

Frightening the Faithful

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. How do we handle it when our heroes become hounds?
 - 1. "Pretend it's okay? He's my hero; he can do no wrong."
 - 2. Accept it as inevitable for public figures? Bill Clinton, Tiger Woods
 - 3. Become disillusioned? "There's no point in trying."
 - 4. Turn cynical? "Everyone is evil."
 - 5. Reject all the good they did; turn our backs on them?
- B. It's hard to witness people we respect do and say things unbecoming or sinful.
 - 1. Honesty requires that we acknowledge that we fall in the same manner.
 - 2. Righteousness requires that we do something about it.
 - 3. Humility requires that we avoid being judgmental.

I. SOMETIMES THE FAITHFUL ARE FEARFUL

- A. The Bible says "Do not fear" 51 times - Isa. 35:3-4; Matt. 10:28; Rev. 2:10
- B. Faith is a process; it does not come all at once.
 - 1. Heroes of faith in the Bible had to grow and often suffered setbacks.

II. FAITHFULNESS DOES NOT IMPLY PERFECTION

- A. The Bible records the failures of its noble characters.
 - 1. Does not gloss over their sins as human literature often does.
- B. Abraham, "Friend of God" and "Father of the Faithful" - James 2:23; Rom. 4:16
 - 2. Was shamed and eclipsed by a pagan king - Gen. 20
- C. Even the righteous who had witnessed great miracles by God fell into fear.
 - 1. Noah - Gen. 9:20-23
 - 2. Moses - Num. 20:7-13
 - 3. David - 2Sam. 11 (Uriah and Bathsheba)
 - 4. Peter - Matt. 26:69-75
- D. Abraham did it more than once - Gen. 12:11-20

III. FAITHFULNESS DEMANDS REPENTANCE

- A. Abimelech would have died had Abraham remained silent - Gen. 20:3, 11
 - 1. A casual or resentful admission of sin is not the same as a broken-hearted confession - Psalm 51:17, 34:18
 - 2. The faithful have an obligation to the world to overcome their fears and repair the damage they have done.
- B. What harm had Abraham done?
 - 1. His character - Abraham stopped asking what was right and asked what was safe.
 - 2. His honor - How can others trust him if he is a known liar?
 - 3. His life's purpose - He was sent to bless people, but he put lives at risk.
 - 4. His heritage - Isaac followed in his father's footsteps - Gen. 26:7-11
- C. The influence of our sins persists in the lives of others long after we are gone. If the heroes of faith had known that their sins would be displayed and remembered forever, would they have chosen differently? Would you?