

## “Who Hindered You From Obeying The Truth?”

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By Kyle Pope

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built bigger barns but was not “rich toward God” when he died unexpectedly (Luke 12:16-21). The story is told of an ancient king who lit lamps all around his palace then sent a herald to proclaim that all criminals who would come to his palace while the lamps burned could be pardoned. When the lamps went out it would be too late. What if we wait until the lamps burn out on our opportunity for God’s mercy? Paul talked with the Roman governor Felix about the gospel. When he grew afraid he told him to go away until he had a “convenient time” (Acts 24:24-25). On August 24, AD 79 a mountain in Italy known as Vesuvius erupted spewing a cloud of gas and ash into the air coming down on the towns of Pompei and Herculaneum. Citizens who were in the city were buried in the ash with no time to escape. Josephus tells us that Felix – who thought he would have a “convenient time” to speak to Paul again died there that day (Antiquities 20.7.2). Don’t let this be what hinders you.

**Fear of Men.** Jesus taught, “My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!” (Luke 12:4-5). I heard a news report some years ago about a woman who struggled with an intruder in her house who attacked her. In spite of her fear, she fought the man and strangled him to death. The fear we may feel from men must be put in perspective. It is nothing compared to the absolute terror we may one day feel if we find our souls unprepared in the hands of Him who is able to cast both soul and body into hell.

**Love of the World.** This world offers many pleasures, but none of them will last forever. The apostle John warns us not to love these things because all of them are “passing away” (1 John 2:15-17). How foolish and remorseful we will feel one day if we have sacrificed our souls for the few minutes of pleasure this life has to offer only to forfeit an eternity of joy, peace, and satisfaction with our heavenly Father in the next life.

**Carelessness.** The church in Laodicea was rebuked because they were “neither cold nor hot” but only “lukewarm” (Revelation 3:14-16). Ours is a world of apathy. There are few zealots. There are few true rebels. Many just can’t find any reason within them to even care about faith in God. Care about something often comes only after we see the consequence of carelessness. Don’t let carelessness hinder you – too much is at stake.

**Doubt.** James wrote, “he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind” (James 1:6). You can’t pin down a wave; it is ever changing. It doesn’t commit itself to stay in one place but moves as soon as it has started in one direction. Some people are like that. History tells of an Anglo-Saxon king named Redwald (c. 599–624). He was the king of East Anglia in the ancient British Isles, but he couldn’t commit to fully follow Christ. He set up in the same church building an altar to Christ and altar to pagan gods. Don’t let doubt hinder you!

**Slavery to Sin.** Jesus taught, “whoever commits sin is a slave of sin” (John 8:34). Being a Christian isn’t easy. It calls upon us to deny ourselves and submit to God. Perhaps what hinders you is sin. Perhaps you like to drink a little. Maybe you engage in immorality. You may want the freedom to sleep in on Sunday, use whatever kind of profanity you want to, wear whatever you want, and have friends that do whatever you like. That makes you free, but you are actually in the worst kind of slavery imaginable. I once met a man who “hacked paint” – a practice that involved spraying paint into a paper bag and inhaling it for the high he could get from it. He started doing it for the pleasure it gave him. The problem was, a person who does this little by little it destroys his brain as he becomes enslaved to it. That’s how sin is! Whatever sin it may be that hinders us from truly following Christ, it isn’t worth selling our soul to it. Don’t let yourself wait until your mind is overcome, your loved ones (in Christ) are alienated from you and all avenues of rescue are exhausted. Be set free from sin today through obedience to the truth.

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