

*A Stop by Quiet Waters*  
by  
*Dick Germaine*

**Persevere To The very End!**

Hebrews 12:1-2 says, *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”* <sup>NIV</sup>

The ministry to which we have been called is not a 100 yard dash, but a lifelong marathon. Our race is not all on flat ground or downhill, oftentimes it's up a steep incline on boulder-strewn, pitfall-pocked paths. Time and again we are tempted to just coast along, go with the crowd, keep a low profile, not stir up trouble, tone down the gospel.

In Lystra Paul and Barnabas proclaimed the gospel with such power and authority that the people mistook them for gods, that is until opponents to the good news from elsewhere arrived and somehow turned the crowds against them. Paul, who was at first believed to be Hermes come in the flesh, was stoned and dragged out of the city as dead. But by the prayers of the disciples gathered around his bleeding body, he was revived and got up. He deliberately went back into the city, and the next day he and Barnabas continued on to the next town.

In the prayer guide, Operation World, Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk give us a clear, succinct, and sobering description of the cultural context in which we proclaim the gospel today. *“The spiritual heritage of the USA is being eroded by an unholy alliance of humanists, New Agers and homosexuals. They exploit the provisions of the Constitution and their control of the media to disparage and mock Christians and dismantle all they can of anything Christian in public life. Freedom of religion is becoming freedom from religion. They aim to replace “intolerant” Christian absolutes with their permissive culture. There is scant tolerance for expression of religious values.”*<sup>1</sup>

We are "being stoned" by these forces, and the danger for us is to retreat into Christian conclaves where it's safe to proclaim Jesus Christ as the only way, truth, and life -- to those who already believe. Let's fight this temptation with all our might, crying out to the Holy Spirit to strengthen and empower us to "get up and go on," proclaiming the Gospel through our preaching, teaching, witnessing, lifestyle, passions, and love. This is no time for us to obscure the gospel or be cowed into passivity or retreat by the forces aligned against us.

Let us remember those who've gone before us and on whose shoulders we now stand. We are the ones to whom their mantle of witness for Christ has now been given. Let's

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick Johnstone, Jason Mandryk, United States center for World Mission, Operation World 21st-century edition, 2001, page 659.

faithfully and persistently run our race looking steadily at Jesus! Let's remember the joy that awaits all the faithful! Let's despise the shame the world attaches to the cross and to our Lord Jesus! Let's keep on revealing the power of the gospel and the love of Christ through who we are and all we do! Let's settle for nothing less than making disciples for Christ of those who are in ignorance of what the gospel truly is, and of those who presently oppose our Lord and us!

Brothers and sisters, we have been called to the ministry of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, who said, *"Do you remember what I told you? 'A servant is not greater than the master.' Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you! The people of the world will hate you because you belong to me, for they don't know God who sent me."* John 15:20-22 NLT Let's beware of just trying to get people to like us; let's so live for Christ that they see him in us and hear him through our lips and so come to him. Let's persevere to the very end!

Peace and joy in Christ,  
Dick Germaine