

STAY THE COURSE

Pastor Jerry Lewis

Sunday Message [October 11, 2026]

Sermon Summary: Drawing from James chapter 1, this message calls believers to endure testing, resist spiritual weariness, and remain faithful to the assignment God has placed on their lives. Pastor Jerry challenges us to move beyond superficial churchgoing and into a deep, sold-out relationship with Christ. Using the apostle Paul's life and final words to Timothy as a primary example, the message declares that perseverance, spiritual resilience, and an unwavering commitment to God's purpose are not optional for the believer — they are essential. Pastor also addresses spiritual attacks, mental fatigue, the danger of drifting from God, and the urgency of the times, while offering hope that seasons of breakthrough are coming for those who refuse to quit.

Scripture Reference:

- James 1 — the primary text, addressing endurance in testing, the source of temptation, and the warning not to be led astray
- Romans 8:35-39 — nothing can separate believers from the love of God in Christ Jesus
- Matthew 5:10-12 — those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake are blessed, and their reward in heaven is great
- John 15:18-20 — the world hated Jesus first; a servant is not greater than his master
- Galatians 6:9 — do not grow weary in doing good, for a harvest will come in due season
- Hebrews 12:1 — run with endurance the race set before us
- Matthew 24:13 — those who endure to the end will be saved
- 2 Thessalonians 2:2-3 — do not be shaken in mind or troubled by false reports
- Philippians 2:5 — let the mind of Christ be in you
- 2 Timothy 4:1-7 — Paul's charge to Timothy and his declaration that he has fought the good fight and finished his race
- 1 Corinthians 9 — run to win, not merely to compete
- Hebrews 10:35 — do not cast away your confidence, which carries great reward
- Psalm 1:3 — the one who is planted by streams of water produces fruit in season and prospers
- Isaiah 53:1 — who has believed the report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed

Key Points:

- God has assigned every believer a specific course and calling, and nothing — sickness, attack, persecution, or weariness — should cause them to abandon it
- The enemy's primary strategy is to wear the saints out mentally, spiritually, and emotionally so they abandon their assignment before it is completed
- Persecution and spiritual attack are signs that a believer is a threat to the enemy's kingdom and is on the threshold of a supernatural breakthrough
- Endurance and perseverance are not passive — they require active, daily decisions to remain under the weight of one's calling without running away
- The mind is the gateway to the soul, and whoever controls the mind controls destiny; believers must guard their minds with the Word of God
- There is a danger in a holding pattern — circling where you are supposed to land — and God is calling certain believers to finally land and move forward in this season
- The church must prepare people for tests, attacks, and persecutions rather than preaching only comfortable messages that avoid conviction
- What a believer feeds grows; two natures exist within every person, and the one that is fed will dominate
- The urgency of the hour demands that believers stop going through the motions and fully embrace their role, responsibility, and position in the kingdom
- Paul's example demonstrates that staying the course means finishing strong, even when facing abandonment, imprisonment, and death

QUOTES:

“The attacks are coming, but so is the glory. Frustrations are coming, but so are the breakthroughs.”

“When your season comes, I don't care what hell is unleashed. It can't stop your season because your season has got your name on it and your season's got a date on it.”

“I went from Jack Daniels to Jesus Christ. I went from a joint to justification. I went from a natural high to a supernatural high.”

“Guard against being in a holding pattern where all you do is circle where you're supposed to land.”

“Your yes today will release His yes today. Your yes releases His yes.”

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Theme: Stay the Course You Have Been Assigned

Day 1: Dead Things Come Alive

Reading: John 11:17-27

Devotional: Jesus arrived at the tomb of Lazarus not a moment too soon by heaven's calendar, though four days too late by human reckoning. When Martha expressed her grief and her limited hope, Jesus redirected her eyes from the grave to himself. He did not simply promise a future resurrection. He declared himself to be the resurrection. Whatever in your life appears sealed, decaying, and beyond recovery is not beyond him. He stands outside your tomb today, calling your name. Dead dreams, dead relationships, dead faith -- none of these are beyond the reach of the one who holds authority over death itself.

Personal Reflection: What area of your life have you accepted as permanently dead? Bring it before Jesus today and ask him to speak life over it.

Practical Application: Write down one thing you have given up on. Pray over it daily this week, declaring that Jesus is the resurrection and the life over that specific situation.

Day 2: Enduring the Weight Without Running Away

Reading: James 1:2-4, 12

James 1:2-4 describes how trials, when met with faith, produce endurance and mature character. Verse 12 describes the blessing that comes to the one who perseveres under testing, promising the crown of life to those who love God.

Devotional: The Greek word for perseverance used in this passage carries the image of remaining under a heavy load without fleeing. In a culture that prizes comfort and the path of least resistance, this kind of endurance is countercultural and deeply spiritual. God is not indifferent to the weight you are carrying. He is watching how you carry it. The load is not designed to crush you. It is designed to reveal what is already inside you. Perseverance does not mean the absence of pain. It means choosing to remain faithful in the presence of it.

Personal Reflection: What heavy load are you currently tempted to drop or run from? How might God be using it to build something lasting in your character?

Practical Application: Identify one area where you have been tempted to quit. Make a written commitment today to remain faithful in that area for the next thirty days, checking in with a trusted believer for accountability.

Day 3: The Power of the Name of Jesus

Reading: Philippians 2:9-11, Acts 16:25-34

Philippians 2:9-11 declares that God has exalted Jesus and given him the name above every name, before which every knee will bow. Acts 16:25-34 recounts how Paul and Silas, beaten and imprisoned, chose worship over despair, and how God responded with an earthquake that shook open prison doors and broke every chain.

Devotional: There is something that happens in the unseen realm every time the name of Jesus is spoken in faith. Chains do not merely loosen. They break. Paul and Silas did not wait until their circumstances improved before they worshipped. They worshipped in the midnight hour, in the inner prison, with their feet in stocks. Their praise was not a performance. It was a declaration of who God is regardless of what their situation looked like. When you call on the name of Jesus in the middle of your darkest moment, heaven responds. The question is not whether God will move. The question is whether you will open your mouth.

Personal Reflection: Do you tend to praise God only when circumstances are favorable, or have you learned to worship in the midnight hour? What would it look like to praise him today in the middle of your current difficulty?

Practical Application: Set aside ten minutes today to worship God specifically in the area where you are struggling most. Do not petition. Simply praise him for who he is, not for what you want him to do.

Day 4: Running the Race With Endurance

Reading: Hebrews 12:1-3, 2 Timothy 4:6-8

Hebrews 12:1-3 urges believers to run with endurance the race set before them, fixing their eyes on Jesus as both the source and the perfecter of faith. In 2 Timothy 4:6-8, Paul, writing from a cold and dark Roman prison cell, declares that he has fought well, finished his race, and kept the faith, with full confidence that a crown of righteousness awaits him.

Devotional: Paul did not write his farewell words from a place of comfort or recognition. He wrote them from confinement, abandoned by many he had once called companions. And yet there is no bitterness in his words. There is only the quiet, settled confidence of a man who knows he has been faithful to his assignment. He is not measuring his life by what he accumulated or what others thought of him. He is measuring it by whether he finished what God called him to do. That is the only measure that will matter in eternity. What is your assigned race? Are you running it?

Personal Reflection: If you were to write your own version of Paul's declaration today, could you honestly say you have been faithful to the assignment God has given you? Where have you drifted from the course?

Practical Application: Take time to write out what you believe your specific God-given assignment is in this season of life. Ask a pastor or trusted mentor to speak into whether they see you walking in alignment with it.

Day 5: Your Season Is Coming -- Do Not Grow Weary

Reading: Galatians 6:9, Romans 8:35-39

Galatians 6:9 promises that those who do not give up will reap a harvest in the proper season. Romans 8:35-39 declares that nothing in all of creation -- not tribulation, distress, persecution, or any spiritual power -- can separate the believer from the love of God found in Christ Jesus.

Devotional: The enemy's primary strategy against the believer is not a single devastating blow. It is prolonged exhaustion. He wants to wear you down through mental fatigue, fear, accusation, and the slow grind of unanswered prayers and delayed promises. But God's word does not say the harvest comes to those who feel the most energetic. It says the harvest comes to those who do not faint. Your season has your name on it and a date attached to it. No delay is a denial. No holding pattern is a permanent address. The runway lights are visible. Your clearance to land is being issued. Do not quit before your harvest arrives.

Personal Reflection: In what area of your faith have you grown the most weary? What would it mean to trust that your season is coming, even if the evidence around you suggests otherwise?

Practical Application: Memorize Galatians 6:9 this week. Each time weariness or discouragement rises, speak it aloud. Share it with one person in your life who is also in a season of waiting, and encourage them to hold on.