

The Glory of Persevering Faith

I. PERSEVERING FAITH

- A. Perseverance (*hypomonē*) – steadfastness, constancy, endurance, patience.
- B. Persevering faith involves being diligent over years and decades to press into God and to do His will in small things with humility and gratitude, as well as to be faithful under pressure in the big or the difficult.
- C. It is a form of spiritual violence that refuses to let go of devotion to God’s ways and purposes, regardless of how circumstances may appear. It presses on.

I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Phil 3:12

- D. Perseverance, by very nature, involves the presence of the difficult. It means we are facing obstacles, interior mindsets, or exterior circumstances that need to be overcome. Our flesh complains, our minds misinterpret, and we are tempted to quit, draw back, or coast. Perseverance refuses the disillusionment, weariness, and clamor and presses forward in faithful obedience.
- E. We are not alone in the requirement to persevere on our spiritual journeys. In the Isaiah 49:1-13 Servant Song we see this requirement of God *intentionally applied* in the Son’s narrative. He was also required to trust in God’s unorthodox leadership, which included the need for faithful perseverance in the midst of difficulty and humble delay.
- F. As we recognize that God’s divine plan intentionally ordained that the earthly life of Jesus would include walking out lengthy faithful perseverance, we realize that the allowing of difficulty and delay on our own spiritual journeys is not an accident, but an intentional part of God’s wise ways.
- G. The requirement of perseverance in the life of Jesus proved His perfect character and provided a necessary example for those who would follow after Him. His life dignifies persevering faith, giving us courage, and leading us to the hidden glory concealed within the perseverance process.

The wisdom of God is hidden in Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:24; Col 2:3).

II. JESUS: OUR GREAT EXAMPLE OF PERSEVERANCE (ISAIAH 49:1-13)

May the Lord direct your hearts into God’s love and Christ’s perseverance (2 Thes 3:5 NIV).

- A. Jesus trusted in the Father’s ways, obediently walking out every unorthodox aspect of life with great perseverance, proving His godly character and qualifying for His inheritance. Yet to the human mind the earthly life of Jesus was a foolish waste. This is why the story of Jesus in Isaiah 49:1 begins with *listen* and *take heed*. What is going on will not appear obviously on the surface, which will result in many wrong evaluations and conclusions. Listen and learn from the Son!

Listen, O coastlands, to Me, and take heed, you peoples from afar! The Lord has called Me from the womb; Is 49:1

- B. Glorious Calling: Jesus was called from the womb – come forth as a man - with the preordained purpose of restoring Israel back to YHWH. God would be glorified in this man (Is.49:3), who in turn would be deemed glorious to God (Is. 49:5). This is an astounding calling!

And now the Lord says, who formed Me from the womb...to bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel is gathered to Him (for I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord) ...Is 49:3

- C. Hiddenness and Restraint: Yet other than a few magnificent moments surrounding His birth, the life of Jesus then consisted of living virtually anonymously for 30 years.

He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me. And made Me a polished arrow; In His quiver He has hidden Me. Is 49:2

- I am a sharp sword – all I have to do is say the word (Rev 1:16) - but He has hidden me.
- I am a polished arrow – to be accurate and sharp in the hearts of the King’s enemies (Ps 45:5) - and yet I have been placed back and hidden in God’s quiver.

- D. As an arrow being polished, Jesus endured the testing rub of human life in this corrupted age.

- Weariness of Pain and Grief: acquainted with sorrow and grief (Is. 53:3)
- Decades of Being Insignificant: “when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.” (Is. 53:2). “Is this not the carpenter?” (Mk 6:3).
- Misunderstanding and Persecution: He did all the will of the Father – and yet in the eyes of man He was despised and abhorred (Is. 49:7). He was not esteemed by family members, his own community, and both religious and political leaders.
- Seemingly Little Fruit: disciples left him, and He ended up with “nothing” (Is 49:4).

Then I said, ‘I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain. Yet surely my just reward is with the Lord, and my work with my God.’ Isaiah 49:4

- E. Jesus had to press through the same sources of buffeting pressure that we do:

- Spiritual Warfare: Satan in wilderness; more opportune time (Lk 4:13). Demons affecting those around Him (Jn 13:27).
- Sin and Brokenness of Man: Jesus was despised, rejected, slandered and gossiped about (Jn 8:41). People hid their faces from him – they did not want to be associated with Him (Is 53:3). He had antagonistic family relationships (Jn 7:5). He had many people leave His ministry (Jn. 6:66). He was complained about and spoken against (Lk 15:12), avoided (Is. 53:3), secretly plotted against (Mt 26:4), denounced by His own community, and by religious and political leaders alike, had public participation rallied in seeking His arrest (Jn 11:57), and was intentionally mocked, humiliated and shamed at the hour of His death (Lk 23:11, 23:36, Mt 27:39-41).

For consider Him who endured [hypomonē] such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. Heb 12:3

- Frailty of His Own Humanity: emotional pressure and physical weariness, (Jn 4:6, Mt 8:24), hunger (Mt 21:18), and the needs of unending crowds (Mk 1:33; Lk 9:10-11)

Jesus answered and said, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Mt 17:17

- F. Jesus was *tested and tempted* in all things (Heb 4:15). Jesus had to *prevail* to be worthy (Rev 5:5). Jesus had to *overcome* (Rev 3:21). All of these words indicate resistance that took effort, difficulty, and persistence to gain victory over. In other words, Jesus had to endure and persevere in faith. He had to press on for His own upward calling.

To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. Rev 3:21

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses but was in all points tempted as we are.... Heb 4:15

- G. Jesus continues to wait for fullness (Is. 49:5-13). Seated at the right hand of the Father until the Father makes His enemies His footstool at the appointed hour (Ps. 110:1-2). Jesus still waits to be fully revealed and receive His vindication, inheritance and full display of glory. It's been 2000 years and He still hasn't completed all of His promised calling to bring Israel back to YHWH.
- H. The key to His successful perseverance: Jesus successfully persevered in His race by living for the Father's approval, not man's, knowing His reward was with His God.

Yet surely my just reward is with the Lord, and my work with my God.” Is 49:4

For I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and My God shall be My strength Is 49:5

III. FOLLOWING CHRIST'S EXAMPLE OF FAITHFUL PERSEVERANCE

Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps. 1 Pet 2:21

- A. Faithful perseverance is not an unfortunate side-effect required in this life because we just have to press through hard and weary things. It is *an intentional methodology of God* placed into the divine narrative that contains hidden glory and works for our benefit.
- B. As we imitate Christ, perseverance *produces in us godly character*. Obedient, faithful choices over time and difficulty serve to progressively transform us into the image of Christ.

... tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, [godly] character...Rom 5:3

- C. This transformation into the likeness of Christ is more than the development of natural moral character. It is the *supernatural* attributes of God's nature: an “other than” joy, kindness, patience, wisdom, mercy, love, etc...
- D. This is a breathtaking privilege. We don't get to just gaze upon God's loveliness like the seraphim. We actually get to become transformed into His very likeness (2 Cor 3:18). We get to become *partakers* of His divine nature (2 Pet 1:4) and become the very image of Christ.

- E. Perseverance (engaged faithfulness over time) produces this godly nature in us, which results in an increasing experience of supernatural love and joyful hope (Rom 5:2-4, 2 Pet 1:5-8) because we begin *to experientially touch the knowledge of God as we become transformed into His lovely image* (2 Cor 3:18). Divine love pours into our hearts, and we become filled with joyous hope as we taste of the transcendent loveliness of that which is to come.

... we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, [godly] character; and [godly] character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.... Rom 5:2-4

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience [hypomonē]. 4 But let patience [hypomonē] have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. James 1:4

...add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 2 Pet 1:5-7

- F. We tend to evaluate this life mostly in terms of the external of “getting things done.” We are to do the works of the Kingdom. However, the Scriptures also speak of the Bride “making herself ready” (Rev 19:7; 2 Cor 11:2) to rule and reign with Christ by being transformed into His image (2 Cor 3:18). This occurs through persevering in faithfulness in all seasons of life, choosing God’s ways, and becoming more and more like Him over time by the Spirit’s work.
- G. We demonstrate our ability to rule and reign with Him as we are transformed into agreement with His nature and His ways. We are to become like Him. He is the King. We are to be conformed to **His** image. The constant yielded obedience of persevering faith in the midst of testing forges this godly divine character deeply within us, delighting us and approving us (2 Tim 2:5,15) for that which is to come.

IV. CONCLUSION

- A. Persevere in obedient faith! Especially through difficult seasons. Your weak yes is forging within you an inner glory by which over time you will taste of the beautiful nature of Christ as you become like Him. The reward of perseverance is transformational godliness (Rom 5:4, 2 Pet 1:6, James 1:4) that readies and approves you to reign in mature partnership with Jesus Christ.
- B. Do not be discouraged by the evaluations of this world. God’s ways are not our ways. They are hiddenly marvelous. Set your heart to faithful perseverance before the wise eyes of your God.

For I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and My God shall be My strength Is 49:5

- ❖ *NOTE: Jesus did not require the method of perseverance to produce godly character. He always had it. For Him, perseverance **proved** His perfect godly character, authenticating Him as the unblemished Lamb, and **provided the example** of the manner in which that same effort of perseverance would serve to **forged** godly character in the rest of us who would believe in Him, by the work of the Spirit within us.*