



“The Power of Perseverance”

Pastor Marcus Preciado / May 27, 2018

Opening Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for preparing our hearts to receive Your Word today. May we come to realize that we are all running a race in our lives: the race for eternal life with You, Lord. Help us to persevere through the trials that are before us, knowing that You are with us each and every step of the way. May we connect with others who also love You, and may we be a light in the darkness to bring others to know Your saving Grace. In Jesus' name, we pray.

Icebreaker:

Have each person either:

- share an experience from childhood or teen years, which included winning an award or certificate or receiving a trophy or medal, whether it was academic, sports related, or other
- OR recall how a mentor, teacher, coach, or other adult who encouraged you when you were younger

Encouragement:

In order to persevere through this life's trials, we need God and others. The enemy knows this, so he attempts to isolate you and make you feel unloved and abandoned. But the truth is that God always loves you and He desires to be a part of your life, especially through your discipleship and fellowship relationships with other believers.

The story that continues with Paul and Silas in prison reveals three benefits of persevering through our trials:

- Trials humble us
- Trials help others
- Trials honor God

Scriptures:

Paul and Silas are stripped, flogged, and jailed. They are humbled and injured, but notice how they react: not by complaining and giving up, but by worshipping and

singing praises to the Lord. It is during their humble praise that an earthquake shakes the prison and everyone's shackles fall off.

But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." ~James 4:6

God wants us to remain humble. When we understand that we can't make it on our own, we have to rely on God. We want grace and favor in our lives and relationships, not God's opposition!

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As we experience difficult trials in our lives, people watch how we respond. People see our suffering, but they also see our victories and they notice who sets us free in our pain. When we glorify God, others will watch and will want what we have: a powerful relationship with Jesus.

The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

*The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"
~Acts 16:27-30*

Think about how differently this story would have turned out if Paul and Silas had complained and wallowed in their sorrow!

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Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. ~Acts 16: 32-33

God was glorified everywhere that Paul and Silas went. Their lives shone for Him, and He desires that our lives shine for Him as well because He loves us. We can show, by our attitudes, words, and actions, that we have a great and wonderful

God who delivers us from shackles, heals us from sin and pain, and frees us from all kinds of bondage.

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” ~Galatians 6:9

Life is tough sometimes and the enemy wants to isolate you, but you don't have to let his influence determine your story. Pastor Marcus shared some of the trials his family experienced this last year and how they saw the redemptive hand of God moving through their struggles. Stay strong, run the race, and don't give up!

Prayer:

Lord, it is our prayer that we would keep pressing through the darkness and heaviness of this earth, in order to receive and achieve the bountiful blessings You have for us. Help us to not get tired or complain about things happening in our lives, but use these to allow opportunities for growth and change in order to become whom You've created us to be: dependent on You for all things. In your name we pray, Amen.

Next Steps:

How are you pouring into the next generation? If you don't have an answer to that question today, then find someone you can encourage, disciple, and mentor! Your past failures, victories, pain, and experiences can be helpful to those younger than you!

If you are younger, are you actively pursuing someone older to disciple you as well? Are you willing to learn from people with more experience or are you just hanging out with your group of friends in order to validate the things you currently do?

Notes:
