

Rafz, 21st July, 2021

Circular letter: Why we do not become discouraged!!

Hello dear family and friends,

You may be wondering now why we should have reason to be discouraged. Because in my last post I passed on to you positive news of the very good values.

Well, while the joy about it continues, unfortunately there were also unpleasant surprises: Two days later, I developed shingles, which then spread around my entire left side over a few days. I started immediately with a virostatic agent. It is a typical complication of chemotherapy weakened immune system. I had shingles before, over 30 years ago, and this virus has been sitting in my body ever since. We just thought, "Here you are trying to protect yourself against infection from the outside, and then you get sick from something that's already in your body!" After more than a week, the shingles are so slowly receding, but are still painful, especially at night. I will probably now have to take a small dose of these tablets permanently as prophylaxis.

After that, conjunctivitis joined in. And there are always days when I am particularly tired or exhausted after a few hours.

These are reasons that could quickly discourage me. And sometimes now I think back to the beginning of this illness and inwardly experience again the first shock; and I ask myself what all this is for.

To this I have received an impressive answer from God: Two days ago, on Monday evening, I read the 4th chapter of 2 Corinthians. Paul describes there some

difficult and life-threatening experiences he had in his service for God. He experienced a lot of opposition, rejection and hostility. But because he also knew God's great work, and because God was magnified in his heart in His glory, he can write the following, among other things:

*«Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart.»
(2Kor 4:1 NKJV)*

*«For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.»
(4:6-9)*

With the "earthen (fragile) vessel" Paul means our body. I feel that now, too, that it is quite fragile, if I only think of the damaged vertebrae. A few verses further on Paul writes:

*«Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.»
(4:16-18)*

The special thing was: Last night I finally got around to listening to a sermon that my sister had sent me some time ago and recommended as very encouraging. The topic was: "We do not grow weary, and we are not discouraged!" The sermon text was – 2 Corinthians 4!

This morning a faithful brother from Hamburg sent me an audio message. For weeks now I have been receiving a chapter from the Bible read by him every Wednesday morning, with some accompanying words and a prayer for Dietlind and me. He then stands at the weekly market and sells his wares. While there is not much going on yet, he takes in the message.

The chapter he read to me this morning was – 2 Corinthians 4!

Three times in a row in a short time - that is no coincidence. Therefore, WE DON'T LOSE HEART! What an outlook – from the perspective of eternity, the things that sometimes weigh me down so much and want to take away my courage lose their importance. They are temporal and transitory, therefore I look beyond them upward to the eternal and imperishable glory, that is, to life with the Lord Jesus, in a resurrected or transformed new body, no longer afflicted by sickness, suffering or death, and where the soul no longer must go through pain and tears, but where I will live in eternal joy with all who have personally believed in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Some people ask us if we are Swiss now (after living in Switzerland for over 8 years). I often answer with the following Bible verse:

«For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.»
(Philippians 3:20 NKJV)

This “citizenship of heaven” is so infinitely more important and essential than having a passport in red color with a white cross in my pocket; for that is visible, temporal, and transitory! But to be a citizen of heaven is for eternity. The passport for it my

Savior acquired for me at the cross outside of Jerusalem, when he died there for approx. 2000 years ago under terrible sufferings, and after three days again bodily rose. Therefore, I wish that you can also say this from your heart and share this wonderful hope with me!

Warm regards
Andreas

PS: Yesterday my oncologist sent his report to the University Hospital in Zurich to the center there for stem cell therapy. Now I expect to hear from them in the next few days. I will report to you then.