



Life Changing Words From God Week #3 Persevere

Jim Hoffman

So Far

- Week #1 *Love*
- Week #2 *Maranatha*

Tonight

- Tonight's lesson is for all those who have found the Christian life to be *less than smooth sailing.*
- For those who wonder why it sometimes seems like *the godly suffer while the ungodly seem to go through life unscathed.*
- For those who were 'sold a bill of goods' that *promised health and wealth to all who belong to God.*
- To all those the bible says *'hang in there'* and allow heaven's Anchor to hold you steady through the storms of life

Persevere

- To *persist* in or *remain constant* to a purpose, idea, or task in the face of obstacles or discouragement.
- *Fads* come and go, our interests in *hobbies* changes over time, and the unimportant things of life get cast aside as we prioritize our lives.
- *Saving faith persists*. (assurance)

Persevere

- How we are blessed when we read the stories of the martyrs who gave no ground on their faith even when it cost them their lives.
- When people remain true to God when times are bad and do not seek to blame Him, we know that they have the real thing. (*Job*)
- When your old friends run into you from time to time and see that you are sticking with Jesus, it means something to them.

Persevere

- We are all on a mission as we pass through this life Sometimes the mission is pleasant and light and sometimes it's down right hard.
- It seems that God is more concerned about making us *holy* than He is about making our lives *happy*.
- When (*never if*) hard times come to your doorstep know that the mission has not changed and know that God still expects you to serve him.
- *The truth is that we usually grow closer to God when the going gets tough* It's never fun to go through the fire, but it sure is satisfying to look back one day at what He has brought us through.

The 'Fire'

by Christine Wyrzten

I've been through a fire, that has deepened my desire;

To know the living God, more and more.

It hasn't been much fun, but the work that it has done;

In my life has made it worth the hurt.

You see sometimes we need the hard times;

To bring us to our knees, otherwise we'd do as we please
and never heed Him.

But he always knows what's best; and it's when we are
distressed;

That we really come to know God as He is.

Why We Hurt.

- Sometimes it's the chastening hand of our loving Father. (Hebrews 12:7-8, Jeremiah 29)
 - *The remedy is repentance.*
- Sometimes it's a simple matter of reaping what we have sown. (Gal 6:7-8)
 - *The remedy is to stop sowing and seek God's help.*
- Sometimes it's for the glory of God. (John 9:1-3)
 - *There is no remedy, but there is consolation in knowing that God is at work.*

Persevering through pain.

- Whatever the source of your pain there is always a way to turn it into something good and positive. (*Joseph*)
- Adopt this mindset; if God is allowing it then who am I to argue with Him?
- At the end of the day persevering for Jesus is a commentary on how much we trust Him.
 - If you are being *spanked*, *learn from it*.
 - If you are *reaping*, *warn others*.
 - If you are a Job, *rest in His grace*.

Jeremiah 29

- In Jeremiah we read about how the people of Israel were carried away from their homeland to Babylon where they would be the slaves of the Babylonians.
- *They were being chastened by God for their unfaithfulness to Him after repeated warnings to turn from their sin.*
- God is a God of love, but as His children we ignore Him at our own peril. (*Heb 10:30*"The LORD will judge His people." 31 *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. NKJV*)

Jeremiah 29:4-9

Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom ***I have caused*** to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. 6 Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters — that you may be increased there, and not diminished. 7 And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace. 8 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. 9 For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them, says the LORD.

NKJV

Tough News From A Father

- Key phrase in verse #4 ‘whom **I have caused** to be carried away’
- He had set standards
- He sent prophets
- He waited for them to repent
- Finally they forced Him to apply tough love.

Hunker Down

- Build houses and plant gardens (Vs 5)
- Let your sons and daughters marry and start families so that my people grow and progress and not shrink (Vs 6)
- Seek the peace of this strange city because that is how you will have peace (Vs 7) Compare Psalm 122:6 & I Tim 2:1-2
- They were also to pray for the city and it's inhabitants. (Rom 12:14-21)

Light in the Darkness

- It was during this time of captivity that a young man named Daniel would rise up and be noticed for his faith.
- A man of integrity, faith, courage, and visions is in Israel even when the nation was being punished.
- God always has His remnant.

Listen to Me, not False Prophets (Verses 8-9)

- A welcome message would have been ‘This is going to be a short stay’, but that was not God’s plan.
- False prophets were telling the people what they wanted to hear. (we need to test the spirits 1st John 4:1)
- It is so much harder to deliver the hard truths.
- It seems that then, just as today, it’s easy to find someone that will tell you that God is just love and non-judgmental.

Jeremiah 29:10-14

For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. 11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive. NKJV

A Slow, But Sure Return

- Just as they heard the tough news that their suffering is the will of God, they now hear that **He is not done with them.**
- It one thing to know that your sin has brought chastening, but it would be **unbearable to think that God is done with you.**
- Instead, they have a promise from God that **He will see them through their discipline.** What a comfort to us!

- "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in his excellent word! What more can he say than to you he hath said, to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?
- "Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed, for I am thy God and will still give thee aid; I'll strengthen and help thee, and cause thee to stand upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.
- "When through deep waters I call thee to go, the rivers of woe shall not thee overflow; for I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless, and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.
- "When through fiery trials thy pathways shall lie, my grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply; the flame shall not hurt thee; I only design thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

News that Sustains the Soul

11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. NKJV

- They may have been sent away, but they were never out of God's thoughts.
- Though they were unfaithful, unreliable, and unworthy God still had plans for them.
- Psalm 103:10 pretty much sums it up. "He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities."
NKJV

News that Sustains the Soul

11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. NKJV

- Not only was God thinking about them, but His thoughts (and plans) were to *bless them again.*
- When it looked like they had squandered all of their blessings, God assures them *He is not through with them.*
- We should be glad that He was not done with them because much of His redemption plan ran through Israel. (The word and the Savior)

God Has a Destination For You

11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. NKJV

- ‘An expected end’ What is that.
 - The NIV renders it a ‘future and a hope’
 - In any version, it means that God has a specific will for your life.
 - It is always good and acceptable. Rom 12:1
 - He is not interested in having you guess what it is.
 - It is the same (Rom 8:29) for everyone and yet nuanced to each individual.

He Will Hear and Answer Again

12 Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. NKJV

- The day will come again when they will pray and be heard. (Jer 33:3)
- What do you suppose the difference might be between ‘calling’ on the Lord and ‘praying’ to Him?
 - **Calling is more of an outcry for help. (this is what we do when we say ‘is anybody home?’)**
 - **Praying is more communication. (this is what we do when we know someone is listening)**

The God Who Wants Found

**13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me
with all your heart. NKJV**

- God relates to our heart (our inner man).
- He is not impressed by form, pomp, and circumstance, He wants a relationship with us on the deepest level.
- *Micah 6:6-8* He invites and instructs us to approach Him
- *John 4:23* If we worship Him, He will approach us.

John 16:33

33 I've told you all this so that trusting me, you will be unshakable and assured, deeply at peace. In this godless world you will continue to experience difficulties. But take heart! I've conquered the world." (From THE MESSAGE:)

- If your experience has been all smooth sailing, please take note that you are not home yet.
- It is unrealistic to think that people living in complete contrast and contradiction to this present world would have an easy path.
- If you find yourself out of step with the world and out of tune with the culture you are probably on the right track.

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- However, it is in this very circumstance (experiencing difficulty) that we have perhaps our best opportunities to shine for Jesus.
- When we hold fast to our faith when it seems like it is not 'paying off' we make a strong statement that this world is not my home.
- When we patiently endure difficult times we declare to this world that we are looking for another world.

Questions

