

I Am Nothing

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake; requested by Coral Blake)

Introduction:

- A. Gal. 6:3 - "For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself."
 - 1. What does Paul mean by "he is nothing"?
 - 2. That we are "nothing" in the sense that we are totally worthless?
 - 3. That we are "nothing" in comparison to God?
 - 4. That we are "nothing" in comparison to what we are deceived into thinking we are?
- B. How should we understand this nothingness?
 - 1. We are not worthless. God loves us enough that He moved heaven and earth to save us. However, in terms of our strength measured against His, there is no comparison; we are nothing. This is not Paul's point.
 - a. While there are many arrogant persons who need to be taught this, that message is taught elsewhere, not here.
 - b. Some harm themselves by failing to remember that God's love for them means that they are something, not nothing.
 - 2. Certainly, we are nothing in comparison to God; however, the gift of being created in His image means that we are something: the crown of His creation and the children He desires to dwell with Him forever.
 - a. This does not fit the context even though it is taught elsewhere.
- C. Paul is talking about spiritual disciples helping fallen disciples; he is warning them about the temptations that come with the work of restoring the fallen.
 - 1. Consider this text from these two questions:
 - 2. What do the scriptures teach about being nothing?
 - 3. How do we apply this in our relationships with fallen disciples?

I. WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES TEACH ABOUT BEING NOTHING?

- A. The context begins in Gal. 5:26
 - 1. The context continues through Gal. 6:1-6
 - 2. He injects a reminder that everyone will be judged based on what he does and why he does it - Gal. 6:7-8
 - 3. He resumes the context in Gal. 6:9-10
- B. Paul is emphasizing humility for the spiritual disciples in their treatment of falling and fallen disciples.
 - 1. The Adversary does not want you to restore what he has labored to draw away from the Lord.
 - 2. He attaches temptations to the work of restoration in the hope that whether or not the fallen one is restored, he wins the spiritual one by leading him into temptation.
- C. God expects spiritual disciples to reach out and help the fallen ones.
 - 1. 1Thes. 5:14; James 5:19-20
 - 2. We need to do so unselfishly concerned for them with no personal interests beyond their well-being - Rom. 15:1; 1John 4:21; 2Cor. 1:24
- D. It is tempting for spiritual disciples to become proud of their knowledge.
 - 1. 1Cor. 8:1-2

- E. It is tempting for stronger disciples to become proud of their maturity.
 1. Luke 18:11-12
 2. We must remember that we have become stronger because God has helped us, time and trials have trained us, and other disciples lifted us up in our weak and falling moments - 2Cor. 3:5-6; 1Cor. 15:10
- F. It is tempting for spiritual disciples to become proud of their faithfulness.
 1. Rom. 12:3; 2Cor. 13:5; 1Cor. 10:12
- G. It is easy, through self-deceit, for spiritual disciples to fall to the sin of arrogant thoughts, words, and behavior toward drifting disciples in their weakness.
 1. "He deceives himself": phrenapatao - to be a mind-misleader, self-delude or deceive, hallucinate; to see what does not exist (Strongs)
 2. "A peculiar word: he puts himself under an hallucination; persuades himself of the existence of that which has no reality." (Barnes Notes)
 3. They deceive themselves, because they lack the virtues that would make them great in the kingdom of God - Gal. 5:22-24; 2Peter 1:5-7
- H. The apostle Paul used himself to illustrate this danger.
 1. 2Cor. 12:11; 1Cor. 9:27
 2. Nor did he allow the arrogance of others to interfere with his own efforts to lift up and edify others - Gal. 2:6

II. HOW DO WE APPLY THIS IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH FALLEN DISCIPLES?

- A. "Restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness"
 1. The spiritual ones must be gentle in the work of restoration. If one is proud of himself for not falling like others have, it is impossible to keep that out of his words and behavior.
- B. "Considering yourself lest you also be tempted"
 1. Those who are most confident may fall. They may feel secure, think it impossible that they should sin, and that they are safe. These are just as vulnerable to lost as those they are trying to restore.
- C. "If anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing"
 1. He has not performed a careful self-examination and has overlooked a weakness in his own character.
 2. "It is very common for a man to look upon himself as wiser and better than other men; and as such, he believes himself fit to dictate to them. Everyone is advised to teste his own work. The better we know our own hearts and ways, the less shall we despise others, and the more be disposed to help them under infirmities and afflictions." (Matthew Henry)
 3. This kind of conceit will prevent the spiritual one from helping to bear another's burdens; in fact, he increases them.

Conclusion:

- A. It is ironically tragic that someone, in an attempt to lift up another, ends up falling himself, always to his own destruction, and often to the harm of others.

"The wind of joy will blow most clean
When you and I have felt and seen
That sin keeps joy from being wide
And many sins take root in pride."