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8 | PHILIPPIANS 1:28-30

THE COURAGE TO WALK WORTHY

Four Foundations of Courage

Outline

The Courage to Walk Worthy, Outline

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Announcements

1. Welcome visitors!
2. Last week's Fighter verse: Isaiah 43:1-3
3. Evening service tonight, 5pm.
4. The Rowe's, who help lead our youth, have prepared devotional books for all the youth as well as a book for the parents to use and join in with their youth. This month is the book of John. There will be a different book of the Bible every month. You don't have to be part of the youth group to participate. Just have your youth grab a binder. The parents get a more streamlined booklet – all at the Welcome Center.

Key structural foundations for this message:

- This is a Word from God
 - Utilize all biblical genres: Psalms, Proverbs, OT Narratives, prophecy
 - Use both systematic and biblical theology
 - Use biblical examples
 - Bring application with conviction
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Introduction

Open your Bible if you will to **Philippians 1**. The title of our study this morning is: “How to Walk Worthy.”

ENCOURAGED

Can I ask you a question this morning? Are you encouraged this morning? You ought to be. Yet so often we live in fear. That is not the will of God. So often we do not walk worthy of the Gospel because we are afraid.

Peter: I think of Simon Peter. In fear he denied the Lord three times. But something transformed him. With faith he saw the risen Lord, and he became courageous! All the apostles were transformed by faith after the resurrection, and they became tenacious for the Gospel. The love of God invaded them, and they were transformed.

What is it that makes us courageous? I believe the Bible answer is **faith**. That's what God told Joshua. And 365 times, God tells us “Fear not”! It's always “fear not, and trust in me.” Don't lean to what you see, but look to me. Get your reality from me. If you lack courage, it's because you lack focus.

Where does courage come from? And how do you get it when you need it, when some fear towers over you and threatens you, and you feel like cowering and fleeing into some place to hide? It

The Courage to Walk Worthy, Outline

This morning, we are going to talk about what it means to walk worthy and how exactly we attain that. I want to walk worthy of that high call in Christ. I need courage. Christ is our mighty champion. He's already triumphant. How can we have the courage to walk worth? Four pillars of courageous faith:

- Faithfulness
- Forcefulness
- Fearlessness
- Favor

Scripture Reading

It's these four things that keep pushing us to grow in our faith in God. Let's learn about it as we read our passage today. Let's stand and read Philippians 1:27-30,

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸ and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, ³⁰ engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have (1:27-30).

This is God's Word.

As we guard our unity in the Spirit, there will be always intense spiritual opposition. ***Live up to your heavenly citizenship.*** "Live as citizens of heaven in a way that is worthy of the Gospel of Christ." Live up to your heavenly calling. Live up to your union with Christ. Live in the power of Christ. Be lifted up by grace to walk according to that high calling.

Yet, the moment you begin living for Christ, opposition comes. Paul says don't be "frightened in anything by your opponents" (vs 28a). "Don't be intimidated by your enemies."

Walk Worthy: One with Christ

Paul commands us to walk worthy of the Gospel. A literal translation would be: "Live up to your heavenly citizenship, worthy of Christ's Gospel." You are united with Christ (BT, ST). Walk worthy of your union. You are a member of God's family. Walk worthy. You are adopted. Walk worthy! You are one with Christ. Walk worthy.

When Christ **died**, you died with Christ. All your sins are fully propitiated. The wrath of God is satisfied for every transgression today, yesterday, forever! You are fully forgiven by our compassionate and tender heavenly Father (YHWH).

When Christ was **resurrected**, you were raised with him by the Spirit. Keep getting to the higher ground of the holy life. This is a gift from God. He has given you "everything you need" for life and godliness.



When Christ **ascended** to the Father's right hand, you ascended with him. You are "seated in the heavenly places" (Eph 2:5). Now you must set your mind on heavenly things, not on things on the earth (Col 3:1ff).

When Christ **comes again**, you will be glorified like him. **Walk worthy** of the death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming of Christ.

1. FAITHFULNESS (1:27)

I'm convinced that what the world needs is to see a Christian whose character is bold and courageous, who is living a consistent life of holiness, whose life manifests sheer faithfulness!

Paul says to the Philippians, you need to be united like **soldiers**, "standing firm in one spirit." We need to be united like **athletes**, with "one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel." We are to be faithful to Christ in all things.

Definition. To be **faithful** means to be loyal, constant, staunch, steadfast, resolute mean firm in adherence to whatever one owes allegiance. For the Christian, this firm adherence is not from our own power, or faith in ourselves, but we are filled with faith in another's power. We are filled with faith in Christ who has infinite power. The faithful one is the faith-filled Christian!

THE SPIRIT'S FRUIT

Notice Paul says: "Stand firm in one spirit" (1:27c). Hold your ground in one spirit! How is that possible? How can people with such differences, with so many different ideas to be "in one spirit"? How can you please all the people all the time? If you've ever thought of trying it, don't do it. It's impossible. It was Abraham Lincoln who said, "You can please **some** of the people **all** of the time, and you can please **all** of the people **some** of the time, but you can't please all of the people all of the time." And if you can't please all the people all the time, how are you going to keep everybody in one spirit. I'll tell you: there's only one way. When one Holy Spirit is allowed to be and do what he wants to be and do in every one of our spirits. That's what Paul is asking for. It's my spirit abandoned to the Holy Spirit. It's realizing the Christian next to me is in exactly the same place. "Stand firm in one spirit." Faithfulness! The Spirit will bring it.



The faithfulness that characterizes the Christian flows from my surrender to the Holy Spirit. This is the kind of unity and faithfulness the Spirit of God produces in the heart of the child of God. **Faithfulness** is a fruit the Spirit (**Gal 5:22-23**). The faithful, consistent life is a gift that comes from resting in the Spirit of Christ.

EZEKIEL'S PROPHECY

It's important that what we NT saints are experiencing, as God gives us this gift of **faithfulness** that comes out of a new heart, was prophesied long ago: 2600 years ago to be more precise. It was prophesied in Ezekiel that the Spirit would come and take out our "heart of stone" and put in a "heart of flesh" in the Gospel times that we are in, and it has happened (cf Eze 36:25-27). God's Word is true. We are seeing God's faithfulness to his Word right now. God promises to give you a *faithful heart*. It's not something you can work up. It's a miracle of God's revealed Word to your heart. You believe, and you are changed. He put's in us a faithful heart. He joins us to a body of believers with faithful hearts.



ELEAZAR: ONE OF DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN

Paul tells us "stand firm"! Hold your ground! Be united in your battle: fight the good fight as God's army. "The gates of hell shall not prevail," so go forward no matter what and build Christ's church.

When I think of the fruit of faithfulness that the Spirit produces, I have to remember one of David's three mighty men named **Eleazer**.

And next to him among the three mighty men was Eleazar the son of Dodo, son of Ahohi. He was with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel withdrew. ¹⁰ He rose and struck down the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clung to the sword. And the Lord brought about a great victory that day, and the men returned after him only to strip the slain (2 Sam 23:9-10).

Eleazer was with David when they battled against the Philistines. The Bible says that the battle was so fierce that the rest of David's battalion withdrew, but Eleazer kept fighting against 800 men! Look at 2 Sam 23:10, "He rose and struck down the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clung to the sword. And the Lord brought about a great victory that day, and the men returned after him only to strip the slain."

They had to pry that sword from Eleazer's hand. He lost all vision for everything else except one thing: faithfulness. **What courage in his great and mighty God he had!** What a mighty man not just for David, but a mighty man of God. His fellow soldiers came to take the spoil, but only after Eleazer cleaned the Philistines house (so to speak)!



GOD'S EARLIER PROMISE TO THE PHILIPPIANS



Remember God's earlier promise to the Philippians. Faithfulness is a gift from the Spirit. The courage to remain faithful always comes from faith in another. You are powerless, but God is infinite in power. His grace is sufficient. Remember what he told

Examples

Is there this **faithful tenacity** to move forward in your life? What are you ceding to the enemy of your soul? What have you given up on in your life of holiness.

Don't you know that the Lord can "**restore the years that the locusts have eaten**"? Don't you know that God can "**make beauty from ashes**"? You need to look in faith to the one who makes us faithful.

Jesus says, "Without me, you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). The prophet Zechariah said, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord" (Zech 4:6). The Lord said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient" and "When you are weak, you are really strong... my strength is made perfect in your weakness."

- God can take a **puny David** and defeat a **prideful Goliath!** How? David had a great God who can defeat giants!
- God can take a "**has bin**" named **Moses** and turn him into a prophet through which the **entire Egyptian army** is defeated. How? Moses had a great God who made Moses one of the most faithful man in the Old Testament.
- **Simon Peter**, what a big mouth he had! What an unstable personality! God can take a bumbling Simon Peter and turn him into a **faithful apostle** who preaches Pentecost.
- God can take **YOU** wherever you are, and whatever you are going through and make you faithful. How? Through faith in his power, God can make you



Scriptural Support

Jesus says, "Without me, you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). The prophet Zechariah said, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord" (Zech 4:6). The Lord said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient" and "When you are weak, you are really strong... my strength is made perfect in your weakness."

"Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it" (Psa 127:1).

"The joy of the Lord is my strength" (Neh 8:10)

"I can do all things (context: in all situations) through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13).





I know you hear God's voice right now, Christian. Jesus said "**My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me**" (Jn 10:27ff). God is talking directly to you today, and you need to stop trying to live in the power of your own faithfulness.

Quote John Newton

John Newton, author of Amazing Grace, said it this way:

"I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in another world; but still I am not what I once was, and by the grace of God I am what I am."

Did you hear that? By the grace of God. It's the empowering grace of God that makes us faithful!

Application



So, you say, how can I lay this foundation of courage in my life? Surrender to the power of our great God! He is able! Surrender and rest in him! That's where faithfulness comes from!

Whatever it is that keeps you from consistency, God's got you. That's where you have to begin. God's bigger than your flesh, the world and the devil. "Greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 Jn 4:4).

We are far from where we ought to be, but we are also so far from where we once were. We were dead in sin, now we live. We were blind, now we see.

God wants you to be **faithful** in every area of your life. It's going to take courageous faith to be faithful. It's not about small you, but our great God! Perhaps you've neglected the greatness of God in your life. I'm calling you to step up and step out in reliance on your great God! Step out on faith and...

- *Be faithful* in your quiet time with God: in prayer, and in the Word.
- *Be faithful* in pursuing your spouse if you are married.
- *Be faithful* in your purity.
- *Be faithful* in giving God the firstfruits of all that he gives you, in tithes and offerings. Be faithful in your finances. Don't cheat the IRS. Don't cheat God either.
- *Be faithful* in assembling together at church, small groups, home fellowships.
- *Be faithful* brothers and sisters to walk with integrity, according to your heavenly citizenship.

What this world needs is to see Christians who are ruggedly faithful to the Christ they say they believe in. We need to following him faithfully, not in our own power or pride, but in weakness and humility. “He must increase, and I must decrease.” That’s the secret to faithfulness.

2. FORCEFULNESS (1:27)

Forcefulness comes to easy for some and hardly at all for others. Stand firm. Don’t move! Don’t give any ground to the enemy! We have to be forceful and disciplined. Forcefulness is not always looked upon well, but we must insist on being forceful when it comes to **self-denial for the sake of unity.**

... **standing firm** in one spirit, with one mind **striving side by side** for the faith of the gospel... (1:27).

THE FORCEFULNESS OF OLYMPIC ATHLETES

Paul says we are to be “**striving together** for the faith of the Gospel.” What does it mean, striving **side by side**? It’s the word we get our English word, “**athletics**”. It has to do with **wrestling**. Paul says, “I want to see all of you, like **soldiers**, holding your ground with one spirit.”

Then I want to see you lined up like athletes: wrestling and winning against the forces of darkness. We need to be weapons in God’s hands, ripping people from the fires of hell. “The gates of hell will not prevail” because Christ said, “I will build my church.”

We need to be like athletic fighters and not give in to the philosophies and fears of this world. There needs to be a forceful presentation of the Gospel of Christ where it’s needed most.

In the Olympic games that Paul is referring to, the wrestling event was quite different. The wrestlers lined up shoulder to shoulder and battled against the other team. At the given signal, they went at it, one united front against another.

The only way the Gospel is going to get to the uttermost parts of the earth so that every creature hears the Gospel, is when everyone in the local church realizes we are competing on the same team. We cannot do this alone. We must insist on unity and togetherness.

Put aside all differences among you. Cover offenses with love. Put the great looming glory and love of God before you!

FORCEFULNESS OF SELF-DENIAL, PERSONAL HOLINESS

Like an athlete wrestler, we need to deny self for the entire team. An athlete is a person who denies self. We have to have the courage to say no to worldliness and no to personal ambition. Our ambition must be for Christ. We must be forceful with ourselves because of love for Christ. Jesus in order to follow him, you have to **daily attend your own funeral:**

If anyone desires to come after Me, **let him deny himself**, and **take up his cross** daily, and **follow** me (Lk 9:23).

An athlete is a person who trains. On Olympic teams, they are to train together. An athlete is a person who willing to cut out unnecessary things. There's a courage to it. There's a competition. There's a drive, a forcefulness we must have. We must deny self like an athlete. "An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules" (**2 Tim 2:5**). Paul says:

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So **run that you may obtain it**. ²⁵ Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶ So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified (1 Cor 9:24-27).

At the end of his life, Paul says, "I have fought a good fight, I have **run the race**, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim 4:7).

FORCEFULNESS NEEDED FOR CORPORATE UNITY

Forcefulness is necessary **personally**, but also **corporately**.

Forcefulness can be seen as a negative thing. Why is it necessary for Christian conduct? Because you must have a tenacity and a forcefulness when it comes to **unity**.

Paul says, "I want to see the same kind of abandonment and self-denial an athlete has!" But **it's not merely on an individual level**. "With one mind **striving side by side** for the faith of the gospel" (1:27). Have the same discipline that an athlete would have.

The ancient **wrestler-athlete** had to be forceful when it comes to unity. There must be a grittiness. There must be a firmness when it comes to unity.

We are going forward **together**. We are not leaving anyone behind. We must fight side by side together against the enemy.

3. FEARLESSNESS (1:28)

Fear is a very real experience for all people because of the fall, but God does not intend for any of his children to be fearful, though we often are. You must not live in fear because fear destroys unity.

²⁸ and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.

God never tells us to be afraid of anything, except to fear the Lord. And that fear of God is not a servile fear, but an awe and reverence for the greatness and goodness and majesty of God.

God calls us to an audacious faith and courage. Remember the words of God to Joshua? “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (Josh 1:9). Or remember the words of Isaiah. This ought to breed courage in us:

....Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
 I have called you by name, you are mine.
 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
 and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
 when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
 and the flame shall not consume you.
 3 For I am the Lord your God,
 the Holy One of Israel, your Savior... (Isa 43:1-3).

COURAGE INSPITE OF BEING OVERWHELMED

Sometimes we can get so overwhelmed by the conflict and the battle. You know Isaiah was **overwhelmed** as well in Isaiah 61:10! (NLT). Listen to what he says:

I am *overwhelmed* with joy in the LORD, my God! For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness (Isa 61:10, NLT).

Be overwhelmed by the love God has for you! This was David’s example. Instead of cowering in a cave hiding for his life, he wrote so many Psalms encouraging his soul and his faith in his great and mighty God.

COURAGE BECAUSE OF GOD’S CLEAR SIGN

The word Paul uses for “clear sign” is interesting. It was used by **Caesar** to determine the fate of a gladiator. At the **Roman Colosseum**, if a gladiator was seriously wounded or threw down his weapon in defeat, his fate was left in the hands of Caesar. The emperor could give him the “thumbs up” or “thumbs down”. That’s what this clear sign originates from.

In other words, as Christians go forth into the world, their fearless unity, their love for one another, is a “clear sign” – literally a **thumbs up** or “thumbs down” for the eternal destiny for all around. Paul put it this way: when we go out into the world, “we are a living letter, known and read by all men.” Or in another place:

For we are the **aroma of Christ** to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, ¹⁶to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? ¹⁷For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ (1 Cor 2:15-16).

You are an aroma of Christ. Some people are offended by the fragrance of Christ because it reveals their sin. In order to embrace Christ, you have to embrace your need

for him. We are wretched and horrible sinners in need of the Savior. To some this aroma is offensive because it humbles the proud. Some on this earth don't want to be humbled.

RIOTING AND REJOICING

Hear what Paul is saying. Don't be frightened by your enemies/opponents. You are giving off an aroma that makes some of them want to persecute you and even kill you. You are a sign post for God. Some are going to "see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Others are going to hate you and mob you. There will be both **rioting** and **rejoicing**. Paul was attacked by a mob at **Thessalonica**. He was again attacked by a mob at **Ephesus**. He had to be lowered down a wall in a basket in **Jerusalem** because people wanted to kill him.

Don't be overwhelmed by God's Enemies

Who are these enemies? Look over at chapter 3. Paul says:

For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ... (Phil 3:18-20).

In the Philippian church, there were **human enemies** who were bringing **false teaching** into the church, trying to bring the saints into bondage again. And whether it is **legalism** or **license**, Satan wants to bring us into bondage. Paul says: don't be afraid of these enemies whoever they are.

Don't be frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God (1:28).

The fact that you are being oppressed by the enemy on all sides is a **sign** of what's coming. It's a harbinger of the future. For the lost, their hatred of Christ a sign of their **destruction**, but for you persecution is a sign of your **salvation**.

Although it seems now that the church's opponents have the upper hand, their current persecution of believers, whether severe or mild, is a harbinger of a radical reversal to come. It is actually "**a clear sign**" of the enemies' own impending destruction and of believers' eventual rescue by God himself (1:28).¹

4. FAVOR (1:29-30)

BLESSED AND HIGHLY FAVORED

We can have courage to walk worthy because the battle is won, and the winning of it does not come from us. It clearly comes from God. "It has been granted" speaks of God's

¹ Ibid., 95.

gifts of grace. We might say that each one of us is truly “blessed and highly favored.” Spiritually speaking, we are embarrassed with riches.

Has been granted is from *charizō*, which is from the same root as the noun *charis* (grace) and literally means “to give, render, or grant graciously.” In his sovereign grace, God gave believers the marvelous **gift of faith** to believe in him (*cf* Eph 2:8-9).²

“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness...” (2 Pet 1:3).

We are enriched. We have an unlimited spiritual arsenal to fight the enemy. We are indeed blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Paul says to the Philippians, we have been enriched in two ways. Here Paul mentions two gifts. One is obvious. The other is a surprise.

²⁹For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, ³⁰engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have (1:29-30).

FAVORED WITH THE GIFT OF FAITH

Faith is a gift from God, so no one should boast (Eph 2:8-9). There is a pattern of conduct that must characterize heaven’s citizens because it is “worthy” of the gospel (Phil. 1:27). Yet the gospel is **not a set of responsibilities** to be fulfilled. It is **good news** to be believed, the joyful report of a mission accomplished on our behalf despite our unworthiness and helplessness.³

The Ability to Believe in Christ

The ability to believe in Christ is one of two gifts of grace that come from God (1:29–30). These two gifts—faith and suffering—are Paul’s explanation of his concise but momentous assertion that our final salvation will be “from God” (1:28).⁴

Look over at **Ephesians 1:3-9**. Consider how infinitely blessed we are to be chosen in Christ from the foundation of the world

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,⁴ even as **he chose us in him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and blameless before him. **In love** ⁵**he predestined us** for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸which **he lavished upon us**, in all wisdom and insight ⁹making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ (Eph 1:3-9).

² John F. MacArthur Jr., *Philippians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 95.

³ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁴ *Ibid.*

Election is a Family Doctrine

Rejoice in your election! God has chosen you. It is not there to ask whether or not you are elect. That is a futile question. Ask yourself, is Christ the only Savior? Could I forsake him and go back to the world? Who gave you that faith to keep you? What a gift! If you have the faith of Christ, then God has graciously **opened your eyes!**

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me,
I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see!*

Jesus said in John 6:37, “**All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.**” The giving precedes the coming. The Father must give us to the Father. You have been given to the Father in eternity past, long before you ever believed.

So listen, walk worthy, but there is nothing to boast in. Your faith comes from the Father. It’s a gift. “It has been granted to you to believe in Christ.”

FAVORED WITH THE GIFT OF SUFFERING

We can have courage because the battle is won, and the winning of it does not come from us. It clearly comes from God. “It has been granted” speaks of God’s gracious gifts. We are not surprised by the first gift: faith, but certainly suffering is a gift we would want to give back!

“For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but **also suffer for his sake**, engaged in the same conflict...” (1:29-30a).

Paul says, we are “engaged in the same conflict” as he is. Remember Paul was imprisoned and beaten with Silas in Philippi. But that suffering was a gift. Paul and Silas sang in the jail that night and the walls of the prison shook with an earthquake of joy and fell down. We rejoice in suffering because we are counted worthy to suffer for Christ.

Kinds of Suffering

There are various ways we suffer in the Christian life.

- There is the suffering of **persecution**. “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (**2 Tim 3:12**). As you bring the Word of the Gospel to the world, you will suffer. They will reject you. There will be some **rioting**, but there will also be **rejoicing!**
- There is the suffering of **trials**. “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness” (**Jas 1:2-3**). It’s when troubles come that your endurance has a chance to grow!
- There is the suffering of God’s compassionate **chastening**. “Whom the Lord loves, he chastens” (Heb 12:6). Sometimes God lays us up to draw us **closer**.

Your suffering is a gift from God! You are going to suffer so much in this life, and there is a reason for that. It is so show that you are “going to be saved” (vs 28), “and that from God” – that is, by God Himself. You are so weak. Your suffering is so great. There is no way you could save yourself. God’s going to make that clear through the gift of suffering.

Why does God call suffering a gift? Think about what suffering does to us. It humbles us. Job said, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” James said, “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.”

Suffering builds faith. It helps you draw near to God. It strips you of everything so that you will draw near. It humbles you. It produces strong and steadfast faith.

We are Not Home Yet

There is satanic attack daily. You are not home yet. You are in a war zone. You are not home yet. Where is your focus? You need to focus on home.

It is a fatal mistake to assume that God’s goal for your life is material prosperity or popular success as the world defines it. The abundant life has nothing to do with material abundance. Faithfulness to God does not guarantee success in a career or even in ministry. Never focus on temporary crowns.

Paul was faithful, yet he ended up in **prison**. **John the Baptist** was faithful, but he was **beheaded**. Millions of faithful people have been **martyred**, have lost everything, or have come to the end of life with nothing to show for it. But the end of life is not the end!

Listen to Paul in 2 Cor 4.

For we fix our attention, not on things that are seen, but on things that are unseen.
What can be seen lasts only for a time, but what cannot be seen lasts forever (2 Cor 4:18, GNT).

When life gets tough, when you’re overwhelmed with doubt, or when you wonder if living for Christ is worth the effort, remember that you are not home yet. At death you won’t leave home — you’ll go home.

Conclusion

You need to have courage to walk worthy. No matter what happens, courage comes from faith in a big God. If you lack courage, you need to refocus and recalibrate. Turn your eyes upon Jesus. He’s the one who chose you and he’s the one who holds you.

War Zone

In the 1940s, children across America would have to go through wartime drills. In schools everywhere they would have wartime tests where the alarm would go off, warning of a possible approaching bomb. The children would have to get under their desks or go to a shelter. They were never quite comfortable.

Dear saints, we are not home yet. We will suffer on this earth. But let us rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer for Christ. We are counted worthy in Christ to go through every trial, every difficulty for a goal. That goal is that we would know the nearness of

God, know his majesty and fear, know the conviction and comfort of the Holy Spirit, and as a result, be transformed!

Walk worthy saints! If you lack courage, refocus on Christ. Turn your eyes on Christ!