

No Turning Back

No Turning Back! Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward-to Jesus. I'm off and running and I'm not turning back. Philippians 3:12 The Message

Most of us have experienced moments in life when we have been tested right to the breaking point. Reaching the extreme of our individual limits, it isn't too difficult to imagine ourselves falling to the dirt and simply giving up. Finding the strength to take one more step can, at times, seem too much to expect of ourselves.

However, it is right at this moment of implosion that the strength of God explodes within us and catapults us to a brand new level of grace. Only seconds after giving careful consideration to quitting we most often find ourselves rejuvenated by the power of an inner-strength that only comes from a relevant connection with The Most High; if we elect to persevere!

The warfare that we are engaged in is very real. This is a battlefield, friend, not a recreation room. Our enemy isn't out to hurt us ... he's out to kill us. Regardless of our level of commitment, we face a foe who is absolutely, one hundred percent, totally committed to destruction. There is so much more at stake than most of us realize. Our future, our families, and our faith are under constant attack and we can't allow ourselves the luxury of floating through life with a Cruise Ship Mentality.

Aboard the Cruise Ship there are a multitude of service oriented individuals who are all trained and focused upon meeting the individual needs of each passenger. Here, passengers lounge around the poolside expecting a fully grown man in little-boy pants to deliver a liquid treat with a tiny umbrella sticking out of it while sailing towards a white, sandy beach and tax-exempt shopping. The farthest thing from the minds of a Cruise Ship passenger is the reality of the torpedo headed directly towards the ship's hull. However, we're not passengers on a Cruise Ship. We're soldiers aboard a Battleship. Each of us playing a significant role in the success of the entire vessel and no one job description is more vital than the next.

Whether we like it or not, faith requires a fight. 1 Timothy 6:12 defines faith as a good fight. I've been in some pretty hairy bouts in my time and I've learned the difference between a bad fight and a good fight. A good fight is the one we win! You may feel as though you've been beaten to the ground - get up again. It may appear that you're not winning any rounds - keep throwing punches.

Every voice around you might be suggesting that you throw in the towel - answer the bell for the next round. Refusing to be moved by what we see and retaining a strong stance based upon what we know is our great advantage in this war that we wage.

Like Paul, "I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward-to Jesus. I'm off and running and I'm not turning back." (Philippians 3:12-14 MSG)

I get the impression that there are those who assume that the life of the leader is basically a life of great ease. May I submit to you; that is NOT the case. Over the past few months I've experienced some of the greatest difficulties that I've ever faced in life and ministry. Challenged on almost a daily basis, I have been forced to produce a living demonstration of the material that I teach on a weekly basis. But again, like Paul, I continue to stretch towards the prize.

"Reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me!" What are you reaching for? Are you stretching for comfort or acceptance? Maybe you're hunting for strength or a new level of joy? Whatever your greatest need, the source remains the same. Trust me on this one. Reach out for Christ—He is reaching out for you!

We believe in you!

Pastors Thom and Shelby