

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

April 11, 2010

"Get behind Me, Satan!"

by David King

"From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, 'Far be it from You, Lord, this shall not happen to You!' But He turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men'" (Matt. 16:21-23).

This testy exchange between Jesus and Peter occurred right after Peter's famous confession that Jesus was the Christ (v. 13-19). Whatever pride Peter felt in that earlier incident was quickly smashed in this later episode, revealing the cleverness of our adversary.

First, consider this exchange from the perspective of Jesus. He not only knew how His life would end, He knew that it **had** to be that way — there were no other alternatives for accomplishing God's plan. He began telling His apostles these details regarding His fate so they would be prepared for it when it happened. So when one of them responded with a rebuke, Jesus saw it for what it was: an attempt by Satan to discourage Him from finishing His mission. He came down hard on Peter, not out of personal animosity, but as a means of self-defense. If He allowed Himself to listen to too much of this kind of flattery, it would be much more difficult to finish His course. He had to put an end to this kind of talk. He pushed aside the personal friendship and dealt firmly with the temptation.

There is another lesson, and a more interesting one, when we examine the exchange from Peter's perspective. There is no doubt that Peter rebuked Jesus solely from a sense of loyalty to his Master. The idea of Jesus' work coming to such a humiliating and bizarre end was unthinkable. Peter's rebuke was not intended to be hurtful, nor a message from Satan. Peter was ignorant, but well-intended.

So when Jesus turned on him with such a sharp response, Peter was dumfounded. "Satan"? "An offense"? "Not mindful of the things of God"? How those words must have stung Peter's ears! If he knew his own heart, Peter would **never** say or do anything to offend His Master. Yet here was Jesus turning Peter's admonition back on his head with uncharacteristic ferocity.

Peter did not argue back, so perhaps he took Jesus' words to heart. His later behavior at Jesus' arrest and trial, however, suggest that he still didn't understand what Jesus was talking about. He may not have understood, but at least he no longer tried to rebuke Jesus.

Whether Peter got the message or not, there is a lesson here for us when we feel compelled to set a brother straight. Whatever my intentions, my words of kindly rebuke can end up doing Satan's work, if I am not careful to understand the circumstances my friend is dealing with. Peter misspoke because he did not see the bigger picture. We, too, can cause a brother to stumble by not taking the time to understand the larger context. Before we rebuke, we should take the time to listen.