

The Battle Is On

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It's interesting that when you pray and seek and struggle to hear God and get his direction, the first minute you feel you have heard from the Lord, you come under attack.

I had a blessed time this weekend at Calvary and I felt good about the completion of my series on *Family Matters*. This series has had more media requests than any other since my series on *Operating Under the Influence*. Also, communion on Sunday night was great as everyone shared testimonies of how God has worked in their lives over the years and been faithful to them in times of need.

Then on Monday I once again had to fight to keep my head up. As I awoke to go to the Prayer Tower, immediately the devil began screaming his accusations at me, "Go back to bed. You've made a fool of yourself. You'll get in trouble for preaching like that. People are going to turn away from you. You are hurting people more than you are helping them. You have no compassion." It was so deafening that I couldn't even get out a rebuke before the next accusation came. I hurried to the tower and a quiet stillness fell over me. In the silence I asked the Lord what I had done wrong. His answer? "You did something right!"

However, even his answer didn't encourage me. It seems every victory in the spirit is met with a greater assault. Peace and unity in the church is maintained by a constant battle in the spirit. I guess that's why when I feel I am making progress, I am the weakest on the inside.

I thank God for a church that provides the freedom to speak the truth, even when it hurts. However, that doesn't make the battle any easier. A long time ago the Lord told me that if I wanted to enjoy life then I needed to learn to enjoy the taste of victory. However, it seems like each victory brings on a greater assault the next time. Those assaults come almost before you can even enjoy the last victory.

In Second Kings chapter twenty we read the story of King Ahab when Ben-Hadad, king of Aram, organized 32 kings against him to march on the capital city of Samaria in Israel. Ben-Hadad made such impossible demands upon Ahab that he had to refuse. Perhaps Ben-Hadad just wanted an excuse to attack. However, a prophet came to Ahab and said, "*This is what the LORD says: 'Do you see this vast army? I will give it into your hand today, and then you will know that I am the LORD.'*" (1st Kings 20:13, NIV.) So with only 7,000 men Ahab inflicted heavy losses on all the kings who were allied with Ben-Hadad.

You would think that the foreign armies would learn not to attack, but in verse 22 the same prophet returns right after this great victory and says, "*Strengthen your position and see what must be done, because next spring the king of Aram will attack you again.*" Even though the enemy will never overcome us, sometimes he wearies us with his continual attacks. Once again Ahab had to regroup and fight an already defeated enemy.

It is the same with us. That's why the Bible tells us in Galatians 6:9, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." Even though the devil cannot win and is already defeated, he tries to threaten us with how hard it's going to be to win the next battle, and then the next, then the next. If we do not watch ourselves we will get the "what's the use" spirit on us and we will not be defeated, but we will give up.

Saints, stand with me and help strengthen me with a commitment to not give up when the going gets hard. On Sunday I posted the *Verse Of The Week* (VOTW) on our bulletin board at Calvary. It encouraged me, so I hope that it encourages you. I've added the next couple of verses so you can get the whole context of what

the Lord is speaking to my spirit.

"²⁷ Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you.

This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰ since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have."

Philippians 1:27-30, NIV.

Thomas A. Dorsey (1899-1993) wrote a song after his wife died in 1932 while giving birth to a child, who also died shortly thereafter. The first verse contains some lyrics that express the pain he felt during this time in his life. I too have clung to these words wherever the attack is on. I hope you find the strength in them that I find each time the Spirit brings these lyrics back to my mind.

*Precious Lord, take my hand,
Lead me on, let me stand,
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
Through the storm, through the night,
Lead me on to the light:
Take my hand, precious Lord,
Lead me home.*

Sometimes we need to withdraw from the fight, encourage ourselves in the Lord, and remind ourselves that his hand is always available to lift us up once again. Sometimes we also need to realize and affirm that the weariness we feel is not from what we are doing wrong, but because we have done something right and the battle is on.

"And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right."

2nd Thessalonians 3:13, NIV.

*"For I am the LORD, your God,
who takes hold of your right hand and says to you,
Do not fear; I will help you."*

Isaiah 41:13, NIV.

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