

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday March 1, 2020 "A long obedience in the same direction."

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this past Sunday. Whether you were able to attend the worship service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

II Sunday.

Sunday was an unusual, stand alone service that kind of started out super intense. So we're just going to start in kind of the same way the message did...with an 'in your face' kind of scripture, talk about it a bit, and then dive into the main passage.

Read **Jeremiah 12:1-5**.

Jeremiah, often called 'the weeping prophet' complaining to God about how hard things are, nothing is changing, and he's not sure if he can keep going. Now God's response isn't overly compassionate. But it reveals the nature of our theme today. And that is; life is hard. It's a constant struggle. And sometimes we simply lose heart and the desire to keep going.

So, what did the passage say to you about that truth?

What did you think about God's response?

How have you experienced trying to make it through life?

The theme for this Sunday was; "*A long obedience in the same direction*", and is based on a Friedrich Nietzsche quote that basically confirms God's response to Jeremiah, and in the long run is the better way to live. Life is hard, requires sacrifices, and a commitment to the bigger more important things. And in the end you will have lived the life you always wanted to live.

In addition to the truth that life is hard, Kal also said that we are living in the in between time. That period in history in which Jesus has already come, and we're waiting for the culmination of the age. Like all of the people of faith who came before us, we will most likely die before we see this happen, so we have to design a life that helps us keep going in the meanwhile.

In addition, it was shared that by every measure found in scripture, faith seems to be cumulative. We are benefitting and living in the wake of the faith of those who have gone before us, and our faith and life will be a foundation for those who follow us.

So...how we live, and what we do, is so important!

The second passage was the primary one for the specifics used to help us live this "*long obedience in the same direction*". Read **Psalms 132**, and then we'll pull some teaching truths we can use to help us keep on keeping on. Try reading a few different translations also.

This source was a less point by point passage, and a bit more lyrical and poetic.

But did anything jump out to you specifically about living life for the long haul?

This psalm is chock full of truths. What else did it say to you?

As always, and in pure ministerial form, Kal found three applicable truths from this passage to help us live a; *“long obedience in the same direction”*.

1. Find a place for God.

There is no way we can live the life we want, are called to live, under our own strength. It has to come from God. This is why in the Ten Commandments God said, *“don’t have any other gods before me”*. He didn’t say, “have no other gods”. God knew we would have other gods. Just make the one true God, the primary one.

Where is God in your life right now?

What can you point to that shows you carving out a space for God?

2. Remember milestones are markers not the destination.

We have to have milestones and markers along our journey to guide us, and let us know we’re headed in the right direction. Otherwise it’s just guessing your location. Without milestones we’ll be like finding our way around in the middle of a white-out blizzards. We may just be going in circles. There have to be ways we can measure growth, and movement, but we can’t get bogged down in those. Our destination is continual obedience and faith in the same direction, and we chart our way along the path.

What is in your life telling you you’re going in the right direction?

3. Commit to the process not results.

This final point is somewhat like the previous one, except it focuses on the work we are doing in that *“long obedience in the same direction”*. It’s the obedience part, not constantly seeing if we’re there yet. And we all know that’s the worst question kids constantly ask their parents on a long trip. I always used to mess with my kids when they asked that question by saying; *“you can never actually get there”*. *Because once you get there’ that there becomes here”*. It took them years to understand that, and they’re in counseling now for it.

What processes, habits, practices do you have in your life right now that help you live life for the long haul?

What new processes, habits, practices could you add to your regular routine to help you live life for the long haul?

III Challenge.

This was a pretty unusual message. Born from a quote from someone who confessed God is dead, (another in depth conversation for another time), but perfectly matches several truths from scripture.

So, finally what do you need to live a; *“long obedience in the same direction”*?