

Kingdom Foundations

Part Nine -Faith & Hope

The Power of Perseverance

Movie Clip – Ice Age

Key Text: Luke 18:1 – 8, The Parable of the Persistent Widow

We have been going through a series on Kingdom Foundations. Today we will focus on faith and hope. Many talk about having “big” or “strong” faith by seeing God do mighty things in their lives, but here are a couple of questions to reflect upon today:

- Why does it seem at times God does not answer our prayers?
- What do we need the most during these times?

Two Kinds of Faith by which We as Christians Live our Lives

1. Delivering Faith – God moves quickly in your situation, and the victory is sure.
2. “Going through” or “Persevering” Faith – God seems distant or uninterested. Your dilemma or circumstance changes little if any or it may even seem to get worse.

**Persevere– “set, fixed or continued.” Comes from “per” and “sisto” which mean “to stand.”
“Continue” and “constant” have a like primary sense, as in “to hold on”.
(Webster’s Dictionary 1828)**

**Synonyms: stability, tenacity, steadiness, plodding, stamina, backbone, determination
and grit!**

By perseverance the snail reached the ark.
Charles Spurgeon

He who stands firm to the end will be saved.
Matthew 10:22 (Jesus speaking of the last days.)

There is no question that we are living in tough times as a nation. In 2 Timothy 3:1 Paul wrote this: “But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days.” God has an answer. His purposes and plans will prevail. God cannot and will not be stopped, but if we are to see the Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven, we must not give up either. Even Jesus when talking about His church in Matthew 16:18 said, “Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell will not overcome it.”

**And I tell you, you are Peter [Greek, Petros--a large piece of rock], and on this rock
[Greek, petra—a huge rock like Gibraltar] I will build My church, and the gates of
Hades (the powers of the infernal region) shall not overpower it (or be strong to its
detriment or hold out against it.)
Matthew 16:18 Amplified**

In other words, we as a church *must outlast the Enemy!*

Paul said it best in Acts 14:22 in the Message Bible “putting muscle and sinew in the lives of the disciples, urging them to stick with what they had begun to believe and not quit, making it clear to them that it wouldn't be easy: Anyone signing up for the kingdom of God has to go through plenty of hard times.

It is not a popular message today, but if we want the Kingdom to come in our lives, our church, our city and nation we will have to persevere. By persevering not only do we grow stronger in our faith, but also our hope increases in seeing God's plans come to pass.

Three Close Encounters in God's Kingdom

I. Fight (Judges 3:1-2)

Have you ever been in a fight? If you have, you will never forget it! It is intense and unforgettable. Believe or not, the Bible says quite a bit about fighting. In the Old Testament there were many battles won and lost depending on the spiritual state of the nation of Israel. When Israel walked close with God and put Him first, they either had peace in the land or they were helped by God to gain victory over their enemies with insurmountable odds.

**“The Lord is a warrior, the Lord is his name.”
Exodus 15:3**

God is a fighter! God is loving, tender, meek, patient, and sweet, but He is also a fighter! God has already defeated the enemy through His son's death on the cross. The victory has been won, but we still have to work it out in our lives as believers. We've got to have some “fight” in our character to stand against the enemy in these last days. In the passage above, God purposely left enemies in the land so Israel would learn to fight. This was a generation who had not experienced the wars of their parents when they entered the Promiseland.

**Though we walk according to the flesh, we do not wage war in the flesh.
2 Corinthians 10:4**

In other words, our battle today is not necessarily a physical one, but a spiritual one. The problem is that spiritual battles are more difficult. You are fighting an enemy you cannot see. Many times he works through those closest to you. The point is: We must have an attitude of *never giving up* as we encounter difficulties in our lives. There may be times when you will go through hardships that never seem to get any better or they progress very slowly. Daniel prayed 21 days before he received an answer to his prayer. He didn't give up. He persevered until he got an answer. Like Job, some of us may go through years of tough times. This is where our “fight” has got to kick in! These may be times in our lives where outwardly there appears to be no change for the better. We must not get discouraged by what we see on the outside and have an “I don't care” attitude. Without knowing it, we stop fighting for God's best in our lives.

A. Two Not-So-Famous Bible Heroes (2 Samuel 23:9-12)

1. Two Mighty Men-Eleazar & Shammah

What we can learn from them: *“Stand your ground!”*

2. There will be times in our walk with the Lord when we do not advance, but we also must not go backwards.

“...having done all, stand...”
Ephesians 6

God is more concerned about what happens *in you* than what happens *to you*.

(Example: Trees in the winter time!)

B. Things We Must Fight For

- Passion for God (our hunger for God!)
- Relationships (marriage, kids, friends, parents, pastors, etc...)
- Against Temptation (resisting sin and it's harmful desires)

II. Fatigue

He will speak out against the Most High and **wear down the saints of the Highest One**, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.
Daniel 7:25

If there is one thing today we are experiencing more than ever is that *people are tired!* When you ask people how they are doing most often than not you get either “busy” or “tired” or both. Don't get me wrong, being tired is a good thing, but not to the point that it begins to effect your life negatively. When we get tired we tend to get moody, short and snappy. We tend to make bad decisions and begin to neglect the most important things in life. We often are to blame for some of this, but also realize that the *enemy of our souls has his hand in it as well.* He does it so gradually and over a long period of time that we don't even notice. *We begin to live life “weary” and “worn out” as the norm.* The Bible says:

Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.
Ephesians 5:14

We are to “**renew our strength like the eagle...**” (Is. 40) at times in our lives. *If the enemy can't keep you from going to heaven, he will do all he can to keep you from bringing heaven to earth!*

Example: Moses – wandered for so long, he grew weary over time and made a bad decision at a key moment of his life. The consequence – he only saw Canaan from a distance but never walked in it!

“When fatigue walks in, faith walks out!”
Mike Murdock

Reasons we get fatigued:

- **Dead Spiritual Life! (Religious obligation)**
- **Out of balance in some area of our life. (Work, entertainment)**
- **Stress & worry (stretched financially)**

- **Bad Health (Our bodies are the temple of God’s spirit!)**
- **Lack of change and creativity!**

III. Finish

He also made the pots and shovels and sprinkling bowls. *So Hiram finished the work he had undertaken for King Solomon in the temple of God.*
2 Chronicles 4:11

Hiram got his name in the Bible for being a finisher! What a way to get in the Bible! God is huge on finishing! Jesus is the author and “finisher” of our faith. God finished making the earth in Genesis 2. Solomon finished building the temple. Paul finished the race. Joshua finished crossing the Jordan. Moses received the 10 commandments after God “finished” speaking to him on the mountain. Even Jesus’ last words on the cross were “It is finished!” There is *one thing we must expect though* as we set out to finish what God has for us:

Now when the time was almost come for Jesus to be received up [to heaven], ***He steadfastly and determinedly set His face to go to Jerusalem.*** And He sent messengers before Him; and they reached and entered a Samaritan village to make [things] ready for Him; But [the people] would not welcome or receive or accept Him, because His face was [set as if He was] going to Jerusalem.”
 Luke 9:51-53

Opposition from the enemy is many times the indicator that you are in God’s will!

Roadblocks to finishing:

- **Loss of excitement (emotional buzz is gone)**
- **Lack of acceptance or popularity (Change, change and change)**
- **Laziness (habit of starting things and not finishing)**
- **Distractions (friends, relatives, sports, hobbies, etc...)**

“Great is the art of beginning, but greater is the art of ending.”
 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Close: The Ultimate End of Perseverance (Romans 5:3-5)

“Moreover [let us also be full of joy now!] let us exult and triumph in our troubles and rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that pressure and affliction and hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance. And endurance (fortitude) develops maturity of character (approved faith and tried integrity). And character [of this sort] produces [the habit of] joyful and confident hope of eternal salvation. Such hope never disappoints or deludes or shames us, for God’s love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

Suffering + perseverance = mature character + hope =

REAPPOINTMENT!

Every disappointment leads to reappointment if we persevere!