

Weekly Health Update from Pastor Jim – Weekend of October 13 & 14, 2018

Dear Friends and Family:

Can you believe it, I have been on Chemo for one whole year now, since my transplant? I am so sick and tired of being sick and tired. I sure feel like quitting. Even my Doctor said that maybe I can go off the chemo and have the same results. I really don't understand that, but I sure am tempted to try it. But, knowing me, I sometimes quit too soon. I've quit when what I really needed was to press on and press through. Sometimes I've grown tired of the struggle — tired of trying. And I've missed many blessings because I threw up my hands in the battle and said, "Just forget it." Could this be one of those times?

The battle plan for Joshua to take the Promised Land was as simple as it was strange, complete with marching for seven days around the city of Jericho, a whole army shouting and priests blowing trumpets. (Read more in Joshua 6:1-21.)

Now, that was a strange plan. God's infinite ways often don't make sense in our finite minds. Sometimes you have to be willing to look ridiculous and be radical to live a remarkable life. The choices you make when you feel God's nudge will become the hinges on which your destiny swings.

Jericho was "tightly shut" (Joshua 6:1, NLT). Sometimes it can feel like our promises are "tightly shut" as well. But that doesn't mean we should give up. It means we are to suit up, step up and keep moving forward. In Joshua 6:2b, God said, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands" (NIV). Notice the verb tense. God did not say, "I **will** deliver Jericho into your hands." He said, "I **have** delivered Jericho into your hands" (emphasis added). He had already done it, but the Israelites had to obey and put their foot down and march to receive it. I love how God speaks in past tense to our present problems.

But here's the conundrum: What do you do when what God says doesn't match up with what you see? When all you see is a big wall standing between your promise and your present situation? There will be times when you're doing everything you know to do, and you still don't see any movement. The Israelites walked around Jericho for six days, and as far as they could tell, the wall had not moved even one inch. I'm sure it unnerved the people behind the wall, but as far as the walkers could tell, not one brick fell.

This is where many give up — me included — when they don't see any progress. At my last Doctor's visit my numbers had gone up from 120.07 to 140.82. Now, that does not look like a serious jump, but if you compare that to May, I was at 46.80, you will understand I am moving in the wrong direction. But God says, "Keep walking ... by faith." Keep taking the chemo. Keep feeling sick and tired. Don't give up.

Just because you don't see God working does not mean He isn't. Jesus said, "My Father is always working" (John 5:17, NLT). The writer of Hebrews notes: "So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised" (Hebrews 10:35-36, NIV).

Today, you might be on lap number seven around your “Jericho” and not even know it. Suppose the Israelites had stopped on day six, saying, “This is ridiculous. Not one stone has fallen to the ground. I don’t see any progress. And those people in the city of Jericho are probably laughing their heads off. So, I’m going home.” They would have missed the blessing. If I were to quit on the chemo today, would I miss out on remission tomorrow?

Paul writes, “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9). I don’t know the answer to the question of how much longer for you, but I do know this: Tomorrow could be the final lap. Don’t give up too soon.

Love you all. Pastor Jim