

# PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

REV. DAVE RHODES



## What is the Race Before You? What is the Next Step?



*"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us"*

Hebrews 12:1

Yesterday, I watched the movie production of the book, All Quiet on the Western Front. I think that movie is the saddest that I have ever watched, but is still compelling as a movie. Most war movies are made from the perspective of the winning side. This movie was about what fighting in World War One did to the people who fought in it on the losing side. I began to think deeply about how wars of attrition affect the armies and the nations that engage in them. Attrition is a word that we don't use very much.

**attrition** ə-ˈtrɪʃ-ən

- 1. A rubbing away or wearing down by friction.
- 2. A gradual reduction in number or strength because of stress or military action.

Attrition simply means to wear down the opposition by constant work. There are some efforts that are accomplished by attrition which are very admirable, for example the finding of the Corona Virus vaccine. Other efforts of attrition destroy the people doing the work, like long extended wars that have no clear objective. Some wars are named simply on how long they lasted, like the One Hundred Years War or the Thirty Years War. The fact that people name wars on how long they last shows how destructive the long wars of attrition are on people.

Where is this military history going? We are called by God in scriptures like the one above to move forward in our lives with God. Hebrews 12:1 call us to live for God in a way that is compared to running a marathon. I know that I often ask the question of the church, "What is the next step God wants you or us to take?" I ask that question because there is great spiritual danger in standing still with God. I also ask that question because there is a tendency of all people to be superficial with God and each other. We need to keep taking the next step with God so that superficiality and staleness do not set in our lives. Then, there is the problem of attrition. If we do not sense that our lives are being moved forward by God, despair begins to set in, especially when things go wrong. I know that none of us want these problems. If these problems persist and we don't counteract them by being spiritually proactive, they will prevail!

In last months newsletter I shared about the already, but not yet reality of the kingdom of God. Taking the next step with God is another area of life where we live in the already, but not yet reality of living in Christ. I keep asking myself what is God's next step for me. I guess that is pretty obvious. At the exact same time, I

daily celebrate and embrace that I am forgiven by Christ and have an assurance of eternal life in heaven that is a gift to me from God. That gift is completely based on Christ's work on my behalf and not based on what I do, or have not done. Every night when I go to bed, one of the thoughts that I think before I go to sleep is that I am so glad that I belong to Jesus based on Him receiving me and not anything I have done or not done. So, please don't hear what I am not saying. God gives to you the privilege of being in a state of Him being pleased with you simply by receiving the gift in faith. I will be sharing in my church news article about some ways that we are moving forward as a church. This part of Christian living is another area where we live into it both individually and corporately. Are you running the race with perseverance?

God Bless,

*Brother Dave*

SENIOR PASTOR