



**SERIES: Ephesians**

**SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD**

**Wednesday, January 27, 2021**

**Scripture: Ephesians 3:12-13**

**TITLE: Pushing Through the Trials**

One of the most notorious boxing matches in history is the 1980 Superfight between Roberto Duran vs. Sugar Ray Leonard. This was a rematch from a previous win for Duran. The Superfight lasted 8 rounds. In the final seconds of the 8<sup>th</sup> round, Duran was frustrated and told the ref, "No mas." "No more - I quit". Duran was in a battle – a trial that he could have pushed through - but he said, "no mas."

Maybe today you feel like Duran. You're in the 8<sup>th</sup> round. It looks like it's time to quit. If this is you, the Apostle Paul has a message for you today in Ephesians 3:

Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence. <sup>13</sup> So please don't lose heart because of my trials here. I am suffering for you, so you should feel honored. (Eph. 3:12-13, NLT)

I love what Paul says here, "Don't lose heart". In other words, don't say, "No mas" to the good fight. Paul was a friend of hardship and trials. Paul would disclose that he was shipwrecked, beaten, stoned, flogged, left for dead, humiliated, and so on...all for the sake of Christ.

Paul would not say, "I quit." One, because he knew the truth of his mission and Who He was doing it for. He saw a risen Christ, and that changed everything. But that's not the only reason he kept pushing through the trials. It was also because Jesus Christ endured the same trials he faced. Hebrews 4 says, "This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. <sup>16</sup> So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most" (Heb. 4:15-16).

Because Christ endured it all before, and because He paved a way to God for us, we can come before God boldly, for mercy and grace to push through the trials. God provides us the real-life power to push through the trials, just like spinach gave Popeye that extra strength to fight on. We can come to God directly, and with confidence, to request sufficient grace and mercy to push through the trials. We don't ever need to say, "no mas."

Today, if you're feeling worn out from life, if you're feeling like you're ready to quit because of your trials, if you're feeling like you're frustrated with your spiritual journey, then here is my challenge for you: cry out to God for help. Be honest with God. Let him know you want to quit. You're ready to yell, "No mas," but you don't want to. Ask Him for mercy in the trial, and grace to push through it. James wrote, "You have not because you ask not." So ask Him today for that mercy and grace. He is ready to provide it. Simply ask Him, and be ready to receive it.

