

Live in Hope

A Disciple's Response to Adversity

No one can live without Hope. It is as essential to the sustaining of the soul as water and food are for the body. A life without Hope is a life without a future. The lack of Hope is the absence of a secure and bright tomorrow, quenching a person's reason to live for today. Many have extinguished their lives for this very reason.

Christians, however, have a future worth living for. Their ultimate destiny is an eternity in a new heaven and new earth with their God and Savior. But their immediate future is a life made secure by God. Christians reborn to eternal life have a reason to persevere through every earthly trial, which in comparison is a mere moment. Jesus encouraged His disciples just before His arrest and crucifixion when He said,

"These things I have spoken to you,
so that in Me you may have peace.
In the world you have tribulation,
but take courage;
I have overcome the world."

John 16:33

The Christian life is not trouble free! Jesus makes that plain. But it ought to be free from anxiety, for Jesus, who possesses all authority, is our **provider** and **protector**. The apostle Paul, who was very familiar with trials, wrote:

"And my God shall supply all your needs
according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:19

Interpretation

1. In light of the context (read Philippians 4:10-18) what kind of 'needs' is Paul referring

to? _____

2. In light of Ephesians 3:8, why are the future of Christians secure? _____

John 16:33

Circle or Underline ...

- ✓ Where we may have peace.
- ✓ Where we have tribulation.
- ✓ What we should take.
- ✓ What Jesus has overcome.

Jesus guaranteed tribulation while in this world. So don't expect a perfect, trouble free existence! Instead, learn to replace your fear and anxiety with hope, for Jesus, the over comer, is with us!

Philippians 4:19

Circle or Underline ...

- ✓ What God shall supply.
- ✓ How He will supply them.



Ephesians 3:8

Jesus knows our every need, be it physical, intellectual, social, emotional, financial or spiritual. He has walked in our shoes and is familiar with the desires that drive each of us. And He has the perfect provision which He will supply at the right time if we will only trust Him. And because His supplies are 'unfathomable' we need never worry that He will ever be without!

Jesus is our model for triumphing over adversity.

- 1 Therefore,
since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us,
let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin
which so easily entangles us,
and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,
- 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus,
the author and perfecter of faith,
who for the joy set before Him endured the cross,
despising the shame,
and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:1-2

Interpretation

1. Who are the 'cloud of witnesses' in verse 1? _____

2. How is the imagery of a runner used as an example of Christ centered living?

3. How does 'fixing our eyes on Jesus' help us endure the race? _____

4. How did Jesus endure the suffering and shame of the cross? _____

The key to enduring adversity is to lay aside every distraction in order to focus on the one thing that really matters. Then, adversities can be seen in their proper perspective ... insignificant in comparison to the final goal.

Many Christians hold to a belief that they will be spared the ultimate tribulation and suffering. But it is presumptuous to assume that they will be spared what Christians through the ages, and around the world, were not. The only thing that will bring us through suffering victoriously is the secure hope of seeing Jesus on the other side!

Hebrews 12:1-2

Circle or Underline ...

- ✓ Who is surrounding us.
- ✓ What we should lay aside.
- ✓ How we should run.
- ✓ On what we should fix our eyes.
- ✓ What Jesus focused on in order to endure the cross.

Running Through Adversity

The writer evokes the image of a stadium crowd, cheering on the athletes who have stripped off everything that might encumber their chances for victory, and who must now endure the agony of pain as they push themselves to excel for the prize. Their only hope is to focus on the finish line where stands their mentor holding the prize awaiting at their end.

Observe carefully the truths in the following Psalm of hope.

Memorize 
entire
Psalm

Psalm 91 (KJV)

- 1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High
shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
- 2 I will say of the LORD,
He is my refuge and my fortress:
my God; in him will I trust.
- 3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler,
and from the noisome pestilence.
- 4 He shall cover thee with his feathers,
and under his wings shalt thou trust:
his truth *shall be thy shield and buckler.*
- 5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night;
nor for the arrow that flieth by day;
6 *Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness;*
nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.
- 7 A thousand shall fall at thy side,
and ten thousand at thy right hand;
but it shall not come nigh thee.
- 8 Only with thine eyes
shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.
- 9 Because thou hast made the LORD,
which is my refuge,
even the most High,
thy habitation;
- 10 There shall no evil befall thee,
neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.
- 11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee,
to keep thee in all thy ways.
- 12 They shall bear thee up in *their hands,*
lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.
- 13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder:
the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.
- 14 Because he hath set his love upon me,
therefore will I deliver him:
I will set him on high,
because he hath known my name.
- 15 He shall call upon me,
and I will answer him:
I will be with him in trouble;
I will deliver him, and honour him.
- 16 With long life will I satisfy him,
and shew him my salvation.

Psalm 91

Circle or Underline ...

- v 1 Where the one who dwells
in God abides.
- v 2 What he claims of the
LORD.
How he will respond to his
LORD.
- v 3 From what he will be
delivered.
- v 4 What God will symbolically
do.
What shall be his shield.
- v 5-6
What he shall not fear.
- v 7 How many shall 'fall' beside
him.
What it shall not do.
- v 8 With what shall he behold
the 'reward of the
wicked'.
- v 9 Why he shall not fall.
- v 10 What shall befall him
'there'.
What shall not come near
him.
- v 11 Who God will give charge
over you.
Where they will 'keep' him.
- v 12 What they will do with
their hands.
- v 13 What he shall tread upon.
- v 14 Why God will deliver 'him'.
Why God will 'set him on
high'.
- v 15 What God will do when he
calls on Him.
When God will be with him.
What God will do for the
one who calls in trouble.
- v 16 With what will God satisfy
him.
What God will show him.

I do not want to leave you with the false impression that no physical harm can befall a Christian who trusts God. The history of the Christian Church is littered with the sufferings of her martyrs ... faithful men and women of God who would not compromise nor retreat from testifying of God's Love and Holiness. Even the Son of God who knew no sin suffered physical torture and execution! Should we expect anything less?

The psalmist's ultimate message is that no matter what physical adversity may befall the Christian, **he cannot lose**. Even if our persecutors were to kill us, we still win! Death is but a door to a life of unimaginable beauty, joys and pleasures.

(1 Corinthians 2:9, Psalm 16:11) I myself cannot wait for my corrupt body to breathe its last breath in anticipation of inhaling the celestial air of heaven and opening my eyes to behold the splendor of my LORD's glory! My executors will be but doormen who will open the way for me into God's paradise, and I will thank them for it. Such is the hope we possess. Such is the hope in which we must live! The apostle Paul put it this way.

**“For to me, to live is Christ,
and to die is gain.”**

Philippians 1:21

Live in Hope

List key Truths and Principles you learned from this study:

- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____

In light of what what you learned, list what you will do.

- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____
- ▶ _____

Jesus prophesied a coming time when Believers worldwide will be subject to intense persecution like nothing the world has seen before, resulting in many 'falling away'. Only those Christians who have learned to persevere in hope will endure and stand till the last day!

Matthew 24:9-13, 21-22