



Ron & Cheryl Myers

GOD'S WORD FOR ISAN NEWSLETTER

January, 2022

A Faith-based Ministry Sustained Through the Prayers and Partnership of God's People

New Year's Resolutions vs. Prime Commitments

"No Man Careth for My Soul," Thus Cry the Millions

By Ron Myers

New Year's Greetings in Jesus' Matchless Name,

I often wonder, what's the average of New Year's resolutions that are kept? And, how many new leaves get *turned over* and left dormant? These come under the general heading of *Good Intentions* ... a category under which many of us inadvertently find ourselves. I too have some well-intended projects – home, hobbyist, writing, etc. – that I'm guilty of starting with the best of intentions, now gathering dust while awaiting completion. Bottom line? ... good intentions are the bane of successful achievement.

Paul was unstoppable in seeking to achieve his God-ordained prime commitments. He was also an ardent sports enthusiast, seen in the various sports-related terms and analogies he made in his epistles (approximately 60 by count). In 1 Timothy 6:12, Paul challenged Timothy to "*Fight the good fight of faith*," which, in principle, applies to every born-again Christian. But what did Paul mean? In breaking it down exegetically while translating the Isan New Testament, I found that it's another of Paul's sports analogies. The first occurrence of *Fight* in this verse (*agōnizomai*) is in the Greek *verb* form. It means to struggle or strive to accomplish something – in this case literally to compete for a prize. It's also where we get our English word *agonize* – to struggle or persist to attain a worthwhile goal.

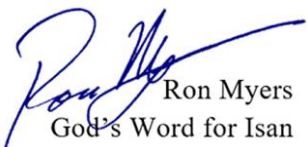
The second occurrence of *Fight* in this verse (*agōn*) is in the Greek *noun* form. In this instance it refers to an arena or stadium in which Greeks gathered to watch their national games where contestants competed, contending for a prize. Hence, I believe a more-precise wording might read, "*Strive for Excellence in The Arena of Faith*" – the sports analogy Paul was making. These games included Greco-Roman wrestling, seen in the verbs "*Fight* and *lay hold on*." Both of these are in the imperative grammatical sense, signifying its importance. Paul's testimony exemplifies this, after his life-changing encounter with the living Christ on the road to Damascus. Starting with his salvation experience (Acts 9:3–6), through to the end of Acts, Paul pressed forward for his Savior (Acts 9–28) until he reached the finish line – his martyrdom in Rome (2 Timothy 4:6–8).

Paul's *primary commitment* was obvious; to preach the whosoever will Gospel of God's *Amazing Grace* where it had not yet been heard – in the far reaches of the known world (Ephesians 2:8–9; Titus 3:5–6). Paul told the Corinthian believers that he was not interested in going where the Gospel had already been preached, but to take the Good News to the *regions beyond* them, where people had yet to have a chance to hear and believe. Also, Paul wasn't into *Church stealing* – taking ownership or credit for another's accomplishments as his detractors did (2 Corinthians 10:16). In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul severely castigated them for their complacency, admonishing them to wake up and get their priorities in order. He told them, to their shame, that some were still without the knowledge of God (1 Corinthians 15:34).

What should our priorities be in light of Paul's prime commitment to get the Gospel to the regions beyond? He was *sold out* in obeying Christ's Command to "*Go into All the World and Preach the Gospel to Every Creature*" (Mark 16:15). No sooner is this voiced among Christians than a chorus of voices echo a familiar mantra: "We can't all go like the Apostle Paul did, you know." That reminds me of a poster I once saw: "Hear I am Lord, Send My Sister." I'm not implying everyone should enter foreign missionary service. Yet I am suggesting every Christian needs to be personally involved in some meaningful capacity and not just hold membership in a missions-minded church, which is good, of course.

Revelation 5:9 states: They sang a new song, saying: "You (Christ) were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your Blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation." How did these ones get there? Someone obviously had to leave the *good life* behind and go to them in obedience. I am one that did, and found it the most worthwhile and satisfying way I could have invested my life – lasting long after I'm gone. Obviously, everyone can't go, yet considering Christ's all-inclusive command, it appears every Christian should have an integral part – supporting the efforts of those who do go. I also believe God wants every lost person to have a chance to hear about God's gift of eternal life and deliverance from judgement. It's only possible if someone takes the Gospel to those living in the yet unreached ends of the earth. Otherwise, why would Peter say God is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9)? Millions are crying out, still waiting to hear the truth, that there's a loving Creator God who sent His Son into the world to deliver them from the powers of darkness into the Kingdom of Light of His beloved Son (Colossian 1:13).

Remember Christ's parable of a Nobleman who traveled to a far country to inherit a kingdom, then return? The Nobleman instructed his servants to "Occupy till I come" during his absence (Luke 19:13). Jesus is that Nobleman; who, having finished His earthly mission as *The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*, returned to Heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Father, later to return to receive His rightful Kingdom. With that in mind, it's clear that "Occupy till I come" means to "*Go into All the World and Preach the Gospel to Every Creature*."


Ron Myers
God's Word for Isan