

# Three Good Reasons to Keep Showing Up

Date: January 7, 2024

Transition: Band Continues Softly

If you would remain standing for a moment I want to read our main text today. As everyone gets ready to mash the gas on this New Year I have a very specific message that God has laid on my heart for you. How many of you would say some exhaustion, some tiredness, some weariness began to set in towards the end of last year? My hand is raised! Maybe it's still lingering over you.

The Apostle Paul encourages us with this from Galatians 6. I actually shared this with all our awesome volunteers right before the holidays. But Paul writes:

**<sup>9</sup> Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we**

**DO NOT GIVE UP.** [Isn't that a good promise to begin 2024, turn to two people and tell them, "Do not give up! Paul goes on to say] **<sup>10</sup> Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people,**

**especially to those who belong to the family of believers.**

How many of you are ready to reap a harvest of blessing this year? I don't think you heard me, I said how many of you are ready to reap a harvest of blessing this year! Paul gives us the key and that's why I want to preach a message today I'm calling:

## **Three Good Reasons to Keep Showing Up**

Help me preach my message and tell two more people, two different people, tell them, "You need this today!" Let's ask God to open our hearts and minds and we will jump into this, pray with me.

### [PRAYER TIME]

Hey, before you grab a seat take :30 seconds and say "Hi" to some people around you. Thank you worship team! Happy New Year to everyone in our online family. I hope you had a great holiday season and that God's blessing and favor rests on you this year. Let us know how we can pray for you or serve you.

Well, I hope you guys all had a great Christmas and enjoyed our annual break in the Sunday routine. I think those pauses are important. Before we go any further, can we also just give God a shout of praise for everything He did on Christmas Eve, EVE! Lives were changed, eternities altered, Jesus was lifted high what a night!

BUT I'll be honest. The build up to all that was exhausting! That's why I love what the Apostle Paul says in our text today. He says, "Let us not become weary in doing good..." Which confirms the assumption that the pursuit of doing good can wear you out! Amen? Being a good leader can wear you out! Being a good employee can wear you out! Being a good spouse / parent can wear you out! Being a good example can wear you out! How good do you have to be? When is good enough, good enough?

I put this in my notes. We get weary when: **We think the results depend on us. We get frustrated with the pace of results. And we take responsibility for things we don't have authority over.**

But in the midst of this good work, there's an exhaustion that can set in. There is a tiredness and a weariness that comes when you are trying to do good things. AND sometimes there is another pattern that emerges. People who started with good intentions, over the course of time, begin to give up on the things that God has asked them to do.

Over the past 12-months I have watched people call it quits on a relationship that God had asked them to give their heart and soul to. I have watched people in the local church decide, "I'm done with church. I'm not going to continue to be faithful to my church family." I have watched other people give up on careers and callings that God had given to them. I've watched students and young people grow tired from the culture wars and give into a lifestyle that is not blessing or honoring to God.

And maybe today you are listening to my voice, and you feel that tension, there's an exhaustion or a tiredness or a weariness that has set in. God has sent me here today to give you a word of hope and a word of encouragement that, no matter how hard it is, there is a way forward for you! That you can be the kind of person who shows up where it matters most!

In Galatians chapter 6, the Apostle Paul is writing this letter to the church in Galatia. Paul was writing this letter to help them understand the grace of God. He wanted them to know that, regardless of what they had done in the past, regardless of their brokenness, that because of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, there was hope that they could be free from the power of sin and death, that they could have a relationship with God that wasn't based on religion or performance, but they could have a relationship with God that was based on grace through faith.

So, Paul describes this all throughout the book of Galatians. But then, at the end of the book, Paul gets into this concept of personal responsibility and obedience. And he wants them to understand, and for us today, this is God's truth for us, that grace does not abdicate us of personal responsibility. Let me say that again. Grace does not abdicate us of personal responsibility. Grace is not a license to do whatever we want without consequence. In fact, grace when properly understood, is the motivation to live the life that God has called us to live in Scripture. Paul makes these statements like, "Don't be misled... You cannot mock God... You will always reap what you sow..." Paul is saying, whatever you pour out, you get in return!

You see the truth of this all around you. You know people who live greedy lives, and their lives shrink. But you know people who live generous lives, and as the proverb says, their world gets larger and larger and larger. When you sow joy and peace and kindness into the lives of others, you get that back. And when you sow bitterness and anger, you get that back too.

Paul is warning us not to be deceived by a false grace. God has structured the world by laws and principles like sowing and reaping. AND then he continues his thought. He says: (Gal 6:8)

**<sup>8</sup> Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit.**

Notice how he's comparing and contrasting. He's saying that, when you live a life to please your flesh, when you live a life to do what you want to do all the time, and you respond to that broken part of you, there's death and decay that comes as a result. But when you live to please the spirit of God, when you wake up every day and you say, *God may the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you*—Psalm 19:14—that, in return, there is a harvest of everlasting life that goes from now, in this life, into all of eternity.

And then we come to our theme text today. Paul is helping us understand we get what we pour out. BUT when you're pouring out good, when you are pouring out good seed, there are moments in your life where it doesn't go the way that you want it to go. It's almost like you sow, sow, sow, sow, sow and you don't get any harvest, and you start to wonder is that law of sowing and reaping really true.

SO, Paul says the line we have been looking at:

## **9 Let us not become weary in doing good...**

This one verse is so crucial for the follower of Jesus. Anybody ever get tired of doing what is good? You get tired of investing in other people when they don't respond the way that you thought they would. You get tired of pouring out and pouring out. He says, "*Let us not get tired of doing what is good: {BUILD ON LAST}*

**for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we DO NOT GIVE UP.**

He's saying that, if you persevere through the difficulty, if you continue to put one foot in front of the other, when you want to quit, there is a harvest that God is going to bring into your life, a harvest of blessing! In other words, keep showing up, do not quit, there is good ahead!

Now, implicit within this passage, there are three truths that I'd like to share with you. And the first one is this if you are taking notes today. The first truth is that whatever you're going through right now:

### **1. This is just a season.**

There is an expiration date to every season of our lives. Turn to someone and tell them, "This is just a season..."

I want to show you a picture of my family here.

### **MOON'S CHRISTMAS PHOTO**

This is from some Christmas pictures Brina did for us. But you look at this picture and you think, "Oh, that's a nice-looking family, cute picture..." Maybe you wouldn't think that, I think it's cute. But when I look at the picture, I know what happened right before that picture.

I know that we got all dressed up and Cheryl had done the girls hair up nice, but then the skies unzipped and soaked us on the way inside. As I was rushing to get Ella inside in my arms (because she had on slippers) I slipped and rammed her back into the corner of a wooden hand rail so by the time we got indoors we were soaked, and she was balling. Then because of the storm, the previous families had not left so instead of just a family shoot we had an entire audience watching us as we tried to pull it together! It's like, "All right, everybody. Let's smile..."

But when I see that picture, I see so much. I see more than just the situation. I see 21 years of marriage to my wife and the ups and the downs that come along with being married to the same person for half your life! I see the ups and the downs of our finances being a ministry family and how this is only the second time we have ever had photos taken of us. I see my 12-year-old navigating middle school this year and figuring out friends and advanced classes *and* who was going through some health stuff. I see my youngest who is brilliant, a model student, but has been passed up for almost two years on any kind of awards at school and how that weighs on her little heart. I see an empty place where we would have had a third child but for a miscarriage years ago. I see that our family has gone through so many different seasons. I see so much in that picture.

And if you were to do the same with your family or with your life, if you were to take a picture, you would know that there's a lot that comes together for one moment. There's so much history that is always building. And I hope that you can see the truth here. There's a reality that, when we embrace it, it changes the way that we see our seasons. See:

## Every season comes with GIFTS, GRIND, and GRIEF.

In every season that you walk through, there are gifts, there's a grind and there's grief. When I can understand that God is constantly blessing me with good things, but at the same time, in every season, there are going to be some hard things that I have to endure too. When we embrace this truth it helps us keep showing up. It helps us continue on. It strengthens our weary legs.

Parents with young kids know all about this. You hold your child in your hands, and you think, "Could it get any better than this?" And apparently from every grandparent I know they say, "Yes, it can get better than this..." But then, that night, when it's 2:00 AM and the child is crying again and you're trying to change diapers, and it's your 15th night of getting two hours of sleep, you think, "Could it get any harder than this?" Right? Are you with me?

Life comes with gifts, and it comes with a grind. It comes with goodness, and with grief. BUT when I understand this, it gives me the ability to endure, to understand that life flows in seasons. And right now, you are in a season. And sometimes when you're in a season, it's really hard to see that this season will ever end.

But God, today, wants you to understand that this, too, this grief, this grind that you're in right now, this, too, shall pass. Peter says, in 1 Peter:

**<sup>3</sup> Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.**

That's the good news of Jesus, that no matter where you are in your journey spiritually today, by faith in Jesus, His death on a cross for your sins, His resurrection from the dead three days later, that you can have a relationship with God and you can live in a broken, dying world, a decaying world with living hope! Peter wants us to understand that this changes the way that you see a trial. Rest of verse 4 now:

**This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup> In **ALL THIS** [In all your trial, in all your grind and all your grievances and in all your grief, in all this] **you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.****

Peter says in every season you can have hope! In every season you can rejoice! Here's the truth:

**It may feel pervasive, but it's never permanent.**

Amen? It may feel pervasive when you're in it, but it's never permanent. It's never going to last forever! There's always going to be a moment where that trial is going to finish! AND in the middle God gives us hope and He gives us comfort in our trials. And one of the ways that He comforts us is to help us understand there's an expiration date.

I hope today that this truth gives somebody strength in the midst of a season where they want to quit, to realize that this is not going to last forever. AND in the midst of understanding that God will eventually give an expiration date to our trials, there's another truth that Paul highlights in Galatians 6:9, and it's this:

**2. Every season matters.**

Every season that you walk through matters. Listen to me if you are struggling today, every season that you walk through, there is something that God is doing both in you and through you. God is trying to cultivate in us character. He's trying to form us and shape us, and he will leverage every season of our life to do this.

I love James' words, in James 1:2-4. He says:

**<sup>2</sup> Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.**

This is one of the hardest verses to embrace, that there are so many moments in life, all kinds of trials, there's getting stuck in traffic, there are moments where people get on your nerves at work, there are times where, in your home, it's really difficult. And somehow, in the midst of that, you're supposed to consider it an opportunity for great joy. WHY? James goes on:

**<sup>3</sup> For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. <sup>4</sup> So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.**

So, embrace the trial because God is using it to cultivate something in you that changes you and allows you to be used by God.

I love thinking of this in patterns. There's an arc to life, a way that life tends to flow. There are some mega themes that happen in every decade of life. These patterns show up in Scripture and these patterns show up if you watch a person's life through the decades.

So, when a person is born on up until 18, 19, 20 they are preparing. The big theme is preparation for life. You're preparing to go to college. You are preparing for a career. You're preparing to move out of your parents' home. You're preparing to be able to pay your own bills. You're preparing for your 20's.

Now, when you get to your 20s, you're training. In your 20's, this is such an important time to read as many books as you can read and find mentors and ask questions and do everything that you can to absorb like a sponge, because when you get out of your 20s, that are for training, you're going to go into your 30s, which are for building.

When you get to your 30s, you start to build a life. You build a marriage; you start to build a career. This is the decade that most people buy a home. You begin to build a family or expand your family. You're building in your 30s. And once you get past your 30's, then you get into a season where you start to master.

Your 40's are for mastering. You start to master your craft. You learn over your 20's and in your 30's, your life grows by saying yes. But when you get in your 40's, your life narrows in focus by saying no to the things that God did not ask you to do. You're learning to master in your 40s, which I am now rocking at 45!

BUT as I am also learning, right next to mastering, you can also put the word enduring. Because your 40's is a decade where you look back and you've come a long way, but you look forward and you've still got a long way to go. And in this season, this is where more midlife crises happen than any other season. Because if you're successful, you realize it doesn't fill that void that you were hoping that it would fill. Then there are a lot of people that that have strived their whole lives, and they thought they'd be further along in their 40's than they really are. So, they go off, they find a new spouse, they get a new career, get a Jeep instead of getting a new spouse... but there's an endurance part of the 40's too.

And if you stay the course you enter your 50's and a season of harvesting. All of the things you've sown for decades now begin to mature and you enter a season of harvesting. This is the pinnacle of wisdom and ability where you are young enough to still do things and wise enough to avoid a lot of previous mistakes.

In your 60's, now you're guiding. You're starting to come alongside people and you're encouraging them and you're giving wisdom. You are also transitioning from an identity wrapped up in a job to figuring out who you are now.

In your 70s, you're imparting. This is where the Yoda's and sages begin to emerge, that somebody who's walked with God for 40 to 50 years, and they've been so faithful, that they are now at the place where they're imparting. Their life becomes about imparting to another generation.

And then in your 80s, what you start to do is you savor. Somebody who's in their 80s, if they followed Jesus and they've been faithful and they've lived with wisdom, they look back and they thank God for all the good things that He's done in their life. And then, as the decade rolls on they are also preparing for death and coming to terms with what that will mean.

My point in all of that is that in every decade, every season of your life, God is doing something in you and through you! Every season matters! God is at work right now in you and through you!

BUT word of warning. There is also a way in every season that you can miss what it is that God is trying to form and shape in your character. I love this verse from John chapter 9, where Jesus is speaking, and He says:

**<sup>4</sup> As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me; night is coming when no one can work.**

Jesus is saying that:

**There is a window for all work, internal and external.**

There's a window for all the work that God wants to do, both in you and through you. There's internal work that God wants to do, and there's external work that God wants to do through you. And you and I both, we can miss that window.

For some of you right now, and please hear me, this is not me talking from a place of judgement but from a place of struggle with you, but some of you are in a difficult season and you are so focused on how miserable things are that you are losing twice. What do I mean losing twice? You are losing twice because you are miserable due to your situation, but on top of that, you're not receiving the gift of formation that God wants to give to you. There is a window for the work of God, both in you and through you, and we can miss it when we can't lift our eyes.

I want to encourage you, today, this week, before anymore daylight in this New Year passes, to stop and ponder and pray through this question. This is a question I have been wrestling with for a couple months now, but ask this question:

**What season am I in right now?**

And what is it that God is trying to cultivate, both in you and do through you right now in this season? Chew on those questions this week and honestly for the next month. Ask God to give you something specific you can apply to your life right now.

There is a window for work, and every season matters. There's one final truth that I want to finish on. And this perhaps is the most important thing that I want you to hear today. Number three, whatever it is that you are faithful to today, wherever in your life you are putting your hand to the plow:

### **3. There is a harvest ahead.**

There is a hope and a promise that, at the end of this trial, there will be a harvest from God! Let's look at Galatians 6:9 one more time from start to finish. Paul says:

**<sup>9</sup> Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we DO NOT GIVE UP.**

There's a harvest that God wants to bring into your life in the future that will only happen if you are faithful today!

SO, I want to encourage you today. There are some of you that are exhausted because you are looking at your life like a sprint. You just keep sprinting, sprinting, sprinting, and you're exhausted. And God is saying that there is a way that you can run, that you run all the way to the finish line, where you stand before the living God, and you hear the phrase, "Well done, good and faithful servant." You don't have to be among the number of people that quit where it matters most. You can be a person that perseveres if you remember that life is a marathon!

Every marathon runner will tell you that when you hit the wall at mile 18 to 20, it's the place where you can't go on, your body starts shutting down, even your vision starts to dim, but if you slow down your pace, stretch, catch your breath to recharge and take on some fuel you can push through to the other side. One guy I was reading about said this:

"Find one positive thing and focus on it. Focus on putting one foot in front of the other to keep moving forward. Repeat a mantra that keeps you motivated. And remember why you are doing this. What is the prize at the end."

Come on, when you frame life and your current struggles, knowing that there is a harvest ahead, there is a crown of righteousness for those who endure, there is a reward from your Heavenly Father for every tear that you cry and every moment that you pour out, and the good you do that nobody sees! The God of universe sees it and He rewards! He blesses those who are faithful and obedient! So, my challenge, my encouragement to you is, do not give up, do not throw in the towel where it matters most!

Because what the enemy will do to you is he will take all the elements of quitting and he will highlight the benefits of quitting. "Oh, if you quit, you won't be so tired anymore. Oh, if you quit, you won't hurt anymore. If you just give in right now, it's going to be so much easier..." He'll highlight all the benefits of quitting, and he'll diminish all the promise of perseverance.

But your Heavenly Father, what He wants to do for you today is He wants to lift up the reward of perseverance. He wants you to see an image of yourself that is filled with love and joy and peace, patience, kindness. He wants you to get a vision for your life that, in the decades to come, your life can be more fruitful. That the most fruitful years of your life can still be in the future!

Church hear me, here's your why in all this:

**The pain of regret is greater than the pain of perseverance.**

