

Remnant Life Church
October 5, 2014

**“Lessons by Paul:
The Building Blocks of Family Fellowship -
Part 4”**

Romans 12:12
(Hebrews 6:13-20)

Rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer. (NASB)

- The points of this verse follow each other because they are the reason for the other
 - Our joy in hope is how we can persevere in times of trial and it is all predicated by our time in prayer.
 - Removing one element lessens the effectiveness of the others
- Paul links hope with endurance several times in his writings (Rom 5:2-4, Rom 8:24-25, 1Cor 13:7, 1Thes 1:3)
 - He does this because endurance (or perseverance) is fueled by hope
 - That hope is about what was done for us in the past and, because of that, what our promise is for the future
 - ILLUS: There is a nautical term used in the sailing world called “kedging.” A kedge anchor is used when a ship is grounded or finds itself in turbulent seas. Sailors will row the kedge anchor as far as they can from the ship in the general direction they want to go and then drop the kedge anchor into the sea. Once the anchor digs into the bottom, the sailors on board begin to operate a winch and pull their way towards the anchor. This is known as kedging.
We don’t normally think of moving towards an anchor. As a matter of fact an anchor usually represents the past – something that holds us back. Sometimes, however, the anchor is our future and we move towards it. In especially turbulent times, we need to pull ourselves into the future with the anchor of our hope in Jesus Christ.
The Bible calls hope an anchor in Heb 6:18-19. Yet the anchor in those times is not behind us, it is before us. We are kedging our way into the future using the anchor of hope – Jesus Christ.
- **Perseverance**
 - There are a number of visual images that quickly come to mind when you think of this word
 - The last runner in a marathon valiantly staggering across the finish line
 - The climber, virtually immobilized by exhaustion, nearing the summit of a great mountain peak
 - Perseverance always precedes success or in the case of the Christian the blessing:
 - Several in history -

- A young man went to war a captain and returned a private. Afterwards, he was a failure as a businessman. As a lawyer he was deemed too impractical and temperamental to be a success. He turned to politics and was defeated in his first try for the legislature, defeated in his first attempt to be nominated for congress, defeated in his application to become a commissioner, defeated in the senatorial election, and defeated in his efforts for the vice-presidency. That was all part of the journey that led Abraham Lincoln to the White House
 - As an inventor, Thomas Edison, awarded 1093 patents in the US and another 1240 in other countries at the time of his death in made over 1,000 unsuccessful attempts at inventing the incandescent filament that led to the invention of the light bulb. When he was once asked, "How did it feel to fail 1,000 times?" Edison replied, "I didn't fail 1,000 times. The light bulb was an invention required 1,000 steps."
 - Henry Ford failed and went broke five times before he succeeded.
 - Perseverance can even be about your attitude...Daniel Boone the great explorer and frontiersman of the 1700's was once asked if he had ever gotten lost in the wilderness. Boone thought for a moment and replied, "Can't say I was ever lost, but I was once bewildered for about three days."
- But this is not about motivating you to "stick it out" or "keep your eyes on the prize" – it is not even about tenacity alone...those are the ways of the world
- This is about changing the way you deal with the times of trouble and struggle at the very core of who you are to the glory of God
 - Moses fled into the desert alone for 285 miles to Midian (walking from Mechanicsburg to the shores of Lake Ontario just north of Syracuse) from the riches of Egypt as God prepared him to lead the nation of Israel ([Ex. 2](#))
 - Joseph was thrown in prison before becoming the vice-pharaoh over all of Egypt ([Gen. 39](#))
 - Paul suffered numerous set-backs in his work yet still succeeded in spreading the Gospel through much of the then-known world ([2 Cor. 11](#))
- Each of these and countless others were sustained by the hope given by God
 - This hope is not the world's wishful thinking – "I hope so" based on pure chance
 - This hope is an assurance of certainty given by God through Jesus Christ ([Titus 2:11-13](#))
- Reginald White – a British theologian writes: "Every Christian knows that he would not have continued in the faith, or even begun, but for the unmerited, invasive grace of God shown in innumerable ways. Who has not found comfort in the words, 'He did not begin to love me because of what I was, but He will go on loving me in spite of what I am'? When we fail we know it is our fault; when we are upheld, we know it is thanks to God's grace."

- God's grace will uphold us but will we embrace it or reject it in order to take control of our own lives?
 - Our lives require action but our actions must be out of a submissive heart
 - Prayer – Humility – Godly Counsel
- **Tribulation**
 - Thlipsis in the original language
 - Pressure of the crushing of two things together
 - Same word used of pressing together of 2 objects
 - Sheer, physical pressing – not just a mere inconvenience
 - The Bible also speaks of the Great Tribulation (**Rev 7:14**)
 - Most scholars believe that this refers to the end of days that will immediately precede the coming of Jesus to establish His kingdom on earth for a thousand years
 - We tend to call anything that does not go our way a trial or tribulation but that is not what Paul is referring to here
 - This is a time of true testing under great pressure
 - That is different for each person – what is your period of thlipsis?
 - But our focus this morning is not on the trials – we all have experience in those things
 - Our focus is on the promises of God when we are in those times
 - How you walk through those times will tell others more about you than any words
 - How you walk through those times will also reveal your heart, your relationship, and your trust in God
 - Many say, “Well I trust God **but...**”
 - There is no “but” – either you trust Him or you do not
 - To trust Him partially is the same as using Him at your convenience
- The words of Jesus give us the anchor we hold to -
 - *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:27)*
 - *Jesus said, I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)*
- How do we maintain the strength to push ahead?
 - *This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.” (Neh 8:10b)*
 - The joy of our hope, Jesus Christ, is the wellspring of our strength

Next week: The cornerstone of it all – Devoted in Prayer