

Facing Fear

On July 21, 1861, raw Yankee recruits marched toward the Confederate Army camping at Bull Run, 30 miles southwest of Washington, D.C.

The Union soldiers were overconfident and acted as if they were headed toward a sporting event. Congressmen, ladies, and all sorts of spectators trailed along with lunch baskets to observe the fun.

But the courage of the Confederates, who stood their ground like a stone wall – giving their leader, Thomas J. Jackson, the nickname of “Stonewall Jackson” – and the arrival of Confederate reinforcements threw the Union forces into a panic, even though the Union had superior forces.

One observer wrote: “We called to them, tried to tell them there was no danger, called them to stop, implored them to stand. We called them cowards, denounced them in the most offensive terms ... but all in vain; a cruel, crazy, mad, hopeless panic possessed them.”

Likewise, fear and panic can overwhelm us emotionally, even though we have the spiritual resources to deal with the situation. We are better able to face fearful circumstances – and stop a “mad, hopeless panic” from possessing us – if we prepare ourselves soberly for the challenges life will hand us.

And count on it. Those challenges will come.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7).

– Beecher Hunter