

## *A Stop by Quiet Waters*

By  
*Richard A. Germaine*

### **“How to Face Pastoral Ministry Successfully”**

Recently I read Wasmond and Miller's book, Battle Plan for Spiritual Warfare. In it they tell about Josef Tson, a Romanian pastor who suffered extreme persecution under the brutal dictatorship of Nicolae Ceausescu. He was eventually exiled from his own country in 1981 and couldn't return until after Ceausescu fell in 1991. Pastor Tson said that during his time of painful persecution he learned four crucial principles which sustained him. As I pondered these I realized they are as necessary for us if we are going to make it successfully through pastoral ministry as they became for Josef Tson. Here are his four principles.<sup>1</sup>

“First, we need to *grab hold of and not let go of the truth that our lives ‘are hidden with Christ in God.’* Tson said, ‘To get to me they had to go through Jesus and the Father first.’ That is a place of great security: knowing that no one can touch us unless God allows it – and that what He allows, he will give grace to endure.

“Second..., we need to *rest in the sovereignty of God.* Tson's definition of sovereignty is this: God is so much in charge of what is happening that in the end he uses all His enemies' schemes for His great purposes. Tson said that, ‘When I was in prison it was like seeing my God moving His six puppet strings,’ referring to the six guards charged with his interrogation. That's understanding sovereignty. Look to them [persecutions] as God's puppet strings for you. They are His instruments for you.

“Third, we must *learn to live by the principle of Romans 12:21 – ‘Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.’* Tson teaches that love, not evil, is the aggressor. When being interrogated by the cruelest investigator in all Romania, he told the man repeatedly that he was praying for him. When the weeks of interrogation were finally over, the man told Josef he would miss him! It was a moment of supreme triumph for Christ and His servant.

“Fourth, we need to *understand that suffering produces glory.* The apostle Paul, a man who suffered much for the kingdom of God, explained this: ‘*The Spirit himself testifies that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*”

Paul knew Timothy had his hands full with some people pastoring the church in Ephesus, so gave him challenging but sound advice.

*“And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth...”* <sup>2 Tim. 2:24-25</sup>  
NIV

We have our hands full, too, and we must not become quarrelsome or resentful. Let's lay hold of the foundational biblical principles pastor Tson learned in his persecutions and with these

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<sup>1</sup> Joe Wasmond, Rich Miller, *Battle Plan For Spiritual Warfare*, Harvest House, Eugene, Or. 2004, 142-143.

face the opposition and struggles that come our way. We, too, can become "*More than conquerors through Him who loved us.*"

Dick Germaine