Both became wealthy. Disagreement between herdsmen.

They separated. Lot chose the rich land toward the wicked city of Sodom.

Moving closer and closer, he finally was living in Sodom. He became one of its prominent men. Now there may have been nothing wrong with him living in Sodom,--

Many say, "give me a scripture that says what I am doing is wrong."

There may be some things that the scripture does not specifically say "this is wrong" but they are extremely dangerous and compromise is written all over them.

But it was wrong when Sodom began to live in him. Soon his family was wrapped up in the wickedness of the city. Lot became "vexed" with the filthy lives of the people.

Disaster followed and finally The angels came and said "hurry and get out, God will destroy Sodom." He tried to get his family out, but they laughed at him.

He had lost his influence over them. He and his wife and two daughters leave.

But his wife's heart was wrapped up in the city, she looked back. It's hard to leave what you have grown to love. The after effects show in the immorality of his two daughters.

The tragic story of a man who compromised with sin and paid a high price. Is your family compromising? Parents are you making some concessions that later you will regret? Do you serve liquor in your home? Do you take a drink now and then to be sociable?

Do you allow your children to wear immodest clothing? Do you wear it? Do you frequent the movies? If you do, do you flinch when someone takes God's name in vain? Or uses a four letter word? Do you get up and leave when an illicit love scene flashes on the screen?

Christian parents have a harder time now than ever, because in many families "anything goes." Pressure on children is often fierce, and we are tempted to let down the bars. Teach your children from birth that some things are wrong, and we just don't do them. Then stick by your word. Are you making a compromise that will haunt you later? If you think you can live with and around sin and it will make no difference, talk to Lot.

III. Compromising Churches

Regarding the church at Laodicea, the Lord said "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So because thou art neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." Here is a compromising church. A church that did not allow their Christianity to interfere with their life style. Hot means "at boiling point" i.e. no real religion without enthusiasm. Cold i.e. at the other end of the spectrum.

Lukewarm means tepid or lacking energy. The Lord did not want them to be cold in the sense that they would never come under the power of the Word. However, the one who is cold spiritually knows his abject spiritual poverty and is more likely to change than the one who is lukewarm because he is satisfied with things as they are and feels he "has need of nothing."

The Plight of a compromising church:

1. wretched--same word used to describe one relying on his own resources for deliverance under the law. Rom. 7:24
2. miserable--same word used by Paul to describe one who has hope only in this world, but no hope beyond. 1Cor. 15:19
3. Poor--reduced to begging or a state of dependence on others for support.

4. blind--Peter used this word to describe those who had forgotten they were cleansed from their old sins 2Pet. 1:9

5. naked--describes one who is divested of any covering before the Lord.

A pathetic picture of a church who has lost touch with themselves and God.

So is every church that compromises.

The Things We Can't Afford

We can't afford to win the gain, that means another's loss;

We can't afford to miss the crown, By stumbling at the cross.

We can't afford the heedless jest, That robs us of a friend;

We can't afford the laugh that finds, in bitter tears an end.

We can't afford the feast today, That brings tomorrow's fast;

We can't afford to play with fire, Or tempt the serpent's bite;

We can't afford to think that sin, Brings any true delight.

We can't afford for hate to give, Like hatred in return;

We can't afford to feed such flame, and make it fiercer burn.

We can't afford to lose the soul, For this world's fleeting breath;

We can't afford to barter life, In mad exchange for death.

But blind to good we are apart, From Thee, all-seeing Lord;

Oh, grant us light that we may know, The things we can't afford.

IV. One Who Never Compromised.

There was one who never compromised.

Go with me to Calvary and see Jesus on the cross, dying for us. No compromise there. If there had been, he could have saved himself, but not others.

He did it all for us. Ought we not take a stand for him and never compromise?