



REFLECTIONS

October 9, 2016

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

Perseverance

Perhaps Job is most often credited with setting the standard for perseverance. Indeed, he is a worthy model for honoring God in the face of trouble. *“Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him;”* Job declared. (Job 13:15) But Paul may well have set the benchmark for standing strong for the Gospel. He took the great commission seriously.

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me,” Jesus said.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.” (Matthew 28:18-19) Paul may not have been an early believer, but after Jesus confronted him on the Damascus Road, he devoted his entire soul to being a teacher and a herald to the Gentiles. And to do it, he persevered pain, endured constant suffering, and stared death squarely in the face.

He wrote, *“I have...been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.”* (2 Corinthians 11:23-28)

Difficult times befall each of our lives as well. Those troubles easily cause loss of focus on the greater picture of life. Pressures of the day produce doubts accentuated by the likes of illness, conflict, loneliness, insecurity, and fear. But remembering: *What [God] opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.* (Revelation 3:7-9)

So as the writer of Hebrews encouraged, *“let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”* (Hebrews 12:1)

Job didn't give up on God. And Paul didn't give in to the world. When faced with troubled times, ...

Neither must we.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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