

REFLECTIONS

June 28, 2009

**Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the Lord his God,
the Maker of heaven and earth,**

Psalms 146:5-6

A Matter of Hope

The struggle was long and hard fought. A championship was on the line and I watched as my team put up a valiant effort to prevail. The momentum of the game swung like a pendulum from one team to the other. Then the opponent made a strong offensive move and the pendulum stopped swinging. Spirit drained from my team. Their shoulders slumped, they moved about slowly, and their eyes that had danced with expectation, now looked dejectedly downward. Defeat replaced hope. Victory was not to be.

Perhaps there is no other activity that allows us to witness the power of hope more than athletic competition. No matter the game and no matter the level of play, the deciding point of the competition is a matter of hope. When there is no hope the game is lost. And when there is no hope, life is lost.

Hope is the stimulant for life. It is the difference between winning and losing, between living and dying. Hope is more than a wish. It is the expectation of a favorable future. Hope is rooted in faith. It gives us courage to face adversity, and when we have it we inspire hope in those around us too.

I think of those who have inspired a nation—of George Washington holding an army together at Valley Forge, of Abraham Lincoln preserving a nation in the face of the Civil War, and of New York firemen on 911 giving hope to a city. They all had hope for themselves, and they gave hope to those they served.

I think of those who inspired me, my parents whose hope carried them to their final breathes, my grandparents whose hope made them my heroes and models for life. I think of my friends who departed this life with unwavering hope in their hearts. None of them celebrated the separation from those they loved; but they faced life's end with their shoulders strong, and with spirit alive in their eyes.

Now as I reflect on these lives, I find one thing common in them all. Hope in the Lord renewed their strength. And from hope, their lives soared on wings like eagles; they ran without growing weary; they walked and did not faint. (Isaiah 40:31)

Our lives are a matter of hope. And our hope is in the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

“You are the light of the world.”

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