

## October 17, 2021 James Gallaher Building Endurance

Aside from the challenge and the difficulty of a strenuous ordeal is a sense of accomplishment when you finish. What does it mean to build endurance in our faith and what is the value?

### I Timothy 3 (Immerse Bible)

Paul is writing from a Roman dungeon and begins to warn Timothy of difficult times ahead. Paul knows that he would not survive this difficult imprisonment. Then not long after writing he was taken out and beheaded. It shows his urgency in writing these words! "Difficult times" is often translated as "perilous (exceedingly fierce)" which is a much stronger word.

The same word is used here... **Matthew 8:28** *When He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. They were so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way.* Paul is warning Timothy that in the final days that there will be extremely violent times - perilous times ahead. Paul wanted Timothy to be aware.

Do you think we are in the last days? Yes. But how could it be then and now? Because the last days began when Jesus ascended into Heaven and ends when Jesus comes to take His people back home. We are always in pursuit of awaiting His arrival to restore His church. There is a sense in every generation of being in the last days. God wants us to be prepared and to remain vigilant. Paul was living in the last days and so are we. He warns us to be prepared for the extreme difficulties ahead.

Some things do require more effort than we anticipate. Today's situations require more effort than we ever expected. A virus, a border crisis, the sanctity of life arguments... perilous times. The church today needs the same awareness from Paul - difficulty is a part of the promise. We tend to want the right answer or response to our problems but we are called as God's church to endure.

**John 16:33** *These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.* We cannot separate difficulty from the promises of God.

**James 1:2** *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.* The answer to the lack in our lives is to see the difficulties and troubles from the same perspective that God sees them. Difficult times are not to be feared. Jesus will be with us, endurance is being developed, and we are becoming more complete.

**John 16:1** *These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling. Many are abandoning their faith because of the challenges they face. We think people will understand because life is overwhelming. But God wants us to persevere so that we experience His mercy and goodness. We complain and get frustrated when things aren't easy or our way. Heaven will not have tribulation and it will be better than here. But sometimes we think it should be better here. We are but strangers here and eternity awaits. We miss the promise that difficulties bring. His presence with us. His Words are with us in the darkness. His provision is in the desert places. That's what we really desire.*

Would we be surprised if Jesus came in the next hour, or today, or tomorrow? The real question is... Will you be ready in the next hour, today, or tomorrow?

**I Thessalonians 5:1-6** *Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do but let us be alert and sober.*

To be ready:

- 1) Be alert. Be constantly vigilant. Be prepared. Is your life in order? Are we living to honor the Lord with our lives?
- 2) Be sober. Live with self-control. Are you controlling your time and submitting to the Holy Spirit's leading?

The day will come as a thief in the night. Are you ready right now? Are you letting holiness change the inner man?

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What is out of order in your life? activities, events, hobbies, relationships stealing your focus and time making it impossible to hear God, habits, immorality, desires? Lay these burdens at His feet and He will replace with His goodness, mercy and grace.

What difficulty have you wanted to eliminate that you could let God use?

What should you lay down so that you can prepare and be ready for His coming?