



# *The Christian Life Institute*

Friday, April 17

Thank you for joining us today, as we continue our series, at the Christian Life Institute, presented through 15-minute encouraging messages three times per week, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 12:45 Central time, on practical ways to grow forward in Christ in uncertainty, unpredictability, and upheaval.

This message is entitled: Endurance

It is hard for all of us to hear truth. We often want to stay in the safety of our own thoughts, perceptions, and ways of thinking. Yet our own ways are often distorted by our inability to see past our hurt, fear, pain, impatience, suffering, anxieties, and on and on the list grows. God's love and concern for us is so deep and vast that He desires we stay on course, following in His footsteps and, endure for the sake of our well-being. These words from Stuart Townend's hymn, "How Deep the Father's Love for Us:"

"How deep the Father's love for us,  
How vast beyond all measure,  
That He should give His only Son  
To make a wretch His treasure.  
How great the pain of searing loss –  
The Father turns His face away,  
As wounds which mar the Chosen One  
Bring many sons to glory.

How great the pain of searing loss  
The Father turns His face away  
As wounds which mar the Chosen One  
Bring many sons to glory  
Behold the man upon a cross  
My sin upon His shoulders  
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice  
Call out among the scoffers

It was my sin that held Him there  
Until it was accomplished  
His dying breath has brought me life  
I know that it is finished

I will not boast in anything  
No gifts, no power, no wisdom  
But I will boast in Jesus Christ  
His death and resurrection

Why should I gain from His reward?  
I cannot give an answer  
But this I know with all my heart

His wounds have paid my ransom  
Why should I gain from His reward?  
I cannot give an answer  
But this I know with all my heart  
His wounds have paid my ransom.”

The lyrics from this hymn remind us that that we are a treasure to Him and through His son we have been brought to glory. God’s love for you and me drive His every decision and action. We know in this life we will face trials and temptations. First, let us ground ourselves in the truth of 1 Corinthians 10:13, “no temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.” This Scripture reminds us that it is common to man to experience temptation and trial, so when you experience one do not be amazed or surprised but shift into the fact, not feeling, that God is faithful. Note, also that God does, He will, provide a way – our challenge and choice is to seek His way – that is the Christ-follower’s life. We are also promised endurance. Romans 5:3 reminds us that “More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance.” This life, Who is Christ, is a journey of seasons where our focus is on one moment, one day at a time in following after Him – Who is our Guide, our Shepherd, our Lord. Our Lord desires us to endure – to press on, run the race.

Hebrews 12:1-2 reminds us, “therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” Jesus is our model and His endurance birthed, out of His love, allowed Him to endure the cross as He beckons us to endurance. Endurance as an adjective means “denoting or relating to a race or other event that takes place over a long distance or otherwise demands great physical stamina.” As a Christ-follower our endurance demands physical conditioning, mental/emotional conditioning, and spiritual conditioning. Christ is concerned about our spiritual well-being, but He is also concerned about our overall wellness. We are a whole person whose overall well-being is a function of the health of our parts, which include physical, mental/emotional, and spiritual. In the Bible the word ‘welfare’ is often used to denote ‘well-being.’ For example, in Psalm 35:27, ““Great is the LORD, who delights in the welfare of his servant!” God’s care and concern for your state or condition of being well is extraordinary.

How will you endure today? As I write that question, I pray it is not read with a sense of dread or oppression. As we have seen endurance is a positive, healthy attribute derived from a desire to continue forward in the strength and power of Christ. We must remind ourselves it is “not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6). It is His Holy Spirit dwelling in you and me, as His children, which moves us to endurance and allows us to endure. The question, I pray, evokes a sense of desperate dependence on Him, Who is infinitely “able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us” (Ephesians 3:20). Let us endure today through His love. Let us endure today through His strength. Let us endure today through His will and way. As John Piper writes in his book, *Seeing and Savoring Jesus Christ*, “let us bow down and worship Jesus Christ. Jesus alone is worthy of our highest admiration. Jesus alone is worthy of our trust. He can show us the Father. He can give us irresistible wisdom. He can see how all things work together for our good (Romans 8:28). He teaches the way of God with infallible truthfulness. Follow Him!” (p. 55).

As we read in 1 Peter 2:21 we are “to follow in His steps.” Jesus endured in so many different situations. He endured the disbelief and failures in faith of His disciples. He endured the dogmatism of the legalists who were steadfastly intent in dishonoring Him. He endured accusation, mocking, denial – by one of his own, Peter, and He endured death so that you and I would live and have abundant life in Him. Our abundant life is in our connection to the One who nourishes and grows us, Jesus, the Messiah – the King – Lord of Lords, the Alpha and Omega. Our abundant life is found in God’s great desire that we should know Him and His power. In 2 Corinthians 13:4 we read, “for He was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God.” The abundant life is a recognition of what you and I have because of who we are in Christ and Who He is according to the truth of His Word. In His goodness and by His grace, God changes our standing — our position — before Him when we place our trust in Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. Ephesians 2:7 affirms that our new status flows out of that wonderful phrase “the riches of God’s grace.”

Let us choose to experience the overflowing of His love upon us as Paul wrote “and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you (1 Thessalonians 3:12). Let us share the abundant life we have in Christ through the Hope that flows from His life. As we shared in previous messages, the challenge for us during these times, is to keep our eyes up - on our mission and to continue to walk through whatever comes upon us in His strength, His love, and His Truth. The abundant life is a Spirit-filled, Christ-centric life which consists of living Christ in His strength, His power, and His truth one day, and even one moment at a time. The abundant life is a full and rich life – full in the fruit of the Spirit and rich in the riches of His grace, mercy, love, and forgiveness. The abundant life is not focused on what we do not have – it is focused on Who we have, Jesus Christ.

Let us choose to endure with patience, grace, forgiveness, love and mercy and press on with endurance to follow our Savior who knows our way! Let us keep our eyes focused on our Great Shepherd who guides, guards, and protects us as we endure in Him and through Him. So let us keep our eyes on Him from Whom our Help comes (Psalm 121:1), walk in faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7), “for you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow” (James 1:3).

In this season, and life which is a journey of seasons, we as Christ-followers, have opportunities to, through His strength and His power reflect Him to a broken and hurting world – so, let us persevere and come together, even when technology weary.

Let us agree together to:

“Walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7)

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

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