

Roll Away the Stone

By A Concerned Disciple

Do we often find ourselves clinging to preconceived notions regarding who we are and what we are able to do? Do we say, "I can't" or "I don't know how" without even thinking, when faced with a seemingly impossible situation? When a task seems extremely overwhelming, do we just give up? Or, do we roll the stone away, push forward, and take a more optimistic attitude of, "I can or I will," knowing that with God, all things are possible (Matt.19:26)? Have we forgotten that, if God says do it, it not only can be done, but must be done (1John 5:3-4)?

When Jesus was in the tomb, His stone was rolled away and He went on His way to carry out God's will. Do we sometimes act as though we are in a tomb, yet can't roll the stone away? Do we remain dead to the will of the Lord and the fight that we need to win, because we refuse to roll the stone away and take charge of our spiritual lives? Jesus said, "Take away the stone" (John 11:39).

A fight cannot be won by the side that puts forth no effort. A battle was never accidentally won, a hurdle was never accidentally overcome, and a race was never won by happenstance. Michael Phelps didn't just happen to break Olympic records and win multiple gold medals. It took daily persistence and practice during most of his life, along with inexhaustible strength and effort to stick to a plan that allowed him to finally succeed. He rolled his stone away, and did what needed to be done. Diligence, desire and the proper equipment must all be put into place, remembering that if only one is left out, we can expect nothing but failure (Eph. 6:13).

Let us get into shape with the proper diet of God's word, persistently feeding on it every day, sufficiently exercising to strengthen our minds and bodies by meeting with brethren at every opportunity, then putting on our gloves, or girding up our loins with the whole armor of God, to finally and fearlessly, roll the stone away and charge into battle, that we may win the fights and save the souls that are lost and dying in this world (Eph. 6:10-16).

What obstacles are preventing you from carrying out the commands that God has given you? Does a physical impairment slow you down? Then go slow — but go! Roll the stone away and move ahead one step at a time — but move! Are you emotionally bogged down with cares and concerns that make you too sick or tired to move forward? What about mental issues? Have you convinced yourself that you are trapped and nothing will help? Are you in a financial rut that convinces you to work yourself to death with no time for anything else? Are any of these reasons valid? Have you sought help for these problems, or are they excuses to spend more time doing what pleases you, while you forget about what pleases God? Are your talents buried in your tomb? Roll the stone away. You may fool yourself and others, but not God (Matt. 25:14-30).

Is there someone in your life who is trying to suck the spiritual life from your soul? Roll the stone away and let Jesus be the only one who influences your actions. Learn to say, "Get thee behind me Satan," and stand your ground. If you can't convince a negative influence in your life to become a positive one, then let that person know that God comes first, and no other will be the guiding influence in your life, and you will tolerate no other to control your thoughts, intents, actions or attitudes even if that decision results in your death (Matt. 10:34-39). "Resist the devil and he will flee from you"! Otherwise, the devil will see that he has an opening to drag you away — and then he will go after your loved ones (James 4:7-8).

Does past guilt prevent you from being all you can be? Jesus said that no man who looks back after putting his hand to the plow, is fit for the kingdom of heaven (Luke 9:62). Roll the stone away from the pain of your past, and move forward, resolving to let nothing or no one from the past take the reins. You wouldn't give your physical life over to someone from your past; why be so willing to give up your spiritual life?

Does a desire for things of this world block your spiritual growth with attachments that continue to pull you away from your Savior? Roll the stone of worldliness away, and the stone of excessive involvements that are not spiritual...and make Christ the focus of your life. No person, activity, endeavor or cause — regardless of how good it seems — is more important than the life and soul that was given to you by God. The salvation that He offers you through his word — that you have been blessed with and allowed to pass on to others, and especially those you love — is a gift like no other. It is not an imposition or burden for us to do what we can to spread the gospel, but a gift that should be received with thanksgiving and awe. How sad would be suddenly be if we came across a scripture that tells us that each man or woman is on his own and that we can only help ourselves, but no others? Would our attitude about teaching others, suddenly change? I wonder (Matt. 6:24).

If a man works day and night to find a cure for cancer, feed the hungry physical bread, save the unwanted and abused pets from a terrible fate, doggedly attend sports functions — rooting for his teams and supporting them with every fiber of his being, or works tirelessly to support a political candidate that is better or less bad than another — in an effort to save his children from future ill, “What does it profit?” (Mark 8:34-36 and Luke 9:23-25). Nothing to excess is good if it interferes with our duty to God and man. If spiritual food and support is less important than physical food and support, how will that affect all of those who are starving for God’s word? Who will feed them (Matt. 5:6)?

Are you willing to roll the stone away from the concerns of this world, putting the things of God first? Not only are there those who are hungry for God’s word, but there are those who are oblivious to their own needs concerning their souls. Spiritual anorexia prevents some from realizing that they need to be fed. It is up to each of us to recognize those needs in others and give them the care that is necessary for life and godliness. Allow nothing to stand in the way of your salvation and those who are influenced by you. Will you take control of your life and roll the stone away that keeps you from moving forward, and prevents you from saving a soul from death?...It could very well be your own!

Is Marriage Really Necessary?

"I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully" (1Tim. 5:14). In USA Today, Michael Medved reported that a third of all babies now being born in the U.S. are born to unmarried mothers. There are some women "raising" children without a husband who had no choice in the matter; however, to "conceive" a child without a husband is a choice! Medved said that music star, Madonna, well summed up American's attitude when she said, "We can't decide whether marriage is really something that's necessary." The Bible is profoundly clear on the matter: "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4).