



## *A BATTLE & A BALLET*

BY AIMEE JOSEPH

Life is both a battle and a ballet.

In seasons of ease and comfort, where life feels beautiful and flowing like a ballet, we need prophetic voices in the Christian faith reminding us that there is also an epic and eternal battle waging. In those seasons, we need to be prodded to remember that prayer is not an eternal vending machine intended to give us what we most desire for our convenience and comfort; rather, prayer is also a war-time walkie talkie connecting us to Christ, the captain and commander, who has the provision and perspectives we need to move forward.

On the other hand, in the midst of long and arduous seasons where the battle is on the forefront, we need prophetic voices to remind us that life is also a ballet. If all we can see and talk about is the advance of the front line and the casualty counts of the day's battles, we will lose hope.

While I am no prima ballerina, my mother did enroll me in my fair share of ballet classes when I was a little girl. I don't remember much, but the positions, the posture, and the discipline of ballet made a lasting impression on me before I abandoned the bar for the soccer ball. After the first few weeks of classes, I wanted to quit and take jazz or tap which felt far more exciting and flashy to me; however, my mother would not let me. Looking back, I am so glad she did not.

Ballet is a self-controlled, disciplined art which requires daily discipline and posture practice. Constant repetition of small movements slowly trains the hips to turn out when they would much more naturally turn in. This turn out does not happen overnight; it is a gradual process requiring discipline. In this season of Covid combined with political tension combined with raising awareness of systemic racism, we need the daily and disciplined routine of meeting with the Lord to keep us turning our perspective outward when our flesh would naturally want to atrophy to an inward posture. Being conformed increasingly to the image of Christ will not happen overnight. Years of thinking one way, seeing one way, and living one way must be chipped away by daily

encounters with the Word of God.

*I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercy of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.*

**Romans 12:1-2, ESV.**

While I never got passed the little slip on ballet slippers, I know from friends who advanced further into the ranks of ballet the significance of a focal point. In the midst of all those pirouettes, dizziness overcomes the dancer who does not focus on a fixed point. When everything is spinning, it takes incredible amounts of discipline and focus to fix one's eyes on the chosen focal point.

In our current culture, everything feels like it is spinning, sometimes in different and competing directions. Many of us have found ourselves dizzy to the point of disability and paralyzation. Many desperately long for things to settle down, begging God to stop the spinning circumstances. However, believers are never promised lives of ease. Rather, we are called to have our eyes fixed on the person of Christ and His ends for humanity.

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **Hebrews 12:1-2, NIV.***

The battle rages on all around us, and we have a part to play. At the same time, God calls us to remember the redemptive choreography He is currently calling us into as well. With discipline that flows from a growing awareness of His devotion shown for us on the cross, may we slowly become those who are outward-facing and fixed on Christ.