



SHIELD OF FAITH

"Take Up the Shield of Faith" - Paul

Friday August 9, 2019

Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. — Matthew 6:34

Confront Evil Today

<https://email.althahosting.com/campaigns/bp767hq8cc946>

I almost never know what I'm going to write when I sit down in front of my keyboard and computer screen to write these daily columns. Oftentimes I will pray on my way to the office. "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner." That helps. But the prayer doesn't settle my mind to knowing what to write. Oftentimes I simply must start typing.

This morning I opened my Bible software and the verse of the day is copied and pasted above. Now I'm typing. And praying.

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner."

This verse from Matthew's gospel settled my mind this morning. My mind is settled by the candor in this verse. Matthew admits that evil is a daily occurrence in our lives. The gospel writer offers a solution. He advises that we satisfy ourselves with conquering today's evil. We must leave tomorrow's fight for tomorrow. "for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself," he writes.

In a verse earlier in the chapter Jesus says, "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

As we overcome the evil of each day we must be mindful of our eyes — what we choose to gaze upon. As the promised evil confronts us throughout the day we can choose not to look, or we can choose to take the darkness into our souls. Jesus is telling us to keep our eye focused on the good the true and the beautiful. He allows that our eye can become evil. If that happens he declares, "thy whole body shall be full of darkness."

Ignoring evil is no solution. Our path to true peace and joy daily passes through worldly temptations. Christianity is realistic. It provides helps every day that are rooted in the realities around, and within, us. Evil, temptation and sin are all very real for each and every one of us.

The devil is a utopian. He lives in a false narrative of his own making about everything. He is the father of lies. His goal is to make your whole body full of darkness. He will remain active in the world until God brings his time to an end.

Continued on the back

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As Christians we know that we cannot know the future. Only God knows the future. Becoming overly concerned about tomorrow, and what's going to happen, can only lead to trouble. Jesus Christ is asking us to realize that this is the day that He has made. He wants us to rejoice and be glad in it. And He needs us to live today knowing that He isn't making another August 9, 2019.

Imagine a world in which God's people took captive every thought and made them obedient to Jesus. What would that day look like?

It's not that evil wouldn't be a thing. Until God wraps things up we're going to fight satan, we're going to push back against injustice. A world that includes Christians who take captive every thought, making them obedient to Christ, would be a world of conflict. Evil doesn't get a pass in that world.

I was tired last night. Paulie and I were caring for four of our grandchildren. My son and his wife needed to attend an orientation for Classical Conversations, the homeschooling program in which they participate. I was thankful for the way my wife — grammy — took captive every thought. She has remarkable deep love in her soul for others. That love is marinated in the scriptures, in the gospel. While she loved on the grandbabies she was always instructing, helping their little minds take captive every thought. Observing a Christian woman shepherd infants is like being witness to a miracle. It is very good, always true and sublimely beautiful.

In one of my columns this week I mentioned the concept of Acedia. I just learned that it was thought to be a cardinal sin — the eighth cardinal sin — in the fourth century. In an online article titled, "Before Sloth Meant Laziness, It Was the Spiritual Sin of Acedia" the author observes, "To Evagrius of Pontius, acedia was the most noteworthy of the eight vices that he felt could tempt monks to abandon their religious lives. The Greek monk listed gluttony, fornication, avarice, sadness, anger, vainglory, pride, and acedia as threats to devout monasticism in *Of the Eight Capital Sins*, but argued that acedia was 'the last of the sins to conquer.' Overcoming the other seven didn't mean a monk was safe, but overcoming acedia, according to Evagrius, brought one closer to God."

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/desert-fathers-sins-acedia-sloth>

Dictionary.com defines Acedia, "laziness or indifference in religious matters."

The reality of daily evil is a religious matter. The world is not all good if we think our way to good feelings. Lazy thinking will lead us to avoid confronting evil ... to become listless. If we enable our eye to pervert the sin-soaked world around us into something it isn't — something that is always good and positive — then we are making our eye evil and filling our body with darkness.

Sufficient unto the day is the EVIL thereof. Jesus didn't say "Sufficient unto the day is the GOOD thereof." He said this because He understands the power of the devil. While satan suffered a significant defeat that day on calvary, he wasn't destroyed. There is evil in the world. It is the Christian's duty to confront it TODAY.

It is the job of the Church to equip us for that daily struggle.

Amen.