
THE DANGER OF DEMAS

The Parable of the Sower is well known, but I want to begin by highlighting one verse from that parable, Matthew 13.22:

“As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfaithful...”

I think the Bible illustrates this unfortunate reality very well, in the story of Paul’s fellow worker, Demas. You might be thinking to yourself, “Demas? Who’s that? I’ve never heard of him before!” Sure enough, there’s a reason we don’t talk about Demas too often; he’s not a major Biblical character. There are only three references to him in Paul’s letters, but they have a story to tell.

We don’t know the exact date that the different epistles were written, but we do have a rough idea of the *order* in which they were written, and when you look at the scriptures that mention Demas in chronological order, they tell the story of one man’s spiritual decline:

- *“My fellow worker...” (Philemon 24)*. At this point, Demas is someone who works with Paul, someone Paul can count on, someone who shares in Paul’s circumstances and hardships.
- *“Luke the beloved physician sends you greetings, also Demas” (Colossians 4.14)*. Here, it almost seems that Demas is an afterthought in Paul’s mind.
- *“...for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica...” (2 Timothy 4.10)*. At this point, Demas is no longer with Paul at all, and has deserted him.

Demas was led astray by his love for the world, and every Christian faces that same danger:

“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5.8). Peter gives us this warning to remind us what the devil is really like; if our encounters with the devil were actually this obvious, we’d be sure to run! But he is much more crafty than that. Most often, the devil doesn’t devour Christians all at once; he destroys them by biting off one piece at a time, while we barely notice. Demas didn’t go from a devoted disciple one day to a deserter the next. Instead, he seemed to drift away, step by step.

We need to make sure that the same thing doesn’t happen to us. I suppose it has always been this way, but we live in a time when there seem to be so many “cares of this world”: our jobs, our education, our families, our children’s athletic careers, our health, TV, technology, social media, our hobbies, and the list goes on and on.

And I’m not saying these are *bad* things, but they are things which threaten to choke our faith, little by little.

“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

Pay close attention to the trajectory of your life and cling tightly to Jesus, as this world tries to pull you away from Him.

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