

VOICE OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

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DO I MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Do I as one Christian make a difference in the Kingdom of God? I'm sure that each of us ask that question from time to time. Rarely do we get our names in the paper but we keep on marching in the Army of God. My goal as a Christian has been to touch the people around me with the kind of compassion that our Lord showed while He walked on the earth. I think the cup of water shared with the thirsty that Jesus spoke of reveals the ability of every Christian to share something with others. Water is a commodity that we all have access to. Allowing someone to go before you in a busy linen, opening a door, offering a smile, sharing a kind word and that is just a few of the simple things that encourage others. Just as the cup of water, these are things that we all can give in our daily routine of life. There is a saying among missionaries that states, "SOUP, SOAP, AND SALVATION," in that order. People are touched from a caring spirit and shown Christ by the same. The Word indicates that we should do unto others as we would have them do unto us. You're making a difference so keep up the good work.

Pastor George Ferrington



*"I am the
resurrection
and the
life."*

JOHN 11:25

BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE

What does it mean to "be strong and of good courage?" This expression is used several times in the Word of God and I thought it worthy of further study. Let's look at some of these scriptures.

Deuteronomy 31:6, **"Be strong and of good courage, fear not, or be afraid of them; for the Lord thy God, he it is who doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."**

Joshua 1:6, **"Be strong and of good courage; for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I swore unto their fathers to give them."**

Joshua 10:25, **"And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage; for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight."**

I Chronicles 28:20, **"And David said to Solomon, his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it. Fear not, nor be dismayed; for the Lord God, even thy God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord."**

To "be strong and of good courage" also means to be bold and steadfast. Some of the Bible translations will use that term. So, did God intend for only the Old Testament saints to be strong and of good courage, or is that same attribute to exist in us today? Hebrews 4:16 tells us, **"Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."** I have come to understand that physical strength is not what God is looking for in His children. He expects us to be spiritually strong and steadfast. He likes for us to be bold in our faith, not because we are as strong as Samson, but because we know Him and understand that God in us is greater than the enemy. We have been made more than conquerors through Christ Jesus our Lord. We do not have to fear, nor do we have to languish in discouragement. Our God has assured us of victory, in the name of Jesus, **"In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him."** (Ephesians 3:12)

I never had the privilege of fighting in the military, but I have studied civil war battles and battles in the Bible. What I have discovered is how important it is for the soldiers or warriors to sometimes have access to their commander. It may mean only a glimpse of him along the battle lines or a word of encouragement. This encouragement can mean the difference between defeat or victory as the troops rally and fight under the confident influence of their leader. Our Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus are faithful to keep all of His promises unto us who believe. I John 5:14-15 tells us, **"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us, And if we know that he hear us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."**

So then, why is it important for us to be strong and of good courage, since we no longer have to fight physical battles. We are in spiritual battles every day, whether we realize it or not. Ephesians 6:12 shows this, **"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."** This is not a time to rest and take ease, for the enemy is like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. We are admonished in Ephesians 6:10 to **"be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."** Study and meditation of the Word trains us for that warfare. This does not

TONY SNOW'S MESSAGE

This is an outstanding testimony from Tony Snow, President Bush's Press Secretary, and his fight with cancer. Commentator and broadcaster Tony Snow announced that he had colon cancer in

2005. Following surgery and chemo-therapy, Snow joined the Bush Administration in April 2006 as press secretary. Unfortunately, on March 23, 2007, Snow, 51, a husband and father of three, announced that the cancer had recurred, with tumors found in his abdomen, leading to surgery in April, followed by more chemo-therapy. Snow went back to work in the White House Briefing Room on May 30th, but has resigned since, "for economic reasons," and to pursue "other interests."

It needs little intro—it speaks for itself. "Blessings arrive in unexpected packages—in my case, cancer. Those of us with potentially fatal diseases, and there are millions in America today, find ourselves in the odd position of coping with our mortality while trying to fathom God's will. Although it would be the height of presumption to declare with confidence "What It All Means," scripture provides powerful hints and consolations. The first is that we shouldn't spend too much time trying to answer the "why" questions: Why me? Why must people suffer? Why can't someone else get sick? We can't answer such things, and the questions themselves often are designed more to express our anguish than to solicit an answer.

I don't know why I have cancer, and I don't much care. It is what it is, a plain and indisputable fact. Yet even while staring into a mirror darkly, great and stunning truths begin to take shape. Our maladies define a central feature of our existence: We are fallen. We are imperfect. Our bodies give out. But despite this, or because of it, God offers the possibility of salvation and grace. We don't know how the narrative of our lives will end, but we get to choose how to use the interval between now and the moment we meet our Creator face-to-face. Second, we need to get past the anxiety. The mere thought of dying can send adrenaline flooding through your system. A dizzy, unfocused panic seizes you. Your heart thumps; your head swims. You think of nothingness and swoon. You fear partings; you worry about the impact on family and friends. You fidget and get nowhere.

To regain footing, remember that we were born not into death, but into life, and that the journey continues after we have finished our days on this earth. We accept this on faith, but that faith is nourished by a conviction that stirs even within many non-believing hearts—an intuition that the gift of life, once given, cannot be taken away. Those who have been stricken enjoy the special privilege of being able to fight with their might, main, and faith to live fully, richly, exuberantly—no matter how their days may be numbered.

Third, we can open our eyes and hearts. God relishes surprise. We want lives of simple, predictable ease—smooth, even trails as far as the eye can see—but God likes to go off-road. He provokes us with twists and turns. He places us in predicaments that seem to defy our endurance; and comprehension—and yet don't. By His love and grace, we persevere. The challenges that make our hearts leap and stomachs churn invariably strengthen our faith and grant measures of wisdom and joy we would not experience otherwise. "You Have Been Called" Picture yourself in a hospital bed. The fog of anesthesia has begun to wear away. A doctor stands at your feet, a loved one holds your hand at the side. "It's cancer," the healer announces. The natural reaction is to turn to God and ask Him to serve as a cosmic Santa. "Dear God, make it all go away. Make everything simpler." But another voice whispers, "You have been called." Your quandary has drawn you closer to God, closer to those you love, closer to the issues that matter, and has dragged into insignificance the banal concerns that occupy our "normal time."

There's another kind of response, although usually short-lived an inexplicable shudder of excitement, as if a clarifying moment of calamity has swept away everything trivial and tiny, and placed before us the challenges of important questions.

The moment you enter the Valley of the Shadow of Death, things change. You discover that Christianity is not something doughy, passive, pious, and soft. Faith may be the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. But it also draws you into a world shorn of fearful caution. The life of belief teem with thrills, boldness, danger, shocks, reversals, triumphs, and epiphanies. Think of Paul, traipsing through the known world and contemplating trips to what must have seemed the antipodes (Spain), shaking the dust from his sandals, worrying not about the morrow, but only about the moment. There's nothing wilder than a life of humble virtue—for it is through selflessness and service that God wrings from our bodies and spirits the most we ever could give, the most we ever could offer, and the most we ever could do.

Finally, we can let love change everything. When Jesus was faced with the prospect of crucifixion, he grieved not for himself, but for us. He cried for Jerusalem before entering the holy city. From the Cross, He took on the cumulative burden of human sin and weakness, and begged for forgiveness on our behalf.

We get repeated chances to learn that life is not about us, that we acquire purpose and satisfaction by sharing in God's love for others. Sickness gets us part way there. It reminds us of our limitation and dependence. But it also gives us a chance to serve the healthy. A minister friend of mine observes that people suffering grave afflictions often acquire the faith of two people, while loved ones accept the burden of two people's worries and fears.

"Learning How to Live." Most of us have watched friends as they drifted toward God's arms; not with resignation, but with peace and hope. In so doing, they have taught us not how to die, but how to live. They have emulated Christ by transmitting the power and authority of love.

I sat by my best friend's bedside a few years ago as a wasting cancer took him away. He kept at his table a worn Bible and a 1928 edition of the Book of Common Prayer. A shattering grief disabled his family, many of his old friends, and at least one

TONY SNOW'S MESSAGE

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"I'm going to try to beat (this cancer)," he told me several months before he died. "But if I don't, I'll see you on the other side."

His gift was to remind everyone around him that even though God doesn't promise us tomorrow, he does promise us eternity, filled with life and love we cannot comprehend, and that one can in the throes of sickness point the rest of us toward the timeless

truths that will help us weather future storms.

Through such trials, God bids us to choose: Do we believe, or do we not? Will we be bold enough to love, daring enough to serve, humble enough to submit, and strong enough to acknowledge our limitations? Can we surrender our concern in things that don't matter so that we might devote our remaining days to things that do?

When our faith flags, he throws reminders in our way. Think of the prayer warriors in our midst. They change things, and those of us who have been on the receiving end of their petitions and intercessions know it. It is hard to describe, but there are times when suddenly the hairs on the back of your neck stand up, and you feel a surge of the Spirit. Somehow you just know; Others have chosen, when talking to the Author of all creation, to lift us up, to speak to us.

This is love of a very special order. But so is the ability to sit back and appreciate the wonder of every created thing. The mere thought of death somehow makes every blessing vivid, every happiness more luminous and intense. We may not know how our contest with sickness will end, but we have felt the ineluctable touch of God.

What is man that Thou art mindful of him? We don't know much, but we know this: No matter where we are, no matter what we do, no matter how bleak or frightening our prospects, each and every one of us who believe, each and every day, lies in the same safe and impregnable place, in the hollow of God's hand."

Tony Snow lost his battle with cancer recently, but he has gained his victory in Jesus. This message has touched my life, and I hope it touches and changes yours.

STRONG

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of our faith, Jesus Christ. God's plan for our lives is not defeat, but victory in Jesus.

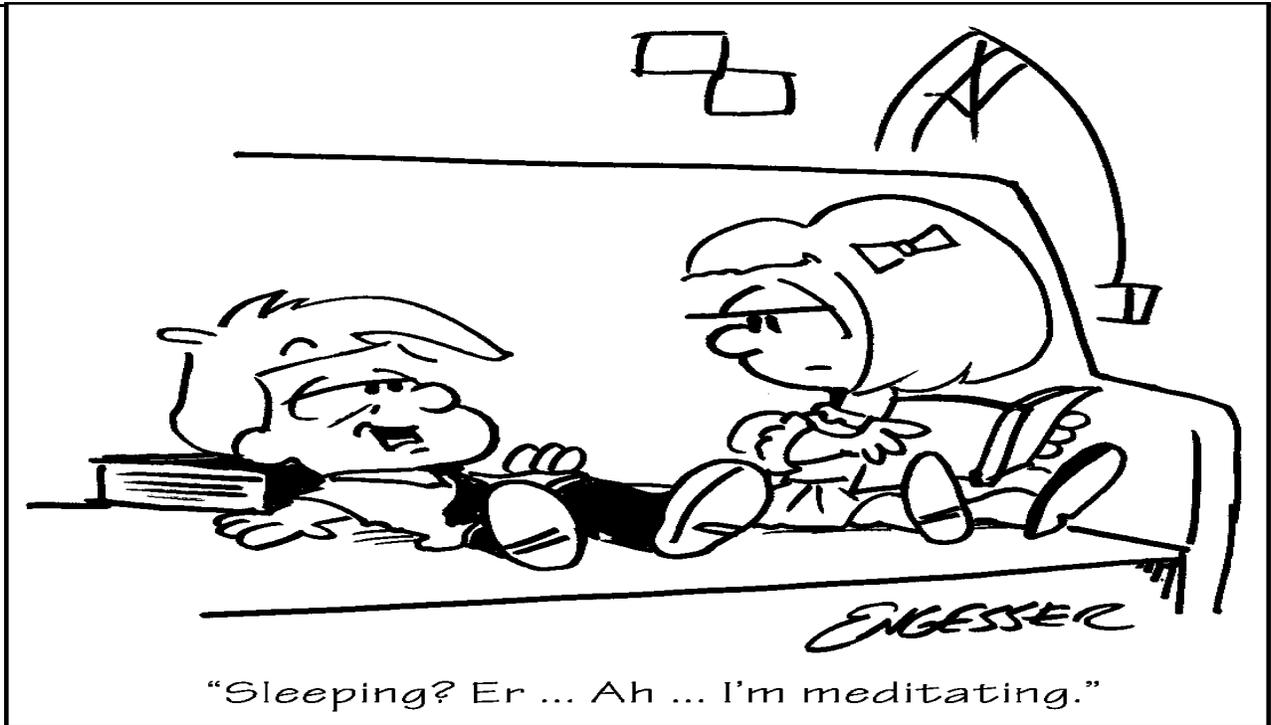
That victory is not hindered by age, sex, physical strength, or limitations. There are no limitations in God. His strength wisdom, power and might are

sufficient to defeat the enemy on every turn, but He only fights the battles of those that will engage the enemy. The Word tells us to "resist the devil, and he must flee." We can only resist him when we have confronted him. Many today flee from the enemy because they are afraid of him. We are told in the Word to "fear not." That means do not harbor fear, but rather exercise your faith—not just in a few areas but in all areas of your life. Be bold and steadfast, courageous and unmoving, and see the salvation of your God. He is faithful to the faithful, His Word to fulfill in every situation.

Bro. Mike Woods

IF YOU HAVEN'T BEEN BY THE FELLOWSHIP LATELY, YOU SHOULD COME SEE WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON. BESIDES THE REMODELING INSIDE THE CHURCH, AND THE NEW VIDEO AND SOUND EQUIPMENT, YOU REALLY MUST SEE THE NEW PLAYGROUND AND COVERED FELLOWSHIP AREA BEHIND THE CHURCH. THE KIDS ARE EXCITED, THE PARENTS ARE EXCITED, EVEN PASTOR GEORGE IS EXCITED. YOU WILL BE TOO. WE HOPE TO SEE YOU SOON. TO GOD BE THE GLORY!!!!





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