

## Never Say Never

by Laura Shaw

Do you have any idea where the phrase "Never Say Never" originated from? As far as I can tell with my internet research, this expression was first recorded in Charles Dickens's Pickwick Papers in 1837. It has been used by many ever since. One of the best examples I stumbled upon was the following:

*"Never say never, for if you live long enough, chances are you will not be able to abide by its restrictions. Never is a long, undependable time, and life is too full of rich possibilities to have restrictions placed upon it." (Gloria Swanson, Actress 1899-1983)*

In my opinion, it would have been helpful to have this quote familiarized to Peter while he was walking with Jesus in ministry.

*"...Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. 'Never, Lord!' he said. 'This shall never happen to You!' Jesus turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.'" Matthew 16:21-23*

Wow! What a scene! Unfortunately, that would've been me, hand sweeping the forehead with dramatic emphasis and all, "Nevah, Lord, Nevah!!!!!"

Peter had grown so comfortable in ministry with Jesus that he was pretty shook up at the idea of it being taken away from him. Can any of us relate? When something comes along that shakes us to the very core of our being, we can either choose to say "yes" or "no" to a godly response. When the Holy Spirit prods us to talk to a lost person about Jesus, we have a choice. When we need to speak the "truth in love" to another believer, we can be willing or not. When sufferings and trials come, do we deny God or choose to praise Him through them? When we are nudged to consider giving up a ministry position that is dear to us, do we cling to it or to Him? Is there something new on our path that we feel led to pursue?

This is where the degree of our faith comes in...after Jesus' rebuke to Peter, he makes a bold statement to the rest of His disciples: *"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but WHOEVER LOSES HIS LIFE for me will find it."*

We can't possibly comprehend allowing our own son or daughter to die for the sins of the world. How am I to understand how God would love any of us that much? There isn't any way at all! But I believe in His plan. I believe that He came to save the lost. I believe that everything we are asked to sacrifice will be used to accomplish His good. Even when the ick stuff comes, I am compelled to believe in His ability to provide my every need.

What are you using the word "no" or "never" to? Do you have in mind the things of God, or the things of this world? Let's believe in this promise as Matthew 16 continues: *"For the Son of Man is going to come in His Father's glory with His angels, and then He will reward each person according to what He has done."* Let's not trip ourselves or be a stumbling block to others by claiming, "Never, Lord!" Instead, let's cling in faith to the promises that came from the very lips of the One we put our trust in: Let's be a "Loser" for Him today!