

Serving for *His Glory*

Giant seas of grass encompass much of southeastern Montana. The landscape is broken only by a shallow river here and there; pine covered buttes; and the snow covered mountains on the western horizon. Here, on these rolling plains is the scene of the very famous battle where a cocky, pompous American died – along with hundreds of soldiers under his command. Some say Lt. Col. George A Custer got what he deserved; others disagree. No matter your take on history, those who visit Little Bighorn Battlefield will not only learn more about Custer – but many others who took part in the most famous battle of the American Indian Wars of the 1870's. Throughout the battlefield are white, stone markers reading, "US Soldier fell here." There is no name – just a marker where the soldier fell. Who were these men? What was their life like? What must have gone through their minds on the day of that great battle? Regardless of one's opinion on the Indian wars – we know these men paid the ultimate price.

The Hebrew writer speaks of veterans of a spiritual war...those who have gone on before us. He mentioned unnamed prophets who *by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.* (Heb. 11:33-34) He then mentions unidentified women who are remembered for their faith (11:35). We are then told of countless others who stood up for God. (11:36-38) God did not preserve their names for us. But, what is important is their example of sacrifice and perseverance in hope of eternal life. The Hebrew writer tells us *all these, gained approval through their faith* (Heb. 11:39). These unnamed souls now serve as an example and motivation for today's Christian - *Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us* (Heb. 12:1)

At certain times, we find ourselves caving into resentment when we do not receive the recognition for spiritual service that we think we deserve. Let the ones in the Hebrews account remind us that God sees our work – and it is He who will reward us in the end! Jesus reminds us, *(our) Father who sees what is done in secret will reward (us).* (Mt. 6:18) Think of the unnamed ones in the church at Jerusalem who *endured a great conflict of sufferings; were made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations; and showed sympathy to prisoners.* (Heb. 10:32-34) What was their motivation? *A better possession and a lasting one.* They were told not to *throw away their confidence, which (has) a great reward.* Remember those who do the will of God **will** receive what is promised! (Heb. 10:35-36)

Right now – there are countless numbers of Christians who, on a daily basis seek to make a difference in the lives of those they touch. Think of men who quietly set the example of what a godly husband/father is. Remember their wives who toil at home – managing the household affairs; training up their children; and following Christ. Think about those who roll up their sleeves and get involved in the Lord's work within the congregation. They never draw attention to themselves – they just do what the need to do. Day by day – many Christians are doing great things that never make the bulletin, announcements, or bulletin board. Keep it up! These are the things that make such a difference in the war with the devil! Remember, stand up; fight the devil; and do good! Not for personal glory – but for the glory of Almighty God! Paul has said, *whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.* (Col. 3:17) Let this column serve as a hearty "thank-you" to all those who serve God from the heart.

While we're busy serving God – let's look for opportunities to encourage others in their work. A simple word of thanks, a pat on the back, and a smile on the face make such a difference! Regular encouragement can be the driving force behind someone excelling even more. (1 Thess. 4:1, 9-10). So, *let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.* (Heb. 10:24) Not only will our relationships flourish, but God's church will be strengthened as well!

Matthew (Matt) Allen,
mhallen@sbcglobal.net