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Enduring in Salvation.

(2013)

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Enduring in Salvation.

Topics.

- The, one who endures to the end, shall be saved.
- Some only endure for a time.
- The one, who endures to the end, shall be saved.
- We speak proudly of you for all the afflictions, which you endure.
- Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.
- I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen.
- The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching.
- I have kept the faith.
- Let us run with endurance the race set before us.
- Looking to Jesus who for joy endured the cross.
- Consider Jesus who endured the hostility of sinners against himself.
- It is for discipline that you have to endure.
- Israel could not endure God's order.
- We count those blessed who endured.
- God's favour is upon those who endure grief when suffering unjustly.

INTRODUCTION: the focus of this study is upon all the Scriptures in the New Testament that use the word endure to discover if the saying "Once saved always saved" is true (as many believe) or whether a brother or sister in Christ can turn, forsake or fall away from their faith.

The One Who Endures to the End, Shall be Saved.

Matthew 24:10-13 ---- ¹⁰And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹²And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

ENDURE: from Strong's Concordance means to continue, to remain and to abide it carries the idea of abiding and enduring bravely and calmly while facing persecutions, hardships and troubles, biblically it means not receding or fleeing under misfortunes and trials but holding fast to one's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and abiding in him while patiently waiting for his return. These verses show that Christians can fall away from their faith for the following four reasons: -

1. Persecution (because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ).
2. False teachers will lead them away from the faith.
3. Lawlessness will continue to increase.
4. The love of many will grow cold.

Prior to these verses Jesus has told his disciples that there will be great persecution trials and tribulations and that because of these persecutions many will fall away. Then the Lord tells them that as the world approaches the end of this age it will move further away from God (consider the teaching of evolution) and His ethics and standards.

This will result in the world falling deeper into spiritual darkness and out of this darkness not only will many false prophets arise and corrupt the message of the cross, pervert the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life and distort the message of God's grace, but also the love many had for the Lord and the Christian faith will be affected in such a way that it will result in many forsaking their faith.

The words, "Endure to the end," imply the following three things: -

1. Being a Christian does not always mean that a brother or sister in Christ will have a charmed life.
2. Trials, hardship and difficulties are not foreign to the Christian faith or Christian life.
3. Some who are in the faith will chose not to endure.

TODAY: because of a perverted and distorted teaching of the Gospel there is a danger in some circles of Christianity of people being misled into thinking that because they are a child of God their life should be relatively free of trouble. This is because the underlying thought lying behind some present day modern teaching presents God as a kind of Santa Claus that has a bag full of good gifts to give to His children.

Under this kind of teaching some can be led to believe that God's love toward them is determined by their circumstances, (i.e. if life is going well God loves them, but if life has taken a downward spiral into difficulty God has withdrawn His love), but if the apostles who went hungry and were persecuted thought of God's love in this way they would certainly not have endured the beatings and imprisonments they suffered. If we ever feel God has withdrawn His love all we have to do is look at the bloodstained cross and see what it cost God to redeem us and the enormous suffering Christ endured to save us.

Some Only Endure for a Time.

Mark 4:15-17 ----- ¹⁵And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. ¹⁶And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; Then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.

The rocky ground is a symbol of a heart that has no depth, the word does not penetrate and it's not taken seriously enough. It's that attitude that says, as long as I am getting some immediate benefit from this I'll stick with it but once the immediate benefit is gone they move on to the next thing. The benefit in this parable is primarily the joy that comes with the promises of God's word.

The practical application today: a person can be in a Christian environment and get caught up with the emotion of the music, the joy of the peoples singing, the motivational message (especially if it is promising prosperity, wealth and healing) and not only receive the word of the Lord, but actually endure for a while. Nevertheless they eventually fall away because they only responded for what they could get from God rather than wanting to know God. Like the many who came to Jesus for healing, but when he told them to be a disciple of his they needed to be prepared to lay down their lives for him they considered it to hard a saying and turned away. The word that is sown does not refer to every teaching or doctrine from Genesis to Revelation but to the message of the cross and the Gospel of the

Lord Jesus Christ that leads to salvation and eternal life. In the context of this parable and these verses people are being witnessed to, they are listening to the Gospel and though they are not saved they are on the right path toward being saved, but as soon as they are in different circumstance or different company satan comes and takes what they have heard and received away from them before it has time to take root in their heart and be established in their life.

Satan: in its widest and fullest sense is a personification of everything that is opposed to what is good (religious or secular) thus the reason for the universal title, "The Arch Enemy of Good." This means that in the context of this parable the title satan could refer to an individual, or to any group, government or leader of a nation or to a church or friends, a family member or a romantic partner that influences a person away from God, and away from His grace, away from Christ and away from what is good, decent and right.

For further information see the title:-

- Satan in, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The One who Endures to the End, Shall be Saved.

Mark 13:13 ----- 13 You will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Clearly, Jesus words, "The one who endures to the end will be saved" implies that there will be some who will not endure to the end. For further information see the title: "The One Who Endures to the End, Shall be Saved," following (Matthew 24:10-13) (above) since it is the same conversation.

We speak Proudly of You, for all the Afflictions, which You Endure.

2 Thessalonians 1:4 --- 4 We (Paul, Silvanus and Timothy) ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were absolutely thrilled at the great faith of these brothers' and sisters' in Christ for the following three reasons: -

1. Their faith was growing and maturing not only in the face of persecution and hardship, but also in love.
2. The love (compassion, kindness, mercy, forgiveness and grace) they had for each other was increasing as they grew in the Lord.
3. They endured persecution and hardship in contrast to others who turned away and give up their faith.

These verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that the message of the cross and the Good News of the Gospel that leads to eternal life is not about success, prosperity and wealth (as some teach) since most of those who lived during the time of the early church had none of these. For them the focal point of Christ's message was upon spiritual life dwelling in the heart and the mind and about God's glorious promise of eternal life in everlasting glory. Their heartfelt focus was upon growing in the fruits of the Spirit and upon knowing the love and grace of God and the love of the Lord Jesus Christ in such an intimate manner that his love surpasses anything this materialistic world can give.

The fact Paul, Silvanus and Timothy were boasting in these brothers and sisters in Christ because they were enduring in their faith despite the troubles and hardships of life clearly shows that Christian life will not always be charmed and that because of persecutions and hardships some will not endure.

Endure Hardness, as a Good Soldier of Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 2:3-4 ----- ³Share in suffering (endure in the KJV) as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.

The reference here would be to a voluntary Roman soldier, they were taken from their homes and friends; exposed to cold, heat, storms and fatiguing marches, often destitute of food and compelled to suffer and endure as much as the human frame can bear. They endured extreme burdens and many died. Regardless of whether they endured for reward or their country they were willing to endure great hardship. If a soldier was willing to endure such a trying lifestyle for financial reward or for their country how much more should the soldier of the cross be willing to endure the troubles and hardships of life for Christ's sake and for the good of the human race.

This shows that a person who desires to serve the Lord should be prepared to lead a soldier's life and accept that they will be exposed to hardship, trials and at times compelled to pursue a wearisome march. No one thinking only to enjoy themselves in a life of ease and comfort should think to enter into the service of the Lord. Those who desire to serve Christ should see the Lord as the Captain of salvation, the leader and commander of those who willingly enlist themselves into his service and under his banner be prepared to fight the good fight of faith in contrast to living a life of ease and comfort.

I Endure All Things for the Sake of Those Who are Chosen.

2 Timothy 2:10 ----- ¹⁰Therefore I (Paul) endure everything for the sake of the elect that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

The elect in this context refers to the Jews, most of Paul's suffering is a result of proclaiming Christ to the Jews, yet he is still prepared to endure suffering at their hands so that some may be saved. Here is the true heart of a Shepherd Paul has more than enough knowledge for his own salvation and is saved to eternal life so he could sit back and take it easy, but because of his love for the Lord and those outside the Kingdom of God he not only chooses to live a life of denying himself of worldly pleasures and luxuries, but is also prepared to suffer so that brothers and sisters would mature in the love of Christ and the grace of God and others would be added to the family of Christ.

This is the true heart of a shepherd; Paul is not suffering for himself, but for others. The fact that Paul a man chosen of by God and the Lord Jesus Christ and totally devoted in love to him is saying that he is enduring in his faith shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that simply because a brother or sister faithfully serves the Lord their life will not be free of trouble and hardship.

The Time, is Coming when People will Not Endure Sound Teaching.

2 Timothy 4:3-5 ----- ³For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. ⁵As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry.

NOTE: though Paul is talking to Timothy the underlying principles of what he is saying apply to Christians of all ages.

Myths: in this context carries the idea of speculations, assumptions, philosophies and human reasoning. During Paul's era it most likely referred to endless discussions and fruitless arguments concerning genealogies, details of history and ceremonial law etc., all the things that have no relevance to salvation and eternal life or to godly behaviour. Today it would embrace all those who from every nation of the world are embracing teachings on a global scale (because of the internet)

that appeal to self, ego and pride and doctrines that promise success, prosperity, wealth and worldly riches here and now. The ministers of these doctrines promise their followers that they can teach them the keys to a successful life and the secrets to obtaining to such great levels of faith that they will be able to bring to pass whatever they desire. Multitudes worldwide are leaving the sound teachings of Paul and the apostles to chase after teachers who proclaim they can escape the hardships and troubles of life. These men not only speak with absolute confidence and authority but are also highly skilled in speech-making and the art of persuasiveness and by these and their eloquent speeches clothed in Scripture and Biblical language seduce many to follow their empty words and the myths and fables they teach.

In total contrast to the life of Christ, the apostles and Paul many of these ministers live in opulent homes, wear designer clothes and Rolex watches, drive excessively expensive cars and only stay in the most luxurious hotels when they travel from country to country to share the word of the Lord. Since the spirit of the world craves after wealth and luxury those with itching ears (a worldly spirit) leave the high calling of the Gospel to follow the false and deceiving promises of these self-exalted and prideful ministers who use those who are under their influence as merchandise to expand their own religious empire.

Sober-minded: in this context means be cautious, careful mindful discreet and watchful.

Endure suffering: Paul's words, "Endure suffering" show why those with itching ears, meaning those led by self, ego, pride, selfish ambition, greed and such like things forsake sound teaching. Obviously everyone wants to prosper and no-one wants to suffer so when ministers appear proclaiming a Gospel of success, wealth and riches multitudes gladly, follow them without question. The tragedy in this is that their Gospel is a deception no one not even the rich escape troubles of some sort that deeply affects them in some manner, therefore when a crisis in life or hardship comes to those who have been taught that their lives should be charmed and blessed because of their faith in Christ they are not only thrown into confusion, but also have no comforter.

Nowhere in the Bible does Jesus, the apostle or Paul ever imply that following the Lord will exempt a person from hardship no matter how faithful and devoted they are to Christ, but the Scriptures do promise that those who willing surrender their life to the Lord and endure through the troubles and hardships of life will not only be filled with the love and comfort of the Lord, but also be strengthened with happiness, contentment, inner joy and peace which is really what the rich are chasing after, but rarely ever find. Added to this those who endure in their faith to the end will inherit eternal life and everlasting joy in eternal glory whereas those who chase after empty promises only have a coffin and the darkness of the grave awaiting them.

I have Kept the Faith.

2 Timothy 4:7 ----- ⁷I (Paul) have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Enduring in the faith and proclaiming the Gospel is called the good fight because it is not fought with fist or weapons of war, but with love, mercy and grace and the end result of those who surrender is joy, peace, contentment and eternal life in everlasting glory.

The glory and beauty of the Christian race: at the Grecian games, only one could obtain the highest prize all the rest who contended in those games, no matter how numerous they were, or how skilfully they contended, or how much effort they made, were of course subjected to missing out on the highest prize and the greatest reward. Every other competitor running the race was liable to the disappointment of missing out on the highest prize even though they crossed the finish line, but not so in the Christian faith. Here is the excitement the joy the thrill and the glory of running in the Christian race, no matter how numerous the competitors, or how worthy, talented and skilled any one of them maybe all may

obtain the highest prize all may be crowned with a diadem of eternal life of equal brilliancy. No one is excluded of eternal life because another is successful; no one loses the reward because another obtains it. Such is the wonder and splendour of God's love, grace and mercy in Christ and the joy of running alongside our brothers and sisters having the knowledge that all who reach the finish-line receive the highest prize of an immortal and eternal crown and not just the first to cross over it. In this race every brother and sister who runs may obtain the crown.

The struggle is not between each other as competitors in such a sense that, if one obtains the crown all others must be excluded; but it is a crown which all who run can obtain. As many as run - as many as fight the good fight - as many as keep the faith - as many as love his appearing, may win the crown. Such is the beauty and glory in which the highest prize of this race differs from all other races.

The prize is great since it is a prize not of debt, but of grace and is suitably fit not only for an apostle, but for even the most common of us who belong to the global family of Christ. The prize is given not only to those with great gifts and talents, but to all who look by faith and with love toward the Lords appearing. This crown is laid up - it is in view, but not in possession. There is laid up for all who look to the Lord's return with anticipated excitement a crown of righteousness. The happiness of the future state of every brother and sister in Christ is signified by a crown on account of the glory and excellency of it; and in perfect agreement with the character of the those in Christ as kings who are raised to sit among princes and to inherit the throne of glory and have a Kingdom prepared for them.

This is called a crown of righteousness, because it comes through the righteousness of Christ; it is his righteousness that gives those in the Lord the right to it. Without Christ's righteousness that is obtained and possessed by faith and not by works and self-effort it cannot be enjoyed. This crown can only be possessed by faith and God's grace it cannot be usurped (as crowns sometimes are) by self-righteousness or self-effort in trusting in ceremonial rites, holy days and religious customs and traditions. It is God the Father's free gift unto his children, it is what they are spiritually born heirs into, and have an anticipated excitement for and through their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace they have the legal title to it. This happiness, signified by a crown is laid up in the covenant of grace for every faithful brother and sister in Christ, which is promised with God's oath and therefore guaranteed in Christ in whose hands their life of glory is hidden and secure laid up in heaven and reserved there for that glorious day of their Saviours return.

The crown of every brother and sister is a crown of righteousness purchased by the righteousness of Christ, they have not yet attained this state it is sure (except by faith and God's grace), but it is laid up in glory for those who endure through poverty, pain, sickness, and the agonies of death to the finish line. No brother or sister in Christ should despair since their crown is not like the perishing wreath of olive, laurel, pine, or parsley which could be presented on only one victor, but is an eternal crown that will be bestowed on all who endure' in faith to the finish line. Such is the honour and glory, the splendour and beauty of the Christian faith.

Turning away from God: Paul's statement, "I have kept the faith" not only implies that he could have at any time chosen to forsake the faith since if it was impossible for him to do so this statement has no power and no meaning, but it also highlights the truth that any brother or sister in Christ could at any time should they desire and determine to do so chose to turn away from their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. God will never force Himself upon anyone, nor will His Holy Spirit abide with those who consciously and deliberately desire in their hearts and minds to have nothing to do with God. Even when we are saved God does not violate our free will. He may woe us by love, but if we want nothing to do with His love He will allow us to go the way our heart desires.

NOTE: this is not about a brother or sister falling into temptation, turning away from church attendance, because of hurt or disillusionment or even doubting their faith because of certain confusions and such like things, but about a conscious, deliberate and willful turning away from God and from the heart and mind a deliberate denying of Christ.

Let Us Run with Endurance the Race Set Before Us.

Hebrews 12:1 -----¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

This chapter should be read in connection with the previous chapter. The great cloud of witnesses' refers to the men and woman of faith mentioned in the previous chapter who were all commended as having pleased God because of their faith.

The great cloud of witnesses: is no-doubt an allusion is here to the ancient games. A great multitude of spectators usually occupied the circular seats in the amphitheatre, from which they could easily behold the combatants. In like manner, the author here represents Christians as encompassed with the multitude of other honoured men and woman of faith who by faith patiently endured the conflict and got the victors crown of approval.

NOTE: this does not infer that the author literally means to say that all these ancient men and woman of faith are actually looking at the conduct of Christians, and watching their conflicts. It is a figurative illustration, such as was common and simply means that we ought to act as if they were in sight and cheering us on.

Let us lay aside every weight: the allusion here is most likely to runners in the Olympic races who were careful not to burden themselves with anything that would hinder them running. Roman soldiers wore very heavy garments of armour, this is why the allusion to weight. Whereas those who were running in the Grecian games were very careful not to overburden themselves with clothing that would hinder them from winning the race and would therefore remove anything that would do so. Clearly the idea for Christians is to put on anything that would advantage them in winning the race and removing everything that would obstruct their progress in the Christian life to win the eternal crown of glory.

Let us lay aside every sin which clings so closely: the sin which clings to us so closely can refer to many things, (i.e., the love of the world in our hearts, the affections for its wealth and pleasures or whatever it is we are most likely to give in to, but when we take into account the author in this letter is writing to Hebrews who still place a high value on the Levitical priesthood and its religious services and the fact that this entire letter is written to prove to the readers that Jesus Christ has replaced the Old Covenant system of religious service and the entire Levitical priesthood, the most likely sin he has in mind that clings so closely to the Hebrews he is writing to, is the sin of trusting in religious works for righteous that leads to eternal life instead of trusting in Christ and God's grace.

This sin of trusting in religious works is not limited to the Hebrews only since it is most likely one of the most subtle and dangerous sins for Christian brothers and sisters today, since it involves doing good things. The religious works in themselves are not sinful (i.e., attending church, Bible meetings, teaching at Sunday school, singing in a church choir, being a pastor and proclaiming the Gospel etc.), these are all good things, but if a person trusts in them for their righteousness they become grossly evil before God. This is because the instant we trust in our own self-effort and works (no-matter how good) is the instant we nullify what Christ achieved for us on the cross and we make his death count for nothing.

The particular sin that clinged so closely to the Hebrews was no-doubt the sin of unbelief which manifested itself in their trusting in Moses laws of purification, the Levitical High Priest and its system of ceremonial rites, religious customs and traditions. The author of this letter has spent the last ten chapters brilliantly using Old Testament Scriptures and the Tabernacle of Moses to prove to this Hebrew audience that righteous that leads to eternal life is by faith in Christ alone and by God's grace and that Christ is the only High Priest anyone needs today.

In the previous chapters the author magnificently showed how those believing in God could not move out of the Holy Place (the place of religious service) of the Tabernacle of God into the Most Holy Place (the place of God's presence) until the Holy Place was pulled down. From the time of Christ's death and his resurrection for anyone to enter into the Most Holy Place of God they have to move out of the

Holy Place (the place of religious service). There is only one way this can be done and only one way anyone can enter into the Most Holy Place of God and that is by forsaking our trust in religious works and trusting wholly by faith in Christ and in God's grace to be counted righteous and worthy of eternal life.

Until we do this we will always remain in the Holy Place and never go beyond the torn veil and into the Most Holy Place of God since it is only when we are fully clothed with Christ's priestly garments of righteousness that God accepts us into the very throne room of His glorious and majestic presence. The word rendered endurance implies perseverance; we are to run the race without giving up being encouraged by the example of the multitudes that have run the same race before us. The stadium in which the Christian race is run is this world; the prize is the heavenly glory; which is being held by Christ ready to be given to all who cross the finishing line.

Every race track has its markers, the Christian path is marked out for everyone who enters the race: -

- By the word of God and the life of Christ.
- By the many examples of God's faithful servants.
- By the love, grace and mercy of God and the call to love thy neighbour.

All athletes' physically exercise to improve their muscles and their chance of winning the prize, the training for the race of life is not physical, but spiritual, it is exercising our spiritual muscles in the fruits of the Spirit the race must be run with love, grace, mercy, kindness etc. The conquering muscles to take hold of and that will carry all through to the victory when facing the difficulties and hardships of life are faith, grace, patience and perseverance these are the spiritual muscles that will carry us all through to the royal crown of eternal glory.

Looking to Jesus Who for Joy Endured the Cross.

Hebrews 12:2 ----- ²looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Here we are told that the reason Jesus was willing to surrender his life to the hands of his persecutors and allow them to judge him as a common criminal sentenced to suffer a brutal bloody and a cruel death was because of the joy that was set before him, this shows us the following two things: -

1. Jesus had faith that his heavenly Father would raise him from the grave to eternal glory.
2. This faith gave Jesus the fortitude and willingness to spend his life revealing God's love and grace toward sinners because he knew that it was his heavenly Father desire that all would be saved (John 3:16).

The joy set before Christ refers to the following two things: -

1. The honour and glory Jesus would have when resurrected and seated at the right hand of his heavenly Father.
2. The family of brothers and sisters he would inherit because of his death and resurrection.

Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends (John 15:13). This shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that all who trust in Jesus death and resurrection are his friends. This is the joy Jesus was willing to lay his life down for. Jesus not only fully understands that not one of us is free from sinful dysfunctions and aberrations dwelling within the fallen and corrupted body we live in, but also fully understands that not one of us can attain to

the perfect standard the law demands or the perfect Holiness of God and therefore was willing to lay down his life so that you and I and every other seeker of God could not only be united to his heavenly Father apart from self-effort and adhering to religious works, but also be Christ's eternal friend and his eternal brothers and sisters in the family of his heavenly Father.

The author in these verses is encouraging all who are facing persecutions or struggling with the difficulties and hardships of life because of their faith to consider the life of Jesus and set their focus on the same joy that he set his heart upon. The spiritual muscle that will carry us through present troubles is the ability to focus on the joy of the glorious eternal reward as Christ our Saviour and exalted eternal and perfect brother did.

Consider Jesus Who Endured the Hostility of Sinners Against Himself.

Hebrews 12:3 ----- ³Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. ⁴in your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

The author realises that some who belong to Christ may become tired or wearied of trying to live a lifestyle that honours God and the Lord Jesus Christ, others may become doubtful in their faith due to other influences affecting them and is therefore encouraging them to think of Christ and what he endured. He tells them that in their struggle against sin they have not yet resisted to the point of shedding their blood as Jesus did. This can refer to two events: -

1. **The cross of Calvary:** if Jesus had given into sin and temptation, if he had overlooked the hypocrisy of the Pharisees they would not have enticed the Romans to crucify him. Jesus resistance against sin and temptation and his stand for what is just and right before God and for others were the things that led to his bloody brutal and cruel death on the cross.
2. **The Garden of Gethsemane:** Luke tells us that Jesus while praying in the Garden of Gethsemane knowing the torture and brutal death he was about to face prayed with such great agony that his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground (Luke 22:44) (KJV).

The author here is encouraging his Hebrew readers and by extension all of us not to give up our faith no matter how difficult the struggle to overcome sin might be, but rather consider Jesus who suffered the agony of the cross and the sinful brutality of others even to the death. We are being told to consider Jesus suffering (v3), but what does the author mean, what is it about Jesus suffering that we are to consider? There are two things that come to light in pondering this verse the first is obvious, the second is not quite so clear.

1. Knowing and being aware that in suffering for our faith we are suffering with Christ, and as God rewarded him with an eternal crown of glory so too will he reward all those who suffer for his name.
2. Jesus suffered the sins of multitudes while ministering on earth so that through his life and his death he could save sinners to eternal life, therefore if Christ's grace can cope with the sins of multitudes he can certainly cope with the sin you are struggling with, so don't throw away your faith simply because you cannot overcome sin.

NOTE: the sin in focus is sin people struggle with, it is not talking about living a lifestyle of sin and being indifferent to it, rather the focus is sin brothers and sisters in Christ desire to overcome, but are having difficulty in doing so. Rather than forsake Christ because of sin, understand that no brother or sister in Christ is without sin this is the reason Christ suffered and died, if it was possible for us to attain to that glorious state of sinlessness and be free of any spot or blemish of sin then Christ died for no reason.

John in his letter to those who have fellowship with the Father and the Son wrote: -

- If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus God's Son cleanses us from all sin, but if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, but if we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar, and his word is not in us (1 John 1:7-10).

The light God is in of course is Holiness God's pure Holiness is pure light.

The Holiness of God: not only embraces all the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, mercy, grace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, forgiveness and justice in absolute perfection, but also has an absolute lack of malice and anything that is contrary to love. Walking in the light means walking in the same kind of light that God dwells in which is Holiness though the measure of light which we have is clearly not the same in degree that God dwells in, it is nevertheless of the same kind since the true character of a brother and sister in Christ should reflect God's character of Holiness and his likeness.

The presence of God brings the consciousness of sin in our fallen and corrupted nature and outward sins in our life the blood of Christ is the divine provision for cleansing both. To walk in the light is to live by faith in fellowship with the Father and the Son. Whereas sin interrupts our fellowship, confession restores it and immediate confession keeps the fellowship unbroken. All who walk near to God as a reflection of his light and his Holiness are fully aware that even on their best days of duties and service they are mixed with sin. God by providing his own beloved Son as a sufficient an effectual sacrifice for sin needed in all ages has shown that he is not only fully aware of the sinfulness of the world, but also by requiring believers to continually confess their sins and to apply by faith the blood of Christ to them has shown that he is also fully aware of the sinfulness of those in Christ.

Every brother and sister in the family of Christ should always be humble and willing to honestly acknowledge even the ugliest of their sin before God and confess them in their full extent relying wholly on God's mercy, God's grace and God's truth fully assured that by their faith in Christ they are counted righteous and by God's grace given a free pardon, full forgiveness and free deliverance from sin because of the sacrificial blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and because there is no stain made by sin so deep that the blood of Christ cannot entirely cleanse it from the mind and the heart. God has made provision for cleansing the mind and heart of every brother and sister in Christ from sin so that by faith they can share in his light and his Holiness.

No system of religion intended for mankind could be adapted to our human fallen condition that did not contain this provision since not even the world's most skilful surgeon can with his scalpel cut sin out of our nature; since it is engrained into our fallen and corrupted body and infects not only our outward actions, but our thoughts, motives and passions. If Christ blood did not cleanse from all sin past, present and future not one of us could fellowship with God or enter with boldness into his presence. The blood of Christ does not stop cleansing us at salvation, but continues to cleanse us, (i.e., it continues to keep clean what it has made clean) and will continue to cleanse us until Christ returns, nevertheless it should always be remembered that it requires the same faith to preserve our righteous standing before God as the faith needed to enter the Kingdom of God.

The faith required to enter Christ's family is not a different faith to the faith needed to remain in the Lord's Kingdom. The faith we entered Christ's household with is the same faith that will carry us through to his return. Faith in Christ not only justifies and cleanses the sinner, but continues to justify and cleanse those who are redeemed in the same way and by the same means. Here is the glory wonder and beauty of Christ he is not a partial Saviour, but saves and cleanses from all sin to the uttermost, if he did not we would all be rejected from entering into his eternal Kingdom at the judgment seat of Christ.

There is a pollution on human nature, which is original, natural, universal, and internal, and is such that nothing can remove but the blood of Christ; not ceremonial rites, sacrifices, moral duties, evangelical performances or the practise of religious ordinances, none of these have any power to cleanse from sin or purge the conscience and cleanse the mind and the heart.

Christ's blood has been always cleansing from sin even before it was actually shed even to the faithful of the Old Testament, since Scripture states that Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8) which means the blood of Christ shed at Calvary not only cleanses those who trust in him since his resurrection, but also flows back cleansing all the faithful from the foundations of the world. This is because God in his eternal mind purposed and planned Christ's death before the foundation of the world began and therefore it has the same effective cleansing power both back in time and forward in time as when first shed, and will have to the return of Christ.

One of the most glorious moments in any relationship for those who have been offended is when the person who has offended them humbles themselves and admits they were wrong and say sorry. This natural principal that applies to all human relationships is also the same principal by which a person enters the Kingdom of God, and by which they continue to remain in fellowship with God the only difference is that it is to God we humble ourselves and admit our wrongs and say sorry to.

It is for Discipline that You Have to Endure.

Hebrews 12:7 -----⁷It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

Again the author is encouraging those who struggle with sin; he is here likening the household of God to a natural family. Every caring parent loves their children, yet no child behaves as perfectly as their parents might wish they would, but despite this reality the parents love is always set upon their children for their long term good and not for their harm. This verses shows that the primary purpose of a parent is not to be their child's best friend, but to be the loving parent who cares for their child's long term future and because of this love and care are willing to discipline their child in what is right to protect them from future harm. Of course the friendship between a parent and a child is a beautiful thing, but it is destructive to the child's well-being if such a friendship comes as a result of forsaking discipline (given in love).

NOTICE: the key word is love when talking about discipline, no discipline should ever be given in anger, wrath or malice, all forms of discipline are acts of love to mature a child in self-control and the right way to go and protect them from future harm and should always be administered in a spirit of love and in love explained to them why they are being disciplined and how they should have behaved.

Israel could Not Endure God's Order.

Hebrews 12:20 -----²⁰For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned."

This verse refers to that time in Israel's history when the LORD descended on Mount Sinai and wrote all the words of His covenant on two Tablets of Stone. The whole mountain trembled greatly and when all the people of Israel saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the mountain smoking, they were afraid and trembled at the foot of the mountain and said to Moses, "Do not let God speak to us, lest we die" to which Moses replied, "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin."

(Deut. 5:22) (Exod. 19:12-20) (Exod. 20:18) (Deut. 4:11) (Deut. 9:18-21).

Since every Hebrew from childhood would have been fully conversant with this story the author of Hebrews is using it to contrast the fear and terror of the Old covenant of law being given to the nation of Israel to the glory of the new covenant of grace being given to whoever will receive it. In this chapter the author of Hebrews is saying that we unlike Old Testament Israel have not come to a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest which was so terrifying that Moses

said, "I tremble with fear," nor have we come to a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them (Heb. 12:18-21), but we unlike Israel of old have come to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant (Heb. 12:22-23).

Since we are under the new covenant of grace the author warns his listeners not to turn away because of hardships from the words of the Lord and his Gospel and God's grace, because if Israel did not escape when they refused Moses who warned them on earth how much less will we escape if we reject God who through Christ warns us from heaven. The message in this chapter is: don't turn bitter and forsake your faith because of persecution and hardship, but instead be grateful toward God and endure in faith offering up praises to God knowing that we are not under the law with its condemnation, but under grace and through faith in His Son we have God's undeserved favour and that because of Christ's sacrifice we will receive by faith and by grace an eternal Kingdom that cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:24-29).

This chapter is warnings against the dangers of losing salvation because the heart is full of bitterness toward God, because of trials, troubles and hardships. The author is telling his readers to consider how much more wicked it would be for those who are under grace and have the undeserved favor of God upon them because of their faith in Jesus and not because of religious works to turn against God than it was for those who were under the law of Moses and the strict adherence to ceremonial rites, holy days, sacrifices and the laws of purification.

We Count those Blessed Who Endured.

James 5:11 ----- ¹¹Behold, we consider those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

The endurance of Job was manifested in that he resigned himself to his suffering and never spoke a foolish word against God even though he was stripped of all his worldly possessions, deprived in a moment of all his children, tortured in his body with sore diseases, harassed by his wife and falsely accused by his friends he held fast his integrity before God. The words, consider those blessed who endured immediately brings to the mind of the ardent Bible student the great men and woman of faith recorded in Hebrews chapter eleven commonly called "The Hall of Fame" since it lists men and woman of great faith.

The author of Hebrews wrote: -

- Men and woman of faith through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword and were made strong out of weakness. Others suffered mocking, flogging and even imprisonment. Many were stoned and killed with the sword. They went about in skins destitute, afflicted, mistreated of whom the world was not worthy wandering about in deserts and mountains and all these God commended for their faith (Hebrews 11:32-40).

God Himself said of Job: -

- There is none like Job a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?

And even after Job had been tested and suffered greatly the LORD said: -

- Job even continues to hold fast his integrity even though I the LORD have almost destroyed him without reason (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3).

Job is the perfect example of a man who had integrity of faith and understood the sovereignty of God. The secular world knows that anyone who is blessed and whose life is charmed will praise God; real faith is when a believer continues to praise God under suffering.

This is something the natural mind and those who do not know the love of God cannot understand. Job is evidence that God's love overcomes even the worst of trials, sorrow and suffering. He is testimony to all the world that faith in God is not dependent on a prosperous or charmed life, and that the love of God in those with genuine faith is so deeply rooted in the heart that nothing will turn them against God or to curse Him. This kind of faith and love confounds the world; it causes those who have not tasted God's love in Christ to wonder what it is in the faith of a believer who like Job continues to praise God even in the face of sorrow, troubles and hardship.

NOTICE: the word blessed in this context does not mean being free of sorrow, hardship and suffering, but rather refers to those who will inherit eternal life and eternal glory this is why they are spoken of as being blessed and not because their life was charmed. The life of Job and God's testimony of his great faith and of all those who were persecuted and suffered through extreme struggles of life and of those who were so destitute they could only clothe themselves in the cheapest of clothing was that the world was not worthy of them.

This great testimony clearly fly's in the face of the modern day prosperity gospel that some religious teachers are proclaiming to entice people into their churches, but since this distorted and perverted gospel appeals to self, ego and pride it eventually leaves many of its followers in confusion and bewilderment when struggles and crisis strike their lives and even worse often results in them falling away from their faith since what they have been taught does not relate to their real life experience.

James is encouraging those who are suffering the hardships and troubles of this life to consider the eternal glory of the faithful who have gone before them and endured in their faith under great suffering who because of their faith and endurance have been crowned with Christ's righteousness apart from works and exalted to everlasting glory to dwell in eternity with the Lord. This is the majestic eternal and royal inheritance of all who endure in faith until the Lord returns in glory to gather us together to himself.

The Lord is compassionate and merciful: the end result of God's dealings with Job was that he was spiritually better for it and God abundantly blessed him when they ended. Every faithful believer in Christ should be encouraged to be patient under their trials and be fully confident that it will be the same in their case. The Lord's mercy and compassion toward Job was manifested in that at the end of Jobs suffering God blessed him far above what Job could have imagined. Likewise every faithful brother and sister in Christ who endures the trials and hardships of life should continue in the same spirit of integrity toward God as Job did and in the faith that at their end of the trial God will have worked in them a blessing that they could never have imagined and at the end of their life God will deliver them from all suffering, pain and sorrow and reward them with eternal happiness in everlasting glory.

God's compassion and mercy is manifested to us all in that: -

- God gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

Trials are never pleasant if they were they would not be trials. The best way to bear afflictions is to look to the end of them knowing that God will wipe away every tear from our eyes (Rev. 7:17) and make abundant amends for all our sufferings and afflictions and reward us with a crown of eternal glory and everlasting happiness

The apostle Peter wrote: -

- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by

fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith an immortal body and eternal happiness in everlasting glory (1 Peter 1:3-9).

NOTICE: it is not the trial that brings us grief that we are to rejoice in, but in our salvation that will be revealed in the last time (referring to the Lord Jesus Christ returning in glory).

God's Favor, is upon those Who Endure Grief when Suffering Unjustly.

1 Peter 2:19 ----- ¹⁹For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.

The perfect example of a man suffering unjustly is of course the Lord Jesus Christ himself; he was an innocent man without sin condemned by prideful and hypocritical religious leaders and unjustly sentence to death as a common criminal. Jesus had all the power of God available to slay his enemies, but chose to suffer his unjust sentence to fulfil his heavenly Fathers eternal plan of salvation which He planned and purposed in his eternal mind to be in Christ before the foundations of the world.

Jesus chose to suffer the humiliation and mocking of man to follow God knowing he would be vindicated in God's time (i.e., upon his resurrection to God's right hand side) as all who endure unjust suffering because of their faith in Christ will be vindicated when the Lord returns. This verse should be of great comfort to any brother and sister who has or is suffering unjustly since they like Christ can be confident that God understands and that they will be vindicated on that great day when they are raised to glory.

SUMMERY: Enduring in Salvation.

From the verses we have looked at it is clear that the Bible does not teach once saved always saved, but likens salvation and the Christian faith to a race in which those running in it should set their eyes on Jesus and not grow weary, loose heart, become despondent or do away with what they have in Christ, but bravely endure misfortunes and trials holding fast to their faith setting their eyes on the eternal joy set before them and continue in the race until they cross the finish line and receive the prize and crown of eternal life with the Lord Jesus Christ in everlasting glory.

End