

Refuge Josh. 20:1-9; 1 Cor. 10:1-6, 11

If you have a hard time memorizing the 10 commandments, take heart, you only have to remember two, love God and love people. The whole Bible hinges on these two things. What does your life hinge on?

God provided cities of refuge for the Hebrew children, where, if they accidentally killed someone, they would be protected from the avenger until the day of trial. If they were shown to be innocent of premeditated actions, they would live there until the High Priest died, at which time they would be free to return home. (Num. 35:9-28)

Refuge is a sanctuary; a safe place, it's our protection. Every one of us has a refuge. For some of us it is God for others it is eating, or alcohol, or drugs, spending... Any refuge other than Jesus is not a solution, but a problem. What is your refuge? When you are stressed where do you run?

We substitute **things** for our refuge. Too often we believe having something other than what we already have will bring us peace and protection. Adam and Eve believed a lie and exchanged paradise for the one thing they didn't have and didn't need. The new believers met daily in the temple and from house to house. (Acts 2:42-47) they were devoted to the apostles teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread together and prayer. We want New Testament power in our church but we will not follow the pattern; we are not devoted.

Satan's greatest tactic is to get us to replace our refuge with **isolation**. If we isolate ourselves from the company of believers we are easy pray to the enemy. The safest place to be is in the midst of the saints, relying on godly counsel when we need it. Where are you in the body of Christ? How devoted are you to living by the pattern?

Bad company corrupts good character (1Cor. 15:33; 2 Cor. 6:14) we give up our refuge for **ungodly relationships**. Who controls your schedule, your activities? Realize that you have contact with ungodly (worldly/ unsaved) people for a purpose; you are there to be a light for Christ, not to be yoked together with them. What communion does light have with darkness? How can two walk together unless they are agreed? Things may look good now but remember, God does not settle all His accounts this side of judgment. There will come a day of reckoning. Some replace refuge with religion. Tradition and sacrifices take the place of relationship.

Some have traded in their refuge for busyness (Luke 10:38-42). There is a time to serve and a time to sit. How busy are you? Are you too busy to sit at Jesus feet?

Take heed that God doesn't have to stop you in your tracks to make you find your refuge in him (Ps. 46:10).

Refuge is for the righteous, (Num. 35:9-28, Psalm. 91) it is not for the rebellious (Is. 30:15-16; 48:22; Rev. 12:9-10; Ps. 24:3-4). If we don't seek refuge when the warnings come it will be too late. God is a very present help in time of trouble because we have already declared Him to be our refuge and strength. Don't run to Him when trouble comes if you have taken refuge in something else. God will be our refuge if we ask Him. He will be our avenger. Refuge is for the righteous, those in right standing with God. God is the avenger for those who tithe. He will rebuke the devourer. For the one who does not

tithe, the enemy has legal right to steal from you (**Mal. 3:8-12**) and it doesn't just mean finances. He has access to your family, your health, your job... We all make mistakes and do things wrong but when the Lord reveals it we must admit it and quit it. Heb 7 tells us that our High priest has already died. That means the sentence has been served, the penalty has been paid and we are free. When we make a mistake we are free to run to the one who has already paid the price and find refuge in Him. If we are living in rebellion, we are on our own; we will not find sanctuary there. He wants to be your refuge. If you have already made Him your refuge He will be a very present help in trouble. If not, why not?