

Word of the Day

“Persevere to the End”

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:58, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

In lieu of the certainty of the resurrection from the dead, we’re called to be steadfast in the faith, unwavering in our hope, and faithful to the ministry. Now is not the time to waver, now is the time to persevere, despite opposition, hardships, or trials. Those things are temporary, but our destiny is eternal. God wants us to always focus on our future, for only then can we see the big picture.

Some time ago, I ministered to someone who was on the verge of giving up. They felt like, “What’s the use in persevering, no one cares, I might as well give up.” The truth is, God cares, others care, and you’re not alone. The devil knows that if he can make you feel sorry for yourself, have a pity party, and lose focus on your future, he has you. However, he is a liar, and despite our dire circumstance, our future remains bright. This was Paul’s emphasis when he wrote, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (v.58).

Beloved, we must persevere to the end, because that’s where our hope is. In everything that we endure, do, or experience, there’s a rainbow at the end of the road. It may not feel that way now, but we don’t walk according to our feelings, we walk by faith. When we persevere to the end, we will know that our labor was indeed worth the heartaches, pains, and disappointments that we faced.

Be encouraged my friends, and persevere to the end.

Love,

Pastor Penn

“God Won’t Forget You”

Text: Genesis: 40:21-23, “And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh’s hand:

But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgat him.”

One of life’s tragedies is that people that we help the most, tend to hurt us the most. When we’re in the same boat, or they are struggling, and we help them, they promise not to forget us. Unfortunately, as soon as they get back on their feet, they forget about us, and renege on their promise to remember us.

This was what happened to Joseph. After he helped Pharaoh’s chief butler, and he was restored to his position as Joseph predicted when he interpreted his dream, he forgot Joseph. He didn’t remember Joseph until two years later when Pharaoh had a dream that others could not interpret. No doubt, Joseph felt abandoned by yet another person in his life, but he would come to realize that God would never forget, leave, or abandon him.

After 13 years of being abandoned and mistreated, Joseph’s story eventually turned around, because God was with him. We too can be confident that our situation will also turn around, because unlike people, God will not forget us.

Be encouraged my friends, God won’t forget you!

Love,

Pastor Penn

“The Thirst Quencher”

Text: John 4:13-14, “Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

Companies make a lot of money from sports drinks that promise to quench our thirst. Sports drinks like Gatorade, Powerade, and body armor are the ones that I’m familiar with. Of those three, I prefer body armor because it contains less sugar and calories, and it is based with coconut water. While I prefer body armor to quench my thirst, I’m aware that it can only satisfy my natural thirst. To quench my spiritual thirst, I need the refreshing water that only Jesus can provide.

Jesus emphasized this in his response to the Samaritan woman at the well, when He said, “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (vv.13-14).

The water that Jesus offers is the refreshing waters of salvation that comes from a relationship with Him. It is the only thing that can quench our spiritual thirst, for it is living waters that are everlasting.

Beloved, only Jesus can satisfy the void in our lives, and the longing for God that’s in our soul. So, if you’re thirsty on today, don’t look no where else, but come to Jesus, and receive the living water, that can indeed quench your thirst.

Love,

Pastor Penn

“God is Able”

Text: John 6:12-13, “When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.”

Problems tend to overwhelm us. Certain situations get the best of us because we are faced with insurmountable odds. Jesus miraculously feeding 5,000 plus is a powerful reminder that God is able to do anything.

Like Jesus’ disciples, we may only see our limited resources. For us, they may be simply five loaves and two small fish. However, when we place them in the Master’s hands, those five loaves and two fish are more than enough to feed the multitude. God will use anyone or anything to accomplish His will for our lives. All He needs from us is our trust and obedience and He will do the rest.

Beloved, I’m not sure what impossible situation that you may be facing but God wants you to know that whatever it is, it is not beyond His ability to fix.

God is able my friends!

Love,

Pastor Penn

“They that Know Him”

Text: Psalms 9:10, “And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.”

To know God’s name is to know Him, but more importantly, it is to be known by Him. For when we really know Him, it is because God knows us. Knowing God, goes beyond a superficial encounter or relationship, it is to know Him intimately. David, despite all of his faults knew God intimately. He had a strong desire to know God and sought after Him. His passion for God was so great that he declared, “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” (Psalms 42:1-2).

They that know God place their trust in Him, because like David, they realize that God is indeed trustworthy and will never forsake them. Throughout his life, David faced much trouble. He was abandoned and had his life threatened by his father in law, King Saul, betrayed by his son, Absalom who also tried to kill him and abandoned by his closest friends. However, through it all, David overcame because of his relationship with God. Many of his Psalms are dedicated to God because He delivered him from all of his enemies.

Beloved, we too will face threats, betrayal and being abandoned by our family or friends. However, because we know God, we can put our trust in Him. For He’s indeed trustworthy, He will deliver or sustain us and He will never abandon us.

Love,

Pastor Penn

"Trust God"

Text: Job 23:8-10, "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

Faced with the toughest challenges of his life, Job cried out, "If only I could find God, I will explain to Him my dilemma and he would rescue me" (vv.3-6). Unable to find God, Job desperately cried, "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (vv.8-10).

Beloved, during times where pain and suffering are everywhere and God seems to be nowhere, it is then that we need to trust Him the most. God is not insensitive to our needs, He is not oblivious to our cause. God knows our journey is sometimes heavy, and He is there when we can't find or perceive Him. However, when we trust Him, we will discover that He was there all the time.

Trust God my friends!

Love,

Pastor Penn

“Come Boldly”

Text: Hebrews 4:16, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

Several years ago when the late President Jimmy Carter was president, his daughter, Amy interrupted a live presidential interview. His staff struggled to minimize the disruption without offending the president by mistreating his daughter. Young Amy didn’t understand the nuances of protocol, she just wanted to spend some time with her daddy.

When President Carter saw Amy, he simply reached for her, and she boldly ran into his opened arms. As I reflect on that encounter, it reminds me that my Heavenly Father wants me to come before Him boldly. God through Christ went through great lengths to ensure that He could relate to our humanity. Since Christ was tempted in all points like we are, but did not sin, He’s able to help us when we’re tempted (v.15). Therefore, we can confidently approach Him, so that we may obtain mercy when we fail, and find grace to help us when we need it.

Beloved, like young Amy, we can come before God’s throne boldly, for we’re welcome. Our Heavenly Father loves us dearly, wants to spend time with us, and literally moved heaven and earth so that we could come before Him.

Come boldly before God my friends, for we’re welcome at His throne!

Love,

Pastor Penn

“We Can Depend on God”

Text: Psalms 27:10, “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.”

Are you feeling abandoned? Does it seem like those closest to us have forsaken us? Why is it that those that we have been there for, tend not to be there for us when we need them most? The reality is, people will not always be there because they might be limited by circumstance. However, God is always there. We can depend on Him.

David understood this when he said, “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up” (v.10). While Scripture does not record David’s parents abandoning him, his point is clear. When he felt orphaned or abandoned by his parents, David knew that He could depend on God. He could depend on God because He would not forsake him.

Beloved, when those closest to us forsake us, we’re not alone. For God is with us, He will never leave or forsake us. He promised to be with us always.

We can depend on God, my friends!

Love,

Pastor Penn

“Trials Are Not Strange”

Text: 1 Peter 4:12-13, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

None of us like to be tried, we struggle with the thought of experiencing hardships, and we're often surprised when we go through. The truth is, we should not be surprised when we go through or think it strange that we are being tried. Trials are not strange or foreign to us as Believer's, they are a natural aspect of our lives.

Speaking to a church experiencing intense persecution, Peter said, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (12-13). In essence, our fiery trials are not strange because God often uses them to purify, transform, and develop us. We should not be surprised by or loathe being tried, but we should embrace them. We should embrace trials because they are necessary to propel us to our destiny.

Think it not strange when we're tried my friends. Trials are not strangers to us, they are our friends.

Love,

Pastor Penn

“God is with Us”

Text: Isaiah 43:2, “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”

God is with us at all times. He is with us during the good and bad times. God is with us when trials war against us. His presence with us assures us that we will overcome. I vividly remember facing a bully and having to involve one of my cousins. He said to me, “Wayne, I have your back and I will stop by and let the bully know that I have your back.” The next day prior to my cousin’s arrival, the bully confronted me and I simply told him what my cousin said. Those words stopped the bully dead in his tracks and we are now friends.

When God said to ancient Judah and subsequently us, “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee” (v.2), He assured us of His presence and protection. Sometimes, when the bully shows up, it appears like God is not there, but He is. We know that He is with us, because He gave us His word.

Beloved, because God is with us, life’s watery obstacles and it’s fiery trials will not defeat us. God is with us, just like He delivered them then, He will deliver us now.

Love,

Pastor Penn

“Serving is Important”

Text: Matthew 20:28, “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

It’s been an honor and a privilege to have served in the military for 24.5 years. Serving in the military literally changed my life. It was during my service that I became a Christian, met and married the love of my life, had children, and served with some of the greatest people that I’ve ever met.

Serving taught me that it is not about money, prestige, or benefits, it’s about fulfilling one’s purpose.

According to Dr. Martin Luther King “If a man has not discovered something he will die for, he isn't fit to live.” Dr King spoke about the importance of having purpose and conviction beyond one's own individual concerns. History is filled with countless persons who rose to the occasion and chose purpose over personal safety. However, Jesus is in a class by Himself, because He came to serve and to die that we might live. Matthew reiterated this, when he wrote, “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (v.28).

Be encouraged my friends, serving is important. Everyone may not have served in the military, but you can serve your family, community, and others. A special shoutout to all veterans; thank you for your service.

Love,

Pastor Penn

Word of the Day (Nov 18, 25)

"Down but not Out"

Text: Judges 16:28, "And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes."

The story of Samson, an Old Testament judge during Israel's Tribal Period, reads like a soap opera. It is filled with lust, lies, deception, and failure. Sampson lost his strength (anointing) because he broke his vow to God, gambled with the devil and lost, and laid his head in the wrong woman's lap.

However, despite his many failings, God did not give up on Sampson and Sampson did not give up on God. In probably his lowest moment as he was being humiliated by the Philistines, Samson asked God to strengthen him just one last time (v.28). God heard his prayers, strengthened him, and in his final act as a judge, Samson destroyed more of Israel's enemies in his death than he did throughout his life (v.30).

Beloved, sometimes in this life we might struggle, stray, and lose focus. When this occurs, don't give up, but repent and pray. When you do, God will answer, He will forgive and restore your strength.

Be encouraged my friends, you may be down, but you're not out!

Love,

Pastor Penn