

speaking to God's people

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bible studies

Subject: **Walking with Jesus – Pt 5 – Steadfastness**

Scripture

Introduction

Commentary

The apostle Peter defined a process to help people to progress as Christians, and so I will be using the pattern he defined in 2 Peter 1:5-7, which says:

5 For this very reason make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,

6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,

7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

The next aspect of growing in maturity and walking with Jesus is the matter of steadfastness.

To be steadfast is to be constant, firm, steady and unwavering. Basically it means to hold fast to your faith and your conviction in the hope of salvation in Jesus Christ. So let us look at some aspects of steadfastness.

1 Timothy 6:10-11

In Peter's scripture above we see that he rates steadfastness as being important for a continuing walk with Jesus. And that makes good sense for it is steadfastness that keeps you on a stable and...well...steady path.

Can you imagine if you were walking down a road and were constantly tripping, falling, veering from side to side and sometimes backtracking to places you have already been? How long would it take to get to your destination walking like that? It would look like you were drunk or on drugs because you would go lurching about the place rather than making a strong, stable and steady progression forward.

That is why steadfastness is essential to you in your walk with Christ. It is meant to keep you on track, not veering to the left or right, but following the path of Jesus Christ.

This is why Paul wrote in this scripture that we should aim for steadfastness.

10 For the love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs.

11 But as for you, man of God, shun all this; aim at righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.

He links this teaching with the issue of chasing after money. The love of money, which is greed, is a great destroyer as it leads many people astray. I am concerned that many of the churches of today have fallen into this snare and trap as they seem to be more about marketing machines than teachers of the gospel. It is especially problematic when they flaunt wealth as a desirable goal and their ministers drive expensive sports cars, wear expensive clothing and so on.

This was not the aim of Christ and it was not what Paul is telling us to aim for here. He tells Timothy, and by extension is telling us to aim at the attributes of God, one of which is steadfastness.

A person who is steadfast is able to stand against all opposition. But one who is focussed on the wealth of this world cannot stand stable because their attentions are divided. They veer from left to right.

Romans 15:4-6	<p>Whereas what we see coming from steadfastness is not instability, but hope. And as Paul said in Romans 5:5, "Hope does not disappoint us."</p> <p>In this scripture we see that steadfastness works together with the scriptures.</p> <p><i>4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.</i> <i>5 May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus,</i> <i>6 that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.</i></p> <p>He talks here about the encouragement of the scriptures for in them we learn the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In the scriptures we begin to understand the workings of the New Covenant and how we are able to find the way to Christ.</p> <p>All of the knowledge we need as to what is happening in this world and that pertains to the teachings of life can be found in the scriptures. That is why we need to study them. We need to be immersed in the scriptures so that they can guide our decisions, comfort us in difficult times, give us insight into the way forward and ultimately lead us to Christ who is our salvation.</p> <p>By being immersed in the scriptures we then become steadfast. As Jesus answered and foiled the devil when He was tested in the wilderness for forty days, so too we will be able to overcome temptations, testings and trials as we become steadfast and stable in the word.</p>
1 Peter 4:12	<p>And whether we like it or not, trials & testings are necessary. Just as Jesus was tested, we too will be tested. Peter wrote the following as evidence that this will and must occur:</p> <p><i>Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you.</i></p>

<p>James 1:2-4</p>	<p>The fiery ordeals of trials and testings will come to all who decide to follow Christ. They will come to those who DO NOT follow Christ too, but the advantage the Christian has over the non-Christian is that we have an advocate in the Holy Spirit and a Saviour in Jesus Christ to guide us and lead us through the trials.</p> <p>James writes also that we will be tested, and rather than throw a pity party when it happens or get depressed or angry or whatever, he says we should be joyful!</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>2 Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.</i></p> <p>OK so when you are going through times of strife, joy might not be the first thing that comes to mind. But consider that if the devil is attacking you for the sake of your faith, then you must be doing something right.</p> <p>And as James says, the purpose of the trials and testing is to lead you to steadfastness. As you stand and fight the good fight in Jesus, you become stronger. And as you increase in the strength of your knowledge and understanding of the power of Jesus Christ, your faith grows stronger and you become...steadfast. And the value of being steadfast is that ultimately it will lead to completeness and perfection in Christ.</p> <p>So do not be disheartened when you are going through troubled times. It is bound to happen. But instead seek the Lord and use the weapons of spiritual warfare to fight the good fight and you will overcome and be stronger afterwards. The old saying that “iron sharpens iron” was never more true than in the battle for the Lord.</p>
	<p>For those who aspire to be leaders in the church steadfastness is important. Can you imagine following a leader who is indecisive and wishy-washy? What war would ever be won by an unstable leader?</p> <p>Thus it is shown that steadfastness is an essential quality for the elders of the church. They are to be steadfast because just as individuals are attacked, so too the churches will come under fire too. And it is the responsibility of elders as leaders to protect the church and the younger members of the flock so that they</p>

<p>Titus 2:2-3</p>	<p>can repel the opposition that comes against them. Paul defined these qualities in his letter to Titus.</p> <p><i>2 Bid the older men be temperate, serious, sensible, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.</i> <i>3 Bid the older women likewise to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good</i></p> <p>Not that the scriptures here render the word “Elder” as “older.” However in both cases for the men and women the Greek word this was translated from was at its root the word “presbuteros.” This word is the same as used to describe the elders of the church rather than someone who is older or “aged” as it is used in the KJV Bible. When the Bible speaks of one who is older in years, the typical word used is “heliakia” which means “mature.”</p> <p>For some this may be interesting too because this verse of Paul’s shows there are women elders and they are doing teaching roles. And this is not the only place the bible speaks of women in eldership roles. But I will address that some other time. Suffice to say that in Christ there is no distinction between male and female but we are all equal in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).</p> <p>The important point here is that steadfastness is a necessary trait for an elder. They need to be strong in the faith to be able to tend the church in their care and to protect it from attacks.</p>
<p>2 Corinthians 11:23-28</p>	<p>When writing to Timothy he gives his own life as an example. If you consider the trials and tribulations Paul went through it is certainly a remarkable example of steadfastness in the Lord. Consider the following as examples of what Paul went through in his walk with Christ.</p> <p><i>23 Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one--I am talking like a madman--with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death.</i> <i>24 Five times I have received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one.</i> <i>25 Three times I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned. Three times I have been shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been adrift at sea;</i> <i>26 on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people,</i></p>

*danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brethren;
27 in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.
28 And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure upon me of my anxiety for all the churches.*

What was it that got Paul through these afflictions, testings, trials and tribulations? Steadfastness! He held on rock steady to the truth of Jesus Christ knowing that the worst man could do is to kill him...and then he would be with the Lord. Paul did not consider anything of this world, whether riches, wealth or the pleasures of this life, nor the sufferings and punishments he went through for the sake of Christ to be of any consequence at all. He was focussed on one thing. The kingdom of God and teaching as many people as he could how to find the way there.

And praise God that he did for he left us a great legacy in his letters to still be teaching people today.

2 Timothy 3:10-11

*10 Now you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness,
11 my persecutions, my sufferings, what befell me at Antioch, at Ico'nium, and at Lystra, what persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me.*

In one of his final letters to Timothy he instructs Timothy to consider the outcome of his life. Paul said to use himself as an example so that Timothy, and us too, would know and understand how the Lord works with those who are his. It helps to understand that in spite of all the trials Paul went through, the outcome of his life was guided and directed by the Lord. The pathway that was set before Paul was established by God and the Lord Jesus Christ and in the last few words above he says, "...from them all the Lord rescued me."

And he will rescue us too who seek his ways. He will protect, teach and guide us in our walks. And when we aim at steadfastness as Paul instructed Timothy above, along with faith, love and patience, he will carry us to the destination he has set before us. The ultimate outcome will be the salvation of your life to eternal life with Christ.

Romans 4:18-22

Let us look at one more example of the power of steadfastness so that we can understand the need for this attribute. Consider the life of Abraham. He was promised by God that he would become the father of many peoples and nations. And yet at the time he was about ninety years old, Sarah was about eighty and she was barren and had been unable to have children. Furthermore she had gone through menopause and was way beyond the age where a woman could conceive and bear children.

Add to this that after he had been told these things it was about another ten years later before it all happened. He was nearly one hundred years old and Sarah was ninety before she fell pregnant.

You could forgive anyone from doubting and walking away from this promise given all of the conditions and problems stacked against them. From a man's perspective what had been promised was physically impossible. But not for God. And Abraham chose to believe God and ignore all the reasons why it could not happen; knowing and convinced that God could do anything. Look at how he went through the ten years.

18 In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations; as he had been told, "So shall your descendants be."

19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead because he was about a hundred years old, or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.

20 No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God,

21 fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

22 That is why his faith was "reckoned to him as righteousness."

Abraham believed God. He trusted God totally and was fully convinced God would do what He said He would do. He never wavered. Didn't veer from left to right but grew stronger in his faith.

That's steadfastness. When the odds are so heavily stacked against you that it seems utterly and totally impossible, and yet still hold fast to your faith in God to overcome the impossible is what steadfastness is all about.

	<p>How about you. You may not have reached the strength of faith that Abraham had, but as you continue your walk and learn the truth of the Gospel, it is a place to aspire to. Follow Christ and learn his ways so that steadfastness can have the full effect in your life as it did with all the great men of the faith.</p>
So what next?	<p>This is a brief discussion about steadfastness and how important it is for our walk in Christ. More can be added, but I hope in this introduction you will continue the search for the knowledge of this truth in the Lord Jesus Christ. Please feel free to send me any comments or things you have learned in your own studies or as a result of this information.</p> <p>So now it's your turn. What would you like to add to this conversation? Send me an email (link below) or engage with me on Twitter (@JohnBLemmon) or send me a comment on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/FreeGiftFromGod and let's have the discussion continue.</p> <p>Feel free also to send this to others so they can join the conversation. I hope this has added value to your own walk with Christ.</p>

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