

The Devil Stopped Me!

Her husband Billy was off evangelising the world. Ruth Graham was left at home with five very active children. It was raining outside and the kids were more than testing her mothering skills. Exasperated she shouted at her daughter, "You do that once more and you'll get the wooden spoon." Daringly eyeing her mother Anne proceeded to do what she shouldn't.

Grabbing the wooden spoon Ruth declared, "That's it." Anne fled upstairs to take refuge in her bedroom. Ruth bursting through the door, grabbed Anne, and was about to administer the "spoon" remedy for bad behaviour when Anne cried, "Don't hit me mum, the devil made me do it." "Well," said Ruth, "Then I'll knock the devil out of you!"

People frequently blame others for their behaviour. Despite his repeated feverish attempts to return to Thessalonica, Paul encounters roadblocks erected by the Devil/Satan. Not to be thwarted by these roadblocks Paul sends Timothy who is described as 'our brother' and 'God's fellow-worker.' Paul's reason for sending Timothy was to: "strengthen and encourage you in your faith so that no one would be unnerved by these trials" 1 Thessalonians 3:3-4. To "strengthen" them was to cause these young Christians to be inwardly firm or committed so that they did not crumble in the face of severe opposition. But they also needed courage, which has to do with attitude.

Amy began training new leaders for small groups so she could serve as their "coach." She spent time meeting with a group of potential leaders—training them, laying out expectations, and modelling how to lead a small group. Then she recounts, the bomb fell on the eve of setting up new groups. A trainee quipped: "Why should I follow you? I've been in small groups longer than you've been alive." Ouch. Amy recalls: "I allowed the conflict to tear me down personally, leaving me unsure of myself and my position as a leader. And I reaped the bitter fruit for years after." [from blog.kyria.com].

What 'unnerves' your faith? What might strengthen and encourage you in your faith? Opposition can make us vulnerable to temptation. We begin to think it's too hard to make our lives count for Jesus.

Paul found a way around Satan's roadblock. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, Jesus is going to assess each aspect of our lives. This judgment is like an Olympic award ceremony. It is not about salvation but the giving out of awards. In the light of your life as a Christian being reviewed by Jesus what needs to change if you are to be given an award? Or are you going to let the Devil get you to do what he wants?