

No Man Left Behind

Don Truex

Desmond Doss was determined to serve his country during WWII. His conscience, however, would not allow him to carry a weapon. The Army did all it could to get him to quit. He endured cruelties that would have caused a lesser man to walk away, but he remained steadfast. Assigned to the medical unit of the 77th Infantry Division, Private Doss was sent to the front lines of the war in Okinawa. He was surrounded by atrocities on a daily basis. He would not carry a gun but he lived by the creed of the Armed Services, "No man left behind". He is credited with rescuing over 75 men on the field of a single battle. Mr. Doss is the only conscientious objector to receive the Medal of Honor in WWII.

"No man left behind." Quite simply, our service-men will not leave a fallen comrade in the hands of the enemy on the field of battle. And neither should we.

In Ephesians 6, Paul argues that we too, are engaged in warfare. We may not see flag-covered coffins or have funerals for those who die spiritually, but there are casualties none-the-less. The battle takes place in our hearts. The loss of life is not just physical, but a soul ... a soul lost for eternity.

What a difference it would make if we would determine that "No one will be left behind." It would cause elders to shepherd differently, preachers to preach differently, Christians to look at others differently.

The fact is, there are people who are discouraged who need to be encouraged, lonely who need company, weak who need to be strengthened, and wayward who need to be corrected. And too, there are those who are doing well who need to be appreciated, sacrificial who need to be esteemed.

"Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest," said Jesus. Do you pray for the church of which you are a member when outside the assembly? Do you pray for members who are young and particularly vulnerable? People who are in a distressing family relationship? People who are older and struggling with the debilitation of age? People who have left the Lord and placed their soul in eternal jeopardy?

And then, after we say "Amen", we need to do what we can. Maybe that means befriending a young person who needs encouragement, or an older person who needs company. Maybe it means taking the risk to go behind enemy lines to try to rescue a Christian who has been felled by enemy fire. Paul was right, "We who are strong have an obligation to bear the weaknesses of those without strength..."