

ENTERING WITH ONE EYE

“Also, if your eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it away from you. It is better for you to enter one-eyed into life than to be thrown with two eyes into the fiery Gehenna.” – *Matthew 18:9*

In response to the article, [Leaving as Victors, Not Victims](#), we received many emails of thanks and appreciation to the Associate Writers who shared their experiences about leaving the Watchtower organization as victors. All of the emails, some very personal, were encouraging. But some expressed the sentiment that though they left the organization, they do not consider themselves as victors . . . yet. We marvel at those emails because what those dear brothers and sisters do not realize is that they are indeed victors . . . now! They may be battered and bruised. They may carry scars that have not yet healed. They may have left behind family and friends. But they escaped with their faith intact. They are the very ones Jesus was referring to above. They may have left a part of themselves behind and are entering life ‘one-eyed,’ but they are **entering** nonetheless!

The surrounding verses to the above scripture show that Jesus is referring to surviving the misleading errors of men. Notice the context:

“Woe to the world because of the stumbling blocks! Of course, it is inevitable that stumbling blocks will come, but woe to the man through whom the stumbling block comes!” – *Matthew 18:7*

First, Jesus warns that there will be stumbling blocks. The path to life will be paved with them – men who are deceitful and men who are blind who may have good intentions, but bad information. They can be found practically every where you turn. Learning to successfully encounter them is part of the journey. But, in spite of the inevitability of their existence, those ‘stumbling stones’ will be held accountable. Indeed, there is trouble ahead for those who stumble the ‘little ones’ – those of Christ’s brothers who might be considered ‘the least ones.’

“Then they too will answer with the words: ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister to you?’ Then he will answer them, saying: ‘Truly I say to you, **to the extent that you did not do it to one of these least ones, you did not do it to me.**’ These will depart into everlasting cutting-off, but the righteous ones into everlasting life.” – *Matthew 25:44-46*

And to those of his who are entangled with these ‘stumbling stones,’ Jesus tells them to flee, even if it means leaving behind a vital part of themselves.

“If, then, your hand or your foot makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it away from you. It is better for you to enter into life maimed or lame than to be thrown with two hands or two feet into

the everlasting fire. Also, if your eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it away from you. It is better for you to enter one-eyed into life than to be thrown with two eyes into the fiery Gehenna.” – **Matthew 18:8-9**

And Jesus reminds us that our ‘one-eyed’ brothers, in spite of their loss, continue to have the Father’s favor:

“See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my Father who is in heaven.” – **Matthew 18:10**

That is the victory! Not walking away unscathed, but walking away scathed and all! We wonder who really leaves an oppressive religious organization with no ill-effects? Perhaps those who were not whole-souled in the first place. Those who went through the motions of pretending to be a part of the organization, but who never put their hearts into it. Some might refer to that as hypocrisy; some might refer to it as wisdom. We leave that judgment for others to determine. But we can say, for a certainty, that any Jehovah’s Witness who truly believed in the teachings of the Governing Body and who served with the organization whole-souled ‘as to Jehovah and not to men’ (**Colossians 3:23**) are the ones who suffered, and will suffer, the most.

But they are also the very ones who will gain the most!

“Happy are those who have been persecuted for righteousness’ sake, **since the Kingdom of the heavens belongs to them**. Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake. Rejoice and be overjoyed, since **your reward is great in the heavens**, for in that way they persecuted the prophets prior to you.” – **Matthew 5:10-12**

These men and women have been through the fire of refinement. They have learned the skills of the heavens – the fruitage of the spirit:

“On the other hand, the fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.” – **Galatians 5:22-23**

They were able to endure as long as they did because of their love for God and their patience for their brothers. They experienced joy in their ministry, even though portions of their message was not correct. They were not immediately expelled because they exercised patience, kindness, mildness, and self-control. And the more they were persecuted, the more they endeavored to practice goodness. All of these experiences developed the ‘tested quality of faith.’

“Because of this you are greatly rejoicing, though for a short time, if it must be, you have been distressed by various trials, in order

that **the tested quality of your faith**, of much greater value than gold that perishes despite its being tested by fire, **may be found a cause for praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**” – *1 Peter 1:6-7*

True faith is the ability to believe in and hope for the unseen in spite of what appears to the eyes. These spirit-developed qualities are of great value in the eyes of God (*1 Peter 3:4*) because even though their faith and hope was misplaced, it is simply a matter of inserting the correct information and the correct hope, and they are able to continue on and excel in the kingdom of the heavens.

For example, look at the large number of Overseers among Jehovah’s Witnesses who are stepping down from their positions of oversight and continue in association with the organization for the purpose of helping their brothers to see the true light of the kingdom. When mankind is weighed down, pressured from all sides and under constant agitation, it produces diamonds. It is because of this very history that they have become excellent teachers and shepherds, far more skilled and far more valuable to their brothers than they were before opening their eyes to what was occurring with them and around them.

Look at this ministry. It is also a product of coming out of that fiery furnace. It is precisely because we were so oppressed and persecuted, as ones who dared to confess union with Christ, that led us to delve deeply into the matter of sonship. It is our training as public speakers, preachers and teachers through the Kingdom Ministry School that developed our ability to clearly articulate our message. It is our experiences with Elders who were not qualified as teachers or comforters that helped us to know what true shepherding looks like. And it is the ignorance and the arrogance of the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses that provides the ‘manna’ that allows us to reveal the true Christ and his plain and open teachings to our brothers in a way that they can appreciate and accept.

We wonder if it were not for our hurtful experiences with the Watchtower organization, would we have begun this ministry? If it were not for the truly God-oriented, ministry-conscious, brother-loving nature of many among Jehovah’s Witnesses, would this ministry have spread as rapidly as it has? And if it were not for the encouragement of those initial faithful Witnesses, would the non-Witness community have taken note or even been aware of this ministry? Only the Father and Christ Jesus know for sure. But it emphasizes this point:

“Therefore, subject yourselves to God; but oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you. **Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you.** Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you indecisive ones. Give way to misery and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into despair. **Humble yourselves in the eyes of Jehovah, and he will exalt you.**” – *James 4:7-10*

All of our ‘one-eyed’ brothers will be exalted in due time if they draw close to the Father, humble themselves before Christ, and do not tire out. We, too, have scars, but they do not stop us. We, and many others, wear our ‘purple hearts’ as badges of honor, and we limp on!

“Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a person is sowing, this he will also reap; because the one sowing with a view to his flesh will reap corruption from his flesh, but **the one sowing with a view to the spirit will reap everlasting life from the spirit.** So let us not give up in doing what is fine, for **in due time we will reap if we do not tire out.** So, then, as long as we have the opportunity,* let us work what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith.” *Galatians 6:7-10*

Your Faith Has Made You Well

All of our ‘one-eyed’ brothers who have escaped the domination of the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses with their faith in God in tact ARE VICTORS! So many who have left have lost their faith and have become agnostic, even atheists. They are the very ones Jesus was referring to when he chastised the scribes and Pharisees:

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you travel over sea and dry land to make one proselyte, and when he becomes one, **you make him a subject for Gehenna twice as much so as yourselves.**” – *Matthew 23:15*

These proselytes once believed in God before the scribes and Pharisees grabbed hold of them. Afterward, many could no longer see the love, beauty and goodness of the Father, nor could they accept the mercy ministry of Christ Jesus. This is what is happening to many today who have gone through the wringer with oppressive religious organizations. When those organizations destroy the boundary of personal dignity and spiritual intimacy, and demand allegiance ‘in the name of God,’ our brothers begin to lose sight of their true Leader (*Matthew 23:10*) and the ‘Chief Agent and Perfecter of our Faith.’ (*Hebrews 12:2*) But they can in time regain the balance, if they can learn to separate man from God. If they can pry their minds away from the indoctrination, and forgive themselves for being so misled.

An account during Jesus’ ministry demonstrates that running away from faith is not the solution. Only faith can heal those among us who are broken:

“Now there was a woman who had had a flow of blood for years. She had suffered much at the hands of many physicians and had spent all her resources, and she was no better but, rather, had become worse. When she heard the reports about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his outer garment, for she kept saying: ‘If I touch just his outer garments, I will get well.’ And immediately her flow of blood dried up, and she sensed in her body that she had been healed of the grievous sickness. Immediately Jesus realized in himself that power had gone out of him, and he turned around in the crowd and asked: ‘Who touched my outer garments?’ But his disciples said to him: ‘You see the crowd pressing in on you, and you ask, “Who touched me?”’” However, he

was looking around to see who had done this. The woman, frightened and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. He said to her: **‘Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed from your grievous sickness.’** – *Mark 5:25-34*

This woman believed she had been healed by touching Jesus’ garment. But Jesus clarified the matter and expressly informed her that it was not the garment that healed her, it was her own faith.

In the same way, our broken brothers can be healed by regaining and exercising faith – faith in Jesus as ‘the way, the truth and the life’ (*John 14:6*), faith in our adoption that was ‘foreordained from the founding of the world’ (*Ephesians 1:3-5*), faith in our inheritance as the free children of God (*Romans 8:14-17*), and faith in the unfailing promises of God who cannot lie. (*Hebrews 6:18*)

Faith is an individual endowment that has much to do with one’s own life experiences along with one’s individual personality traits. So the actual amount of faith one has will vary from person to person. Some will have faith rather naturally, some will have to work harder at it. But in either case, whatever faith one has can be strengthened by exercise. By taking small steps into the unknown, the uncomfortable, the unfamiliar, and making moral decisions that stem from higher choices and higher values, one develops trust. When trust is built up, faith in the next step becomes easier and easier. And this faith-movement becomes your new living way of operating so that faith becomes your norm. This is not a hypothesis. It is a reality derived from and assured by firsthand living.

A good first step is the upcoming Memorial Supper on April 14, 2014. This is an occasion when our broken and ‘one-eyed’ brothers and sisters can begin developing and exercising their faith by entering the unknown, the uncomfortable, the unfamiliar communion with Christ Jesus. They can jump-starting the healing process by openly partaking and confessing union with Christ Jesus in spite of what has transpired in their lives. This evening can be the opportunity to take a stand against the Devil’s machinations designed to destroy faith and separate them from their Heavenly Father. It can be the needed catalyst to regaining their spiritual balance – a spiritual healing so that their ‘one eye’ can shine brightly and light up their whole body, even the whole world.

“The lamp of the body is your eye. When your eye is focused, your whole body is also bright; but when it is envious, your body is also dark. Be alert, therefore, that the light that is in you is not darkness. Therefore, if your whole body is bright with no part of it dark, it will all be as bright as when a lamp gives you light by its rays.” – *Luke 11:34-36*

“You are the light of the world. A city cannot be hid when located on a mountain. People light a lamp and set it, not under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it shines on all those in the house.

Likewise, **let your light shine before men, so that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens.**” – *Matthew 5:14-16*

To all our brothers who have regained or maintained their faith in the Father and Christ Jesus, we encourage you to reach out to your broken and ‘one-eyed’ brothers and invite them to share the Memorial Supper with you. Help them to forgive themselves and to regain their faith in the only real hope available – everlasting personality survival in the kingdom of the heavens where our Lord has already prepared places for them.

“In the house of my Father are many dwelling places. Otherwise, I would have told you, for I am going my way to prepare a place **for you**. Also, if I go my way and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will receive you home to myself, so **that where I am you also may be**. And where I am going, you know the way.” – *John 14:2-4*

The kingdom message is especially for such ones:

“Hearing them, he said: ‘Healthy people do not need a physician, but those who are ill do. Go, then, and learn what this means: “I want mercy, and not sacrifice.” For I came to call, not righteous people, but sinners.’” – *Matthew 9:12-13*

“For the Son of man came to seek and to save what was lost.” – *Luke 19:10*

Though they may have but ‘one eye,’ their spiritual vision can become 20/20, and all that was left behind can be restored:

“Jesus said: ‘Truly I say to you, no one has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the good news who will not get 100 times more now in this period of time—houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the coming system of things, everlasting life.’” – *Mark 10:29-30*

Our challenge, dear brothers, is to do whatever it takes to enter life, even if it means dragging a lame leg, limping on the other, wearing an arm sling and an eye patch – and even entering alone. It is ‘the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.’ (*Matthew 24:13*)

“By your endurance you will preserve your lives.” – *Luke 21:19*

“For you need endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the fulfillment of the promise.” – *Hebrews 10:36*

We encourage all to accept the challenge of maintaining, developing or regaining your faith. Accept the invitation of sonship and communion with Christ. And trust **only** in the Father and Christ Jesus for salvation.

“May the God who gives hope fill you with all joy and peace by your trusting in him, so that you may abound in hope with power of holy spirit.” – *Romans 15:13*

We welcome your comments.

“Elaia Luchnia”
