

# Perseverance

by Paris Reidhead

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*Perseverance is the key to remaining faithful to God's will and plan for our lives, even in the face of opposition and difficulty.*

**Duration:** 37:36

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Mark 4:14-20, Hebrews 12:1-3, Hebrews 12:7

**Topics:** "Perseverance"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the concept of endurance in the Christian life. He highlights three words in Hebrews chapter 12 that are attributed to Jesus Christ: endure. The speaker explains that Jesus came into a world that was hostile towards him and knew that he would face opposition and ultimately be crucified. He emphasizes that believers are also called to endure and references several scriptures that encourage endurance. The speaker suggests that listeners take note of these words and reflect on their meaning in their own lives.

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## Transcript

Now will you turn, please, to Hebrews chapter 12. Hebrews chapter 12, and I want you to notice three words that are there. The second verse, the third verse, the seventh verse, all have attributed to our Lord Jesus Christ.

This one word, endure. Our theme this morning is keep on keeping on. I might have entitled it the perseverance of the Saints, but I was afraid too many wouldn't understand that ancient, perhaps, archaeological term, so we've just called it keep on keeping on.

And that's substantially what it means. Here in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, the second verse, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye being wearied and faint in your minds.

And in the seventh verse, if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons. For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? Our Lord Jesus is set forward as the prime example of endurance, of faithfulness, of perseverance. He came into the world knowing that it was an alien world, at enmity against his father, a world that hated him.

And even before the foundation of the world, he knew that that world system would be utterly opposed to all that he represented. He knew that the final climax of his invading time and life would be the crucifixion, and so we are told that he endured the cross, and he endured a contradiction of sinners. Again, you are told that you are to endure.

The Lord Jesus, on three occasions, in Matthew 10 and 22, 24 and 13, and Mark 13, verse 13, said, he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. Now we've made a great deal of the new birth, and rightly so, for except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. But I am afraid we have made far too little of the matter of responsible, directed, determined life on the part of the Christian.

We've emphasized the experience of being forgiven, the experience of being pardoned, and we should have done so, because the Word of God makes it abundantly clear. But I am rather afraid that in emphasizing this, it has been to the detriment of the fact that God holds us responsible to persist in that commitment that we make to Christ, and to endure all that may be asked of us along the way. Our Lord Jesus said this because he meant it.

Oh, I know the context in which he said, concerning the fall of Jerusalem, that if they would endure to the end, they should be saved. Tradition tells us that there were no Christians that were slain at the time that the walls of Jerusalem was broken down and the temple was destroyed. Whether this is true or not, I couldn't say, but tradition so has it, because it is said they all endured to the end and so were saved.

But you can't take this text and apply it locally, exclusively. It may have had a local application, and I won't challenge that, but I also know that this is an eternal principle. Writing of this, Matthew Henry, whom you must understand was probably the peer of Calvinist commentators, one whose point of view certainly would not be lightly taken on this matter especially, said the verse that I refer to, Matthew 10, 22, He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.

This is not only an encouragement to endure, but the Lord Jesus is stating it is an obligation. We must endure. Those who endure but a while and in the time of testing fall away, have run in vain and lose all that they have attained.

But they who persevere are sure of the prize, and they only. Be faithful unto death, and then thou shalt have the crown of life. Matthew Henry is simply saying that the faith that saves is the faith that transforms.

The faith that transforms is the faith that will persist throughout all the days of time. Now I want you to recognize this is but the first and introductory message, and what I trust is going to be a developed theme on this important matter of perseverance. And so I'm going to use both the example of the Lord Jesus Christ and the word of the Lord Jesus Christ to, as a lever, to pry you into a serious and sustained consideration of what the Bible has to teach about this matter of endurance or perseverance or persistence.

You call it what you will. There are seven words in the Greek that are translated by the one English word and unfortunately this is just about the case generally. Greek was a very rich language, one that gave opportunity for shades of meaning, and English is a somewhat of a conglomerate language made up of many different contributions from many different cultures.

So when the King James translators were coming to these words they had only one. They resorted to it almost like a cliché and used it over and over again and failed, I believe, in so doing to give to us the

shades of meaning that the Lord wanted us to see. Now I simply suggest for your aid today that you make note of the word in English.

I'm not going to be using the Greek because I don't know enough to use it authoritatively, but you just use the translation and list the scriptures and as you have opportunity in the hours or days to come to go back over the message in meditation, you will see these seven words and you will be able to see with some perhaps new insight into what the Lord wants this matter of endurance in the Christian life to mean to you. The first word that we choose, not first in order, but the first word that we choose is found in Mark chapter 4 and verse 17. I'm going to ask you to turn to it.

Number one is the expression, the translated expression, it is. The translators came to the little Greek word and they knew not how to present it except to say it is. Well, we will use it, call it endure.

I read now Mark 4 14 on through 20. The sower soweth the word and these are they by the wayside where the word is sown. But when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.

And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground, who when they have heard the word immediately receive it with gladness and have no root in themselves. For so endure but for a time. And the word it is and so it is but for a time.

This concept of its being for such a little time is here translated by the word endure. And so it is just for such a brief period. Afterwards when affliction or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

And these are they which are sown among thorns such as hear the word. And the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of other things entering in choke the word and it becometh unfruitful. And these are they which are sown on good ground such as hear the word and receive it and bring forth fruit some thirtyfold some sixty and some hundred.

We would gather from this use of it, translation if you please, mistranslation, that to endure means to be. To just go on being what you ought to be. Being what God has made you.

Being what he has shown you you ought to be. To endure therefore is to be consistent with that as a Christian which is transpired in your heart. The same is given in the second word that's translated to endure.

It is to remain. To remain. In John chapter 6 and verse 27 we find the first occurrence in the New Testament of this word.

Labor not for the meat that perisheth but for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life. To remain. It endures.

It has that continuing quality about it. Indicating from the previous scripture that we read that there were those that were choked out by thorns of ambition and consequently they did not continue to be what they'd set out to be. Now here we want our to understand that the word endure means to remain constant.

Here is meat, not flesh of a beast, but that which is satisfying, that which is enriching, that which meets the need of the life, which will endure unto everlasting life. Paul, the writer of Hebrews, I continually call him

Paul for I so believe he wrote it, in chapter 10 and verse 34 said, for ye had compassion of me in my bonds and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. The writer of the Hebrews, the epistle to the Hebrews, had been imprisoned and the Christians to whom he wrote had associated themselves with him.

They had gone outside the camp, if you please, with one that was charged by the government of being a criminal. Because they shared his convictions, because they shared his experience, they shared his loyalty to the Word of God, they associated themselves with him and whereas they had no personal problem with the government, the consequence was all their goods were confiscated and some of them were imprisoned and their life was taken from them. Why, said he by inference, why was it that you were willing to let it be known that you were one with me? Why were you willing to stand up for the truth when it was evil spoken of? Because you knew that you had in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

Therefore this word means to endure, means to stand for the truth regardless of what it's going to cost you personally, because there is that which will remain after all that men can confiscate has been done. If you understand this, if this truth comes into your heart, that to endure to the end means to remain faithful even at the cost of your goods or of your life. You're beginning to feel something of the temper of the New Testament Christian.

Again, this second word, to remain, is meant used in 1 Peter chapter 1 and verse 25, also in verse 24, I read, for all flesh is his grass and all the glory of man is the flower thereof, but the word of the Lord endureth forever. It's going to perish, this life that we have, it will fall away, but the word of the Lord will remain. And consequently, if you are wise with the wisdom that comes from above when Christ says endure unto the end, then you're going to have the same quality of life that is in the word of God.

You say, well how can this be? The word of God is inspired, the word of God is that which has been breathed by the Holy Ghost. How can it be that I will have that same quality of life that's indicated in the word of God? How? Because if you have been born of God, you've been born of the Spirit, and the same one that has given the word is the one that's changed your character and transformed you and made you anew in Christ. And thus it is that you will have to recognize that to be a Christian is not simply to have subscribed to a scheme of doctrine, to have accepted a certain related scripture verses, but to have had such an encounter with Christ that your whole being has changed and you have now been made partaker of the divine nature.

And there will be in you a constancy, there will be a strength of character, a determination of will in the face of opposition and difficulty that will cause you to remain. Friends may fall on either side, situations may change, goods may perish, life may be threatened or even taken, but there's that quality in you that remains. You just stand because something's happened to you.

And this is exactly what Christ intended this word endure to mean to us. Another word, the third word, is to bear or to carry, to be, to remain. And now the third word, to bear or to carry, this is included in the idea, the biblical idea of endurance.

In Romans the ninth chapter, verse 22, Paul is describing God's forbearance with wicked men and he declares, what if God, willing to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much long sufferings the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. You are therefore to have the same attitude toward the world and the flesh and the devil, all the foes that you encounter. You are to have the same purpose toward God's will and plan for your life that God had in respect to men that were evil, who were fitted for

destruction, but to make his power known he endured with much long suffering their evil actions.

He, God, didn't deal with them the first time they sinned. When Khrushchev was born, God knew what he would be as in Stalin or Hitler or you name the individuals of history. He knew their death and destruction was certain, but God endured and he was willing to bear with it.

Now it's this quality that is to be translated into your life by the Spirit of God and by the power of his working that you will be able to endure and will not have to resort to all sorts of evil chicanery in order to counteract that evil which is directed toward you. Again, this same idea to bear or to carry the weight is in Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 20. I read verse 21 to complete the thought.

For they could not endure that which was commanded. For if so much as a beast touched the mountain, it shall be stoned or thrust through with darts. And so terrible was the sight of that mountain that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.

They couldn't bear it. They couldn't carry it, was the Israel's complaint. They couldn't meet God there as he spoke from Sinai and as he laid the law upon them.

They were unable to bear it, unable to carry it. And consequently, we should gather from this for our own hearts that that which God is going to do in us will be to enable us to carry, to bear that which Israel refused. I'm so grateful that John Wesley lovingly, touchingly said concerning first John 1 16 where we read he that sayeth I know him and keepeth not his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him.

The law was too heavy for Israel to carry because their hearts were evil and they would not. But Wesley went on to say the commandment to the sinner thou shalt not is the promise to the saint thou shalt not. Oh it makes such a difference how you say it.

Which side of the fence you're on. If you're on on the outside of the law and God is holding you away from that which belongs to another, then it interferes with your pleasure and your purpose. But if you're a Christian, you've been born of God, you're on the inside of his will and the threat has been leveled at you.

You can't live the Christian life, you can't bear the law, you can't bear the will of God. Israel failed, you'll certainly fail. Oh not so, not so.

Because you see something's happened and the very God that has been on Sinai in such a manifestation of his power and his holiness and his righteousness that Moses said I exceedingly fear and quake, this God has associated himself with you. He said I will dwell in them and walk in them and I'll be a father unto them and they shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty. And you can bear, you can carry, but Israel refused to carry.

Again we find in Romans chapter 8 and verse 3, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ hath made us free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. It can be borne.

Israel refused, but if you have been born of God and made partaker of his life and know the fullness of his Spirit, then you can bear, you can endure, you can carry because of what God has done in your heart. There's a fourth word translated endure. It means to hold up, to hold up.

In 2nd Timothy chapter 4 and verse 3, for the time will come when men will not support or hold up sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall keep to themselves teachers having itching ears. And Paul is telling young Timothy that one of the evidences of the last days will be when men and women do not support or endure or hold up the truth. It doesn't make any difference anymore.

Doctrinal divergence, calumnies against the truth of God, subtle attacks on the authority of Christ, a gnawing away at the authority of the Bible, will be endured. It will be held up because there will come a time when men will no longer support or hold up sound doctrine. I believe we're living in that day.

I believe we're living in a day when peace and unity is of more importance than truth and purity. I believe we're living in a day when the last bastions of evangelical truth are being attacked from without and from within. I believe we're living in a day when men can lip the cliches of the fathers and at the same time deny their vitality and virility and meaning in their life.

I think we're living in the day when men will not endure, they will not support, they will not hold up sound doctrine. Now if you be that endureth to the end the same shall be saved. This means that as long as one lives they must be utterly committed to the Word of God and the truth of God.

To stand for it and to stand against all that would attack it. In love but in determination, lest they should have part without which you seek condemned here. So to endure means to hold up the truth.

Again in 2nd Thessalonians chapter 1 and verse 4 Paul is writing to this lovely church. Oh how our hearts are to rejoice every time we think of the church at Thessalonica. We are bound to thank God always for you brethren as it is me because that your faith growing it growth exceedingly and the love of every one of you towards each other aboundeth so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecution and tribulations that you endure and here are the people that are holding up under all the problems and all the difficulties that can be heaped upon them because they're associated with Christ.

Some of you are going to school, you're going to have so called scientists to attack your faith and of course the moment that they do they cease to be scientists and disclose the true fangs of their heart as being metaphysicians. I'm not a scientist I make no claim to be but I remember years ago reading the definition of it that science is knowledge observed classified and verified by experiment and the moment that anyone that purports to be a scientist begins to explain what he has observed and classified and verified he ceases to be a scientist and he becomes a metaphysician. We have nothing to fear from science.

All facts are God's facts and all truth is God's truth. What we have to fear is those that are the enemies of God who would use the robes of science to cover the wolf's heart of their determination to destroy the faith of young people and the faith of our fathers and you're going to have to hold up against it. You're going to have to endure recognizing that there is no fact but what is your father's fact and no truth but what your father's truth.

We don't have the explanation for all the facts but we don't have to take the explanation of men who in their very function of explaining cease to be scientists and become metaphysicians or religionists. You've got to hold up in the midst of it all. There's another word and that is to bear up under.

How marvelous it is that we find that the Spirit of God will not only enable us to hold up but to bear up under the load that settles down upon us. In 2nd Timothy chapter 3 and verse 11, but thou hast fully known my doctrine, my manner of life, my purpose, my faith and long suffering, love, patience, persecution, afflictions, which came to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, what persecutions I endured but out of them all the Lord deliver me. And here it is that he said what persecutions I have borne up under.

That's the meaning of the word. That's what it means to endure. Oh he could have said why think of it here at Antioch I've been persecuted.

They want me to go to Iconium? Not so. I'll get the second dose of the same medicine. I've had that.

I'm through. No, no. He went to Iconium and then at Iconium the Lord said go to Lystra and so he went to Lystra and he was willing to bear up under.

That's what it means to endure. To bear up under the stress and the pressure and to walk into another situation if you're walking in obedience to Christ where the pressure will come again upon you. You don't simply bear up once as though life were one event, one problem, one difficulty.

When that's solved it's finished. Not so. It's repeated experiences on and on and step after step into the problems that it holds in the course of God's sovereign will and purpose for your life and to bear up under them all.

In 1st Peter chapter 2 in verse 19, for this is thankworthy if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully, bears up under grief, suffering wrongfully. This is what it means to endure. To bear up continually under all the pressure that can heap to upon you.

There's a sixth word. It means to be strong or to be firm. Hebrews 11 27 By faith he, that is Moses, forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king.

For he endured as seeing him who was invisible. He endured. He was strong and firm seeing him that was invisible.

This is endurance. He that endureth to the end the same shall be saved. He that is strong and firm isn't blown about by every wind of doctrine and by every little siren voice offering this little tidbit to that little trinket or the other toy.

But he knows where he's going and he knows why he's going and he set his face and he's going there. He that endureth to the end. He that is strong and firm.

This is what God wants to do in the life of every man. There's one last word. It means to remain under.

To remain under. There are several. That's the word that I've been giving.

He that endureth to the end. This is literally to remain under. In first Corinthians 13 in verse 7 you read, love endureth all things.

Love is prepared to remain under all the pressures and all the difficulties and all the heartaches and all the problems. He that endureth to the end. He that remains under all things.

In 2nd Timothy chapter 2 in verse 10 Paul writing to this young man, his son in the gospel whom he loved dearly as any father could love his own son. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake. Therefore I choose to remain under all the pressures and problems and opposition and all the misunderstanding and difficulties.

I could escape it, he said. I could avoid it. I could find a far easier path and place for myself.

But for the elect's sake, I choose to go on in the course that's before me. I choose to do it. Nothing here forced.

No coercion. If you're caught in circumstances that you abhor and detest and wouldn't go back into them again, then you may be hanging on by the skin of your teeth, but you're not enduring in the biblical sense. Because this means that one is prepared to walk right back into the same situation, in the same circumstances, the same persecution, the same misunderstanding, because he believes something and believes it firmly enough to be willing to endure, to remain under.

Not trying to get out of it. But I'll quickly carry you to the last verse. There are several others.

Hebrews 12, 2 you've seen, and 12, 7, but James 1 and 12. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he has tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord promised to them that love him. Blessed is the man that bears up under testing, for when he has tried, he shall receive the crown of life.

Oh, I know you're forgiven at a moment of faith in the finished work of Christ. I know that. I know that it's not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

I know that. But I also know that that salvation which God gives, that salvation which pardons past sins, that salvation which is going to ensure your place in heaven is the kind of salvation that produces this. And if it isn't, it's a spurious kind.

It's a counterfeit kind. For this is what he does, for he's become the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. And so we come back to the matter that the Lord Jesus said, he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.

Theodore of Baza, the instructor of Jacob Arminius, and the successor to John Calvin. Writing in the body of divinity as reported by Thomas Watson, the great English divine, said, of the day in which he lived, for he saw there a growing lightness and shallowness and shoddiness that filled his heart with fear. As he saw some that spoke so glibly of being pardoned and so glibly of being forgiven and had no sense of the obligation upon them as Christians and no sense of the nature of that which made them Christians, Theodore of Baza wrote and said, as man of eight, he said, O God, save me from making shipwreck of my soul when I'm just in sight of the harbor.

Now what means he? Simply what Christ said, he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. Think with me now, quickly again. To remain, to endure, means to be something, to be something.

Not only to know it, but to be something. It means to remain. It means to bear and to carry, to hold up.

It means to bear up under, to be strong and firm, to remain under by choice. When by a little exercise of your choice, you could escape from it, but you choose not to escape because you love him. Oh, may God

put iron into our soul in our wishy-washy day that seems to have lost its ability to know what it believes or why it believes it.

May God give to us that purpose to endure in all that the Spirit of God will make it be. Shall we bow our hearts together in prayer? Our Heavenly Father, we're in eternity-bound company of men and women. Perhaps there are some that in the weak past have known failure, sin.

They've come to thy house with a cloud of grief, sorrow, that in the time of testing, they listened to the voice that would lure them away from loyalty to Thee. Oh, Father of Jesus, may there come by Thy Spirit's grace into everyone that's truly born into Thy family through Thy supernatural working such a passionate purpose to endure, to be something, to remain, to be firm and strong, to bear up under all that Thou mayest allow to come into our lives. Oh, that word of the Lord Jesus Christ shall grip our hearts.

We pray especially for the students going to school. We know, Lord, that they're going to be under great pressure, and we know the tendency is going to be to let the winds that blow blow them from their course. May they take hold with passionate purpose this morning to endure.

In Thy sovereign will, Thou art leading them into schools where there are enemies of the truth that must instruct them. Let them know that in some things they are wiser than their teachers, and stand on what they know. For businessmen that are going into places where a little deflection in moral purpose could bring them rewards, oh God, that they may endure.

And so in all of us, as with tests and the pressures accumulate around us, help us to remember the word of the Lord Jesus, he that endureth to the end, same shall be saved. Teach us what it means in its deepest aspects, and lead us on into an understanding that being in Christ is not only pardon and forgiveness, but it's a transformed life and a new nature that's going to manifest itself in steadfast obedience to the head of the church, our Lord Jesus, all that he may see in us of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. To that end, let's study of Thy word and truth this morning, and let something quicken our spirits that shall send us out firmer, stronger men and women than we were when we entered.

We ask in Jesus' name, for his sake, amen.

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