

'He Restrained Them Not'

Do you think juvenile delinquency is an evil that is peculiar to our day? If so, then you would do well to read your Bible, particularly such passages as are found in the book of First Samuel.

Eli was judge in Israel and a priest of the living God. When he grew old, instead of his children being a source of joy to that religious leader of olden days, they caused him much heartache and grief. After Eli had heard of the almost unimaginable sins which his sons committed--as recorded in First Samuel 2:22--he said unto them, "Why do ye such things? For I hear of your evil dealings by all this people...it is no good report that I hear. Ye make the Lord's people to transgress" (1 Samuel 2:23,24).

What a tragedy! The sons of this "man of God" were a stumblingblock to the Lord's people! However, the sons (though vile and wicked indeed) were not altogether to blame, for we are told in First Samuel 3:13, "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." Eli did not "curb" his children. He apparently just let them have their way. Perhaps he had the idea that "boys will be boys." Yes, but those boys grew up to be men — "vile men"!

This case alone should be enough to convince us parents that placing restrictions upon our children is needful if we expect them to grow up to be useful citizens and individuals whose manner of life will be worthy of "the gospel of Christ."

Fathers and mothers, think on these things!

- by John Iverson

What Might Have Been

How painful is the thought expressed by one of the great poets, John Greenleaf Whittier: "For of all sad words of tongue or pen, The saddest are these: 'It might have been!'"

Many a person has thrown away his life in drug addiction, (including alcohol). Numerous are those who have thrown away their marriages by becoming involved with others. Parents have often lost their children by neglecting them, or even granting them excessive freedom. Many are those who have thrown away a good name by some ungodly behavior. Do you not suppose that a vast majority of these later in life have shed tears of bitter remorse as they have thought of "what might have been"? It is too late, however, for all has been lost.

This bitter lament is found also in the Bible. It was expressed by the "weeping prophet," Jeremiah (8:20) as he sadly exclaimed, "THE HARVEST IS PART, THE SUMMER IS ENDED, AND WE ARE NOT SAVED." God had given His people ample time to repent and turn from their idolatrous, immoral ways. They had not shown any inclination to respond appropriately to His offers of mercy. When God was no longer willing to tolerate their wickedness, the Babylonian captivity became His means of teaching them a 70-year lesson. No doubt there were times in Babylon when they mourned and wept over "what might have been" if they had only listened to the voices of the prophets who had warned them.

Such lessons ought not to fall on deaf ears today. That individual who has stopped serving the Lord faithfully will one day realize what he has given up. It may be too late then to do anything about it. My dear wayward brother or sister, before the "harvest is past" and the "summer is ended," you ought to take advantage of a merciful God's offer of pardon by repentance, confession and prayer. Better that, by far, than to stand condemned in the judgment and have to think of "what might have been."

That individual, too, who has never obeyed the gospel should ponder seriously what hell is like (according to God's word) and submit himself to the rule of Christ in faith, repentance, confession and baptism before it is too late to do so. Far better this than to be separated eternally from God and think of "what might have been."

- by Barney Keith

Tomorrow

What a familiar word! What a dangerous word. "I will do it tomorrow." The tragedy of it all is that tomorrow never comes. If we don't do the things we should today, then today's things will never be done.

Solomon said, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27:1). So uncertain is tomorrow that we dare not to trust our souls to it. If your soul is not right with the Lord, now is the time to do something about it. The apostle Paul said, "I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation I have succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).

Tomorrow may find me unable to do the things I should do today. I may not be alive tomorrow. James says, "Come now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into the city and remain there a year and trade and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is a vapor, that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away. For ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this, or that" (James 4:13-15).

- by **Hollis Creel**

How Joseph Resisted Temptation

Joseph stands as a worthy role model on how to resist temptation. We have in mind the episode when he was seduced by Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:6-14). It is obvious that Joseph was susceptible to the temptation, but he kept himself from sin. He did so by:

1) Resisting the temptation from the very beginning.

"Joseph was handsome in form and appearance ... (and) his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." But he refused . . ."

2) He remembered his loyalty to his master, and did not want to wrong him. But, most of all, he remembered his commitment to God, and did not want to sin against Him.

... "(Joseph) said 'my master does not know what is with me in the house and he has committed all that he has to my hand . . . How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?'"

3) As the temptations continued, Joseph didn't listen to the one who was tempting him, even though she was surely offering several 'arguments' to justify this action. It is clear that he did his best to avoid the one who was placing this seduction before him.

"So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her."

4) When there was no other alternative, Joseph simply RAN from the temptation. There is no shame in fleeing from situations that may lead us to sin (1 Cor. 6:18, 2 Tim. 2:22).

"Joseph went into the house to do his work ... she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside."

As we face temptation day by day, let's remember the example of Joseph - and imitate it!

- by **Greg Gwin**