

The Screwtape Letters ~ Letter 15

Living in the Past Worrying About the Future or Living in the Present with the Hope of Eternal Life February 14th, 2021

Before reading the following overview of this Letter, we suggest that you click on the link above to read the short Letter 15 for today's Illustrated Message, which will help you understand the following message.

Screwtape says; *“The humans live in time but our Enemy destines them to eternity. He therefore, I believe, wants them to attend chiefly to two things, to eternity itself, and to that point of time which they call the Present. For the Present is the point at which time touches eternity.”*

The devil would rather have a Christian live in the past or the future but not in the present which leads to eternity in heaven. How often do we reflect on the past experiences where the work of Holy Spirit was demonstrated in signs, wonders and miracles, and the present work of the Holy Spirit in our lives is meanwhile grieved? No matter how good they were, we need to see and know what the Holy Spirit is wanting to do today in our lives and churches.

Let's read what the Prophet Isaiah says about the past in **Isaiah 43:18-19**; *“18 Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. 19 Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”*

How about past failures that keep a Christian from living in the present move of the Holy Spirit, simply because of not truly receiving the forgiveness of past sins? So long as the devil can keep a Christian believing the lies about past failures, condemnation is guaranteed to follow and keep them walking in the flesh and not in the Spirit while living in the present.

The Apostle Paul says in **Romans 8:1-2**; *“8 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.”*

The reason why a Christian would feel condemned, is that they are walking according to the flesh and not according to the Spirit. When a Christian walks in the Spirit there is no condemnation for past sins, because they believe that when confession and repentance are made about past sins, they are not only cleansed but it is never to be remembered against them by God again. This is why it's very important to not grieve the present work of the Holy Spirit in your life by believing the lies of the devil about your past sins.

All the 'could ofs', 'would ofs' and 'should ofs' about the past, simply keep a Christian living under condemnation, believing in lies that not only keep them from the Holy Spirit's present work in their lives but leads to fear, doubt and unbelief about the future. Fear, which is of the devil, paralyzes people because he has them living in the past and afraid about the future. When you can't enjoy and walk in the Spirit in the present, it makes it difficult to have joy looking to eternity.

1 John 1:8-10 says; *“8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”*

Isn't it wonderful to know that Jesus cleanses us from our sins? It's not just a covering of sins like it was under the Old Testament with the blood of slain animal sacrifices. Jesus allowed His blood to be spilt to cleanse us from our sins and remove them from us as far as the east is from the west when we confess them to Him. If you continue in sin, that's a different story, unless you repent of the sin and then He'll forgive you of them also. He

won't leave you or forsake you. I'm not preaching that you have eternal security, because although He'll never leave you, you can leave Him by your choice.

We know that pretty well every day some temptation comes across our path and we sin. We're still in this world where we do fall into sin, where the Screwtape's or Wormwood's are sent to trip the Christian up to get them to fall, but if we confess those sins, Jesus is faithful to forgive us and cleanse us.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 says; *"17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not [a]imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. 21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."*

The devil wants the Christian to worry about the future with all its uncertainty's, but this is not what Jesus wants, for He wants us to live in the present and give no thought to the future cares but rather focus on eternity. To live in a present relationship with Him through the power of the Holy Spirit, to obey Him, to do His will, to evangelize, and look forward to spending eternity with Him.

Jesus says in **Matthew 6:25-34**, and is so comforting for us in what we're living in right now; *"25 Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one [a]cubit to his [b]stature? 28 "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not [c]arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."*

Jesus isn't moved by the economy nor the virus that is raging around the world. He wants you to not worry and to trust Him to heal you. This should bring the Christian great comfort and peace, even if troubles come during the day, the Holy Spirit is there to help you and deliver you from the snares that the enemy would want to set.

Satan has people in terror and fear about the present pandemic, fear about future wars, the global agenda and communism, which are all meant to kill, steal and destroy. But Jesus' words bring comfort that He's looking after you and if need be, He'll multiply your bread like He did the loaves and fishes and He'll multiply the oil in your vats as He did in the Old Testament. Remember....nothing is impossible for God!

Philippians 4:6-7 says; *"6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

It's crazy how the world wants you to believe that being anxious is just a normal part of life. But it isn't! Anxiety and fear go hand in hand and are of the devil. The peace of God is what the born again Christian who has been water baptized is to walk in.

Screwtape says this about God; *“He would therefore have them continually concerned either with eternity (which means being concerned with Him) or with the Present--either meditating on their eternal union with, or separation from, Himself, or else obeying the present voice of conscience, bearing the present cross, receiving the present grace, giving thanks for the present pleasure.”*

God wants you to give Him thanks for what's going on presently in your life. It doesn't matter the past failures either, but if you need to make reconciliation and ask forgiveness from someone for past sins, you need to do it. Jesus says that when we forgive others who have sinned against us, we're forgiven of our sins. Trials, temptations and persecutions will come in your life as that's what Jesus said, but as you depend on Him every day, He'll cause you to overcome.

Mary and Martha are a good example of two individuals; one lived in the present with Christ that leads to eternity and one could not live and enjoy the present Christian life with Christ, but rather was concerned about so many things, both present and future.

The story is in **Luke 10:38-42**; *“38 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at [a]Jesus' feet and heard His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.” 41 And [b]Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”*

This is what Jesus wants for you today. Fellowship with Him today as you read His Word. Find out what He wants you to do, what He wants you to say, find out what His will is for you today.

The devil would like to have the Christian to be like Martha, who was worried and troubled about many things and as a result, missed out on what Jesus wanted to do in her life at the present. I bet if both Mary and Martha were to sit together a Jesus' feet and enjoy the present, Jesus would have probably supernaturally prepared a 'skip the dishes meal' at the snap of His fingers, just as He did when He multiplied the loaves and fishes. Jesus wants to move supernaturally in your life today as you rest in relationship with Him. The devil wants to get you out of the supernatural and into the natural, but Jesus makes it very clear to seek the Kingdom of God first (the supernatural).

Jesus says in **Matthew 6:33-34**; *“33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”*

When you put Jesus first, He will give you the supernatural wisdom and understanding in the present on how to plan for the future without being anxious about it.

So long as the devil can keep a Christian operating in the natural, rational, reasoning and worry about the future, there will be no supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit in the present, but rather a lot of 'could ofs', 'would ofs' and 'should ofs', that keep them in fear, doubt and unbelief about the past, present and the future. Not one of us is exempt from these thoughts, but today, we realize that Jesus doesn't want us living in the past.

Screwtape says; *“In a word, the Future is, of all things, the thing least like eternity. It is the most completely temporal part of time--for the Past is frozen and no longer flows, and the Present is all lit up with eternal rays. Hence the encouragement we have given to all those schemes of thought such as Creative Evolution, Scientific Humanism, or Communism, which fix men's affections on the Future, on the very core of temporality. Hence nearly all vices are rooted in the future. Gratitude looks to the past and love to the present; fear, avarice, lust, and ambition look ahead.”*

It seems like the day and age we are living in with all the biological warfare and globalist agendas to set up a one world communist government, are what the Bible clearly foretold about the signs of the times and the end of age as we know it.

Jesus talks about this in **Matthew 24:4-14**; *“4 And Jesus answered and said to them: ‘Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for [a]all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, [b]pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows. 9 ‘Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. 10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.’”*

It’s clear that Jesus is calling Christian’s to endure to the end. Put your hand to the plow and don’t look back. You each have a call on your life by Jesus to do His will, so you must step into it and do it. All the more reason to fix your attention on what the Holy Spirit is presently doing in your life and be prepared for eternity, because it is evident more than ever that there is a great falling away among Christians who forsake living in the present for cares about the future and have and are denying the truth in exchange for lies.

Jesus also says in **Matthew 6:19-21**; *“19 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

It’s good to examine your heart today and find out what treasure is in it. Is it the present relationship with Christ which leads to eternity or is it the treadmill, spinning on a wheel of past failures and/or successes and fear about what the future holds?

John 14:1-6 says; *“14 Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father’s house are many [a]mansions; if it were not so, [b]I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know.” 5 Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”*

Jesus articulates so clearly that there is eternal life in heaven with no one else but through Him. All other religions are idolatry made from the devil himself so that he can get the worship. But it ends in disaster for him for eternity.

Acts 4:12 says; *“12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”*

The Apostle Paul says in **1 Timothy 2:5**; *“5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.”*

Again, Jesus says in **John 3:36**; *“36 He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”*

We came out from God’s wrath when we accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, and today, He wants you to continue to abide in that life.

The following should be every true Christians confession; “I don’t live in the past days of successes or failures and I don’t worry about the future, but I’m going to live in the present and look forward to eternity with Jesus in Heaven.”

Philippians 3:12-14 in the Amplified Bible says; *“12 Not that I have already obtained it [this goal of being Christlike] or have already been made perfect, but I actively press on [a]so that I may take hold of that [perfection] for which Christ Jesus took hold of me and made me His own. 13 [b]Brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have made it my own yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the [heavenly] prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”*