

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” - Ephesians 6:10-13 (NKJV)

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. - 2 Timothy 4:6-8 (NKJV)

19 June 2022

Dear Friends,

Much has happened in recent days and these verses have come to my mind many times. One, I am sure it has not escaped the attention of any committed Christian that we are in a spiritual war against evil forces vying for the hearts and minds of people. The search for truth has become a subjective, personal pursuit if pursued at all and as a result, people are being hurt on a grand scale. These events seem new to us but the words of Paul written almost two thousand years ago reveal it is not new. His exhortation to believers then, is the same to us now. Stand firm and be strong in the Lord *AND* the power of His might. (The verses following in Ephesians 6:14 to 18 speak more specifically to the armor we are to put on in this battle.) “...having done all, to stand.” These words speak not only to the battle but also to us as warriors. To put it more succinctly, there is a battle for the hearts and minds of people and God has chosen us to be His warriors. The enemy is not the people around us (although it might seem so sometimes) and we have been equipped to fight the battle with spiritual weapons by the King of the Universe.

The second verse above is one of my favorites when I think about the end game. Paul fought the good fight and he knew there was a crown awaiting him.



I wrote you in our last letter about Elaine’s mom and her cancer treatments. Elaine has spent much time up in Atlanta and a few weeks ago, my son David and I were driving up to see her parents and bring Elaine home for a few weeks. About two hours into our drive, I got a text telling me the paramedics had just come for *her father* and that it did not look good. David and I drove straight to the hospital ICU and got to see Louis and talk with him. He seemed in good spirits and we had a great visit. Elaine, her mom and sister spent every day for the next nine days with him but he went steadily downhill. At one point Elaine asked her daddy if he was ready to meet Jesus soon and he said, “Yes I am. I’ve been waiting to see him for a long time. And I will be waiting to see you all over there when you get there too.”

Louis was a very strong man who fought the good fight and never gave up until Jesus ushered him into the kingdom. His life, his wit, his sense of humor is being missed but he does not have pain or weakness anymore and the way he left us was an encouragement to us all. Elaine is still with her mom helping her adjust and trying to figure out next steps on her living situation so I am sure you know how to pray for her.



It stirred my heart to hear the kneeling soldier say “on behalf of a grateful nation, please accept this flag as a symbol of our appreciation for your loved one’s honorable and faithful service.”

We are taking a family vacation in Colorado next week and after that, Elaine and April and Westley will return to Orlando while I go to our staff conference in Milwaukee. Immediately after that, I have been asked to attend our African leadership conference in Senegal. I am really looking forward to that. Pray I can be an encouragement to our leaders there and that God will give me wisdom in conversations when the need arises.

Thank you so much for praying for us. Please continue to pray for Elaine especially as she and her sister help her mother adjust to living without her partner of seventy-two years. Also for us all while we are apart.

I am blessed to have spent a bit of time with Louis before Jesus took him home. His heart preparation was amazing and reminded me of the Apostle Paul's last words to Timothy. When I became a believer fifty-five years ago those words were some of the first words I read in my own study of Scripture. It made everything seem so real and life on earth indeed, temporal. They inspired me to live my life for Jesus. I pray for each of us that they are words we can say when our time here is at an end. We have fought the good fight, we have finished the race, we have kept the faith.

We love you and appreciate your love!

Mark & Elaine