

“DON’T GIVE UP”

Dear, Friend,

Sometimes it’s easy for us to give up in the midst of the daily grind of frustrations and disappointments. Troubling times have a way of destroying our joy until we have a crying need for encouragement. Peter gives us that encouragement in verses 6,7 of this first chapter of 1 Peter. There we see we have joy and hope not only now in times of trouble but, because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have been given this living hope of eternal life.

“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proven genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed” (1 Peter 1:6, 7).

Why is it we are so shocked when trouble comes? Some go into depression when it strikes, others fight back or run while others, just give up. Job 14: 1 declares, “Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.” When the season of troubles, trials and tribulations arrives, we must be equipped through God’s word to be more than conquerors through Christ Jesus who strengthens us. Jesus Himself has promised, “I will not leave you comfortless.” (John 14:18)

There are some days when I feel that trouble is coming from every side. At times I almost feel overwhelmed. Life starts looking negative and hopeless. It is then that my inner spiritual alarms go off and passages like Psalm 50:15 spring to life. There God tells you and me, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will glorify me.” Romans 5:2-8 shows us additional ways that you and I can benefit from these seasons of trouble if we don’t give up. “We throw open our doors to God and discover at the same moment that He has already thrown open His door to us. We find ourselves standing where we always hoped we might stand--out in the wide-open spaces of God’s grace and glory, standing

tall and shouting our praise. There's more to come. We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next. In alert expectancy such as this, we're never left feeling short changed. Quite the contrary—we can't round up enough containers to hold everything God generously pours into our lives through the Holy Spirit. Christ arrives right on time to make this happen.”(The Message Bible)

In the season of troubles and trials we are told to, “Consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”(James 1:2-4) In the season of trouble, we will become bitter, not better, if we don't consider it pure joy knowing that these troubles which test our faith will, if we remain steadfast, develop within us perseverance.

Yet this is hard to receive when, “the thought of my pain, my homelessness, is bitter poison. I think of it constantly, and my spirit is depressed”.(Lamentations 3:19,20 Good News Bible) Sometimes in the middle of our pain we feel like just giving up. “Yet hope returns when I remember this one thing; The Lord's unfailing love and mercy still continue, Fresh as the morning, as sure as the sunrise. The Lord is all I have, and so in Him I put my hope”(Lam.3:21-24 GNB). “Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”(1 Peter 1:8). “Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: Be holy, because I am holy”(1 Peter 1:13-16 NIV).

To “be holy” means to abide in the presence of the Living God. Surrender your life, your hope, and your dreams to the One who loves you and gave His life for you. Don't waddle in hopelessness and sin.

Instead, “set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ returns”. Remember no matter what the circumstances might be now, there is hope because Christ is risen. “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life, handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through Him you believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him, and so your faith and hope are in God”(1 Peter 1:13 NIV).

God is calling each of us at this time to be overcomers, who through the resurrection power of Jesus Christ, are victorious over sin, the devil and the world’s system. Rev.2:7 promises, “To him, who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”

How hard it is to not give up when one is persecuted, put in prison, suffering and in need. Yet we are told, “Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.”(Rev.2:10)

The pressure is on but we can’t afford to give up. As Satan attacks, we must resist him steadfastly in the faith, “Because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete not lacking anything.”(James 1:3, 4) Use the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith to quench every fiery dart of the evil one. (See Eph. 6: 16, 17) Remember that Satan has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. “God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”(Col.2:13-15)

Remember, “They overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb (Jesus Christ) and the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”(Rev.12:11) We are promised that, “He (or she) who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.”(Rev.2:11) “So, fight the

good fight of faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called.”(1 Tim.6:12)

Promise after promise is given to the overcomer in Rev.2 and 3. In spite of these words of promise, it is so easy to get tired out, worn out and burned out as we battle the devil, the world and our sinful flesh day after day. That is why it is so critical that we keep our daily appointments with God. In those daily appointments we talk to God in prayer, reading and meditating on the Scriptures under the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit and beholding the wonders of His creation.

“For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous—those who are upright and in right standing with God—and His ears are attentive (open) to their prayer...(1 Peter 3:12AMP) As we read and mediate upon the Scriptures, we must never forget that God watches over His word to perform it. (See Jer.1:12) Prayer that brings results must be anchored in the word of God. “For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power—making it active, operative, energizing and effective, it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and (the immortal) spirit, and of joints and marrow (that is, of the deepest parts of our nature) exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart.”(Heb.4:12 AMP) Instead of just giving up when we face overwhelming physical, mental and spiritual needs, we need to know and pray the Scriptures which declare, “And my God will meet all your need according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”(Phil.4:19)

There have been so many times I have felt like giving up. But thank God for that encouraging word spoken by the Lord through my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. When David found himself in a real fix at Ziglax, we read that “David encouraged himself in the Lord His God.”(1 Sam.30:6) Then David encouraged the rest of his men and went on to be victorious. At this trying hour let us not give up. “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. **To him who overcomes**, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.”(Rev.2:17) The hour has come for us to be overcomers, moving deeper into the things of God as we receive the hidden manna of God’s spiritual truth and the bread of life that Jesus Christ provides in a new and powerful way. Then we will realize what it is to possess the “white stone with a new name written on it” signifying what it means to be an overcomer who through faith lives the victorious life each day.

Overcomers who don't give up live in the word of God, knowing that as God has spoken even so it will come to pass. "So is My word that goes out from My mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."(Is.55:11) Sometimes that purpose is difficult to understand. Just ask Job who, although trying to live a god-fearing life, found himself going through unbelievable suffering. The book of Job clearly illustrates that as believers we must, when going through the fiery trial of suffering, remain steadfast in faith, entrusting ourselves to God who judges justly, just as Jesus did when He suffered. (See 1 Peter 2:23-25)

As overcomers, in Revelations 2, we are promised that we will eat of the tree of life and will not be hurt by the second death (see verse 11). As we have also seen earlier in verse 17, we are also promised we will receive the hidden manna of a deeper spiritual life and be given a new name in heaven. Then in verse 26 we are told that as overcomers we will be given authority over all nations. In Rev.3:5 we are further promised by the Living Christ, "I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and His angels." But that is not all. We are further told in Rev.3:12, "Him who overcomes, I will make a pillar in the temple of my God." Then in verse 21 we read, "To him (and her) who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on His throne."

Why do we see ourselves all too frequently as defeated victims who think about giving up when through Jesus Christ we are declared victors and overcomers? (See Ephesians 1:4-14) The fact is we can either choose to be overcomers of sin, the world and Satan through Christ or we can be overcome by them. Those who refuse Christ and His overcoming power will ultimately be cast into hell itself. (See Rev. 2:11; 3:5; 20:15; 21:8) There is no in-between, for you are either an overcomer through Christ or overcome by sin, the devil and the world's system. "This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he (and she) who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."(1 John 5:4, 5)

Overcomers are doers of the word and not hearers only. (James 1:22) They are on the front lines reaching out to the poor, the fatherless, widowed, hurting and homeless. Overcomers are those who are able to declare, "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen,

but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”(2 Cor.4:16-18)

Don't give up my brothers and sisters. Hang on, trusting God as He declares, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”(Hebrews 13:5) Now be an overcomer, for Christ has declared, “It is done. I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be My son.”(Rev.21:6, 7) That is His promise to the overcomers. To those who are overcome by sin, the devil and the world's system Christ goes on and says, “But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”(Rev.21:8)

We can be overcomers, not as a result of our own efforts and righteousness, but by trusting in Jesus who declares, “I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart, I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

Determine in your heart this day that no matter what you are going through you will not give up and you will remain faithful to God trusting in Him through the power of our Risen Lord Jesus Christ.

Yours in Christ,

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