



I WILL NOT FAINT.
Becky Combee

I almost fainted in the sixth grade. My elementary school class had gone to see the Passion Play, which was an enactment of the life of Christ. Those were the days! It was a very hot afternoon, and I had not been feeling well. I became dizzy and would have fainted, but the student next to me ran for help. I was moved to an air-conditioned room and, needless to say, I did not see the Passion Play.

When someone faints, he loses consciousness of his surroundings. He is no longer aware of the sights and sounds before him. Yet, the question on our heart today is not about the excessive heat of the sun. We want to know, "Can a Christian faint as he walks with God?" Can circumstances overwhelm us until we fail to successfully navigate the difficulties of life?

Of course, the answer to this question is *yes!* The Scripture gives many examples of men and women who became weary and faint. During difficult days, the prophet Jeremiah said, "My heart is faint in me."¹ When Israel faced the day of battle against their enemy, they were cautioned, "Let not your heart faint, fear not, and do not tremble."² The apostle Paul writes to the church at Ephesus, "I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations."³ The writer of Hebrews declares that we can be weary and faint in our minds as we run the race of life.⁴ Jesus noted that the multitudes fainted because they had no shepherd.⁵

In today's world, it would be easy to faint – to give up, to quit, to tremble in fear, to be overwhelmed – but the gospel of our Lord gives us good news. Every Christian can face adversity with perfect peace. The Word of God says, "Thou wilt

keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."⁶ The New Living Bible states that perfect peace comes to all who trust in the Lord, whose thoughts are fixed on Him.⁷

So, where are your thoughts? Obviously, as long as we think about the dilemma, the possibility of great loss and impending defeat, we will never enjoy God's peace.

The apostle Paul counsels us to be spiritually minded and writes, "To be spiritually minded is life and peace."⁸ A spiritual mind is always focused on the Word of God and the counsel of the Holy Spirit as He teaches us and guides us. It does not turn to the downhearted, the worrier, the complainer, the fatalist, or the melancholy for advice. It seeks the thoughts of God and is committed to obey His Word.

From the belly of a great fish, Jonah said, "When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord."⁹ What a profound statement! Jonah could

I CHOOSE PEACE.
Suzanne D. Williams

"I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war." (Psalms 120:7)

My older dog loves to sit on our front porch. She has a small doggy bed on one end and will sit there searching for something to bark at. She LOVES to bark. I see it in her sometimes. She wants to bark, worse than anything, and will tense, turning her head this way and that. Eventually, whether there's something there or not, she will get so worked up that she barks "just because."

People are like that. They will jump on you for the tiniest things, sometimes just because they are in a bad mood. We can only control our reaction to what they say. Most don't want to know they

(Continued from "I will not faint.")

have fixed his mind on the seas and the waves that surrounded him. He might have seen only his impending death. Instead he turned to the Lord in prayer. He refused to be occupied with "lying vanities"¹⁰ and began to praise the Lord. I don't think there is a greater example of a mind fixed on God. God heard his cry, and the fish vomited him onto dry land.

Jonah was rescued when he turned his attention to the temple where God resided. He prayed and praised God before he was delivered. After Paul and Silas were beaten and placed in the inner prison, they prayed and sang praises to God.¹¹ Just like Jonah, in their darkest hour they anchored their mind in God. When their mind was fixed on their great God, the prison shook, the doors were

opened, and they were loosed.

Isn't that the way of faith? Faith rejoices before the answer is in hand. Before the trauma is eliminated, it shouts victoriously. Even when there is no visible evidence of deliverance and freedom, it is confident that God is working. It expects God's overcoming power. It says, "in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."¹²

We will not faint when we embrace the promises of God. If we hold fast to God's Word and reject the cry of the world, we will not fail. The world repeatedly declares defeat. In agony it cries out, "Nobody loves me, and nobody ever helps me." BUT GOD! God says "I love you and I will help you. I will never leave you or forsake you."¹³ Therefore, I cannot faint. As I hear and obey God's Word, He orchestrates victory in my life. No matter what the difficulty, victory is mine.

¹Jer 8:18 ²Deu 20:3 ³Eph 3:13 ⁴Heb 12:3 ⁵Mt 9:36 ⁶Is 26:3 ⁷author's paraphrase ⁸Rm 8:6 ⁹Jo 2:7 ¹⁰Jo 2:8 ¹¹Act 16:23-25 ¹²Gal 6:9 ¹³Jn 3:16;

Heb 13:5-6 ¹⁴Ps 34:14; 1Pe 3:11 ¹⁵Mk 15:4-5 ¹⁶Mt 26:53 ¹⁷Mk 11:14, 20 ¹⁸Mt 7:1 ¹⁹Ps 34:1 ²⁰Mt 5:38-42 ²¹Php 4:7

(Continued from "I choose peace.")

might be wrong and will refuse to hear any opinion that differs from theirs. They stay defensive, ready to turn harmless remarks into an all-out war.

What are we to do when we find ourselves at the brunt-end of someone else's hatred? First, the Bible tells us to SEEK PEACE.¹⁴ This makes staying peaceful a top priority. We cannot retaliate, no matter how badly we want to.

Jesus sets our example. Pilate gave Him an opportunity to defend Himself from the unjust accusations, but He chose to stay silent.¹⁵ He later said He could call for 12 legions of angels to come to His rescue.¹⁶ He didn't, though, because He knew what He'd been sent to do. He knew the power of His words to bring things to pass. He'd cursed a fig tree and caused it to wither, after all.¹⁷

Our best response is, like His, to give no response at all, or if we are forced to speak, we choose words of peace. Sometimes this means letting the other person believe what they want. Jesus' love for those who hated Him sent Him to a cruel death. He didn't try to correct people first.

Our next action is to walk away. I have learned it is better to leave the scene than to let someone else's actions cause an argument. Just

because the bait of anger is lying there, tempting me, doesn't mean I need to take it. I choose to stay at peace, and I refuse to make judgment.

It is not our job to judge the other person.¹⁸ It is a relief to me, actually, that I can leave their behavior in God's hands. Then, once I'm alone with God, I pray for them (and, "God, make them pay," is not a prayer.) If the devil tries to bring the incident up in my thinking later, I turn to praise.¹⁹ There are several psalms I know by heart that I can easily quote. The devil will leave you alone if every time he tries to bug you, you worship God instead.

We must also consider Jesus' words: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."²⁰

This goes against what's natural, but then, we aren't trying to be natural. We are supernatural. Let them see Christ in me and peace beyond understanding.²¹