

Don't Give Up: God Wants to Encounter You in a New Way

✖ Do you remember when the Lord spoke to the apostle Paul in the night by a vision? He said: "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city" (Acts 18:9-10).

That's the **Scripture** that came to my mind last Friday after I came home from the spa. Yes, the spa. See, I'm not too proud to admit that carrying the weight and fighting the **spiritual warfare** that goes along with planting a church, writing a new book about the **Jezebel spirit**, producing **worship songs**, commenting in a weekly national radio broadcast, working in media ministry at *Charisma*, raising a teenager as a single mother—I'll stop there—I'm not too proud to admit that sometimes the warfare against my mind and body is so intense that it borders on overwhelming.

When that happens, I've learned that I need to unplug and allow the **Holy Spirit** to minister to me. And that's what I did last Friday afternoon. I never imagined that God had someone in the spa ready and waiting to speak a word in due season that would remind me of just how great our God is and how much He really cares. But that's just what happened. Call it a **divine appointment**. God had stationed a powerful **prayer warrior** (with a strong Jamaican accent) in that spa to minister to me by the power of the Holy Spirit.

I emerged from the spa with a renewed awareness that God really does order our steps (Psalm 37:23). I emerged with a new perspective on carrying the **spiritual burdens** and fighting the warfare that goes along with everything the Lord has called me to do. And I emerged with a firm decision that I wasn't going to carry the weight alone anymore—and that the

battle belongs to the Lord (2 Chron. 20:15). I decided I would not be afraid, but speak; that I would not keep silent for God is with me, and no one will attack me to hurt me. Indeed, He has many people in this city (Acts 18:9-10).

Of course, I only came to this revelation after I decided to still my soul (Psalm 46:10). I unplugged from the racing world around me and went to the spa. First, I hit the sauna. I was alone, save the Holy Spirit. God told me, *"When you leave here, leave all this pressure behind you. Leave it right here."* I tried, but when I walked out of the sauna to meet with my massage therapist, I was still carrying the load. I guess Darla, a Jamaican woman in her 60s, discerned my condition and the Holy Ghost gave her a word of wisdom. She said, "When you leave here, leave all the pressure behind you."

Uncanny? No, it was the Holy Ghost speaking through her what He had moments ago spoken to me. See, the Lord has many people in this city—and one of them was in the spa that day. The Lord ordered my steps to this Spirit-filled woman. And the Lord confirmed what He spoke to my spirit through an obedient vessel. I told Darla that I had just been praying and the Lord gave me those same words. And that set into motion **prophetic intercession** that I never would have imagined in the middle of a spa.

Filled with the **Holy Ghost**, Darla grabbed me, hugged me and started preaching a powerful **word of faith** that put the devil on the run. After two strokes and a brain tumor, Darla explained, she learned how to cast all her cares on the Lord once and for all. She testified to the goodness of God, exhorted me to praise Him through the warfare, and otherwise encouraged my heart with the oracles of God. Then she went off in diverse tongues and **intercessory prayer** that literally infused my spirit, soul and body with the strength I needed to run back to the battle line, not in my own strength—but with His might.

Listen, you know the Word. You know the Lord. You know His ways. But sometimes when we're in the thick of the battle—when people are trying to silence our voice and **principalities and powers** are mounting up against us—sometimes we need to put more than 1,000 to flight because there are more than 1,000 coming at us. Sometimes we need a **prayer warrior** at our side that can help us put 10,000 to flight. Sometimes we need an encounter with God in the midst of the **spiritual warfare** to remind us that He has people in this city.

Beloved, if you are discouraged, stressed, overworked or ready to quit, just hang on. Everyone feels like giving up sometimes, and it's usually when we're trying to do what He called us to do in our own strength. Cry out to God. He's listening. Thank God for grace. And thank God that we do not have to be afraid because God is with us and no one will attack us or hurt us—for He has many people in our city.

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