

LITTLE IS MUCH WHEN GOD IS IN IT

By Roelf L. Ruffner

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Mat. 18:20).

Imagine that the year is 1870. You are a U.S. Army Cavalry officer on the Western frontier of the United States. You are assigned to a lonely post at a fort in the New Mexico Territory. The post has great responsibility but few rewards. Your nearest neighbor is miles away. You are surrounded by cacti, yucca and hostile Apache Indians. You miss your family back East, the military parades and social life of the larger posts. But your sense of duty and love of country are always foremost in your mind. It will not always be as it is. Someday you will go home, Lord willing.

The above reflects the state of many young Christians in this world. They may grow up in an area where there are few if any brethren. The school they attend may have an ungodly atmosphere, but they continue on glorifying God. They may be considered “nerdy” or “goodie-goodies” by their class mates. But they continue to remain faithful to their Friend. “...I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one” (1 John 2:14b).

Other Christians find that the local congregation where they have labored for many years has forsaken them, going after false teachers and heresy. They are forced by the Scriptures to withdraw their fellowship. They may end up worshipping God in their homes seemingly alone, but not alone. “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil...” (Ex. 23:2).

Sometimes preachers find themselves working with a small congregation which, to the world, seems to be dying. Some members don't seem to care. Biblical preaching and teaching does not motivate some. Discouragement hovers over these laborers like a cloud. But they shrug it off and continue loving the Lord. “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:13).

As the aging process catches up with all of us some brethren find themselves in a nursing home. They are physically unable to attend worship services and no congregation will come and worship with them where they live. There are few if any Christians in the nursing home. But they do not give up. They continue praying, reading their Bibles and studying; trying to get their fellow residents interested in the Gospel. “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

Perhaps you find yourself in prison. You have repented of your sins and are paying the penalty for those sins. But inwardly you are a free man. You face ungodly, satanic opposition on every side yet you continue to pray, study the Bible, live THE LIFE and teach others. You too are not alone. “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

The apostle Paul faced the monstrous, mighty mad man Emperor Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus ALONE, but not alone. (2 Tim. 4:16). This servant of Christ who had helped free thousands from the bondage of Satan was alone. Where were Luke, Silas, Timothy, Titus, etc? Perhaps they were not allowed to be with him. But he was not alone. To him we can apply the old adage, “One plus God makes a majority!” The Lord was not finished with him. His Master still had tasks for him to do. He was not yet ready to go home. Perhaps this is where you are in your Christian race. Take heart Christian, you are not alone!

“Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion” (2 Tim. 4:17).