

SELF-DECEPTION: HEARING WITHOUT DOING

Joe Slater

Deception characterizes Satan; he is the deceiver of the whole world (Revelation 12:9). Jesus said Satan is a liar and the father of it (John 8:44). So, can we just blame all deception on the devil? Realistically, no!

Truth can be difficult to accept. Deceit may provide a false sense of comfort and security. We rationalize and make excuses, eventually convincing ourselves that truth really isn't truth, or that sin isn't so bad, or that we're pleasing God by doing just as we desire. Bottom line, we deceive ourselves.

As long as I listen to God's word and nod my head in agreement, that's sufficient, right? Hear James, the brother of Jesus: *"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves"* (1:22). Yes, we lie to ourselves when we conclude that just hearing and mentally accepting God's word completes our duty.

James goes on describing the disobedient hearer: *"For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and forgets what kind of man he was"* (1:23-24). Let us be doers, not forgetful hearers!

As a preacher, I appreciate all who come and hear the word proclaimed. I'm thankful for the kind comments I hear. I join you in praying that we will put into practice the things we hear from God's word. If we fail to do that, we're just deceiving ourselves.

Our Hope, Our Anchor

"This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil" (Heb 6:19 NASU).

Some of the largest anchors are those of modern air craft carriers. The Nimitz class carriers carry two anchors, each weighs 30 tons. Each link of the anchor chain weights 365 lb. The total weight of the chain and anchor equals 735,000 pounds.

Obviously, the bigger the ship, the bigger the anchors needed to safely secure a ship. Without adequate anchors, ships could be easily destroyed. The ship on which Paul sailed toward Rome had four anchors (Acts 27:29). Ancient ships often were loaded with more than one anchor for obvious reasons: anchors were lost, and there would be backups; conditions could be worse than normal and they may need the extra weight to moor the ship out at sea.

The Christian has his anchor too. It's a single anchor, perfectly provided for our needs. Actually, the Christian anchor is our hope that is given to us by our Lord. The words "sure and steadfast" continues the metaphor: it will not slip or lose its grip. In other words, regardless what happens to us here, our souls are secure.

When the inspired writer says it enters the veil, he compares heaven with the Most Holy Place behind the veil. Instead of being anchored to this earth, our anchor - our hope - is sure and steadfast since it is anchored in heaven!!

--Rob Redden (Arroyo Grande, CA)

TURNING THE OTHER CHEEK

On April 15, 1947, Jackie Robinson became the first black man to play Major League Baseball. Although best known as a shortstop, Jackie played first base that day for the Brooklyn Dodgers. Prior to that historic day when baseball's color line was broken, the General Manager of the Dodgers, Mr. Branch Richey, had a heart-to-heart talk with Robinson. He warned him of the abuse and racism he would have to endure. Jackie told him he would think it over and let him know. A couple of days later, Jackie called him back and said he could do it.

And he did! The abuse from fans, other players, and even from some of his own teammates at first, was even worse than Mr. Richey had warned him about. But through it all, Jackie Robinson never retaliated and eventually won most of them over with his great play on the field and even greater character off the field.

Jackie Robinson is a great example of what Jesus taught when He said, *"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also"* (Matthew 5:38-39). To turn the other cheek, not retaliating or responding in kind, takes tremendous patience and self-control. But if more of us did so, imagine how much more peaceful the world in which we live would be!

--Travis Quetermous (Thayer, MO)