

Motivation To Endure

John O. Reid (1930-2016)

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In Luke 21:19, there is a six-word sentence that gives instructions concerning how to save our lives. It tells us how to obtain salvation, and it tells us how salvation can be lost. It also places a burden upon each one of us *individually*; individually to work and do to our part in this calling we have been given. The sentence is:

Luke 21:19 By your patience possess your souls.

Albert Barnes notes,

By your perseverance in bearing these trials you will save your lives or you will be safe. Do not yield to these calamities that are coming on the horizon but bear up under them for he that endures shall be saved.

There will be very difficult times coming upon this world, and Jesus Christ wants us to be convinced of the importance of being faithful to the call that each of us has been given. In Luke 21, Matthew 24, and Mark 13, we can read of the difficult times coming on us. A quick look at the general instructions concerning wrong teaching would be: many will come to fool us.

There will be many wars and the rumors that accompany them, earthquakes, pestilence, and famine will have to be faced. Some of us will be turned in to the authorities by our friends and families; and we will be hated by all for what we believe. There will be great distress around us. Because of this, we must keep a right mind in us, and we are to watch and pray that we may have strength to withstand all of these things and stand before the Son of Man, just as Ronny was talking about ["Unbroken Spirit"].

Many we know have left their calling and drifted back into the world. We used to have one doctrine and now we have a variety available to us; people

pick and choose and do whatever is right in their own eyes. They let go of what they have been given, but for those who endure, we have the promise in Matthew 24:13; Mark 13:13; and Luke 21:19.

Matthew 24:13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

Mark 13:13 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

Luke 21:19 By your patience possess your souls.

None of us knows what God has in store for us as individuals. When I pray, "Thy Kingdom come," I pray for this wonderful Kingdom to come to all of us since we are all mankind; but at the same time I am not sure what will happen between the time that I pray and the time that the Kingdom comes. We all pray that we will go to a place of safety, but we also realize that the decision belongs to God.

We had a family that said, "No, no, He promised that we will all go to a place of safety." But that is not true. God owns us. He uses us for His glory and for growth and development. In short, none of us knows what God, in His perfect love, has in store for each of us before His Kingdom is ushered in.

Endurance is a subject that is spoken of often in sermonettes, sermons, and in conversations. The question that crosses our mind is: Can I endure what is coming? I have the answer: You bet you can. I am not saying it will be enjoyable, but God says that we can endure it.

I Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

Our overall test will be to stand fast in what we have been taught, our ability to make the right decision based on godly principles, and to not allow ourselves to let down. Remember in Luke 18, verse 8 Christ says, "Will I find faith when I come?" When I first came into the church, I thought that

meant the faith to move mountains. I said, “No, I'll never have that kind of faith.” But what He means is, “Will you have faith to endure and follow My law?” Live like you should, putting into practice what you need to do. Have the faith to stand fast in the truth.

Concerning verse 13, Albert Barnes gives us encouragement:

This is a general promise just as applicable to all Christians as it was to the Corinthians. It implies first, that all circumstances, cases, and agents that lead to temptation or trials are under the control of God; something we should remember. Second, he goes on to say that you can check them or control them and the trials paralyze their influence or destroy them. Third, remember that there is some good reason the trials are permitted; that it may, in some way, be turned to His glory and to our advantage and virtue. There is an extent to which we are able to resist temptation and that limit will be, in all cases, beyond the point to which we are tempted. God reminds us that He is faithful and that He can be trusted to be our source of strength and will make a way of deliverance or escape to save us from being entirely overcome by it.

In other words, God knows what He proposes for you and me, and what we are able to endure. He has control over all that will affect us; He will adapt our trials to our strengths and will enable us to bear the trials that come upon us and all that we go through.

Each of us is inspired by an individual that endures. We see the Olympic runner that trips, falls, gets up, and the crowd cheers! We see the individual who comes from the wrong side of the track; who struggles, strains, works, becomes a millionaire, and sets that example of overcoming against all odds. We see the war hero who takes the hill, saves the day, and sets the example for all his fellow soldiers. We can imagine what happened when David slew Goliath. The entire army roared, “Let's go get them!” He just set the inspiring example for the entire nation of Israel. And then we have Herbert W. Armstrong who fought against all odds; people laughing at him, calling him “stupid Herbert,” and all these things; yet he is the father of all of us in the faith.

We can also encourage and witness to each other by our quiet steadfastness before God. When I was in the Army, I read books on the enemy's prisoner war camps. I looked to see what made some prisoners never give up. The first thing is hope. They had hope that the war would end and repatriation would take place. There was a statement: Lose hope, lose all. If you do not have hope, you do not have anything.

The second one is faith in God or in one's ability that somehow you can survive each day because of God.

The third is vision; the vision or goal of being able to escape; the vision of a better future, of being home with loved ones and out of the horror of the camps.

In all of this, those three things produced a mindset; a determination not to quit or give up this fight whatever may come. A mindset produces action. Again, hope, faith, vision, and the will not to give up applies to us in this end time. These three components, hope, faith, and vision produce the fourth: The mindset not to give in.

Hope: The expectation of good. The original word denotes a joyful and contented expectation of eternal salvation.

Our needs, at the time of our trial, are what we hope for. Whatever the trial is now: job, home, health, transportation, etcetera; we hope for those things. Please turn to Acts 26, verses 1-7 where the apostle Paul is talking to Agrippa.

Acts 26:1-7 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently. My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest

sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews."

Paul was saying that God had hope for his people. Paul was saying, "This is what I am telling about and this is where I am at." You can read of other hopes in Psalms and Zechariah.

Psalm 16:8-11 I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Psalm 71:1-6 In You, O Lord, I put my trust; let me never be put to shame. Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape; incline Your ear to me, and save me. Be my strong refuge, to which I may resort continually; You have given the commandment to save me, for You are my rock and my fortress. Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man. For You are my hope, O Lord GOD; You are my trust from my youth. By You I have been upheld from birth; You are He who took me out of my mother's womb. My praise shall be continually of You.

Zechariah 9:9-12 (NET) Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! Look! Your king is coming to you: He is legitimate and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey—on a young donkey, the foal of a female donkey. I will remove the chariot from Ephraim and the warhorse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be removed. Then he will announce peace to the nations. His dominion will be from sea to sea and from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth. Moreover, as for you, because of our covenant relationship secured with blood, I will

release your prisoners from the waterless pit. Return to the stronghold, you prisoners, with hope; today I declare that I will return double what was taken from you.

Why did they become prisoners? Because they hoped on all of the promises that God made and that caused them to be put into prison. He says, “I am going to release you, you prisoners of hope.”

What is hope? This is the hope we have. For one last scripture on hope, please look at Titus 2, verse 11-14.

Titus 2:11-14 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

Guess who He is preparing. You and me, I hope.

The second component we need to stand is faith. There are two steps we must all take regarding faith. Faith, in an objective sense, means believing the beliefs and teachings we have been given. It means proving them, studying them, and proving what you are standing on. It also means, putting that faith into action by obedience to what we know we have proven to be correct. You cannot just know it; you have to put it to work.

Jude 3 (Adam Clarke) Beloved brethren, when I saw it necessary to write to you concerning our common salvation, my mind being deeply affected by the dangers to which the church was exposed from the false teachers that are going about into the world; I found it extremely necessary to write and exhort you to hold fast to the truth that you received and strenuously contend for the only faith which by our Lord and His apostles has been delivered to Christians.

The key thing here is to prove what you believe; not just listen to it but to prove it. Matthew 4, verse 4 says:

Matthew 4:4 But He answered, “It is written, “‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

We live by the Word of God; every command, every teaching, every example, and every promise.

What is expected once we have proven that we have our faith to stand on in what we have been taught? It sounds like every day garden variety, but we truly work to forgive others, to love our enemies, to work to be good husbands and wives, good parents and neighbors, employees, and we fight to resist the pulls of this failing world around us. That is no small fight. That is king size.

In short, we do the best we can to imitate God. We approach faith in the active sense; we produce the good works God wants from us by acting on the teaching we have been given.

Faith is the evidence of things we cannot see at this time. We stand on the promises of God and this is the evidence of the promises that God gives us. In short, we trust in God to work, to be obedient, and to live as He and Jesus Christ do. In Hebrews 11:7, Noah acted on God’s command; and he built the Ark for 120 years. He stayed on it and stuck to the job. He was not distracted by all the people laughing at him, jeering.

Abraham obeyed when God told him to leave and go out into a strange country, and you see in verse 17 that he was prepared to offer up Isaac. He had *faith* in the promises of God.

Hebrews 11:8-9 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.

Moses' parents hid him in *faith*. Pharaoh said, "I'm going to destroy all babies," but they hid him; and in Hebrews 11:24-25, Moses chose not to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter but chose to be part of God's people and suffer affliction. I would like to read verses 32 through 37.

Hebrews 11:32-37 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.

They had faith in the promises of God; nothing was going to scare them or take them away.

This brings us to the third promise: vision.

Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law.

God gives us two visions: one of what will take place with physical Israel and the other is of what will take place with us.

The word "vision" is from the root word *chazh* meaning: To gaze mentally, to perceive, to contemplate; and from *chazown* meaning: To dream or have a revelation. This dream or revelation is to cause one to move forward in anticipation; to have this dream or this vision of what is coming rather than to say, "Oh, how long and difficult the way, how heavy the trial!" Our proper

response should be, “Wow! What an awesome future we have in front of us! Let's stand up and go forth, let's work as hard as we can to obtain it!” That is what God is talking about. That is the kind of vision we should promote.

What is the wonderful vision for this world? I was born in 1930 and, as a boy, I remember seeing people without legs sitting on a piece of plywood or some kind of board, and they had casters similar to what you would use to move something. They had leather gloves on their hands with a pad on the palm and they would move themselves up and down the sidewalk. It was not uncommon to see spastics—people who were twisted and could hardly move walking down the street. That was a normal thing at that time. When artificial limbs were invented and homes for people who could not enjoy a normal life were built, we did not see them anymore. What does Israel have in store for their future? You know, but let us go over it again.

Isaiah 35:1-10 The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, “Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God; He will come and save you.” Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; in the habitation of jackals, where each lay, there shall be grass with reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it; it shall not be found there. But the redeemed shall walk there, and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

It would be nice to have that happen now. We see also, in Isaiah 11, where justice will be throughout the land at last. Can you picture that? All the land and the wildlife will be at peace, and at last, we see elsewhere that none will make them afraid.

Wow, what a civilization! What a time is coming! That is the vision for the physical; we have a vision for us, too. When I think of the vision that God has given us, I think of Romans 8:16-18.

Romans 8:16-18 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

We are referred to as the children of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. We are told that the suffering of this time is not to be compared to the glory. That is a wonderful thing to contemplate! The whole creation is groaning, waiting for this to take place. What a new world this is going to be, and you are going to be responsible for so much of it in the jobs that you will have to perform.

The apostle Paul had an awesome revelation, or vision, that he could not describe in words.

II Corinthians 12:1-4 It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

When you look up the word ‘paradise’ in a dictionary, it just means a nice, well-kept garden having trees and a lawn. This is far more than that. Paul

said that he could not do justice to the absolute wonder of what he saw; the wonder that is our future. I hope you really understand that. As Barnes' Notes commented: "There were truths imparted to his mind that he could not hope to convey in any language."

The question that came from this was: Why was it given to Paul and not all of us? Paul was the only one in the Bible to receive such a vision! Paul had to go through so many trials, so many difficulties, pain, suffering, and fear of death that this was given to him that he might have hope and vision.

What will give us the most trouble this year? We, indeed, have our own weaknesses to deal with and they *have* to be addressed. Time is short.

Our overall enemy is the same as it is in the prison camps—the environment itself. Generally, the world is not committed to anything honest, wholesome, or upright. This is one reason we stand out as lights; but, at the same time, the environment wears greatly on us working to invade our thinking. This is Satan's world; and we see that everything is crumbling and degenerating around us.

Matthew 24:12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

We are continually faced with the lusts of the flesh, lusts of the eyes, pride of life, and entertainment; and it truly wears on us, greatly, *greatly*. As I mentioned earlier, hope, faith, and vision in the prison camps provided those prisoners the *will* to take steps of action that they might resist the loneliness, the brainwashing, and the helplessness of being held captive.

Remember, in the North Korean prison camps, the guards would come in the morning to turn on the lights in the barracks and they would find the prisoners sitting up. One would be reading a book he did not have, some would be sewing though they had no needle or thread, and it drove the guards nuts! Why were they doing this? The prisoners would go outside for their break and they would play football with no ball. They had a scrimmage line and the whole nine yards. The North Koreans could not understand it.

One thing the prisoners did, that applies to each of us, was keep in touch with each other no matter what. Many in the camps would tap on the wall using Morse code; they would write in the dirt, they would do whatever it took to be in contact with the other prisoners. Do not give up; hang in there, as my old Sergeant used to say, “Be mean when you drink and drink a little all the time.” He meant, stay tough. He had seen all the lands in the Pacific and had seen everyone killed; he meant: Never take your eye off the enemy.

You might read I Corinthians 10:4. The one thing they did, that applies to each of us, was to keep in touch with those of like mind. That is going to be important for every one of us.

Hebrews 10:22-25 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching.

God says we have to stay close, stay in touch, and draw together as one. It is exceedingly important. None of us knows what this year will bring. We know this nation’s problems and the problems of the world are growing worse daily, and, as Mr. Armstrong would say, “This world is ready for a crash-bang climax.” It is true that we win; but after how much? I do not know.

In all that is on the horizon, we have the assurance of God that He will not forsake us, but that He will be with us in all that takes place.

II Chronicles 16:9 "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars."

When you consider how important you are to God, do you think He would ignore you or let you just suffer not knowing what you are going through? He knows and His eyes run to and fro to see who is at peace, loyal, and standing up for Him.

Hebrews 13:5 Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Richard [Ritenbaugh] brought this out, and it really stands out: I will never, never, never, never, *never*, *ever* leave you.

Revelation 3:10-11 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

Let us go over to Hebrews 12.

Hebrews 12:1-2 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Looking to the example, the author, the beginner, the cause, the source, the finisher or completer of our faith. Look to Him and all that He has been through for us. I am sure we are not going to be asked to go through what He went through at all. Finally, Revelation 15.

Revelation 15:2-4 And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name,

standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: “Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested.”

Who is this group that is standing there, brethren? Who are we talking about here? It is about you and about me; and this is our future. Never lose the vision and never give up.