

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (1 Cor. 4: 16-18)

I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of My hand. (John 10:28)

After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as He told me. (Acts 27: 21-25)

Praise in the Storm

Even though Thanksgiving (technically) is over, and we are in the headlong rush to Christmas, who says we need to stop giving thanks?

We can joke about a traditional Thanksgiving dinner this year being an act of defiance (you weren't just serving the bird, you were "flipping the bird"), but if you're truly of a mind to be an iconoclast (as it were), may I suggest doing the one thing Thanksgiving was made for in the first place... giving thanks. Sure, it's been crazy this year; the virus, the lockdowns, the "grand theft election," the rioting. And I'm not trying to suggest that we gloss all this over and paint smiles on our faces - especially if you've had loved ones sick or even dead from the virus or perhaps are out of work because of it. But as the Apostle Paul states in the above verse, there is the concept of "praising God in the storm." Giving thanks to Him who holds our lives in the palm of His hand even when it seems every circumstance is trying to rip us out.

This, frankly, is impossible, as Jesus Himself said in the second Scripture passage above. So, do what is contrary to our nature and give Him that praise -- continually. Not with fear or hesitation or doubt, but as if the battle is already won. Because it is, and God specializes in acting at the very moment when it seems there's no way out. The sooner we realize that there isn't - except through Him - the sooner we'll see change.

Valley Forge. Gettysburg. The "blitz" in London. The "Battle of the Bulge." The Six-Day War. Pardon the military references, but all of these looked pretty bad at the time... and look what happened in the end.