

Monday, June 29, 2009

Perspective / Perception / Perseverance . . . three powerful words that have major affect on how you and I live our lives each day, right?

Today begins a very significant week in America, in Walworth County and at Calvary, for this weekend will be July 4th which is huge for our nation and our county. It's also an important week for Calvary as we keep reaching to the people of Walworth County, this time through our Patriotic Celebration. Now, look at "the fourth of July" through those three words in the first line today . . .

Without Perseverance, the fight for our Independence would have ended in failure . . . imagine who you would be today?! James 3 is our summer reading chapter for today, one of the most powerful in the Bible as it deals strongly with our TONGUE! Read it slowly friends and invite the Holy Spirit to speak honestly to you about the reputation you have as a result of your vocabulary, your voice inflections, even your body language when you speak.

This past weekend David Ring was with us, and I'm sure you struggled some trying to understand every word he spoke because of his limitations. But here's my question: How quickly did the content of his message overcome the style of his delivery so the Holy Spirit was able to touch your heart? Do you see how "perseverance" empowered by God Himself has transformed Dave from a person most would disregard or even ignore, to a man God can use to powerfully touch America, especially the Christian people of America?

Consider Romans 5:1-5 today and seek to understand what God is saying to you regarding a whole new perspective on your Christian Perseverance. What is the "suffering that produces perseverance" in your life and how are you responding? How do you see God's power unleashed in your life in the face of your challenges, producing perseverance?

Tuesday, June 30, 2009

Yesterday I gave you three big words. Would you look at the first line and those words again? Perseverance in large measure is a product of both perception and perspective isn't it? So, what's your perspective on pain and pride? Today our reading is James 4 and you'll be challenged to consider "what causes fights and quarrels among you". Read this chapter carefully and then look into the concordance of your Bible under the word "PRIDE". I suggest you look up three or four of those verses and then write here a summary statement . . . what is your PERCEPTION of God's PERSPECTIVE on the matter of PRIDE?

Do you see how much God detests PRIDE? Why? Pride, of course is the root of rebellion. Pride is the foundation for most of the negative, wounding attitudes (bitterness, criticism, sarcasm, gossip, anger, resentment etc). Pride says "I know best, my way is right, I am more valuable than you", etc. If we're not careful, Pride can turn us into gods ourselves as we push God out and demand to be in control! Notice how many times in James 4 God invites us to see ourselves from His Perspective, and then invites us to be perceptive as to how pride may be creeping into our lives, our relationships, our business dealings, even our spirituality!

So, what have you found God most effectively uses to caution you against pride that is beginning to well up in you? How do you normally respond? Are you living James 4:10?

Wednesday, July 1, 2009

This summer we're considering "Anchors for the Soul" and this week it's PERSEVERANCE. *Sometimes the storms have been permitted by God to strengthen us!* Have you noticed the Bible sometimes refers to God's people as oak trees? Check out Isaiah 61:1-3, read it carefully and see if you can see the great hope God is speaking over His people? Yes, Jesus quoted a portion of that when He introduced Himself that day in the Synagogue of His hometown Nazareth (Luke 4:14-19), but did you read on and notice the response of the people who had watched Him grow up?

Oak trees . . . strong, deep roots, big leaves, acorns, hard wood, huge after many years, etc. One of the reasons I love Walworth County is oak trees! They're majestic, would you agree? I'm sure you understand one of the reasons they're as strong as they are is the power of our storms in the Midwest. As "saplings", in the fury of our summer thunderstorms, they're whipped and they force their roots deep and wide to build a strong foundation to withstand future storms. How do we do that as people . . . especially God's people? James 5, is part of the answer, as is Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17:5-10. What does God say to you in those Scriptures? Do you see God's plan for helping you drive your tap root deeply into His truth? Do you see the need for surrounding yourself with men and women who can speak truth, encouragement, accountability into your life? Do you see the need for partners in life who will help you grow in the storm, rather than enable you to live a life of excuses that will eventually cause you to be very vulnerable?

Do you see, most of all, God's design is that your Perseverance is rooted in HIM, a strong and unshakable relationship with Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit of God. Yes, our relationship with Jesus is strengthened in the storms . . . storms which produce perseverance in our confidence God is with us in those storms. Are you an OAK?

Thursday, July 2, 2009

Today we're beginning to read the exciting book of Exodus, if you are tracking with us in our summer Scripture reading. Remember, there are more than 300 years of time between the end of Genesis and beginning of Exodus. You may want to look back to the last few chapters of Genesis to remember the story of Joseph, his brothers and their dad Jacob. Remember why they ended up in Egypt, hundreds of miles away from the homeland God had given Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Remember the rejection and abuse Joseph suffered from his brothers and the remarkable sense of abandonment by God he must have felt as a slave in Egypt, especially when his boss' wife accused him of attempted rape and he ended up in prison? Remember God's empowerment of Joseph so he could "persevere" as a man of God and not reject God or defile himself, so when Pharaoh needed a man to lead the "famine management project" Joseph was the obvious best choice. Now, what does that teach us about God's sustaining strength in the storms of life that seem unfair, way too long and especially when it seems God is silent?

May I ask you to consider the various "anchors" we've already looked at this summer:

- Jesus Christ
- The Holy Spirit
- Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus
- Truth
- Perseverance Empowered by God

Now, as you face prolonged difficult times in your life which require difficult perseverance, where do you find it? Do you see for Joseph, God's people as slaves and many others, it's a confidence God is Who He claims to be, He is fully aware of your situation, and He will empower your perseverance!

Friday, July 3, 2009

This is the 4th of July weekend! Tonight again is our Patriotic concert. Would you please pray God will bring many people who need the encouragement of God's people, and that the celebration may draw them to consider Jesus! Have you thought about WHY America has been so blessed in these 233 years? Have you given thought to how highly America has traditionally valued God and God's name? Do you see significant changes happening in our country regarding our respect for God, and do you see evidence that God is removing His hand of blessing on our nation?

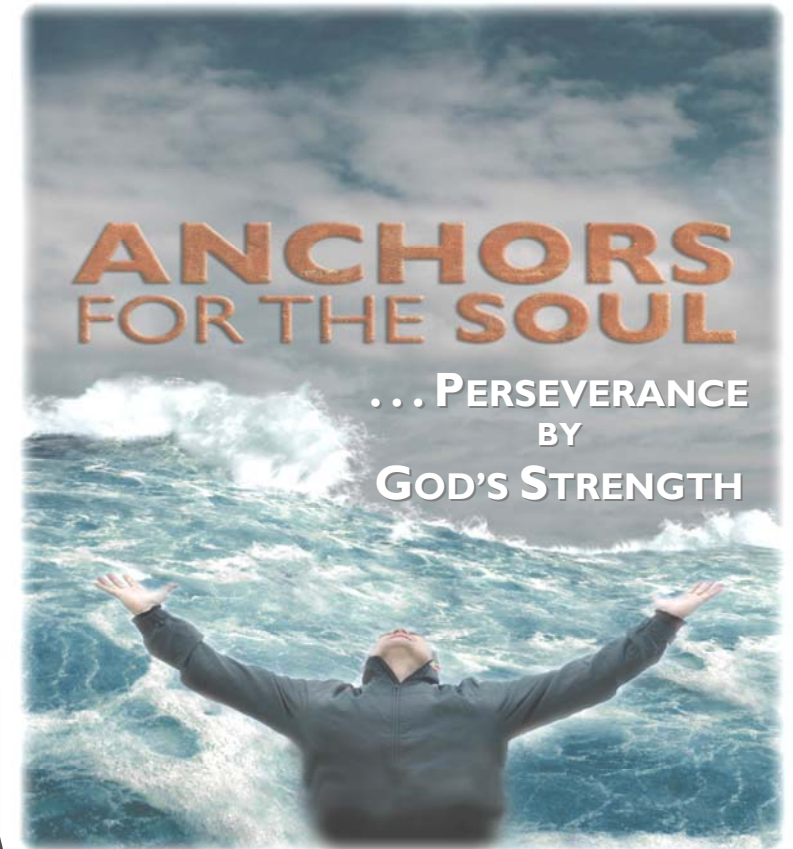
Today we are reading Exodus 2. God had not given up on His people . . . but there was a serious problem. They should not have been living several hundred years in Egypt. Their God-given homeland lay abandoned by God's people! They had settled for "the best in the land" (Genesis 47) and soon found themselves in bondage, first their hearts were captivated by living in Egypt, and before long their bodies were enslaved too! Be careful . . . are we on the same road? Have our hearts drifted far from God, been ensnared by things that turn us away from God, and have you noticed our national debt is owned by foreign nations and too many jobs have left our shores? Listen closely and you'll hear God's call to come back to Him! "Return to Me and I will return to you, says the LORD God Almighty" (Malachi 3:6).

May I urge you this holiday weekend to search your hearts and minds regarding the changes we will need to make as a people in Walworth County, if we desire God's blessing to be poured out once again here? Remember 2 Chronicles 7:14 and Jeremiah 29:11-13? As you read over those and pray about it . . . what is God saying to you?



Pastor Doug Anderson

June 29 - July 3, 2009



Verse of the Week

"Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him."
(James 1:12)



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