

Matthew 10:22b

Introduction

We're now in the middle of Jesus' instructions to the disciples before He sent them out to labor in the harvest ("These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them..." – 10:5a). My prayer is that we have been empowered and enabled to better proclaim the Gospel as a result of what our Lord has been teaching us. With our last study, you could say that we turned a corner from pure "instruction" (what to do and what not to do) to more warning and exhortation. As Jesus' disciples go out to proclaim *salvation* in Jesus' name, they will actually end up being *persecuted and hated* for the sake of Jesus' name. It's important first of all that we *know* this, so that we won't be surprised or fall apart when persecution comes – a persecution that will be completely irrational, undeserved, and will never make any sense at all. Jesus already told us in advance that these things would happen to us as we labor in God's harvest. But Jesus doesn't just give us advance notice of persecution and then leave it at that. For the rest of the chapter now, Jesus will exhort us, and encourage us, and strengthen us, and comfort us in the light of this coming persecution and the fierce hatred of the world.

"Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves... they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake... brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. ***But the one who endures to the end will be saved.***"

Verse 22b – ***But the one who endures to the end*** will be saved.

For many Christians this verse doesn't sound very comforting or encouraging. In fact, some would say the exact opposite. What is this endurance that Jesus speaks of? Is it a hunkering down and gritting our teeth and steeling ourselves against the pain and suffering of persecution? Does endurance mean going into the survival mode of just trying to make it through? If so, then I would agree that Jesus' words are simply scary and gloomy and depressing! There are probably some of us who take this view of endurance, and so when we read this verse we get a sick feeling inside and are filled up with paranoia and anxiety and fear – perhaps even terror. We hear Jesus saying: "If you can make it through, I'll save you, but let me warn you, it's going to be tough." And if we're not careful, we may even hear Jesus speaking with a rather threatening and pessimistic tone of voice. But let me ask you this: Are Jesus' words to His disciples *ever* intended to fill them with anxiety and fear? No. *Never!* And so we *must* be careful to hear Jesus aright. When Jesus speaks of the one who endures to the end, He means to strengthen, and encourage, and comfort – *not* overwhelm with anxiety. So what does it mean to endure?

Well first of all, I want us to see that endurance is actually a Christian *virtue*. In fact, it always appears in the same lists with *faith* and *love*.

- ✓ 2 Peter 1:5-7 – For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your ***faith*** with *virtue*, and *virtue* with *knowledge*, and *knowledge* with *self-control*, and *self-control* with ***[endurance]***, and steadfastness with *godliness*, and *godliness* with *brotherly affection*, and *brotherly affection* with ***love***.

- ✓ 2 Timothy 3:10 – You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my *faith*, my *patience*, my *love*, my [*endurance*],
- ✓ 1 Timothy 6:11 – But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue *righteousness*, *godliness*, *faith*, *love*, [*endurance*], *gentleness*.
- ✓ Titus 2:2 – Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in *faith*, in *love*, and in [*endurance*].

Now faith and love both sound attractive and desirable. These are wonderful captions for pictures on our walls and signs on our front doors. But *endurance*? Does that really deserve an equal place on our walls with faith and love? In light of Jesus' words about flogging and martyrdom and the one who endures to the end being saved, what picture would we hang on our walls with the caption "Endurance"? How inspiring would that be? Well, what does it mean to endure? Let's look at the context of Matthew ten to find what I believe is a very simple and beautiful answer.

What did Jesus send His disciples out to do? He sent them out to labor in the harvest, and to proclaim the good news of *salvation in Jesus' name* (10:7-8). And why will the disciples be delivered over to courts, and flogged in synagogues, and dragged before governors and kings, and put to death, and hated by all? All of these things will happen to the disciples *for Jesus' name's sake* – because the *salvation* they are proclaiming is *salvation in Jesus' name* (10:18, 22). We *must* remember that in the context, the disciple's are connected with Jesus' name because of the *salvation* that they are proclaiming. So how can the disciples get out of persecution and suffering and avoid the hatred of the world? Well, in light of the context, we see that they can escape persecution and suffering very simply – just say that there is *no salvation* in Jesus' name! You see, when the Roman authorities demanded that Christians curse the name of Jesus, this was not just a matter of allegiance to a King, but of *trust* in a *Savior*. We refuse to pledge ultimate allegiance to anything or anyone else but Jesus as King, but we must always remember *why* this is. It is because we believe that outside of the name of Jesus, and apart from His sacrificial death on the cross, there is no other way, no other means, and no other provision of *salvation* anywhere in this world (Acts 4:12)! Once again, endurance is not just an issue of allegiance to a King, but of *trust* in a *Savior*! In light of the context, to *not* endure would be very simply to deny the name of Jesus. But in context, to deny the name of Jesus would be to deny the very *salvation* that the disciples were sent out into the harvest to proclaim.

So what is this endurance that Jesus speaks of? It's very simple. To endure is to *cling* to the Gospel in the face of opposition. The New Century Version paraphrases Matthew 10:22 like this: "But those people who *keep their faith* until the end will be saved".

- ✓ Revelation 13:7-10 – [The beast] was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. If anyone has an ear, let him hear: If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. *Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.*

- ✓ Revelation 14:12 – Here is a call for *the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus*.
- ✓ 2 Thessalonians 1:4 – Therefore we 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.
- ✓ Acts 14:21-22 – When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to *continue in the faith*, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

To endure means that when the world demands that we admit there is no such thing as life everlasting, we steadfastly refuse to abandon our *hope* in the resurrection of the dead. To endure means that when the world is demanding that we call God a liar, we steadfastly *believe* that His promises are true. When the world threatens us with death if we refuse to renounce our allegiance to Jesus' name, endurance responds by actually *calling upon* the name of Jesus for final deliverance and salvation. Do you see how very different this is from just hunkering down and gritting our teeth and steeling ourselves against the pain and suffering of persecution! And do you see that when we fail to endure, it's not just a matter of "letting Jesus down". When Paul says that "if we deny him, he also will deny us" (2 Timothy 2:12), the point is not that if we deny Jesus, Jesus will "get back at us" by denying us! The point is that to deny Jesus is to deny that He is the Savior, and therefore Jesus must deny that we are His children. If we deny that there is salvation in Jesus' name, then we have cut ourselves off from salvation, because as Peter says in Acts 4:12, "*there is salvation in no one else*". We see, then, that endurance in the face of persecution is not just a matter of allegiance to a king, but of a clinging *trust* in the *Savior*. The one who endures to the end is the one who never ceases to *hope* in Jesus' name, the one who always *calls* upon the name of Jesus, the one who *trusts* in Jesus to the very end.

And so we see that at the very heart of Christian endurance is *hope*. Now in the secular Greek world (cf. TDNT), endurance was also an important virtue, but it had nothing to do with hope. The non-Christian Greek was to endure by resisting and defying evil, but *never* with any assurance of final victory. His endurance must never be motivated by hope because that would be a sign that he was too weak to face reality. So what motivated the Greeks to endure in the face of evil? Nothing more than love of honour. Endurance had nothing to do with *hope*, and everything to do with manly *resistance*. Not so in the Bible! When we think of "endure" we automatically think of what it is that we are enduring (suffering, pain, persecution, evil men) – and there we stop! But this is no different than the pagan Greeks! Instead, when we hear the word "endurance", we should automatically think of what we are enduring *for*.

- ✓ Psalm 25:5 – Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait [endure; LXX] all the day long.
- ✓ Lamentations 3:25-26 – The LORD is good to those who wait [endure; LXX] for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait [endure; LXX] quietly for the salvation of the LORD.
- ✓ Jeremiah 14:8 – O you hope [endurance; LXX] of Israel, its savior in time of trouble, why should you be like a stranger in the land, like a traveler who turns aside to tarry for a night?

- ✓ Jeremiah 17:13 – O LORD, the hope [endurance; LXX] of Israel, all who forsake you shall be put to shame; those who turn away from you shall be written in the earth, for they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living water.
- ✓ Psalms 39:7 – “And now, O Lord, for what do I [endure]? My hope is in you.
- ✓ Romans 8:24-25 – For in this *hope* we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we *hope* for what we do not see, we *wait* for it with [endurance].
- ✓ 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 – We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and *steadfastness [endurance] of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ*.

In the Bible, endurance has everything to do not with what it is that we are enduring, but with what we are enduring *for*. To the Greek, this would be a sign that we are not manly enough to face the reality that there are no guarantees. But for the believer, it is simply the recognition that the outcome *is* already assured *because God is faithful*.

- ✓ Micah 7:7 – But as for me, I will look to the LORD; I will wait [endure; LXX] for the God of my salvation; my God *will* hear me.

Jesus says:

Verse 22b – But the one who endures to the end **WILL be saved**.

The one who keeps on *trusting* in Jesus in spite of the persecution will not be put to shame. The one who keeps on *hoping* in Jesus in spite of the persecution will not be disappointed. Our *trust* in the face of persecution will be rewarded. Our *hope* in the face of suffering will be fulfilled. Salvation is so much more than just being delivered out of our sufferings. **Salvation is the fulfillment of all that we have never stopped hoping and longing for.** It is our final entrance into the promised kingdom and the glorious inheritance reserved for us in heaven (1 Pet. 1:3-4; cf. Acts 14:22)! So we see that if hope is at the very heart of Christian endurance, then so also is *joy*. “The endurance of the Christian will not be complaining, weary, despondent or grumbling” (TDNT). How could it possibly be? To endure is to cling to faith. To cling to faith is to be filled with hope. And the true evidence of hope is joy.

- ✓ Acts 5:40-41 – When [the council] had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

In the face of persecution, the apostles steadfastly clung to their faith and hope in the name of Jesus, and this could only result in joy!

- ✓ Romans 5:1-5 – Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering [testing of faith] produces endurance [clinging to the Gospel], and endurance [clinging to the Gospel] produces character, and

character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

- ✓ James 1:2-3 – Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces [endurance].

The testing of faith produces a clinging to faith (endurance), and that clinging to faith produces a deep rooted joy in God's promises of salvation.

- ✓ Cf. Colossians 1:11; Matthew 5:11-12; Hebrews 10:34

The one who in the midst of persecution *never stops* hoping in Christ and longing for His salvation *will* have all his hopes and longings fulfilled.

Conclusion

We saw at the beginning that endurance always appears in the same lists with faith and love (2 Pet. 1:5-7; 2 Tim. 3:10; 1 Tim. 6:11; Titus 2:2). We asked then if endurance really deserves an equal place on our walls with the Christian virtues of faith and love. In light of Jesus' words about flogging and martyrdom and the one who endures to the end being saved, what kind of picture would we hang on our walls with the caption "Endurance"? Would it be inspiring or depressing? Well, in a list of virtues that includes faith and love, what other virtue would we expect to find? Hope – of course. And so in these lists of virtues, where do we find the hope? – In the endurance!

- ✓ Hebrews 12:1-2 – 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, *looking 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.

If you were an artist, what picture would you paint to hang on your wall at home under the word "Endurance"?

- ✓ Acts 16:19-25 – They seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice." The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God.

Here is a beautiful and inspiring portrait of endurance – of a hope that refused to shrink back into doubt or unbelief (cf. Heb. 10:36-39), but actually grew so strong that it overflowed into the singing of hymns to God. In this picture that we have titled "Endurance", the focus is not on the wounds, or on the stocks, or on the prison bars, but on the faces lifted in prayer and song.

Because endurance has everything to do not with *what* we are enduring, but with what we are enduring *for*. To endure to the end is to never cease calling upon, and trusting, and hoping in Jesus' name, because there is salvation in no one else.

So then, how do we *grow* in endurance? – By *clinging more tightly* to hope. Are you growing in endurance? Are you clinging ever more and more tightly to hope? We don't have to wait for threats of flogging and martyrdom before we can grow in endurance.

- ✓ Luke 8:11-15 – Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and *in time of testing fall away*. And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way *they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life*, and their fruit does not mature. As for that in the good soil, *they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast* in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with [**endurance**].

We must learn to see every trial and difficulty and every temptation to sin as opportunities to cling ever more and more tightly to the hope of the Gospel. As Christians, we need to learn to *cling*.

For anyone who is not a Christian, you know now that God does not promise a life without persecution, or hardship, or suffering. In fact He promises the opposite. But now you also know that all those who endure to the end, and *only* those who endure to the end *will be saved*. So won't you join us in *clinging* to the *hope* of the Gospel? And the hope of the Gospel is simply this: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

And now to any of the saints who might happen to be reading this:

"May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:11-14)

Teaching our Children

Q. Since (as Christians) we can expect to be hated and treated badly by the world, Jesus gives us encouragement by reminding us that the one who endures to the end will be *what*?

A. Jesus comforts all of His followers by reminding them that the one who endures to the end will be *saved*.

Q. What did Jesus send His disciples out to do?

A. Jesus sent His disciples out to tell people about salvation in Jesus' name.

Q. Why will the disciples be persecuted and hated by all kinds of people?

A. They will be hated for Jesus' name's sake – because the salvation they proclaim is salvation in Jesus' name.

Q. So how can the disciples get out of persecution and suffering and keep the world from hating them?

A. The disciples can avoid persecution by denying Jesus – by saying that there is no salvation in Jesus' name.

Q. If we say that there is no salvation in Jesus' name we can escape persecution, but then what else do we lose?

A. We lose any hope of salvation!

Q. If the one who does *not* endure to the end is the one who denies Jesus' name (the one who says there is no salvation in Jesus' name), who is the one who *does* endure to the end?

A. The one who endures to the end is the one who *never* stops *trusting* in Jesus. He is the one who *refuses* to stop *hoping* in God's promises of salvation. He is the one who *holds tightly* to the *good news* about Jesus because he knows there is salvation nowhere else.

~ See Rev. 14:12 and Acts 14:21-22 (top of page 3)

~ See Rom. 8:24-25 and 1 Thess. 1:2-3 (top of page 4)

Q. Persecution causes us to hold on more tightly to the hope that is in the Gospel, and the more tightly we hold on to this hope, the more we are filled with what?

A. The more tightly we hold on to the good news about Jesus, the more we are filled with *joy*.

~ See Acts 5:40-41; Rom. 5:1-5; James 1:2-3 (bottom of page 4 and top of page 5)

~ Read and discuss Acts 16:19-25 (bottom of page 5)

Q. How can hope fill us with joy when what we hope for has not yet happened?

A. Jesus said that if we keep on hoping in Him, all our hopes *will* come true. (The one who endures to the end *will be saved*!)

Q. How can we be growing in endurance?

A. Discuss Luke 8:11-15 and the paragraphs before and after (top of page 6)

Finish by exhorting and encouraging your children with Hebrews 12:1-2 (page 5)