

Joni and Friends Daily Devotional

November 29, 2011

Dear Friends,

Finishing Well

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith... Do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. --II Timothy 4:6-7; 9-11

The book of Acts records the golden days of Paul's ministry. It seemed no effort for him to be wide awake at midnight in a jail cell, praying despite his biting chains and singing hymns at the top of his lungs. Scripture tells us the jail doors flew open wide and everyone's chains fell off. Prisoners applauded him and the jail keeper, saved instantly, invited him to his house. Things were looking up!

But if you look closer at his last epistle, you see a softer side. Paul was in jail again when he wrote II Timothy. But this time there was no miracle, no escape. Winter was approaching and Paul felt old and tired. Deserted by his friends, he struggled against sickness. His friend Trophimus was sick, yet Paul couldn't do a thing to heal his friend. He couldn't even heal himself!

Yet the old apostle didn't allow discouraging circumstances to get him down. Things were different than the "golden days of old," yet he hung on courageously to God.

Some days you feel life is on the up-swing, other days it's flat. Sometimes you sense the miracle in your life, other times life seems very ordinary. Are you energized today to meet a challenge head-on? Or do you feel tired and trapped? Life's circumstances can make you feel like a yo-yo, but don't allow the "ups and downs" to get you down. Commit to God to fight the good fight... finish the race... keep the faith.

Give me strength, Lord, to finish well and not allow life's disappointments, along with age, aches and pains to dampen my trust.

Blessings,

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