

**A CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP
SONGS OF ASCENT
THEY HAVE NOT GAINED THE VICTORY - PERSEVERANCE**

Text: Psalm 129

Key Word: Perseverance

Key Thought: We are Called to Persevere over Our Enemies

"Stick-to-it-ness" is a lifestyle that needs to be adopted especially by those who have short-lived enthusiasm. We are a creation of God that quickly becomes engulfed in certain habits and compulsive behaviours. We normally put our sock on the same foot to begin every morning. Some people don't begin the day without reading their morning paper and having a cup of coffee while others never set their feet on the floor until they've talked with God.

We usually take the same path while going places; brush our teeth the same way; study the way we've been taught; eat the same way (Potatoes first and then meat); we write with the same hand; catch a ball in our "glove hand"; we walk a certain way. **There is a sense of security developed in doing things the same way.**

One good habit to develop is the art of perseverance. If it wasn't for perseverance there would be no cars; no planes; no computers; no composers like Bach; no international cuisine; no variety in music; no such thing as fashion; everything would come in one brand name only. Wouldn't life be boring if people had not had a spirit of "stick-to-it-ness?"

4329 Famous Writers

Plato wrote the first sentence of his famous *"Republic"* nine different ways before he was satisfied.

Cicero practised speaking before friends every day for thirty years to perfect his oratory skills.

Noah Webster laboured 36 years writing his dictionary, crossing the Atlantic twice to gather material.

Milton rose at 4:00 A.M. everyday in order to have enough hours for his *"Paradise Lost."*

Gibbon spent 26 years on his *"Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire"*

Bryant rewrote one of his poetic masterpieces 99 times before publication, and it becoming a classic.

These were all noble causes but nothing can compare with the value of maintaining a solid commitment to Christ and His Church in the face of adversity. The enemies of our faith are persistent therefore we must take and hold our ground.

We must Persevere Because,

I. OF THEIR PERSISTENCE (Psalm 129: 1,2a)

II. OF THEIR VIOLENCE (Psalm 129: 3)

III. OF THEIR FAILURE (Psalm 129: 2a,4-8)

I. OF THEIR PERSISTENCE (Psalm 129: 1,2a)

There are times when the enemy does come in like a flood. It seems like he is not about to give up. We feel one blow after another. These come in many forms but all are attempting to achieve the same purpose.

The Psalmist made it very clear as to their persistence.

"They have greatly oppressed me from my youth"

Psalm 129:1,2

It's sometimes frustrating that babes in Christ are cradled in opposition. Even though God's Son was without sin, He still was acquainted with suffering. Immediately after His birth Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt to protect his life. After His baptism He was tempted for 40 days and nights. Many were His afflictions. His pain came in many directions and many forms.

Many people lose faith in God because of the consistent opposition of their faith. We probably all have dreamed of lying in a bed of roses and being fed by a silver spoon. Yet God never chose this path for most of His people. Even youth will have to face great trials and temptations. Perhaps that is why the number one cause of death among teens is suicide.

"When Israel was a child I loved him, and out of Egypt have I called my son."

Hosea 11:1; cf. Matt 2:15

This verse was used to describe our Lord's flight out of Egypt after the death of Herod. Paul lists all the hardships he faced as an apostle of faith. It included being whipped, beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, surviving the high seas and overflowing rivers, bandits, Jewish opposition, pagan influence, exhaustion, sleepless nights, hunger, thirst, cold, exposure, as well as the burden of the churches (II Corinthians 11:23-29). **Yet he didn't give up.**

"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 3:14

I. OF THEIR PERSISTENCE (Psalm 129: 1,2a) (Contd.)

We must persevere!

"Babe Ruth struck out 1,330 times. So Keep on Swinging."

Michael Green
#1978
p. 265

"By perseverance the snail reached the ark."

ibid, #969, p. 263

Cal Ripen was nicknamed "the Iron Man" who played 21 seasons in Major League Baseball with the Baltimore Orioles. He compiled 3,184 hits, 431 home runs and 1695 runs batted in his career. He also celebrated a record of playing 2632 consecutive baseball games as the short stop. He broke the record held by Lou Gehrig of 2130. That record had stood for 56 years and was believed to be unbreakable.

Two frogs fell into a can of cream,
Or so I've heard it told.
The sides of the can were shiny and steep,
The cream was deep and cold.
"Oh, what's the use?" croaked number one.
"Tis fate, no help's around.
Good-bye, my friend!
Good-bye, sad world!"
And weeping still, he drowned

But number two, of sterner stuff,
Dog-paddled in surprise.
The while he wiped his creamy face,
And dried his creamy eyes.
"I'll swim awhile at least," he said,
Or so I've heard he said;
"It really wouldn't help the world,
If one more frog were dead."
An hour or two he kicked and swam,
Not once he stopped to mutter,
But kicked and kicked and swam and kicked,
Then hopped out, via butter!

ibid., #966, p. 262

II. OF THEIR VIOLENCE (Psalm 129: 3)

The Psalmist used graphic words to describe the violence that the ungodly often direct toward us. Picture Israel, as a person of faith, lying stretched out in an open field. Its enemies hitch up their oxen to a plow and begin to cut deep long furrows into the back of Israel. Quickly there appears long gashes as the furrows are systematically plowed. Imagine the pain and suffering. There is no doubt that the description is quite vivid.

The cruelty of such action has been duplicated over the history of the church. Believers have been scourged, mocked, beaten, burned at the stake, stoned to death, torn apart by wild animals. The enemies of the cross of Christ seem to delight at inflicting pain.

We are told that violent crime is on the decrease yet our prisons have never been so full as they are now. Our schools are becoming the playground of pimps, drug pushers, skinheads, and many types of gangs. Terrorism and domestic violence is ever before us.

*** In August 1993 the CRTC were considering the implementation of the "V-Chip" to allow parents to stop violent programming from entering their homes.

Keith Spicer recognized that this probably would not curb the violence that was increasing in our nation. Parents who were concerned already screened the programs their children can watched.

The "V-Chip" technology was being developed in Vancouver and would encode the soundtracks of every movie and t.v. program with a violence rating signal ranging from one to seven.

Parents could program their televisions to go blank when shows of certain ratings are broadcast. They told us that it would put censorship into the hands of the parent.

Since when have government organizations put more control into the hands of parents when problems arise?!!!! ***

Schools have adopted a zero tolerance policy on student violence. Something must be done to curb the armed robberies, stabbing, threats and assaults. Students are turning to violence at younger ages. The old school yard scraps are turning to much more violent acts using weapons. It's not easy living a Christian example in the midst of all the violence.

We are seeing signs in hospitals and most government agencies indicating that they also have adopted a zero tolerance policy when it comes to violence and aggression. Yet we also see police forces being told to "stand down" instead of placing rioters into jail and making them pay for the damages who destroy public property. Instead we are condemned for not giving them better education which they either won't attend or learn to improve themselves by.

III. OF THEIR FAILURE (Psalm 129: 2a,4-8)

If I stopped my message here you would probably feel a little hopeless. So lets go on because God has an answer for us.

*"but they have not gained the victory over me . . .
4. . . . he has cut me free from the cords of the
wicked . . ."*

Psalm 129:2a,4

The wicked will not win. It is no use switching to the devils's side. He is a loser.

Devilish Honesty

** A church service was in progress when a big snowstorm blew up. A man dressed up as a devil was going to a costume party down the road, when his car got stuck.

He remembered seeing lights on at the church so he walked back for help.

The minister was just launching into his climax of a hell-fire-and-devil sermon. At the first glimpse of the costumed devil everyone ran out of the church into the storm.

Everyone, that is, except for one little old lady, who sat there and said *"You can't hurt me, Mr. Devil! You can't hurt me, Mr. Devil!"*

"No, of course, I can't, Madam!" said the costumed devil.

"No, sir! You can't hurt me!" the old lady said to him. *"I may have been in this church these 60 years, but you must know I've always taken your side in everything!"* **

Douglas Mantz
"Let There be Laughter"
p. 31

This woman represents many people who try to sit on the fence and try to keep in a win-win situation. With God there is only one right way - one right side. **The wicked are doomed to fail.** They will be put to shame (vs 5); they will fade away like the grass (vs 6); they will be in great want on the day of reaping (vs 7); they will not receive the blessing of the Lord (vs 8).

Hang in there. Do what is right. The final victory is near.

III. OF THEIR FAILURE (Psalm 129: 2a,4-8)

** A teenager had decided to quit school, saying he was just fed up with it all. His father was trying to convince him to stay with it.

"Son," he said, "you can't just quit. All the people who are remembered in history didn't quit. Abe Lincoln, he didn't quit. Thomas Edison, he didn't quit. Douglas Mac Arthur, he didn't quit. Elmo McCringle . . ."

"Who?" the son burst in. "Who is Elmo McCringle?"

"See," the father replied, "you don't remember him. He Quit!"

**

Michael Green
#979
p. 265

C:\My Documents\WPWin(X7)\Sermons.2016\Psalms\Ascent\Psalms 129.wpd

Date: June 19/16 (Father's Day)

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: The Battle Belongs to the Lord - Gm

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