



Destroyed By Distraction

Song 2:15

Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.

Amazingly, I have watched through the years and can attest for the fact that there is a tremendous thread of truth to what I want to preach on the morning.

I have watched families, and individuals, as well as, entire churches encounter devastating things that you would have thought would destroy them, but somehow they traversed that rocky terrain and went on to experience victory.

Only then to go on to find themselves losing the battle with something else that one might consider trivial.

It is a fact that often we find ourselves “braced” for the worse during horrific storms and perhaps that is the reason why we find victory in our lives. We have prepared ourselves for it.

But it is those day to day things that can become a real hindrance. It is the distractions of life that often overwhelm us.

Some of my favorite scriptures when I am in battle is found in the 91st Psalm.

Ps 91:1-4

1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

Also, another portion of that same chapter says...

Ps 91:13

Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

I want to point out three things among what David list as things that God will give us victory over.

In verse three he said... ***The Noisome Pestilences...***

We well know this could be anything that is small that is rarely more than just something that becomes a “bother” to us. While it is a bother, it IS NOT something that is lethal or deadly, etc. ***Simply small distractions of life!***

However, in verse 13, David moves on to list some things that are DEADLY. He said here that God would give victory over the **LION** and the **ADDER**. Both of these are not merely small and insignificant “bothers” of life!

Ps 91:13

*Thou shalt tread upon the **lion and adder**: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.*

These are things that we face that could inflict serious/deadly wounds!

There ARE some things that we face in the course of life that can and will inflict mortal wounds, however, the Lord promised that He would cause us to walk UPON these circumstances!

So even in the face of SERIOUS situations, we can become over-comers and NOT become distracted!

The next thing listed in verse 13 is...

Psalm 91:13 *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and **the dragon** shalt thou trample under feet.*

The **DRAGON**... this is simply a mythical creature that does not exist. How often have you known of people that become totally distracted by things that DO NOT exist?

Have you ever heard of the *"Interview at Weehawken"*?

Aaron Burr, the vice president of the United States, left his home on Richmond Hill near the southern end of Manhattan at first light on Wednesday, July 11, 1804.

He carried himself toward the barge on the bank of the Hudson River with the nonchalant air of a natural aristocrat strolling to an appointment with destiny.

No one can be sure what was in Burr's mind as a single oarsmen rowed him and William Van Ness, his devoted disciple and protégé, toward the New Jersey Palisades on the other side.

Meanwhile, just north of Richmond Hill, near present-day Wall Street, Alexander Hamilton was boarding a small skiff with two oarsmen, his physician, Dr. David Hosack, and his own loyal associate Nathaniel Pendleton.

They were headed for a duel.

The actual sight of the duel was a narrow ledge, about ten feet wide and forty feet long, located only twenty feet above the water.

It was a popular spot for duels precisely because of its relative isolation and inaccessibility.

By prearranged agreement, the Burr party arrived first, just before 7:00 AM. Hamilton's party arrived shortly thereafter, and the two seconds, Van Ness for Burr and Pendleton for Hamilton, conferred to review the agreed-upon rules of the interview.

It was called an "interview" because dueling was illegal. Burr and Hamilton then met in the middle. They each took ten paces, turned and fired. Two shots rang out. Hamilton's shot went high lodging into a tree. Aaron Burr's shot hit its intended target.

The one-ounce ball struck Hamilton on the right side, making a hole two inches in diameter about four inches above his hip.

The projectile fractured his rib cage, ricocheted off the rib and up through his liver and diaphragm, then splintered the second lumbar vertebra, where it lodged.

There was no hope.

Hamilton himself recognized his own condition almost immediately.

When Dr. Hosack rushed forward to examine him, Hamilton calmly declared, *"This is a mortal wound, Doctor," these were his last words* then lapsed into unconsciousness.

Hamilton died at two o'clock on the afternoon of July 12, 1804.

The funeral two days later was an extravaganza of mourning. The mahogany coffin was trailed by Hamilton's gray horse, with his boots and spurs reversed astride the empty saddle.

Behind it marched his widow and children, the political and legal leaders of the city, the students and faculty of Columbia College, bank presidents, army and navy officers, local clergy and foreign dignitaries, followed by several hundred ordinary citizens.

The overwhelming popular opinion was that Vice President Aaron Burr had murdered Alexander Hamilton in cold blood.

Newspaper editors compared Burr to Benedict Arnold.

Burr fled the city in disgrace, not stopping until he reached Georgia.

So there you have it:

Hamilton safely buried and assuming legendary proportions as a martyr; Burr slipping out of town, eventually headed toward bizarre adventures in the American West, but already consigned to political oblivion.

But why?

What were these two prominent American statesman doing on the ledge in the first place?

Granted they were there because Burr challenged Hamilton, and Hamilton concluded he could not refuse the challenge without staining his honor.

But what had Hamilton done to so enrage Burr?

He had made derogatory comments about Aaron Burr. Aaron Burr sent Alexander Hamilton a letter asking him to publicly apologize.

Hamilton snidely refused.

Burr decided that not only did he want Hamilton to apologize for the most recent slander but for fifteen years of slander.

Again, Hamilton refused stating he couldn't retract what he thought were true statements.

Aaron Burr, the vice president of the United States, allowed Alexander Hamilton's petty comments to get the better of him.

Song 2:15

Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.

The vineyards, beautiful with fragrant blossoms, point to her covenant of love, and the foxes, the little foxes, which might destroy those united vineyards, point to all the threat and little enemies and adverse circumstances which threaten to gnaw and destroy love in the blossom ere it has reached the ripeness of full enjoyment.

These little jackals were seldom more than fifteen inches high.

Let the blossoming love of the soul be without injury and restraint. Let the rising faith and affection be carefully guarded.

Vines that promised well, spoiled.

Few things are more beautiful than the beginnings of the Divine life.

But few things are more sad than to see all this hopefulness and promise spoiled. And such things do happen.

Gal 5:7

Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

How often in our Lord's ministry had he to bear this disappointment! Again and again there would come to him those about whom bright hope might have been cherished - good-natured, well-disposed, warm-hearted, intelligent, pure minded, generous, much esteemed, kindly, lovable, and beloved.

Such people were irresistibly drawn to him, and for a while they would follow him; but then after a while we find something offending them, and they go away.

Christ drew their portrait in his parable of the sower, where he likens such to the seed sown on the stony ground. Quick to spring up and present the appearance of vigorous life, but as quick to wither away when the sun's scorching heat smote them as it smote all else.

There is yet the spoiling. The vines are not cut down, they are not hindered from bringing forth any fruit.

What hinders them?

It is not, as the mournful eightieth Psalm states,

Ps 80:13

The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.

It is not said, as in the sixteenth verse, "*It is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.*"

It is not said, as in the twelfth verse of the eightieth Psalm, "*Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck off her grapes?*"

No! It is the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the tender grapes.

I will not be destroyed by a high-handed, bold, Heaven-defying sin.

But there are other masters of the soul, spoilers of the grapes of God.

"*Little*," so we call them. And "*Fox-Like*," for they lie in wait and lurk and hide; they have as Jesus said, "*their holes*," and there they burrow and bury themselves out of sight.

It has often been pointed out how Daniel might have prayed to God notwithstanding the king's decree, and yet never have incurred the awful peril of the lion's den, if he would only have shut his window when he prayed.

But he had to open it, and so, of course, he was seen. But he would not compromise with what he deemed his duty to God even in so slight degree as this.

And the martyrs, too. The Roman judges used perpetually to remind the early Christians how trivial was the concession asked for - just sprinkling a grain or two of incense on an altar, that was all.

And the little foxes grow into great ones.