

Steadfast Faith

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: Epic Faith

Text: 2 Peter 1:5-6 (NKJV, AMP, CSB)

Many of us pursue our faith, but not all of us **grow** in our faith. The reasons may vary for all of us but one of the main reasons is that many Christians have not learned to be **steadfast** under trials and pressure. Many people will start out walking by faith but the question is what do we do when the road gets **rocky** or difficult. Being a follower of Jesus is not easy, life is filled with temptations, distractions and fears that are designed to keep us from accomplishing what God has for our lives.

To have steadfast faith is to stand firm, to be immovable in our convictions and to refuse to waver and be moved from the path God has for our lives. To be steadfast is to be spiritually, emotionally and physically **committed** to stay the course God has laid out for us and to be holy and courageous while doing it. **Hebrews 10:36 (AMP)** God doesn't want us to just have the strength to get through or to get by, He wants us to **enjoy** living in the promises after we have made it through.

In Hebrews Chapter 11 we see what is known as the Hall of **Faith**. When we look at the lives of these amazing Christians we are reminded that they all faced incredible persecution, stress and pressure. Every one of these people stood in faith even until death. The Apostle Paul reminds us that because we have their example we can and should do the same thing. **Hebrews 12:1-3**

There are four things that we are instructed to do:

1. Throw off everything in our life that **hinders**. (weighs you down) Lighten the Load
2. Cast aside every **sin** that entangles or trips us up and prevents us from walking. Sin wears you out and will always weary you and fill you with guilt and frustration. We are free to run.
3. We are to **run** our race (Life) with perseverance. Press on.
4. We are to **fix** or set our eyes on Jesus. (Our Prize) Keep your head up, keep breathing don't look at the problems, don't think about how tired you are or how much further you have to go. Don't look down you can't see where you are going. Keep your head up looking at Jesus.

There are several words that are vital to understanding the entire meaning behind patient endurance.

- ❖ **Determination**- resolve, staying power, grit, **backbone**, will power, tenacity, spunk and courage. Firmness of purpose, not changing or budging because things get hard.
- ❖ **Perseverance**- This deals with the grit to keep going no matter how difficult, dirty or tired you are. It is responding to difficulty with persistence and **optimism**. Optimism is simply **hope**. It is not only the faith that God can and will but that **you** can and will as well.
- ❖ **Patience**- is two things: it is the ability to **wait**; it is also the ability to wait with the right **attitude** with no loss of strength and no wavering in direction or expectation.
Isaiah 40:31, Isaiah 30:15 If you have ever asked God for patience you will notice that most of us wind up confused about what is happening. He not only allows things to go on for a long time He starts working on our why and in our attitude while dealing with the why. Usually the issue is not the situations that we are dealing with but with our own heart.

- ❖ **Endurance**- simply perseverance without a **clock**. It is stamina, the ability to go the distance over the long haul. The ability to keep going despite a long period of hardship or trial. It is the ability to “tough” it out in the strength of God.
Many people can tough it out for a while but they start losing it when they think that the clock is not their friend. You do not need a clock to be your friend if you truly understand that you are a friend of God.
- ❖ **Persistence**- The **willingness** to keep going. It is a decision to never **quit** or give up.
- ❖ **Gravitas**- This is uncompromising integrity, **dignity**, propriety and good taste demonstrated in quality behavior and speech. It is remaining calm and collected while everyone around you is losing their head and their cool. Christians should be the **classiest** of people regardless of their situation and personality.
- ❖ **Resilience**- The ability to **recover** from adversity, challenges or setbacks. The ability to spring back into shape. It is the flexibility to go through difficulty without the difficulty reshaping and redefining you. Resilience is the ability to **prepare** for disruptions, recover from shock and stress and **adapt** and grow from disruptive experiences. It is the ability to withstand, recover, adapt and to grow in the face of pressure.
Resilience and patient endurance is not only the ability to bounce back it is the willingness to push through thru an obstacle or setback in the power of God. It is realizing that God is **enough**.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

His **grace** is enough and more than enough; in other words it is sufficient. **Matthew 6:34**

Grace is the **favor** of God on our life. It is unearned and undeserved but it is ours. His grace is not only sufficient for our salvation but it is an active part of our everyday life for every child of God.

Resilience is the perfect mixture of endurance, persistence and perseverance.

Resilience is being anti- **fragile**. **Proverbs 24:10 (NKJV & NLT)**

Those who are resilient are committed to **growth**. This is the natural outcome of failing forward. When you start looking for **lessons** you set yourself up to grow personally. Resilient isn't something that you are, it is something you learn and **develop**. It is in life's difficulties that you actually take on the shape that God created you to be. The ability to bounce back from a setback often makes the difference between winning and losing. It turns out that after many studies, success has little to do with intelligence, personality, appearance or social standing. Success is not about acting quickly or easily. It is about pressing on in spite of challenges and disappointment.

Learning has to deal with gaining skills, abilities and understanding that you have personally sought out and **applied** yourself to. Many people assume that the more talented you are the more successful you will be. Natural talent can actually hinder success because people choose to rely too strongly on that and have a difficulty overcoming challenges because they are unwilling to grow beyond where they are. Those who accept their lack of skill and apply themselves achieve much more.

Those who are resilient refuse to **give-up** or quit. Quitting is more about who you are than where you are. Everyone faces difficulty when working towards something. Resilient people do not make **excuses**; they take responsibility realizing that it is rarely the external things that stop us. Grit is passion and perseverance on a daily basis. Paul called it **pressing** on towards the prize of the High Calling in Christ Jesus. **Philippians 3:14-15 (AMP)**

People who grow are consistently adding to their character. One of the ways we grow is by learning to persevere. Perseverance is learning to do something even when it is difficult to do and there is a delay in the outcome. Endurance goes through the situation. Perseverance is doing what you need to do as you go through the situation. It is learning, growing and stretching so you can accomplish what needs done.

Those who have developed endurance learn to meet and solve problems by welcoming the pain they bring so they can grow mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

Sociologists who have studied this tell us people handle trauma in one of two ways:

- 1) They either give up because they are afraid or
- 2) They grow-up by developing the capacity to handle it.

Just like quitting is a pattern that is hard to break so is resilience. The more we determine to be faithful and endure the easier it is to choose that path. **James 1:2-4 (CSB)**

How we consider things is a matter of attitude. A negative attitude only makes a problem worse. Negativity is a magnifier and an amplifier. It takes small issues and increases their emotional weight. It can make a “mountain out of a mole hill.” Negativity magnifies the problem; the correct attitude will magnify the Lord over the problem.

Negative attitudes can paralyze us. The Bible says consider it an opportunity for joy. Have you ever been around those people that, when they encounter issues, setbacks, difficulties and break downs, just roll up their sleeves and jump right in. Their attitude is we can do this. Me and Jesus got this. The right attitude will calm you down and, instead of your mind racing, you begin to be filled with creativity and ideas. A positive attitude is a momentum builder. Fear immobilizes; faith sees every problem as a new opportunity to get energized about solving something.

Endurance understands that there is purpose in the pain. **Hebrews 12:7-11**

Out of endurance comes righteousness and peace. This is a part of adding to our faith. Walking by faith and not by sight means we have learned how to live in peace through life’s most trying times.

The next step of faith is Godliness.