

Hand to Hand Combat

*"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment,
worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory..."*

2 Corinthians 4:17 (KJV).

I was given this passage in West Virginia when I was helping those who survived the flood. When I got the passage, I saw many faces of people I know (and love) in Hand to Hand combat. Many of you are perplexed, some are frustrated with situations, others are tired or feel like you unable to find a way out and some of you just want an answer for your situation.

God says, "Do not despair. Yes, you feel pursued an enemy, but you are "not forsaken" -- you are not alone -- and you will not be overtaken by the enemy. There is more going on than you can see." Friends, He is at work behind the scenes of your life.

We all know that natural tendency is to buckle under times of afflictions and yet, Paul seemed to want us to walk in a deeper faith by calling afflictions light.

Affliction can mean a number of things and covers a multitude of sufferings. Webster's dictionary defines affliction as such:

- persistent pain
- distress
- great suffering

I am pretty sure we can all agree that hand to hand combat (affliction in some form) was something Paul completely identified with. Paul lived life with continual hand-to-hand combat and yet, trusted God completely to help him. Today you need trust God to help you over come the hand to hand combat you are engaged in.

Since affliction means persistent pain, and "persistent" means - something existing for a long or longer time, continuously with little or no relief, Paul doesn't want you to quit or become discouraged because of the sufferings.

Paul knew God was faithful. Paul had seen God deliver him again and again. Paul wanted his readers (you and me) to pursue a godly way of life even though he knew we would be hindered at times by trials and afflictions.

We live in a fallen world of death and suffering and it all started with Adam and Eve. Even though death is at work in each one of us, life is also at work within us. Paul understood hard pressed on every side. Paul understood distress. Paul understood great pain, anxiety, along with physical or mental suffering. Yet, he knew God's spirit was truly at work within him.

Can you relate? Are you dealing with something in your life that has been persistent with little to no relief? It's time to rise up in faith. It's time to kick those feelings of defeat, uncertainty, confusion or whatever it is to the curb. Its time to turn you full trust to God that your afflictions will be used by Him and they make you more like Christ.

His Spirit is working life into you through each situation you encounter. His Spirit brings life so you can stand in the face of affliction. It's confidence in Him that causes us not to faint. God will reward those who trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior for their sufferings.

Affliction is completely unavoidable, but how we handle it - well that's the whole point of today's message. You have to walk in faith that any thing you are facing is doing far more for you than you can currently see. Even when you are engage in hand to hand combat you cannot lose when you follow Christ by faith...you have His promise of something better!

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