

# Hurdles

## To Be Faced in the True Christian Race

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Our lesson today could simply be called 'Hurdles'. One may think that to be a peculiar subject to talk about, yet it is in expression of something that we have to meet all the time. No doubt all of us know what a 'hurdles race' is. It is a race where they have obstacles placed in the way of the runners, which they have to jump over.

Of all types of races known to the world, the 'Christian race' is a 'hurdle race', because from the very beginning we have very strong, active opposition (from Satan and his agents). (The Bible reveals) 'The reason for this, is, we have been born into Satan's kingdom, subject to him and fully under his control. We are not so sure that we realize this as keenly as we ought to realize; but it is true nevertheless, that we have been born subject to the devil and his power, and he has been our master, and has controlled us altogether, from the moment we were born until the time that God breaks his power.

Apostles Paul and John bring this out, clearly. John says, "The whole world lieth in wickedness." (1 John 5:19). Paul said that Satan is "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (Ephes.2:2).

Everyone not fully surrendered to God, has the power of Satan working in them, and controlling them, (and of course they are not aware of this). He controls the very thoughts and suggestions we have (and those of others), so as to make us think they are the sensible reasonings of our own mind, but instead, they are the thoughts of the devil who has charge of us.

Jesus, Himself, acknowledged that. He said, "The prince of this world (or the ruler of this world) cometh, and hath nothing in me." (John 14:30). That was very suggestive. It meant, he has something on everybody else, but nothing on Him (Jesus). Of course, anyone under God's power and control is delivered from that. Jesus

revealed this at the time of His conversation with Paul. Jesus said: "Delivering thee from the people, and from 'the Gentiles', unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the 'power of Satan' unto 'God', that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me." (Acts 26:17-18).

It is a positive fact that there is no neutral ground; every human being on the earth is either under the dominion and control of Satan, or under the power and control of God. There is no in-between position. Some people say, "The devil never bothers me," and others have said, "Why, that is very strange? the devil does things? I never heard about the devil doing such things!"

He said, we were talking to a woman who had a granddaughter going through an oppression. In the course of our conversation, we were telling her how Satan controlled such people. She said, "I never knew that the devil could do such things (and I have gone to church all my life)."

If we had told her that ministers of the denominational churches are under the control of the devil, she would have been shocked, I suppose; but it is a fact, so long as they do not teach, and practice the whole Truth of God (they would not have a Holy Spirit's guidance). (John 14:17, John 1;12, Galatians 3;2, 22).

We want to speak a little about Satan's control, because it is the cause of all of our hurdles (in the 'Christian race'). Satan is a mighty power; he was formerly an archangel in Heaven, and he and the demons under his control are superior in power to human beings; ..and, 'while we go his way', he does not seem to oppose us very much, nor come out openly and fight us, and we 'have to take what comes along'.

But the moment we accept the Truth, and have any measure of faith in God, or any desire to really know and obey God, then the entire power of the evil one is arrayed against us, and, he puts all kinds of opposition and all kinds of hindrances in the way, to hinder us from 'getting to know God'. That is where our opposition comes from.

This is brought out very clearly in the parable of the sower. There were four classes of people who heard the pure word of God. Not many people today are hearing the pure word of God--very few. There is, indeed, a famine, not of bread and of water, but a famine from the 'Word of God', that is, as far as the preaching is concerned. It is discounted, twisted, warped, and dissected, until it does not mean anything at all; it has no power in it, nor does it accomplish results in the average Christian's life; but, in this 'parable of the sower' where people heard the pure Word of God (directly from the lips of Jesus Christ), there were four classes, (and only one class got over the hurdles).

The first hurdle was direct suggestions to the mind, from Satan. The second hurdle was aggravated symptoms and an aggravated condition. (In other words), if we prayed to be delivered from the devil's power, the devil would put suggestions in our mind: (trying to tell us) "You are not delivered, and, you know you are not." Then, if we got over that hurdle and that opposition, he would tempt us with all kinds of evil thoughts, suggestions, (and all kinds of aggravated symptoms, spiritually). We might feel as if we would like to fight and kick back at somebody's (insult or offense), instead of being kind and meek and gentle and giving them a soft answer.

Then when we pray for healing, Satan will aggravate the symptoms, and instead of getting well we may get worse (for the time being) (to see if we clear that hurdle).(God allows us to be tested to prove our faith, just as He tested people in the Bible).

In praying for our loved ones, the devil may make them act worse than ever. That is the way the devil works in his plan, and it is a hurdle we have to get over, to have a success of the Christian life. When we begin to trust God, things will happen that never happened before; people will say and do things to us as they never did before.

So, the first class who dropped out of the race by paying attention to the 'suggestions of Satan' to their minds, are those to whom the seed fell by the wayside, and the birds came and picked it up. (Luke 8:12) "*Those by the wayside*

*are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.*" (Jesus said). (The devil put his word in their minds and so filled them with doubt (or fear) that they gave up.)

The second class is where the seed fell on rocky soil, people who received the Word gladly, but had no root in themselves, and, when opposition, temptation, and persecution arose, "because of the Word," it says they too fell away; (just like when the sun scorches shallow vegetables which haven't any root in itself.) (vs.13) "*They on the rock are they, which when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.*" (Jesus said).

The third class were those who, after hearing the word, Satan brought to their mind all kinds of pleasures; and he shows them in the most glowing colors. Then he tries to get those people interested in human or financial success. Some people become wholly absorbed in it. (14) "*And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.*" (Jesus said, John 15:6) "*If any one does not continue in me, he is like the unfruitful branch which is at once thrown away and then withers up. Such branches they gather up and throw into the fire and they are burned.*" (He said).

If we meet and overcome that 'hurdle', we will then come to the next class that made a success; they are those that received the Word on good soil, hold on to it "*and bring forth fruit thirty, sixty, and one hundredfold.*" (vs.15) "*But that on the good ground are they, which is an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.*" (He said). Bearing fruit means 'fulness of blessing' in this life and eternal life. We need to always remember that.

It is in (and part of) the 'divine life' to have these hurdles and these oppositions. The reason for it is, the great work that needs to be done in our lives and hearts--a complete emancipation from the power of the devil (that we were born under), and God uses every opposition and

every 'hurdle' to perfect us, and to perfect our full deliverance.

We were given (and have) an illustration of how Satan works to hold us in bondage, in the example of Israel when they left Egypt. They got away, but they had great hurdles to meet, and they were the Red Sea in front of them, and a hostile army (Pharaoh's chosen) behind them. It was a very grave predicament to be in from every human standpoint, and they were well-scared, and they said in their ignorance, *"were there no graves in Egypt that we had to be brought out here to be killed?"* However, instead of meeting death as they thought, God used that very attack of Satan and his agents to deliver them from those enemies forever. God can always do that for us.

Regarding the fourth class who heard the Word, there is just one point we need to emphasize, that will make our passing over 'hurdles' successful, and our victories quick and easy; and that is, when they (the fourth class) heard the Word, they held on to it. In other words, they started with a firm decision in their hearts, to go through (the 'hurdles' and endure in the faith).

It makes all the difference in the world what kind of a start we make (in the Christian life). We may not be aware of it when we first begin, but we have to come to that starting point sooner or later, (the sooner the better), and to where we will settle it, regardless of opposition, hindrances, or hurdles, that we are going to hold steady and go through. If that has been settled, then God will be able to make our Christian life a success, and we will *"bring forth fruit thirty, sixty, and one hundredfold."* (as Jesus said) If not, we will go back into darkness, and eventually the lake of fire. There is no neutral ground.

It should be remembered that all kinds of opposition were placed in front of people in the Bible who tried to get to Jesus when He was on earth, but anyone who was determined to go through made a perfect success. Satan has all kinds of opposition and hurdles, but the soul who is determined to go through, and determined to trust on God and in Him alone, will always succeed.

(Lord willing, we may have part II of a message on 'Hurdles'.)

S454R Some Main Points:

1 Of all types of races known to the world, the 'Christian race' is a 'hurdle race, because from the very beginning we have strong, active opposition (from Satan and his agents). (The Bible reveals) 'The reason for this, is, we have been born into Satan's kingdom, subject to him and fully under his control. We are not so sure that we realize this as keenly as we ought to realize; but it is true nevertheless, that we have been born subject to the devil and his power.

2 It is a positive fact that there is no neutral ground; every human being on the earth is either under the dominion and control of Satan, or, under the power and control of God. There is no in-between position.

3 The "parable of the Sower" is considered, and making note of Jesus' explanation of that, to enable us all to consider and determine just what 'class' we would fall into, in 'the sight of Jesus'.



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