

Hanging in There

by Jim Cymbala

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a spirit of endurance and patience with the power of the Holy Spirit, and joyful thanksgiving in difficult situations and with hard-to-be-with people.

Duration: 19:15

Scripture: Matthew 5:39, Romans 12:12, Galatians 5:22, Colossians 1:11

Topics: "Endurance"

Description

In this sermon, the pastor emphasizes the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit and allowing His presence to empower us to endure difficult situations with joy and gratitude. He highlights the fact that we can choose not to let obnoxious people affect us and instead respond with patience and joy. The pastor uses an illustration of a conversation with a shy woman to illustrate the need to overcome negative circumstances and not let them discourage us. He also mentions that patience is often tested by people who try our patience, and encourages the audience to endure with thanksgiving and joy, especially during holiday seasons.

Transcript

The lesson in the BT Kids Sunday had an interesting thought. They were proving that Jesus was the toughest guy in town. Because it was a guy that broke into the class and the teachers were trying to deal with him because he was saying, no, Jesus was a wimp.

Jesus isn't tough and in my block, we got some gangsters and we got some people that are tough and wanna fight and they don't even care if they have to break the law and violate police orders and all of that stuff. So one of the proofs that Jesus was the toughest person in town was that the demons, he wasn't afraid of demons. He had power over demons.

And even though he knew that the Pharisees and Sadducees were planning to do him harm, he wasn't afraid of them, even though they could do him real harm like the cross. But the ultimate proof that they brought out so beautifully and I watched the kids taking it in and I watched all of us taking it in was that Jesus had all power to bring down angels to help him. But when he was suspended on the cross, he used his power to hold steady rather than pull down vengeance on the people who were hurting him.

And it takes more power, the lesson was. It takes great power not to react to provocation. It takes more strength.

They used the gymnastic term, the iron cross, where these guys with these tremendous muscles are suspended in air and they're just holding themselves up like this, but they only win the medal if they're totally still. That takes, it's the hardest, it's harder than the mat, harder than the jumping they do, the parallel bars. And the power of God, and I want the Holy Spirit to fall on us tonight and we're gonna take some time to just pray and I don't want you to rush out, so I'm just gonna abbreviate this so that we can just kneel in the front or stand in the front and be in our seats and not rush out.

But the Holy Spirit is connected to things in the Bible that often we don't think about. Like authority over demons, we think of that. The gift of the Spirit to heal, the gift of healing, the miracles and different things.

But sometimes the Holy Spirit is connected to things that we usually don't connect Him to, and yet they're the thing that daily we need the most, not, maybe more so than power to witness. Because a lot of people have lost their witness for Jesus because they didn't have the Spirit working in this other way that I'm gonna describe. So nobody wanted to hear what they said because they already said, hey, I already saw your behavior, don't tell me about Jesus.

So where they needed the Holy Spirit, they missed Him. So let's just read a prayer that Paul prays for the church in Colossae. We call the book Colossians.

Let's look at the prayer. For this reason, we have always prayed for you ever since we heard about you. And now you get an insight into how the apostles prayed, what they prayed about, not what you heard growing up praying, how you naturally prayed, but how the apostle Paul prayed.

We ask God to fill you with the knowledge of His will, with all the wisdom and understanding that His Spirit gives, hold that. This is the Good News translation. And it's so excellent because in the other translations, for the most part, it puts a small s, and it says that you might have the knowledge of His will with all spiritual wisdom and understanding with a small s. But Paul would never use the word spiritual that way.

When he used the word in that context, it's what they translated it with the wisdom and the understanding that the Holy Spirit gives. So he's praying that you might have wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, supernatural wisdom, supernatural understanding. For what reason? Verse 11, we jump to.

May you be made strong with all the strength which comes from His glorious power. Imagine that. May you be made strong.

He's praying for them. You can't teach strength. You can't teach making someone strong.

May you be made strong with all the strength which comes from His glorious power so that you may be able to endure everything with patience. And with joy, give thanks to the Father who has made you fit to have your share of what God has reserved for His people in the kingdom of light. Now one of the other translations in verse 11 says this.

May you be made strong with all the strength which comes from His glorious power so that you may have endurance and patience in everything. Endurance and patience. They put it together, endure everything with patience.

So that doesn't sound like something that we ask the Holy Spirit for very much. It's usually more spectacular. But Paul says, no, I'm praying that God, according to His glorious might, might strengthen you in the inner person with Holy Ghost power that you might endure and have patience.

Joyfully giving thanks for everything since God has brought you into His kingdom of light. Now what's interesting about that word, these words, is they're used for two different things. Endurance and patience.

Endurance in this context is a Greek word that means being able to hold out under very difficult circumstances. To be able to endure a trial of a situation. To be able to go through the valley when the bottom falls out.

Difficult, you know, the job disappears. And now it's difficult. There's a trial in your body or in your mind.

And to have endurance in a bad situation, Paul says, the only way you can do that, the right way, is through the power of the Holy Spirit. And you rarely ever hear anyone pray, God give me the Spirit's power to endure something. It's just not something we think about or pray about.

But we're the losers for it. We need to do that. Because when you go through difficult situations, what can happen is you can lash out and get crazy and get mean.

Or you can get discouraged and quit because the circumstances are just too negative. You know, where's the money coming from? And I go to a certain place to do mission work and it doesn't work out the way I thought, now what am I gonna do? And we have to endure difficult situations. Now the other word, patience, is always used with people.

Oh yes, that eat your mother's birthday cake. Ah. It doesn't have so much to do with situations, it has to do with people who try you.

Have you ever met anyone? I'll close my eyes so I don't lose respect for you. Have you ever met anyone who tried your patience? Lift your hand up high. See, it's not the situation, it's the person.

It's the person. And Paul says the only way you can represent Christ in the right way in difficult situations when the bottom falls out is that the Holy Spirit gives you endurance so you don't blow up and start getting ugly or you don't quit. Same thing with people.

When you're surrounded by one person or a bunch of people who just try your patience, continually. And sometimes you marry into a family where one of the family members, not a believer, let's say, and they just try, they insult you. I know a situation where just one of the relatives of the spouse, just insulting, insulting.

Now, if you blow up, you lose your testimony. Or if you get into a depression over it and you get all sad, you lose your joy. So Paul says the only way we can go through the trials of circumstances and the difficulties with hard to be with people is through the power of the Holy Spirit.

He said, I'm praying for you that God might grant you endurance and patience. Endurance to get through situations, patience not to blow up with people. How many of us have lost our testimony because we've reacted to people in an ugly way? And then it's very hard to witness to them.

Am I right or wrong? Come on, have we not all done that? I just want to review that with you now. Endurance and patience. Say that, endurance and patience.

Endurance given by the Holy Spirit for what? Situations. Patience with people. Now, but that's not all.

He says, joyfully giving thanks. See, just don't endure it. You gotta do it with joy and you gotta be thanking God while you're going through it.

How many know only God can do that? And while the person is tormenting you, you keep a good spirit and you're full of joy and you're praising God while they're obnoxious. You're just saying, oh God, I thank you. How many want that from the Holy Spirit? Put your hands together.

If you want that from the Holy Spirit. Now, I'm biblically right. I'm biblically right because this is a prayer in the Bible and Paul didn't pray outside the will of God.

So here's what a lot of us do. We get through stuff, but our spirit is so bad that it doesn't pay to get through it. You ever see some people, they go through, I'm gonna make it through, I'm gonna make it through.

And they're gritting their teeth and they have no joy, no spirit of thanksgiving. Or with people, no, I won't react. But every dog has their day and your day is coming.

Bow, wow, wow, wait till your day comes. Come on, haven't we all fallen into that? Did you know that God says that the Holy Spirit can so fill us with his presence and impart power that you can endure bad situations and keep joyful and be giving thanks? Did you know that you can have an obnoxious person around you and not get obnoxious back? Did you know that you can have patience with them and be joyful about it and be giving thanks for God's blessing and not let them get to you? You know what a lot of us have a problem with? We let people get to us that God never intended to get to us. Here's an illustration, it just comes to my mind now.

So someone asked to see me, one of the people in the church, lovely woman with two children. And she says, Pastor, I made an appointment. I said, you know, you're so shy when I say hello to you, you hardly look at me, but I'm so happy that we have a chance to talk.

So how can I help you? Well, Pastor, how are you feeling? I'm okay, good. She said, okay, I just need some wisdom. You see, I got married and my husband died from AIDS.

I didn't know he had AIDS. And now I've tested positive. So Pastor Simbala, here's what I need to know.

Should I tell my children now, should give me the ages? Should I tell my children now or should I maybe hold it from them? Because I don't want them to be hurt and worry about me because, you know, God's gonna take care of me, Pastor Simbala. Oh, praise God, he's gonna take care of me. And I'm just like, what world do you come from? No pity, no impatience, not just enduring her situation, but with joy and thanksgiving.

In fact, I said, may I pray for you? And I prayed for her. She immediately said to me, the minute I said the amen, she said, Pastor Simbala, may I pray for you? I have a burden for you today. May I pray for you? And I'm like, where do you come from? Where are you? Who are you? And she prayed for me and I was weeping like a baby.

She was praying for me. See, now that peace that she had, that endurance, that patience, that joyful thanksgiving spirit, oh my goodness, that only comes from the Holy Spirit. And we need it.

One of the main reasons why Christianity is declining in America is because of the poor advertising Christians do with their own lives. Christians are mean, Christians are selfish, Christians vent, Christians

get angry on the job, Christians blow up, and then the next minute they wanna shout, God is good, all the time, praise God. Woo, yeah, glory.

And people are not buying into it. People are not buying in. How many agree with what I've said so far? Lift your hand up.

So here's the thing. Are you going through something today and Christmas will bring it out. I have found out that holiday seasons, I don't know why, they create situations where you need endurance, joyfully, not gritting your teeth, not a stoic, joyfully enduring it with thanksgiving, and for sure you're gonna need patience.

Oh yeah, living in New York City, you will need patience with people, or relatives, or the get-togethers, and someone saying the wrong thing, doing the wrong thing, and instead of reacting, you could just let it go right off your, like the water off a duck's back, and just like hallelujah, praise God. That person will not get to me today because God the Holy Spirit is working me a spirit of patience. Because if we let people rob our joy and our peace, oh, that'd be terrible.

That'd be terrible. We have to come to a place in God where we say, no, you will not rob my peace, you will not rob my joy. God's given me a patient endurance with joy and with thanksgiving.

Let's close our eyes. Maybe the reason the Lord laid this on my heart was because you're going through either a trial situation or a trial person who is just tearing you up. Now, I don't know how God's gonna change that.

He might deliver you out of it. He might remove the person. I don't know how that's all gonna work out, but that's not what I'm asking God for today.

Paul didn't say God'll change it. He said, I'm praying that he'll give you a spirit of endurance and patience. Where are you gonna run? Where am I gonna go where somebody can't torment me? Where are you gonna go where things can't go wrong? There's no place on earth.

To live on this earth means we need endurance and patience. If you're here upstairs or downstairs and you say, Pastor, I need from the Holy Spirit to breathe on me, to give me endurance with joyful thanksgiving. I need the Holy Spirit to give me patience with people with joyful, thankful heart while I'm putting up with them.

Just get up out of your seat and come here because we'll start praying with you. You're the ones that need now the Holy Spirit to come upon you. Not to be an evangelist yet or to go on a mission trip.

Something more important than all of that is to live through life representing Jesus without blowing up. Come on, you're in a situation where, Pastor, I'm running out of gas. I can't endure this much longer.

God, the Holy Spirit will help you endure. Pastors are gonna walk among you. We're gonna lay our hand on your shoulder.

Maybe somebody is just tearing you apart, breaking your heart. Come on now, God's gonna give you patience with them. Lord, as we leave here tonight, we are trusting that you are gonna moment by moment breathe into us your Holy Spirit in new, stronger ways.

Even while we lay in our beds tonight, come, Holy Spirit, and breathe on us. Fill us to overflowing with your Spirit, Lord, so that we might have endurance through every difficult situation. And some, we know you're gonna deliver us out of some, but while we're waiting and we have to go through it, give us endurance with joy and thanksgiving while we're going through it, Lord.

Not mean-spirited, not mad at the world, not bitter, not negative, but endurance with joyful thanksgiving. As we meet people in the days to come that try our patience, I pray you'll give us a deep, supernatural patience with them. Again, that will be joyful, even when they're just grating against us, God.

We won't give in to retribution or being nasty back, but we will have just a loving kindness, a joyful thanksgiving, and we will have patience with them. Knowing how long you have had patience with us, Lord. How long have you had patience with us, Lord? So we just thank you that tonight we are breathing in and will continue to breathe in your Spirit, Lord, to grant us the endurance and the patience that we need.

That's our prayer tonight. We pray you'll get everyone home safely tonight. And Lord, I pray that your love will abound one to another among us, that we'll be an encouragement to one another.

We pray this all in Jesus' name. And everyone said. Amen.

You know what you do now? Because other people irritate and bother others during the week sometimes, but we're gonna have patience with them. Turn around and give somebody a hug and say something good to them. Come on, everybody.

Give someone a hug.

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