

## Quitting 06-02-19 AM

In 1936 King Edward VIII was crowned King of England; at the end of the same year he abdicated to marry a divorced woman. He threw all of England into a crisis, and chose a godless woman rather than to lead his nation. He is often considered history's greatest quitter.

In the Bible there is another story of a quitter. When Paul and Barnabas were getting ready to leave on their second missionary trip, *"Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another."* (Acts 15:37-39). This division was caused by Mark quitting the journey early on in Acts 13:13. We are not told why Mark quit the journey, but we assume that, since Paul accepted that sometimes workers cannot work (2 Tim. 4:20, Php. 2:27) that Mark's reasons must not have been worthy.

Many people quit Christ when it gets hard. Whatever prompted Mark to quit was not an excuse from the purpose of his calling, and made him undependable. Many quit when sacrifices get too much, temptations become too great, or changes are too hard. Jesus predicted this in places like Mark 4:16-17, Matthew 13:20-21 and Luke 8:13. In these parables, one in three Christians quit Christ. They quit for different reasons. When it is not easy to stand firm against temptation or to keep doing what is expected of us. It can be hard to be different from the world.

Jesus warned quitters of the dangers of quitting. He warned that we should not start unless you are serious. In Luke 14:26-33 He described counting the cost of becoming a Christian. He also said in Matthew 12:43-45 that if you quit, you are in a great danger. This was also the teaching of Jesus' disciples. In Hebrews 10:26-29 and 2 Peter 2:20-21 (among many) the New Testament writers clearly stated that falling away is worse than never obeying.

As a local church we desperately try to encourage others not to quit. But just as Jesus warned us, many still do. They feel that they cannot overcome the obstacles in the path. They become offended or discouraged by brethren or the world. A terrible truth is that when they quit, they don't realize the problems created for themselves and for their brethren. In Hebrews 6:4-6 we are told that quitting crucifies Christ a second time, and brings Him to an open shame. We know that this causes great grief and hurt in a local church, as seen by the example of Demas forsaking Paul in 2 Timothy 4:9-10.

Let us be clear in this point: **No one "quits" the church without "quitting" Christ!**

So how do we avoid quitting? First, we must always be counting the cost. We need to understand that we can't "quit if it doesn't work out"; The Way of Christ has no trial period. Christianity is a trade; the trade is ALL of you for ALL of Him. Second, know that there will be hard times, but you can overcome them (1 Corinthians 10:13). Finally, rest assured that you can always return. Perhaps the best example of this is our example of Mark. One of Paul's last statements is *"Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service"* (2 Timothy 4:11). We can return.