

The Obstacle

*Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan!
You are an **obstacle** to me. You are thinking not as God does,
but as human beings do."*

Matthew 16:23

Imagine, having Jesus call you "Satan"! That was pretty harsh! But, I believe, we all have "*little Satans*" and "**Big Angels**" inside of us, constantly battling for their precious turf. Here, I think Jesus was calling out Peter's dark side, his distorted human-ness, his fear and his lack of faith. TELLING Jesus what was NOT going to happen to Him? Not a good thing!

Let's look for a moment at that word OBSTACLE. The dictionary defines an "obstacle" as: "*One who stands in the way of or holds up progress toward a goal.*" Even in this definition, the dictionary "personalizes" the word by saying "ONE"...one, meaning a person. But obstacles come in many shapes and sizes.

Peter was being a wall, and not a bridge for Jesus. He was creating an atmosphere of doubt and was telling Jesus what was NOT going to happen to Him. The little, *bossy-Satan* in Peter pridefully tried to correct Jesus, in His prophecy. Jesus wouldn't stand for it. He put Peter in his place!

But don't we all, at times, try to control Jesus, even in little ways...?

- Come on, Jesus; You've got to help us pull off this win!
- Jesus, You know it's only a little sin, if I do this.
- OK, Jesus...I'll make a deal with You...if You do ABC, I'll do XYZ!

Hate to say it folks, but we've all probably been an obstacle to Jesus and His mission to bring souls to the Kingdom of God, at one time or another. It can happen in such little ways. The time we lost patience with a child and raised our voice, humiliating the youth; the time we gave a rude driver a loud expletive for cutting us off; the time we decided NOT to be understanding, and to judge another for a perceived offense...

...OBSTACLES...

In 2018, while working at a mental health facility, one of my clients looked at me and said, "Hey Rich...I've got a good quote for you." Intrigued, I said, "What...what quote is that?" She said one of the most surprising and meaningful little statements I have ever heard...

"THE OBSTACLE IS THE PATH!"

I was instantly and surprisingly dumfounded by her little quote! I had been having some struggles in my life at the time that were really bugging me. I couldn't seem to find solutions. I felt somewhat trapped. And BAM! "The obstacle is the path" hit me right square in the forehead. "That's it! I'm SUPPOSED TO HAVE PROBLEMS! It's not always going to be clear sailing," I instantly realized.

Peter, as obstacle, became part of Jesus' **path**—the path to teaching Peter, and the other disciples, who He really was and what He had come to Earth to do. Obstacles make us stronger. Can you imagine a weightlifter who always worked out with an empty bar—no weights on it? Or the defense lawyer who had no prosecuting attorney to spar with him? We are defined by the obstacles we have overcome!!

Years ago, I came up with a little “*reminder acronym*” that really helped me...When I look at a **STOP** sign, I silently call out, “**S**truggles **T**ransforming into **O**pportunities of **P**romise!” Opportunities! Not Obstacles. We don’t seek obstacles. They appear. We deal with them the best we can. But to focus on the opportunities of life—I think this is what Jesus would rather have us do.

Jesus, the optimist, the realist...He believes in opportunity, yes, but, in the end...I bet He could also really relate to “the obstacle is the path”! Obstacle/Opportunity can be one in the same. Guess it’s all in how you look at it. What are your obstacles & opportunities? And, how is Jesus guiding you to live out both of them?

by Rich Melcher