

Do you **ever feel** like just

“Givin Up”, “Throwin in the Towel”, “Callin it Quits”

Every time I’ve seen this happen - **lurking** in the background,
undermining the Foundation - - is the word . . . **DISCOURAGEMENT**

Discouragement is the Devil’s **Favorite tool**

If **he** can get us to **give in** to his *whispers* of **DOUBT** & **FEAR**
& **SELF-PITY** - then he can stir up **ANGER**, **ENVY**, **JEALOUSY**

Not to mention a LIST of **other** destructive **sins** . . .
& **Then** - - He’s got us in **DEEP TROUBLE**

Back when we were teaching **Philippians** - I had **told the story**
about the **Devil** having a **Garage sell**

you know - **clear out** the **tool shed** & **raise** a few bucks . . .

Well - the **devil** **deciding** to sell some of his **tools**

& as a **buyer** was lookin around -

he **noticed** a tool labeled ***“Not for sale”*** - & he asked about it

The **devil** answered, ***“I can spare some of my other tools,
but I cannot spare this one”***

This **might be** the **most useful** tool **I have** against Christians

it’s called **Discouragement**, and with it I can **work my way** into hearts
that are **otherwise faithful, & strong**

When I get *this tool* into a person's heart (even a Godly person),
the way is open for me to plant anything I want in there

There was a time, when the Children of Israel were DISCOURAGED

They had been taken away as Slaves to Babylon, Their Temple,
& the city of Jerusalem, had been destroyed

They thought for sure God had abandoned them - forsaken them

& at just that time God sent them a Prophet named JEREMIAH
& gave him THESE WORDS for the nation of Israel

Jeremiah 29:11–13 (ESV)

*11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans
for welfare (good) and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

*12 Then (after your time of discouragement) you will call upon me
and come and pray to me, and I will hear you.*

*13 You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your
heart.*

IF you belong to Jesus Christ today
then **GOD IS FOR YOU . . .**

RIGHT In the MIDST of the Difficulties, the Trials, the Struggles

GOD IS FOR US !!

He is at work for our good
& He has a good plan & a Good Purpose . . . *Amen ??*

Let's Pray

We're in our **TENTH MSG** in the **ABIDE** series
& I think it **might** be our **last Msg** in this series . . .

& so I **want to talk** about what it means
to **PERSEVERE in ABIDING**

Remember - to **ABIDE in CHRIST** means
“a continuous Living in Union with Christ”
“being Vitaly United to Christ”

& we EACH - Have a VITAL Need
to **PERSEVERE** in our ***continuous Living in Union with Christ***
our ***“being Vitaly United to Christ”***

How many of you know - God **OFTEN** Uses
TRIALS & DIFFICULTIES - **for our GOOD** ??

Even in our **Discouragement**
God is **AT WORK** - For our **GOOD**

Our **JOB** - is to **PERSEVERE in ABIDING**
in our ***Continuous Living in Union with Christ***

God is at Work for our GOOD
He's got a **GOOD plan** & a **GOOD Purpose**
& He's **PROMISED** to bring us through **VICTORIOUSLY**

ALL we have to do - is **CLING to our VITAL UNION with Him**
& He WILL - CARRY us thru - the Difficulties of this life

Let's take a **look** today - at just a **SAMPLING** of scriptures on **this subject**

I **can't** teach them **all** - I just want to **read them** to you

Romans 12:12 (ESV)

12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

Matthew 24:13 (ESV)

13 . . . the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Romans 5:2–5 (ESV)

2 . . . we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,

4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,

5 and hope does not put us to shame . . .

James 1:2–3 (ESV)

2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,

3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

1 Peter 1:6–7 (ESV)

6 In this (your inheritance) you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,

7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

& **the GRANDDADDY Vs's** on **Perseverance**

Hebrews 12:1–3 (ESV)

1 . . . let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

**& Finally - May the Apostle Paul's Personal Commitment
Be OUR Personal Commitment**

Philippians 3:13–14 (ESV)

13 . . . But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,

14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Can you SAY AMEN ???

God **DESIRES** to use our Trials for **Good**,
to **Grow** us, & to **Use us** as a **TESTIMONY** for Him

But we have to **JOIN Him** in the **good work**
that He **desires** to do - - **in the Midst** of our difficulty

When we **Persevere in Abiding**, we become
a **Tremendous Witness** to the **unbelieving** world

when the world looks at us & sees
that **SUPERNATURAL PEACE** IN THE Midst of our trials

They can't Debate that, they can't Criticize that,
they have to acknowledge

SOMETHING is different . . . & it just Might Be - - JESUS !!

Psalm 59:16 (ESV)

16 But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress.

But the ONLY WAY we can SING *that song* to the LORD

Is if we have EXPERIENCED Him

as our FORTRESS, & our REFUGE, in the Day of our DISTRESS

Jesus Promised us in John 16

that IF we will Continue to ABIDE in Him

We can have PEACE - that OVERCOMES the trials of this world

But what we CAN'T DO

is AVOID the Trials & Difficulties of this world

The Bible NEVER says we can AVOID them

But it ALWAYS says the Lord will go through them - with us

There is a day recorded in the life of Jesus

that is so filled with STRESS & DIFFICULTY . . .

that it would make our MOST STRESSFUL DAYS,

look like a VACATION

This day - or portions of it - are recorded in **ALL FOUR** Gospels

the **only other** event recorded in **ALL FOUR** Gospels
is the **Crucifixion**

God **wants us to know**, with Certainty -
what **Jesus** & His **Disciples went thru** - on this day

There's much that can be **taught** in this **Overwhelming Text** -
but **the lesson** I need you to **hear** today is

When it comes to us being **TIRED**, & **OVERWHELMED**,
being in **OVER your HEAD** - & wanting to **GIVE UP** . . .

When it comes to **PERSEVERANCE** - Jesus **KNOWS** how you feel -
He has **BEEN THERE !!** - **HE KNOWS**

When putting **ALL 4** gospel accounts of this day **together**
The **exact timing** of each event is **not PERFECTLY** Clear

but **we know this** - **ALL** of this occurs basically at the same "**TIME**"
possibly on the very **same day**

It's all recorded in **MAT 14**, **MARK 6**, **LUKE 9**, **JOHN 6**
& all **together** - it makes for some **incredible** reading

[Mat 14] It all **begins** with **Jesus** hearing
about the **death of His cousin** - **John the Baptist**

But **not only** His **Cousin** - John was His **Friend**, **Forerunner**,
Co-Laborer - & now, he'd been **murdered**

Herod beheaded **John** the Baptist - the **disciples** had **buried** him,
& then **come to tell Jesus** about it

But along with the news of John's death, came a warning

Luke 9:9 (ESV)

9 Herod said, "John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?" And he sought to see him (Jesus).

Certainly there was more than a "social visit" on Herod's mind here

So Jesus was dealing with the Death of possibly His closest friend AND the guy that killed John, was now looking for Jesus

During that exact same time Luk 9 tells us the Disciples had been sent out on their very first Missionary trip

It had been a extremely EVENTFUL & EXHAUSTING for them all

& JUST as Jesus was receiving the News about the Death of his friend AND the news about Herod's threat toward Him

At that same time, the 12 Disciples were returning from this incredible ministry trip

They had seen Great Miracles & they wanted to talk about then - & they were also Extremely Exhausted

& so - for a number of Reasons - Jesus decides to take some time off

Mark 6:31-32 (ESV)

31 And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. (now THAT, is Busy)

32 And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves.

BUT Then - the Very **Next Vs** tells us

Mark 6:33 (ESV)

33 Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them.

& so, **While Mourning** for **John the Baptist**, **with threats** from Herod,
Trying to **take care** of a **Dozen** overwhelmed **Disciples** -
Jesus tries to just **get away** for a few days

But now - instead - there is a **throng** of **Selfish people**
WAITING for Him - When He **really** just needed some **REST**

& Guys - Jesus **felt EVERY Single** Thing
that **you** & **I** would **feel** in this time - of **overwhelming stress**

He had **thousands of people** pressing in on Him
when He really - **just needed** to be **alone**

But **instead** of responding how **we** would've responded

Luk 9:11 says - ***and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing.***

THAT - is **Persevering in Ministry**

BUT - This Day is **not over** yet

When the **day** was **FAR SPENT**,
& when **Jesus** & the **Disciples** were **FAR SPENT**

Somebody realized there were **5,000 men**, plus families
who all the sudden, were **HUNGRY**

The disciples had **hoped** they'd just all **go away** -

But **instead**, Jesus **FEEDS THEM**, every single one of them

& the **Bone-Weary Disciples** had to do all the **leg-work**

Finally - as the day **should have been** ending - - **Mark 6** says

Jesus **MADE** His disciples get into a boat to cross the lake again

& **Jesus** Himself **went up** on a **mountain**

to get some **time alone** with the **Father** in prayer

It had been an **extremely exhausting** day -

so much **stress** - so many **demands** - by **so many people**

Overwhelming, Exhausting, Grueling

Jesus needed time alone with the **Father**

& we pick up the story in Mark 6:46-48(a)

46 And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray.

47 And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land.

48 And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them . . . (MAT says - they were being beaten by the waves)

Now - I know it's **easy to Spiritualize** this part of the story

& **for some lessons** it's good

But remember - **Jesus** is **100% Man**, **100% God**

& **right now** - the **100% God**, had to inspire the **100% Man**

to go out there & take care of the **100% SCARED** Disciples

Mark 6:45 already told us
Jesus **MADE** them get into the boat

& so we Know God's at WORK for the Disciples good
but **EVERYBODY** is **Overwhelmed** & **Exhausted** at this point

Just like you & I get - **when it's**
one **crisis** after **another**, after **another**, after **another**

This is the **Big Picture** I'm trying to **show** you

Jesus **KNOWS** - He's **BEEN THERE** - He really **does understand**

So Jesus **GOES** to His Disciple's
WALKING on the Water - in the **MIDST** of the Storm

AND . . . The Disciples **FAIL** the **Initial Test**

MAT 14 says - *they were TERRIFIED when they say Jesus, & they thought He was a GHOST*

Can't you **just imagine** Jesus, **walking** on the **water**,
in the **Midst** of the **Storm**

& **putting** His **hand to His forehead** with an **OY-VAY!!**

But - - it's **not over** yet
PETER decides **HE** wants to **walk** on the water

Which brings Jesus **a moment** of real **encouragement**

But then - Peter's faith **FAILS**, He **SINKS**, Jesus has to **SAVE HIM**
& carry him **BACK** into the boat

FINALLY - this incredible string of **Crisis**, **Trials**, & **Difficulties**,
ALL in ONE DAY . . . finally **comes** to an **end**

Matthew 14:32–33 (ESV)

32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

& **Jesus** & the **Disciples** had
the **WHOLE** rest of **THAT NIGHT** to rest,

before they **hit shore** the next day - Where the **same** Needy **people**
were **waiting for them** all over again

Guys - **PLEASE** - **PLEASE** *Hear me*

When **you** are **OVERWHELMED**
& you **think** you just **can't go on**

REMEMBER - Jesus **KNOWS** - **HE KNOWS**

He **KNOWS** how you **feel**,
He **KNOWS** what you're **going thru**

& you can **RUN** to Him - - He **KNOWS**
He **UNDERSTANDS** - from **PERSONAL** Experience

He has **been Us** - in Every Way
& He has **experienced EVERYTHING** we have Experienced

Yet - **Without Sin**

So often - we're like that young boy
whose Dad was trying to teach him how to play basketball

The Dad would easily launch the Ball right up to the Basket
& then give it to his young son,

who would push with all his might, but the ball would only make it
half way to the basket before falling back to earth

& the Dad would pick up the ball & say again to his son,
like this son, & again easily launch the ball

well - after a few times of this,
the boy became Exasperated - & finally said to his dad

***“Yeah, it’s easy for you up there,
but you don’t know how hard it is from down here!”***

Guys - - Jesus **KNOWS** how hard it is, from ***“down here”***

Hebrews 4:15–16 (ESV)

15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Our High Priest - **CAN** sympathize with our weaknesses

IN **EVERY Respect**

Jesus Christ has been **Tried** & **Tested** as we are

Every **HURT**, Every **ACHE**,

All the **STRESS**, & All the **STRAINS** - - with **NO EXCEPTIONS**

WHY ?? . . .

So He could **SYMPATHIZE** with our **weaknesses**

& SO NOW - we can, ***with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, where we can receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need***

We can **COME** to Him - We can **CLING** to Him
He **UNDERSTANDS** - - He's **BEEN THERE**

AND - **THRU it ALL** - He has Emerged **VICTORIOUS**

SUPER Victorious - **More than a Conqueror**

& **WHEN** we are **ABIDING** in Him
IN HIM - We are also **Super Victorious**
We are also **More Than Conquerors**

Romans 8:37–39 (ESV)

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,

39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen ??

In **the last 3 msg's** in the **Abide series**

I've **tried** to include One - - **HOW**

& so **I'd like to do that** as we close today

- - Let's **turn over** to **1Pet Ch 5**

Here's one - HOW (one way) - You can PERSEVERE in ABIDING

1 Peter 5:6 (ESV)

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God . . .

To humble ourselves means to be EMPTY of SELF

or to LOWER our own ESTIMATION, or OPINION of our selves

It means we're not demanding God be our GENIE

We're giving Him FULL RIGHT over our lives, in ALL Areas

& THEN . . . the rest of V.6 says

1 Peter 5:6 (ESV)

. . . so that at the proper time he may exalt you,

Meaning in "HIS" time, or at the "RIGHT" time

According to HIS good Plan & HIS good Purpose

If we will Allow God - to be GOD - in our lives

& continue to ABIDE in His Love & His Care

Then, in HIS Time, He WILL Lift us

out of the difficulties that He has allowed us to pass thru

VS. 6 is about allowing GOD to be GOD

VS. 7 is about our Response to Him being OUR God

1 Peter 5:7 (ESV)

7 casting all your anxieties (cares) on him, because he cares for you.

If we will Truly PUT God in His rightful position in our lives

Then we will be able to cast all our anxieties upon Him

Anxiety most often **comes**
from the **FEAR** of **Losing Control** of something

But if we will **Surrender that Control** to God - as **V.6** says

Trusting that He is a **BETTER GOD** of our lives, than **we** our
& **Trusting** that He truly **CARES** for us

THEN - we can cast all our **anxieties**, **burdens**, **worries**, **concerns** -
ALL upon Him

Because we know - He's **in CHARGE**,
& we know - He **CARES** for us

This is a **PICTURE** of **PERSEVERING in ABIDING**

Continually **rolling your burdens** over to Him
& **allowing** Him - to **SUSTAIN** you

& **When** we do that - He **WILL sustain us** through the **Storms**

However - there is a "Bit More" to **Persevering in Abiding**
than **CASTING** all your **CARES** upon the Lord

You also have **an enemy** -
who **wants** to take you **OUT** of that **Abiding Relationship**

Continuing in 1Pet 5:8-9 (ESV)

8 Be sober-minded; be watchful (be seriously on alert). Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

9 Resist him, firm in your faith, . . .

The word translated **RESIST** means LIT
“**to stand firm against an onslaught, an attack**”

To be **FIRM in your faith** means be **IMMOVEABLE - STEADFAST**

You **HAVE** an Enemy -

He wants to **KNOCK you OUT** - of your **Abiding Relationship**

& Peter says;

Be **SERIOUSLY** on Alert

Stand **FIRM** against His Attacks

Be **IMMOVEABLE** in your Faith

PERSEVERE in Abiding !!

& then - **as encouragement** - Peter says - **You are NOT alone**

Continuing in 1Pet 5:9 (ESV)

. . . knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

Peter - on his way to being MARTYRED for the Faith, says

TAKE HEART - the same kind of sufferings that you are experiencing today, are being experienced by your brotherhood thru-out the world

Guys - We have **GOT** to get out of this **ALFALFA Mentality**

I'm **not talking** about the **Animal Feed**

I'm **talking** about the **Little Rascals**

& Alfalfa's famous quote - where he says

"Then the clouds opened up, & God said, I Hate You Alfalfa!"

God **LOVED** us - when we were sinners

He **DIED** for us - when we were His enemies

He **CARES** for us - as His own children

He **PROVIDES** for us - even when we don't deserve it

He's Reserved an **ETERNAL INHERITANCE** for us

He's **POURED OUT** His love into our hearts

He's our **SHEPHERD**

Our **REFUGE** - Our **ROCK**

Our **DWELLING PLACE** - Our **HOPE**

Our **STRENGTH** Our **LIGHT**

Our **HELP** - Our **KING**

Our **PORTION** - Our **SHIELD**

Our **HIGH TOWER**

We need to **STOP** acting like God **HATES us**

God **LOVES US**

& it is **NORMAL** for us to **Experience**

some **TRIBULATION** & **SUFFERING** in this **WORLD**

Jesus Christ **DID NOT DIE** - so we could **ESCAPE** the **TRIALS**

He **DIED** so we could be **VICTORIOUS THRU** the **TRIALS**

& **THAT** is **WHY** we must **PERSEVERE in ABIDING**

We must **NEVER** - **TURN** Away, **FALL** away, or **DRIFT** Away

IF we will Persevere in ABIDING - GOD WILL;

RESTORE us

CONFIRM us

STRENGTHEN us - &

ESTABLISH us

& **THAT** is exactly what our last verse says

1Peter 5:10-11 (ESV)

10 And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

11 To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Let's Pray