

The Christian Life: A War Zone

Bill Loveless

I want to share with you something that I recently heard from a speaker at our Grace Gathering. He used World War II as the backdrop for his analogy. Displaying a world map, he marked all the war zones and the locations where hundreds of thousands of troops on both sides were fighting. He zeroed in on one American soldier in a foxhole in France after the D-Day invasion. He began by saying that this one soldier in the midst of war and suffering couldn't really see much more than what was in his immediate periphery. He had no idea of the overall strategy to win the war in Europe and the Pacific. In addition, he really had no idea how the war was going worldwide. All he knew from his vantage point was that he was in the middle of a hellish fight that was causing great suffering for him.

Meanwhile, in Washington D. C. the military strategists knew full well what was happening in every battle zone. They knew how well or how poorly the Allied troops were doing throughout the world. They had developed a master strategy for victory on both fronts. Their perspective of the war was totally different than that one G.I.'s understanding in a foxhole in France. In one sense, this soldier was going "by faith" that the generals had an overall strategy for victory. If he wasn't convinced of that, I doubt very seriously that he would of gotten out of his foxhole and moved forward into battle.

Since suffering is part of this phase of our life, I believe that this analogy is very applicable to our own lives. For you see, you and I are in a foxhole called "my life." We are in the midst of a spiritual war of infinite magnitude. However, like the G.I., we can only see the battle that surrounds and involves us. At the very least, this battle produces daily difficulty. And, at the most, it can produce great pain and suffering. When we enter this battle, (and we simply do that by waking up in the morning!) it is sometimes very difficult to see this battle beyond our five senses and what we are experiencing in our souls and bodies. At times like these it is very difficult to see or understand God's overall, eternal strategy in our lives. We tend to focus on the circumstances surrounding our battle instead of seeing God working out His eternal plan through this battle. When these painful battles come into our lives, it can be difficult for us to see God's love and His purpose in the midst of the battle.

However, like the strategists in World War II who knew the whole situation and had an overall strategy for victory, we, too, have a Strategist. Our Strategist is eternally knowledgeable about all aspects of the war. Unlike a general far away who has no intimate knowledge of the G.I. in France, you and I have a Strategist who knows every single detail surrounding our personal battles.

You and I are faced with the same choice as the G.I. in France. We, too, by faith must believe that God is in control. We, too, must believe by faith that God does have an "eternal" strategy for each of our lives. It is one born out of His unconditional love for each of us. It is a strategy designed to draw us and to conform us to Himself. His part is to not allow the battle to overwhelm us as we trust Him by faith. Our part is to "know" by faith that there is an eternal transformation process being worked out in every difficult situation in our lives.

Why does Paul command us to “set our minds on the things above”(Colossians 3:2)? If we don’t set our minds on Him, we are left to experience our battles only in the **seen** realm. We will never understand God’s purposes in the seen realm (2 Corinthians 4:18). Understanding only comes through seeing our situation from His “war room” in the unseen heavenly realm. You may not understand specifically what He is doing in the midst of the current struggle that you face. It is up to God whether or not He chooses to reveal His specific purpose. However, if He chooses not to reveal the “why” of what you are going through at this moment, you can have the same confidence as Paul in Philippians 1:6 by knowing that God is perfecting each one of us. The battle is raging in all of our lives. It never ceases. However, Paige and I pray that you will “set your mind on Him” in the midst of your conflicts, and that you will rest in His eternal strategy for your life. Remember that unlike that G.I. who is working toward victory, you and I are assured of the victory that is already ours in Christ!

**“Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
1 Corinthians 15:57**

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