

“Persistence, a Great Virtue”

When I ministered last week on the month of Elul and the Gate of Repentance, one of my points was that “the King was in the field.” It is important that you understand what this statement means to us as a church body and how it applies to you personally. Many of you have been unaware that the Lord is in your field continually. However, during the month of Elul, He is not only in the field; but, He is extremely approachable! He is pouring into you and me with abounding love... *if we will allow Him.*

It's during this time that you should express to the Lord whatever you have been reluctant to deal with in the past. Basically, He's listening intently to answer your every request. So, while the King is in the field, allow Him to fix what's been broken, healing bondages, removing complacency and filling you with passion for persistence. Believe me dear ones, in the coming months you will need persistence. Don't wait any longer to approach the Lord in your field. Its fear, shame and insecurity that keep you from drawing near to the King. Perseverance will shatter the bondages that cause you to be unable to interact with the Lord and accomplish His directives.

Prophet Bill Lackie prophesied an important word to us when he was here last. The word was brief but compelling, he said, “Rule the Gates of Austin.” Also, during a conversation with Sam Brassfield, a prophet from Bertram, Texas, he said to me that “08” was the year of the gate. Isn't it exciting to be right on target? However, to stay in alignment we must stay in step with the Holy Spirit and be persistent to accomplish everything the Lord has declared!

Even though what the Lord is doing in our lives, church and city is powerful and thrilling, it's imperative that we keep our eyes on the assignment that's before us. If your spiritual focus becomes obscured (dim), you may experience negative feelings (thoughts) causing you to look at your circumstances rather than to God who can heal them. Receiving or releasing negative words can also impact the corporate body tearing at the fiber of unity and personal persistence.

Don't allow shame, rejection, abandonment, betrayal, anger, fears or insecurities to sabotage what the Lord is speaking through a ministry in this church. What is being taught has eternal ramifications and the enemy would love to use your bondages as a filter to cause offense as well as stop your forward motion. In order to flow with the Holy Spirit, you will need to lay down all offenses to stay in right alignment with the Lord. In truth, what this church needs is a download of persistency today!

John Killinger retells this story from Atlantic Monthly about the days of the great western cattle ranches.

“A little burro sometimes would be harnessed to a wild steed (horse). Bucking and raging, convulsing like drunken sailors, the two would be turned loose like Laurel and Hardy to proceed out into the desert range. They could be seen disappearing over the horizon, the great steed dragging that little burro along and throwing him about like a bag of marshmallows. They might be gone for days, but eventually they would come back. The little burro would be seen first, trotting back across the horizon, leading the submissive steed in tow. Somewhere out there on the rim of the world that steed would become exhausted from trying to get rid of the burro, and at that moment, the burro would take mastery and become the leader.

That’s the way it is in God’s Kingdom isn’t it? The battle goes to the **determined**, *not the outraged*; to the **committed**, *not to those who are merely performers*.

When you are **determined** and **committed**, then **persistence** becomes the catalyst that perpetuates mastery. To be persistent, one needs to go on resolutely in spite of opposition. It also means to last on and on ~ to persevere. To persevere means to be given a task and achieve it in spite of difficulties, opposition or discouragement. It means to stay the course even if the odds feel overwhelming, much like being tied to a bucking wild steed, and **conquering it!!** It has been said that, “When things get tough, remember: ***It’s the rubbing that brings out the shine.***” A person who is persistent takes what has been given him and creates sweet victory from it.

Please read Luke 19:11-27 (NIV).

There are three things that can be gleaned from this parable:

1. We need the King’s trust.

When the Lord gives you a task, it’s important that you realize the weight of His request. In the parable of the talents, the King gave his servants money and sent them away to multiply it. He didn’t interfere with them nor did he stand over them to confirm that they had done what he asked. He merely left them alone to accomplish His request. The King chose the servants to achieve a task; **He honored them with his request and then expected results**. That’s the way the Lord interacts with us, isn’t it? The question is, “Will we be persistent to accomplish what has been given to us or will we bury it? What has the Lord asked you to do that you have buried? What does burying mean to you?”

2. We need the King to test us.

Whether we like it or not trust **always** involves tests. A good example of this is found in Jesus Himself. He first became a master carpenter and a provider for His house before He was sent forth in ministry. In Bishop Bill Hamon’s book,

“Prophets, Pitfalls and Principles” there is a section entitled, “The 10-M’s for Maturing and Maintaining Ministry”. Bishop says that God works in these areas of your lives to bring you to a place of spiritual maturity.

Let’s look at the areas where the Lord will work: Manhood, Ministry, Message, Maturity, Marriage, Methods, Manners, Money, Morality and Motive. You can be sure that you will be tested in these areas of life, and in other areas as well, **until the character that God desires is fulfilled in you**. As the Lord uses the 10-M’s to fashion and mold you, at times you may feel uncomfortable, pressed, and misunderstood. The truth is you may still have too much of the world in you and you’re reacting negatively to the touch of a loving and tender God. What He is doing in your life is not negative but positive and more importantly, you won’t always feel this way!

The Lord is preparing to impart His blessings to you, and He is refining your character to receive them. How many of you have said, “I can’t do anything right” or “everything I touch falls apart.” If you can identify with this statement, there’s good news! God is working in you so that He can do something through you. We must embrace our tests because they are opportunities that move us toward our purpose and destiny in God.

3. We need the King’s reward.

The reward that the faithful servants received was not one in which they sat down, folded their hands and enjoyed the blessings with no involvement. One was put over ten cities and the other one was put over five cities! **The reward of work well done was more work to do!** The greatest compliment we can pay a person is to give them ever-greater responsibilities. The great reward of God to man, who has satisfied the test, is more trust and more trust in God’s economy is more responsibility. However, we want to complete a task, receive accolades for our accomplishment, and be left alone so others can finish the assignment while we bask in our victory. Many of you want credit for an idea, yet don’t want to labor to achieve its purpose, and because of that, we gladly hand off to someone else to complete what was assigned to us. How easy it becomes then to criticize those who are doing what you would not do. Where we are going as a body of believers will require each of us to roll up our sleeves, put our shoulder to the plow, and work together to accomplish the mission. **We must link arms and not be guilty of burying our talent.**

The parable of the talents concludes with one of the unyielding laws of life: “To him who has, more will be given; from him who has not, what he has will be taken away.”

Everything we do requires labor and intensity; thus, the title of this ministry; “Persistence, a Great Virtue.” We will never become people of destiny if we are not persistent to accomplish the Lord’s wishes. Here are some statements that I hope will encourage you as you prepare for future assignments.

- “The best way out of difficulty is through it.”
- “Stopping at third base adds no more to the score than striking out.”
- “Many a man has failed because he has a wishbone where his backbone ought to be.”
- “Some men may succeed because they are destined to, but most men succeed because they are determined to.”
- The secret to success is to start from scratch and keep on scratching.”
- Working hard means going all out until you’re all in.”

Conclusion

Read Hebrews 12:1-13

Persistence is one of the great virtues. Most people can start well, yet finish less enthusiastically, if at all. Each of us enjoy mounting up with eagle’s wings; in the moment of the great effort everyone can run and not be weary; **but the greatest gift of all is to walk and not faint**. We need the courage to finish what we have started and complete our ministry purpose with fervor. The time of bright beginnings and lackluster finishes must end today. Because we are warriors in God’s army, we must allow the Holy Spirit to energize us with His lifeblood enabling us to have faith through persistence.

Prayer

Lord, I repent for not being persistent. Forgive me for not doing what you have asked and for burying my talent because I was afraid that you would require more than I was willing to give. Today, I ask that you would help me start anew. I confess and release my old mindsets that tell me I will never measure up. Lord, thank you for healing my soul/spirit hurts and renewing my mind. I say yes to your directives and ask that you strengthen me as I accomplish all that you ask. Nothing is impossible when I line up behind you and I humbly submit myself to you. In Jesus name, Amen!

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