

## Paraklēsis: Distraction

When a train (or a thought process) gets derailed, we can say that it was “dis-track-ted.” Ha! That’s a cute pun, but it isn’t really accurate. I checked. It sounds good, but “tract” is from the Latin “traher,” to pull or drag. “Track” is from the Dutch “trekken,” to pull or drag... Wait a minute, they both mean the same thing but come from two completely different languages! This was really an interesting exercise for me to look for some inspiring word origin connection. I may have found one, but as I type this, **I am clearly getting distracted from my intent.** As we all know, a distraction is something that takes us away from what we were focused on. You can probably see where this is going.

*And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. **But seeing the wind, he became frightened**, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!"(Matthew 14:29-30)*

I really like this example of Peter getting distracted and sinking. It shows me the truth in this scripture:

*And looking at them Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but **with God all things are possible.**" (Matthew 19:26)*

Peter was focused on Messiah’s teaching and was exhibiting faith with a Capital “F.” But then, as we humans do, he got distracted by the danger around him. The PHYSICAL danger. He was reminded of the storm around him and lost that focus. I don’t think he lost his Faith, but **his focus evaporated, and he started sinking.** This can happen in many facets of life and with many degrees of consequence. I recently lost my focus while going to my shop to get a tool for a project I was working on and somehow, I ended up rewiring the light above the workbench. My original project took a lot longer than I wanted, but I got a better work light out of the deal. This was not a devastating distraction. But we have all heard stories of people using their phone while driving, and never using the phone or driving again.

So, yes, we should all be focused and not get distracted; our life will be more productive and fulfilling... But, **Peter was having a spiritual breakthrough in his faith** by conquering the physical when the distraction caused him to sink. This, I believe is truly a devastating distraction, and **one that we all risk succumbing to.**

*"Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28)*

These words of Messiah remind us that the important things are not what we see, hear, smell, touch, and taste. The important things are the “assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

*"Other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. (Mark 4:7)... "And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. (Mark 4:18-19)*

This is starting to sound like I am saying that we need to abandon all things physical and “spiritualize” our life. Well, in a sense, yes, I believe that is the ultimate goal. But we also need to prepare for that first. **Peter did not step out of the boat until Messiah called him to do so.** Surely Peter went through many physical preparations before that day. Physical preparations cannot be ignored, but God does promise to make those preparations effortless if we follow one simple instruction.

*But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but **only one thing is necessary**, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:41-42)*

Only one thing is necessary. That is, follow the simple instruction. This is best summarized by the words of Messiah in Matthew (This scripture always reminds me of how God provided for Elijah in 1Kings17:6.):

*"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" Mat6:33*

All these things will be added to you – not by some miracle so that you don't need to work, or figure things out, or put forth effort to survive. But **you will be blessed with the confidence and knowledge** that the Father will cause everything to work out according to His plan and will. The instruction we need to follow is just one point. You cannot focus on two things; inevitably, **the second thing will distract you.**

*"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. "For this reason I say to you, **do not be worried about your life**, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? (Matthew 6:24-25)*

Our job is to focus on one thing – with diligence and endurance. I think Paul was talking about this specifically in 1Thes 5:17 "...**pray without ceasing**..." This is what our focus will look like - not being on your knees all day long (neglecting the physical preparations,) but acknowledging God in all things, giving thanks and remembering our commitment to Him, submitting to our **utter reliance on Him for everything**... Etc.

*Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which **so easily entangles us**, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2)*

And let us remember that we are not in this alone. We are His children, one body... Here is an example of how our focus or distraction will affect not just ourselves. It would seem that the success of the Bride making herself ready depends on our focus. **The Bride is not distracted but focused on Christ.**

*As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but **speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects** into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:14-16)*

Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness and live according to the spirit and you will not get distracted.

*But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16)*

*Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. (Colossians 3:2)*

Peace to you and glory to God!

-Nate

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