

# Nevertheless!

by James Smith

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*The sermon emphasizes the profound comfort and assurance found in God's 'Nevertheless' amidst our imperfections and struggles.*

**Scripture:** 2 Chronicles 15:17, Psalm 73:23, Psalm 89:29, Psalm 106:8, Proverbs 19:21, Matthew 26:64, 2 Timothy 1:12, Hebrews 12:11

**Topics:** "Gods Faithfulness", "Christian Perseverance"

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## Description

James Smith preaches on the profound impact of the word 'NEVERTHELESS' in conveying comfort, encouragement, and strength from God's Word. Through various passages, he highlights how 'NEVERTHELESS' signifies God's recognition of sincerity, His faithfulness in times of distress, His unchanging love despite our imperfections, and His promise to preserve us until the end. Smith emphasizes the importance of obedience to God's word, even in times of discouragement or apparent fruitless labor, as it leads to extraordinary success. He also draws attention to the assurance of God's unshakable foundation, the hope of new heavens and a new earth, and the peaceable fruit of righteousness through trials.

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## Transcript

How much is sometimes conveyed to the mind by one word, especially by one inspired word. This word, NEVERTHELESS , has often been profitable to me; for it has conveyed sweet comfort , strong encouragement , and a powerful stimulus to me. I propose therefore to spend a few minutes, in looking at it, as it stands in a few different portions of God most holy Word.

1. In considering my many defects and shortcomings , I have at times been greatly depressed and discouraged, and have been tempted to give way to doubts and fears; but in looking into the divine Word, I find that all the saints have had their spots and their defects . I have been encouraged when I have read this, "But the high places were not taken away out of Israel; nevertheless the heart of Asa was faithful all his days." 2 Chronicles 15:17. Asa was not all that he ought to be, neither did he do all he ought or could have done; nevertheless he was sincere -- and God thinks much of sincerity. He was heart-whole in his religion, though he had many imperfections.

And I trust, as deficient as I am, as imperfect as I am -- I trust that I am sincere ; my heart is in God's cause, and is set on God's glory. I have not taken away all the high places -- I have still too many high thoughts, and high ways; nevertheless , I trust it will be found, that my heart is faithful with the Lord, and

that I shall be found a sincere believer, though an imperfect Christian, all my days.

2. I have often been cast down in consequence of the dispensations of divine providence , and the mysterious dealings of the Lord with my soul. But in reading the Psalms, I have often found comfort, because I saw that the Lord's people had been exercised just in the same way in the days of old. Poor Asaph -- how he was tried, dispirited, and distressed -- but even in his case there was a nevertheless , as he says, "Nevertheless I am continually with you -- you have held me by your right hand." Psalm 73:23.

So is there in my case too, for however the Lord has tried me, he has never forsaken me, nor let go his hold of me. I have slid back often -- but he has held me fast, and he holds me fast still. Of many things I may be deprived -- but the Lord has pledged his Word, that he will never leave me nor forsake me. And, not only so -- but he will not let me leave him for long , nor wander from him far . "I am continually with you" -- in the darkest night, in the most trying season. "You have held me with your right hand" -- and this is the reason, why I have not fainted, been overcome, or utterly turned back!

3. I have at times thought, that in consequence of the power of sin , the deceitfulness of my own heart , and the wiles of the devil -- I would certainly turn apostate, and forsake the right ways of the Lord. But there is one blessed, "Nevertheless," which has preserved and kept me until now; and I believe it will keep me even to the end.

For thus it is written, in reference to our beloved Lord, "I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure. If his sons forsake my law and do not follow my statutes, if they violate my decrees and fail to keep my commands, I will punish their sin with the rod, and their iniquity with flogging! Nevertheless, I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered!" Psalm 89:29-34. What a blessed "Nevertheless," is here!

He will correct -- but not reject .

He will punish -- but not disinherit .

He will turn his hand against them -- but not his heart .

Lovingly he will rebuke and chasten -- but will never turn against them, or allow them to apostatize from him.

Gracious God and Father, I bless you, I adore you, for your changeless love! I rejoice in the assurance, that whom you love, you love unto the end! Long ago, I would have left you -- if permitted. Long ago, you would have hated me -- if anything could have provoked you to do so. But, oh, I bless you, for those sweet words, "Nevertheless, I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness." And if not from Christ, the head -- then not from the members , seeing we were chosen in him, blessed in him, are preserved in him, and are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

4. I have passed through many sad and sore afflictions , and in those afflictions I have been left at times, without any cheering light, comforting hope, or soul elevating consolation. I have cried -- but could obtain no answer. I have sought the Lord -- but could not find him. I have given way to doubt and despondency -- until I have sunk deep in sadness and in gloom. I have been tempted to think that my case was hopeless, and my experience contrary to that of the Lord's family. I have fretted, complained, and repined; and have been ready to give up all for lost!

But there was one blessed "Nevertheless," that like a star in the midst of midnight darkness , gave me a little light, and cheered me with a little hope. In Psalm 106 I read of the conduct, or rather misconduct of Israel of old, how they provoked the Lord, and brought down his sore judgments upon them. But in verses 44, 45, it is written "Nevertheless he took note of their distress when he heard their cry; for their sake he remembered his covenant and out of his great love he relented!" What a blessed "Nevertheless," is this! After so much sin, so many provocations, and such severe chastisement, "Nevertheless!" After all, notwithstanding all, in spite of all, "Nevertheless he took note of their distress when he heard their cry!" As if it touched his paternal heart, stirred up the depths of his compassion, and aroused his tenderest pity! O infinitely gracious God! Again I bless your adorable name, for your long-suffering and tender mercy -- toward such poor, weak, wicked, wayward worms of the earth!

5. I have been discouraged in my work very often, because I have seemed to labor in vain -- to spend my strength for nothing, and in vain. But I have been cheered in reading of the fruitless toil of the disciples in the lake of Gennesaret, when they labored all night and caught nothing; and in the morning, when the Master bid them to launch out into the deep, and let down the net for a draught; Simon Peter said, "Master we have toiled all the night, and have caught nothing; Nevertheless, at your word I will let down the net." Luke 5:5. Yes, yes, if Jesus bids -- then we must obey. We must be faithful -- even when we are not successful . We cannot command success -- but we can obey our Master's word. The commendation is not, "Well done, good and successful servant," but, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

If we have toiled in vain for a long time, perhaps the very next attempt may be crowned with extraordinary success. Yes, my soul, if you have toiled and caught nothing, remember you toiled for Jesus , whose ministry was not the most successful. You toiled for Jesus -- who toiled much more for you. O it ought to be enough, if we are only permitted to do something for him -- who has done so much for us! If we are only permitted to suffer a little for him -- who suffered so deeply for us! If in any way we are permitted to show our love, and acknowledge our obligation to him! Yes, blessed, blessed Savior, though we catch nothing, though we seem to toil in vain -- yet at your word we will let down the net!

As ministers of Christ, let us be encouraged by this! As Sunday school teachers, let us be stimulated by this! It is at the command of Jesus, it is out of love to Jesus, it is to honor Jesus -- that we preach and teach; and therefore however discouraging the circumstances in which we are placed, let us say, "Nevertheless at your word, I will let down the net!"

6. I have at various times been much disheartened , and sometimes perplexed by the changeability of professors of religion. How many have I seen fall into sin, or run into error. Many have disgraced their profession, and many have cast it off altogether. But there is a "Nevertheless" in God's Word that has comforted me, and set me right.

Paul, writing to his beloved son Timothy, speaks of some who had erred from the truth, and had overthrown the faith of others -- but he adds, "Nevertheless, the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal: the Lord "knows those who are his. And, Let every one that names the name of Christ, depart from iniquity." Yes, the Lord knows his own -- and can distinguish them from mere pretenders . He is not surprised, or disappointed, at anything that takes place -- though I am. He knows whom he has chosen. He knows every one upon whom he has set his mark. He requires that all who profess Christ -- should imitate Christ, and walk as Christ walked -- departing from all iniquity.

Amidst all the changes then that may take place in the Church, if professors fall away, if they forsake the truth, and embrace error -- God's foundation remains firm! None are removed from that foundation, who are once built on it, and cemented to it. The sheep never perish, nor can any one pluck them out of our Father's hand!

7. Once more, I have seen great changes take place in the world, and greater changes must have taken place since the beginning; and greater changes will take place yet. But whatever changes may take place, however many, or however great -- they ought not to disturb us; for the sure Word of God predicts them, and therefore we ought to expect them. Nor only so -- but we should look beyond them, to what is to be introduced by them, for so did the apostles and primitive believers.

Hence Peter having spoken of the day of the Lord, when "the Heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare;" adds, "nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new Heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness!" 2 Peter 3:13.

What a glorious prospect this opens before us! What a blessed nevertheless is here! New Heavens! A new earth wherein dwells righteousness! Prepared specially for the saints, and intended for the glorification of our blessed Lord and Savior. I do not wonder that they sing above, "Unto him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father -- to him be glory and dominion forever and ever! Amen." Nor am I surprised to read again, "And they sung a new song, saying: You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth!" How glorious to reign on such a new earth! How delightful to reign with Jesus, to the honor of Jesus -- as the purchase of his blood, and the beloved ones of his heart.

If therefore I witness changes, if I suffer losses, if I hear of earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, or the most terrible convulsions, or devastations -- I will not be much disturbed -- but will say with Peter, "Nevertheless, according to his promise, I am looking for new Heavens, and a new earth, wherein righteousness dwells!"

But I must not enlarge, though there are yet many more instances of the value and blessedness of this sweet word, "Nevertheless."

When Nehemiah and the Jews were in trouble, he says "Nevertheless, we made our prayer unto our God," Nehemiah 4:9, and this prayer was successful and brought relief.

When the Psalmist confesses the sins, provocations, and wickedness of his forefathers, he adds to the honor of God's free and unmerited grace, "Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known" Psalm 106:8. How full of comfort is this, to souls deeply sensible of their utter unworthiness!

When Solomon speaks of the many devices that are in a man's heart, he adds for our encouragement, "Nevertheless the counsel of the Lord -- that shall stand." Proverbs 19:21.

When Paul speaks of his persecutions, afflictions, and imprisonment, for the gospel, in his letter to Timothy -- he adds, in order to fortify him, "Nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that

day." 2 Timothy 1:12.

And when alluding to the grievous and painful chastisement endured by the Hebrew Christians, for their comfort he adds, " Nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto those who are exercised thereby." Hebrews 12:11.

But if ever the word was uttered with inimitable grace, representing the most beautiful and lovely state of mind; it was when Jesus , lying on the cold ground in Gethsemane, said, "O my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me -- Nevertheless , not as I will -- but as you will." Matthew 27:39.

And if ever it displayed unequalled courage, and conveyed the full persuasion of divinity, it was when it was uttered by the Lamb of God, as he stood before the High Priest, who said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, that you tell us whether you are the Christ, the Son of God! Jesus replied unto him: Yes, it is as you say. Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall you see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven!" Matthew 26:64. Yes, blessed Jesus, the proud, haughty, scornful priest of Israel, shall have more than your word, to attest your claims, for he shall see you in your glory, and in your Father's glory, and all the holy angels with you!

O Lord Jesus, to submit to my Heavenly Father's will as you did, and to look forward amidst all my sufferings, poverty, and pains, to the fulfillment of the apostolic testimony: "When Christ who is our life shall appear -- then you shall also appear with him in glory!"

Now let the feeble all be strong,

And make Jehovah's arm their song,

His shield is spread o'er every saint;

And, thus supported -- who shall faint?

What though the hosts of Hell engage

With mingled cruelty and rage!

A faithful God restrains their hands,

And chains them down in iron bands!

Bound by his Word, he will display

A strength proportioned to our day;

And when united trials meet,

Will show a path of safe retreat.

Thus far we prove that promise good,

Which Jesus ratified with blood;

Still he is gracious, wise, and just;

And still, in him, may we all trust.

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