

I Have Fought The Good Fight

Joe Slater

Paul wrote the words of the title of this article while in a Roman dungeon awaiting execution (2 Timothy 4:7). He knew his earthly life was drawing to a close rapidly. Looking back, he was content and confident.

The New Testament word “fought” gives us our word “agonize.” It can refer to strenuous effort in athletics but appears to refer to combat in this text.

Paul was serious about spiritual warfare! He fought hard because Jesus, His gospel, and lost souls are worth fighting for. He fought hard because the enemy fights hard. Our “*adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith*” (1 Peter 5:8-9).

Satan’s minions fought Paul tooth and nail. Whether from the Judaizers or pagans, he faced relentless hostility everywhere he went. Not rarely the opposition became violent. With countless scars across his beaten back and the aftereffects of being stoned almost to death, Paul bore in his “*body the marks of the Lord Jesus*” (Galatians 6:17).

Timothy, Paul’s son in the faith, had seen firsthand what his mentor had endured. He knew precisely what Paul meant as he exhorted the young preacher, “*Fight the good fight of (the) faith*” (1 Timothy 6:12). Years later he warned Timothy of “perilous times” on the horizon, emphasizing that “*all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*” (2 Timothy 3:1, 12).

Although few, if any, modern Americans have had to suffer for the Lord the way Jesus and many early Christians did, we still are obligated to fight the good fight. Satan and his servants aren’t resting. Are you striving or sleeping?

God Is Still Good

Lately our world has been filled with bad news, but even in the midst of trouble, God is still good. Chaos and confusion have been swirling, but the Lord is still the God of peace (1 Corinthians 14:33). Even when so many have been filled with hate, our Maker is still the Lord of love (1 John 4:8).

Arrests have taken place, some falsely, some justified, But God is still good, offering spiritual freedom to all (Romans 6:3-7).

The Supreme Court is pushing decisions it deems “right.” But God is the only true, honest, and good Judge of the world (Acts 17:31-32).

Heated debates have occurred on these big issues, but God was good enough to provide the answers in advance (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Cities have been filled with riots, trash, and destruction, but the good Lord offers us an eternal home without such things (Revelation 21:4).

Despite all the sin, wickedness, and corruption, the Lord is good enough to wait patiently for us to repent (2 Peter 3:9).

It is painful to watch all the heartache filling our world. It is discouraging to see so much pain, suffering, sin, and sadness. We must never forget, however, that these are mistakes of our own, not of God’s. Despite all our pitfalls, God still offers hope (Hebrews 6:11). God still offers peace (Philippians 4:6-7). God still offers love (John 3:16). God still offers salvation and forgiveness (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21). Without a doubt, the Lord is still good. And thankfully, He always was and always will be.

--Author Unknown (via Mt, Carmel Church of Christ, Athens, AL)

Perfect Peace

“You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you” (Isaiah 26:3).

Peace. It is hard to find in our world. All one has to do is turn on the television or radio to hear of wars, murders, crime, and natural disasters. Pick up a newspaper or turn on your computer or electronic device, and you get the same bad news. Where can we go to find perfect peace?

God is our author of perfect peace. It is hard to feel His peace when our minds are entwined in the havoc of the world and our own worries and troubles. One secret in connecting to Him every day is to set our minds on Him. How do you do it?

One way to hear God is to find silence. In our special time to talk to God, find a place of quiet and solitude. Turn off your phone, the television, and the computer. Tell your loved ones that this is your time with God and you do not want to be interrupted. Clear your schedule for time just with God and turn off all distractions.

Silence on the outside is easy, but stillness on the inside may be more difficult. Stillness is turning off that inner voice in your head that carries your thoughts to your troubles and cares and worldly matters. Stillness is banning your worry and distrust in God and centering your mind on your worship of God.

When you are alone with God and your mind connects to God and His Word, you know that God is listening. You know how much He cares for you. Your faith in Him is strengthened, and you know that “*My (our) God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 4:19). Your peace is in God.

--Donna Wittlif (Denver, CO)