

May 8, 2016

TIME OF REFLECTION

“The prosperity gospel...revolutionized prayer as an instrument for getting God always to say ‘yes.’ It offers people a guarantee: Follow these rules, and God will reward you, heal you, restore you.

The prosperity gospel has taken a religion based on the contemplation of a dying man and stripped it of its call to surrender all. Perhaps worse, it has replaced Christian faith with the most painful forms of certainty. The movement has perfected a rarefied form of America’s addiction to self-rule.”

~Kate Bowler, professor at Duke, expert on the prosperity gospel and recently diagnosed Stage 4 cancer patient

“No healthy Christian ever chooses suffering; he chooses God’s will, as Jesus did, whether it means suffering or not.”

~Oswald Chambers (1874-1917), Scottish clergyman

“Until you understand that life is war, you will not know what prayer is for.”

~John Piper, American pastor and author

“The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.... For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.... For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.”

~Selections from St. Paul in Romans 8

“I think there is no suffering greater than what is caused by the doubts of those who want to believe. What people don’t realize is how much religion costs. They think faith is a big electric blanket, when of course it is the cross. It is much harder to believe than not to believe.”

~Flannery O’Connor (1925-1964), American writer and essayist

“Enthusiasm is common. Endurance is rare.”

~Angela Duckworth, University of Pennsylvania psychology professor
in *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*

Worship through the Word

SERMON – “True (Christian) Grit” – *Pastor Don Willeman*

SERMON PASSAGES – *selected passages*

1 Peter 4:1, 12-19 (NASB)

¹Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin...

¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. ¹⁴If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of

God rests on you. ¹⁵Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; ¹⁶but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. ¹⁷For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner? ¹⁹Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

Romans 8:15-25 (NASB)

¹⁵For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

¹⁸For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who

subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. ²³And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. ²⁴For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.