



SERIES: A Season of Hope
SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD
Tuesday, 12/08/20
Scripture: Galatians 6:8-9.
TITLE: Don't Give Up!

A number of years ago, I was participating in a Men's Challenge sponsored by our church. I personally hate grueling physical work. And this challenge was 24 hours of guy-bonding time, wrapped in physical challenges that were created by a Marine!

The first challenge we faced was getting dropped off in a small town 13 miles away from our campsite. We were told we had 2 1/2 hours to get from the drop off point to our campsite, if we didn't want to experience more physical pain. The first hour wasn't too bad – we were having fun: Singing songs; eating beef sticks; it was a good time. But at about the two-hour mark, we were frustrated. We were angry. One guy's feet were actually bleeding, because he wore the wrong kind of shoes. If I could summarize our emotions, it was discouragement. We were discouraged, and we were ready to give up, but our team leader said, “Don't give up. We've got this. Keep going.”

Now, discouragement is experienced in all areas of life: Financial, physical, relational, and even spiritual. If you're feeling discouraged today, the Apostle Paul has some encouraging words for you in Galatians 6:8-9:

"Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. ⁹ So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time, we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up." Galatians 6:8-9 (NLT)

I don't know what challenges you're facing today. Maybe you have been locked up because of COVID-19 for the past 9 or 10 months. You're lonely, and you're discouraged. Maybe you're in a dead-end job, and you don't make enough money, and you know in today's marketplace, it's hard to find another solution. You're discouraged. Maybe your spouse just continually disappoints you in their behavior and in their words. You want to honor God, but you just feel like giving up.

The Apostle Paul here says, if you choose to do things in your own power, and for your own selfish reasons, it leads to decay and death. Sin condemned Adam and Eve to both physical and spiritual death. For those of us who are saved because of Jesus Christ, we don't face spiritual death any longer, but the ramifications for our sinful choices linger on.

That's why Paul says, “Don't get discouraged. Keep pursuing what is good.”

What is he talking about? He's saying, "Keep trusting God. Keep walking with Him. Don't give up." Just like we were walking down that gravel road, trying to get to our destination - we were ready to give up, but the team leader said, "Do not grow tired. Keep going." We did keep going, and we made it to our destination. The feeling of accomplishment was incredible. We were exhausted, but we celebrated that night.

If you are feeling discouraged and considering giving up in your walk with God, because of all the trials around you, my challenge to you is to NOT give up. Don't grow tired of doing what is good, because at the right time, God will bless you. There is a reward here in this world, *AND* an overwhelmingly gracious reward in Heaven.

Whatever it is you're struggling with today, when you feel discouraged and overwhelmed, say to yourself, "I won't give up. God is here. He will help me. And He will reward me." Allow that to motivate you, as you follow Him today.