

Encouragement

by Wayne Goff

“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart,”
Galatians 6:9.

The phrase “*grow weary*” is from one Greek word meaning “to succumb to fatigue.” You have seen runners lose races because of fatigue. Sports teams have lost games because of fatigue. In John 4, Jesus sat by a well in Samaria “*being wearied from His journey*” (v. 6). The apostle Paul himself suffered “*in weariness*” (2 Cor. 11:27), like all the other apostles, but he never gave up.

What kept Jesus, Paul, and other apostles built up and encouraged in times of trouble? Paul said that our remembrance of the reward beyond the grave will do it! We all grow weary “*while doing good.*” This refers to doing the “*good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them*” (Eph. 2:10).

“Reaping”

Paul said in Galatians 6, “*...for in due season we shall reap...*” It is discouraging to continue to do right and receive no word of thanks or see no tangible results! But Paul challenged the Galatians and us to keep on doing good while trusting God for the results! When Jesus was reviled, and suffered, what did He do? He “*...committed Himself to Him who judges righteously*” (1 Pet. 2:23). In simple terms, He did what was right and trusted in God for the results!

We will **reap** “*in due season.*” Beloved, there is a better place beyond the grave, and we need to keep our eyes focused on it! “*Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*” (1 Pet. 1:13). To “*gird up the loins of your mind*” means to “**get mentally tough**”! Peter spoke these words to Christians suffering persecution. They are appropriate for us today as well.

Paul suffered many afflictions as an apostle. When false teachers at Corinth compelled him to “brag” about his apostleship, he mentioned his sufferings — labors, stripes above measure, prisons, deaths, beatings, shipwrecks, journeys, perils in water, perils among robbers, perils from both Jews and Gentiles, and perils everywhere he went! (2 Cor. 11:23-26). What sustained Paul through these difficult times was his own great faith that one day he would reap, if he did not faint or grow weary! He even referred to these things as “*light affliction*” (2 Cor. 4:16)! Compared to the *eternal glories of heaven*, indeed they were light!

Perhaps the worst thing that can befall a Christian *physically* in this life is **death**. But Paul’s attitude toward that was that he had a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better (Phil. 1:23)! At the same time he selflessly desired to remain in the flesh in order to help secure the eternal salvation of others! Paul knew that in heaven God would wipe away all tears, Revelation 21:4.

“Don’t Lose Heart!”

What does it mean to “**lose heart**”? A.T. Robertson says in his *Word Pictures in the New Testament* that it means “relaxed, exhausted as a result of giving in to evil (enkakomen).” The King James Version translates the Greek with the word “**faint**” because the *literal* meaning of the word is “to be loosened or relaxed, like the limbs of the weary” (*Vincent’s Word Studies in the NT*). However, keep in mind that in our text the word has a *figurative meaning* — don’t grow weary in your heart by discouragement!

Yes, there **are** many things which can discourage you — sin, failure, death, exhaustion, etc. But do not **focus** your mind on the bad, but **focus** on that which is good! When was the last time you read a beautiful passage on heaven and then meditated on the thought until you could imagine it in your mind’s eye? Well, my guess is that it’s not been recently enough. So consider Revelation 21:4 and remember that God’s promises are to the faithful. “*He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My Son*” (Rev. 21:7).

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