

Call to Obedience # 418
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
www.schultze.org

Are You Possessing Your Souls?

by Reimar Schultze

In your patience possess ye your souls (Luke 21:19).

In your patience ye shall win your souls (ASV).

This article is primarily for the weak and feeble, yet even God's greatest warriors have battle fatigue at times and need to heed this message.

It is wonderful to win souls! It is a commission of Jesus for us to go and tell the story, to be engaged in the soul winning process. We have heard many, many sermons on soul winning: *...he that winneth souls is wise* (Prov. 11:30). But not only must we engage in the saving of other souls, we also must be engaged in the saving, in the winning and in the possessing of our own souls. And that is what this text is all about. Jesus said, *In your patience ye shall win your souls*. So we see from this that it is possible for us to lose our souls. Many of the most pious Christians have lost their own souls in the process of trying to save others.

Now, one of the things many are doing that causes them to lose their souls is that they find fault with themselves. True followers of Jesus will not find fault with others; they will not find fault with their spouse, they will not find fault with their pastor, and they will not find fault with brothers and sisters. For the Apostle Paul tells us, *Let us not therefore judge one another any more...* (Rom. 14:13).

But now as we are called upon not to find fault with others, we also must not, as dear people of God, find fault with ourselves! The fault-finding spirit that we have directed toward others, when turned toward us, is just as bad and grievous to the Lord. All of God's people are precious to Him and, just as God does not want us to find fault with and criticize others, He does not want us to dissect and cut ourselves to pieces.

We must not find fault with that which God has redeemed, with that which God has purchased with His own precious blood, whether it is someone

else's soul or our own soul. *In your patience possess ye your souls*. We must leave the finding of fault within us to the Holy Spirit. God has sent the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit *will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment* (John 16:8). Let us leave it to the Holy Spirit to bring to our attention that which is lacking within. For when the Holy Spirit does surgery on our souls, we always come out better persons; but when we do surgery on our own souls, we always come out worse than when we started. When we do surgery on ourselves, we turn ourselves into butchers and the devil will help us in doing so.

Please know that the Holy Spirit's conviction is always gentle (I am talking about God's people being convicted). Holy Spirit conviction is always connected with hope, and it is always bathed in God's love. As a matter of fact, it is one of the signs of God's great love to us that He will convict us that we might be cleansed, that we might be transformed, and that we might be made more and more into the likeness of Christ.

But, just as there is a convicting power of the Holy Spirit, the devil has a counterfeit "conviction program" by which he will make us feel like a failure: like a worm as David once said of himself. The fact is that we are glory in our Master's crown and we are diadem's in His hand (Is. 62:3). But of course, there are times we need cleaning up and polishing. This comes by confession and repentance, the blood of the Lamb and the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.

So we must know the difference between Holy Ghost conviction and the devil's process of convicting us. The devil's process, his program of conviction always has within it seeds of condemnation, of hopelessness and of despair. It will always try to keep us focused on the Self-life: on our weaknesses, on our failures and on our past sins. It will endeavor to keep our faces in the mud, in the Self-life. The devil tried to keep Joshua with his men rolling in the dust and ashes forever. That was his program. But God's program was for him to get over his failure, to get up and finish the work that God gave him to do.

In the work of conviction, God's Holy Spirit will cause us to look to Jesus. It calls us to look to the promises of God and not at the problems. It calls us to not look behind us or at our past, because our past sins are already buried in God's sea of forgetfulness.

However, I must also tell you that every time when the precious Holy Spirit convicts the true saint, the devil immediately tries to corrupt the beautiful, pure and holy conviction of the Holy Spirit. He tries to twist that conviction in an attempt to bring us to despair and hopelessness.

So, dear saint of God, be cautious; be careful to possess your soul. Do not allow the devil to take you into discouragement and into hopelessness. Keep your eyes on Jesus, *the author and finisher of our faith* (Heb. 12:2). God has already invested SO MUCH in you by giving His own Son for you, by having Him die for you, by having Him raised from the dead for you, and by having Him ascend to heaven to live there, “ever making intercession” for you (Heb. 7:25).

Through Christ, God has invested so much in you that whatever sin or failure you might have committed, the cost of fixing that problem will never exceed the cost of His investment in having saved you to start with! Let me give you an illustration: there is a man who has saved sacrificially all his life. Finally he wants to make an investment. He has saved one million dollars, so he buys a hotel. He now has it debt-free. One day, he gets a report that there has been a plumbing leak on the tenth floor, and the water has ruined all the carpeting on the floors below. He also gets a report that the ceiling in one of the rooms is falling in. Now, let me ask you, what is this man going to do? Is he going to spend one hundred thousand dollars to fix this problem or is he going to destroy the whole building and lose all of his one million dollar investment? Well, I think you know the answer! And so it is with Jesus, my friend! Jesus has invested so much in you, “ever making intercession” for you, that *He would rather fix you than destroy you*, or lose you in any way. You are His most precious investment and He has no intention to turn you over to the devil.

As long as you confess your sins, repent and mean business, He will fix you and fix you and fix you, even if it is 70×7 or if He has to do it a thousand times. The cost of Him fixing you will never exceed what He invested in you from the beginning which was the shedding of His precious life blood for you. Almighty God has absolutely no interest whatsoever in losing you, even though you may fail Him many times. Yet, if you are serious, my friend, after every failure, you will be more determined to go all for God and to be more careful.

Also, do not let the devil drag you to the altar in condemnation, but only go to the altar when the Holy Spirit calls you in love and gentleness, in holiness

and in the fear of God. Conviction by the Holy Spirit will always make you a better person, but the conviction that comes from the devil will always make you more and more miserable, depressed and hopeless. *In your patience possess ye your souls.* Be patient with yourself. Be as patient with yourself as God is! Oh, how patient God was with Abraham, it took him 20 years of waiting until Abraham was ready to be trusted with a son. How patient He was with Moses. It took 40 years of waiting for Moses before God could trust him enough to become a deliver. The Apostle John did not get to write until he was in his early 90's.

Since God is patient with you, you need to be patient with yourself. Of course not to the point of laziness, as it takes many years and many trials to make a seasoned saint. There are those who are impatient, who do a good work for the moment, but their lives are like brilliant meteors: they are like bright, momentary flashes in the eternal sky, but then they are gone! But those who are patient, who have learned patience by not getting what they wanted when they wanted it and how they wanted it, are the lower lights on the seashore of God's precious Kingdom, leading one soul after another into the Harbor of God's Rest.

In your patience possess ye your souls. Friends, know the difference between the Holy Spirit's convicting work and that of the devil. Know the greatness and the marvel of patience in the possession of your souls.

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