Kicking Against The Goads

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday September 29th, 2019

Text: Acts 26:14

### Intro

1. Self-preservation can cause people to do extraordinary things.
2. The gospel calls people to not think only physically but for spiritual soul-preservation.
3. Acts 16:25-30: The Philippian jailer found himself in what he perceived a dire situation: the prisoners had escaped on his watch!
   1. Acts 16:25-27: He was sleeping on the job & wakes to find all the prison doors open.
      1. Under Roman law he would have been executed (Acts 12:19) – about to take his own life.
   2. Acts 16:28: Paul said, “Do yourself no harm!”
      1. He appealed to his physical self-preservation.
   3. Acts 16:29-30: This event caused him to ask, “What must I do to be saved?”
      1. No longer thinking physical, the jailer was concerned about his soul.
      2. *Acts 16:31-33:* Paul preached the gospel to him and his household and they were baptized into the church *(I Cor. 12:13; Col. 1:18).*
      3. Paul told him what he needed to do for his soul’s preservation!
4. Paul knew what it was like to cause harm to himself – Acts 26:14 (NKJ: 9:5)
5. There are ways both physically and spiritually people harm themselves!

#### Kicking Against the Goads

* 1. Acts 26:14 (NKJ: 9:5): “It is hard for you to kick against the goads.”
     1. Many people look at this as “the parable that changed Saul.”
     2. Not a Hebrew parable, but here Christ uses a Greek parable to tell Saul, “Stop hurting yourself!”
     3. Saul had only been hurting himself – Acts 8:1; 9:1-18; 22:4-5; 26:9-11
  2. Kicking against the goads:
     1. Greek writers *(From Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Acts 9:5; 26:14):* Euripides (Bacchae, 791): “I, who am a frail mortal, should rather sacrifice to him who is a god, than, by giving place to anger, kick against the goads.”
     2. Pindar (Pyth., 2:173): “To bear lightly the neck’s yoke brings strength, but kicking against the goads brings failure.”
     3. Terence (Phome., 1, 2, 27): “It is foolishness for you to kick against a goad.”
  3. Goads were sharply pointed instruments used to force stubborn animals to move ahead.
     1. It commonly means an ox-goad: a sharp piece of iron stuck into the end of a stick, with which the ox is urged on (Anywhere from 6-8 ft. long).
     2. Goads among the Hebrews were made very large *(Shamgar killed 600 men with one of them – Judges 3:31).*
     3. The expression “to kick against the prick (goad)” is derived from the action of a stubborn and unyielding ox kicking against the goad. As the ox would injure no one but himself; it came to denote “rebellion against lawful authority.”
  4. This is the condition of every sinner!
  5. Kicking against the goads only hurts the one kicking – “Stop hurting yourself!”

#### Kicking Against the Goads: Those Living In Sin

* 1. Sinful practices may harm one physically:
     1. Drunkenness *(Gal. 5:21)* can result in a fatal accident, divorce, disease, and even cause innocent people to suffer. Don’t want to be drunk? Don’t take that first drink!
     2. Sexual promiscuity *(Gal. 5:19)* can result in disease, emotional trauma, pregnancy out of wedlock, can divide families and hurt the innocent. Don’t want a pregnancy scare or STD? Abstain till marriage; don’t commit adultery!
     3. A life of loose morals can result in one suffering as a murderer or a thief, or committing other acts that can land one in jail (I Pet. 4:15; Js. 4:1-3).
  2. Sinful living will harm one spiritually:
     1. The wages of sin is death! (Rom. 6:23)
     2. Those not found in the Book of Life will suffer the 2nd death! (Rev. 20:14-15)
  3. Christ’s message applies to those living in sin, “Stop kicking against the goads!”

#### Kicking Against the Goads: Those Who Refuse to Obey the Gospel

* 1. Refusing to obey the gospel results in one still in sin, thus harming themselves:
     1. Like a cancer victim (or other disease) that refuses treatment.
     2. Like a drowning victim rejecting the lifeline.
     3. I Cor. 6:9-10: The unrighteous will not inherit Heaven!
     4. II Thess. 1:7-9: Those who do not know God and those who do not obey the gospel will be eternally separated from God!
  2. The gospel is God’s power to save – Rom. 1:16
  3. Christ’s message applies to those refusing to obey the gospel, “Stop kicking against the goads!”

#### Kicking Against the Goads: The Unfaithful

* 1. Some, like the jailer, obey the gospel to be “saved” *(Acts 16:31-33).*
  2. And some, after doing so, turn back to former way of life, like Simon the Sorcerer *(Acts 8:18-24)*, and still others make a show of their faith, like Diotrephes *(III Jn. 9).*
     1. Individuals who do so make “shipwreck of their faith” like Hymenaeus and Alexander (I Tim. 1:19-20).
  3. Some people become “lukewarm” – Rev. 3:16
     1. Theirs is a religion of convenience rather than obedience.
  4. Some people live how they want, “holding to a form of godliness” – II Tim. 3:5 (3:1-4).
     1. People who “play” at Christianity are only fooling themselves.
  5. Those who (for whatever reason) are unfaithful will be held accountable for:
     1. Heb. 10:26-30: Trampling under foot the Son of God, despising His blood, and insulting the Spirit of grace.
  6. Contrast the spirit of indifference, or “lukewarm” with:
     1. *Rom. 12:1-2:* “Present your body a living and holy sacrifice.”
     2. *I Cor. 15:58:* “Always abounding in the work of the Lord.”
     3. *Titus 2:14:* “Zealous for good deeds.”
     4. *Rev. 3:19:* “Be zealous and repent.”
  7. Christ’s message applies to the unfaithful, “Stop kicking against the goads!”

#### Kicking Against the Goads: Those Who Fail to Prepare for Eternity

* 1. Life on earth is brief and uncertain – Js. 4:13-17
  2. All are headed to one of two destinies:
     1. Horror of Hell – Mt. 25:41, 46; *Rev. 20:14-15*
     2. Happiness of Heaven – Rom. 2:7; Rev. 21:3-7
  3. The one not preparing for eternity is harming their soul!
  4. The gospel can save *(Rom. 1:16)* and keep one from (or reduce) some physical harms by the abstaining of evil practices *(I Thess. 5:22)* and can save one’s soul from Hell.
     1. Rom. 2:5-8: To those who obey, eternal life, to those who do not obey, wrath.
     2. Rom. 5:9: Obeying the gospel saves one from the wrath of God.
     3. I Pet. 1:3-4: The Christian has a reservation in Heaven!
  5. Christ’s message applies to those not preparing for eternity, “Stop kicking against the goads!”

## Conclusion

1. The gospel appeals to one’s sense of self-preservation, both physically and spiritually.
2. We are to love ourselves enough to not want to harm our bodies (Eph. 5:28-29), and should love our souls enough to not want to go to Hell *(Mt. 25:41, 46)!*
3. Saul stopped kicking against the goads! (Stopped hurting himself)
   1. Acts 9:18; 22:14-16: He was baptized and fulfilled the mission God gave him.
   2. Acts 26:16-20: He told Agrippa he did “not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision.”
4. If any have been “kicking against the goads,” especially those outside the family of God, listen to Paul speak directly to you as he did the jailer, “Do yourself no harm!”
5. Do the extraordinary for soul-preservation: Obey the gospel ***NOW!***
6. If you haven’t, won’t you obey the gospel to save yourself from the wrath of God *(Rom. 2:8)?*
   1. Repent and be baptized into His name!
7. If you have, be faithful till death and “always abound in the work of the Lord” *(I Cor. 15:58)!*
   1. If in error, don’t wait till it’s eternally too late. Repent and be renewed!
8. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!