

Perseverance and the Grace of God

Introduction and Review

- We have considered God's goodness to everyone as common grace & His goodness to believers as special grace.
- We have considered the effect of saving grace on the sinner & the effect of sanctifying grace on the saint.
- We have seen the godly impact of grace in a believer's personal life: speaking, listening, humility, thankfulness, etc.
- We observed the godly impact of grace in a believer's ministry: desire, motivation, effectiveness, gifts, generosity, etc.
- We have been awestricken to see that the grace of God really can be & really is that good!

I. Perseverance at the Beginning

A. Perseverance defined

*Perseverance (προσκαρτέρησις) means a firm persistence in an undertaking or circumstance. Perseverance (ὑπομονή) also means to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty. Other NT words are translated **remain**, **continue** or **stand firm**. NT uses athletic imagery (2Tim. 4:7; Heb. 12:1).*

B. Perseverance commanded

*Perseverance is essential to all aspects of the Christian life. Therefore it is commanded in: prayer (Lk. 18:1; Col. 4:2), Christian teaching (Ac. 2:42; 2Tim. 3:14), divine love (Jude 20-21), Christian freedom (Gal. 5:1), doing good (Gal. 6:9), affliction (2Th. 1:4), grace (Ac. 13:43), faith (Col. 1:23) & Christ (1Jn. 2:28). **It is not optional, but essential!***

II. Perseverance Until the End

A. Perseverance warnings

People should never presume upon God's grace as if sin does not matter & sanctification is optional (Rom. 6:1-2). The scriptures warn about falling away from God (Heb. 3:12; 2Pe. 1:10). There are examples of people who fell away: Judas (Jn. 17:12), Demas (2Tim. 4:10), Hymenaeus & Philetus (2Tim. 2:16-18). The consequences are dreadful: disqualified (1Co. 9:27), falling (1Co. 10:12) & apostasy (Heb. 6:1-8).

B. Perseverance accomplished

*Jesus assures believers that perseverance is possible & must be accomplished (Mt. 10:22). **Believers persevered in the 1st century with hatred, persecution, homelessness, hunger, imprisonment, torture, threats & brutal death. They did not compromise or give – “Let goods & kindred go...” We can persevere too – God has not changed! It involves God's sovereignty: promises, presence & provisions (Mt. 28:20b; Heb. 13:5c; 2Co. 12:9; 10:4-5; Phil. 4:19). It also involves human responsibility (1Co. 15:58). Even though God has given us everything to persevere, He will not do it for us!***

ILL: A coach can provide all the equipment for the team, the plays, practices, field/track/gym, motivation & everything else to prepare the players, but he cannot play the game for them. A teacher can provide testing materials, training, instructions, drills, sample quizzes & motivation for a student to take a test, but the teacher cannot take the test for the student.

APPL: The same is true with God & the believer. He provides everything necessary for the believer to persevere, but the believer must in fact persevere with godly resolve, character & disciplines.

CONCLUSION

So then my beloved brother or sister, have you considered the fact that persevering in faith to the end of your life is the only acceptable outcome for God. Failure is not an option; quitting, giving up, walking away, turning back are not acceptable options for anyone destined for heaven. Regardless of the level of opposition, hatred, threats & even danger that you must experience, God has already given you everything you need to finish your Christian race. If you need more grace, God provides abundantly...; more patience, peace, courage, strength, hope, encouragement, joy, wisdom, light, liberty, power, mighty miracle, deliverance... We are more than conquerors through Christ who loved us & God is causing all things to work together for our good; nothing is too hard/impossible for Him. Therefore you can & you must persevere to the end (1Co. 15:58)!

And if you are not a Christian, there is only one way for you to finish this life with any hope; only one way for you to persevere through life without giving up; only one way to be absolutely certain about your future for the rest of this life & all eternity. Jesus is the way...; and you must believe in Him first...

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