

Faith That Endures

The reality is that many of us face trials of some kind in life, seasons that we simply can't explain. Situations where we cry out to God, asking where He is, what He is doing. Often at these times, we can't feel Him or hear Him, we don't understand why such a thing is happening. In these situations, we may question if we missed God, did something wrong or sinned, or if our faith is lacking. Sometimes we take aim at the very character of God and begin to question whether He is who He says He is. Today I want to encourage and strengthen those who may find themselves in such situations.

Obedience to God doesn't guarantee the receiving of His promise immediately.

We need endurance

Hebrews 10:36 (NKJV)

For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise...

We need faith

Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV)

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

We have need of enduring faith in the body of Christ.

James 5:11 (NKJV)

Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

Let's take a brief look at Job:

Job's Losses (Job 1–2)

Job was described as a blameless and upright man who feared God and shunned evil (Job 1:1). Despite his righteousness, Job endured **devastating losses**:

1. Loss of Wealth:

- Raiders stole his oxen and donkeys.
- Fire from heaven (lightning) burned his sheep and servants.
- Chaldeans took his camels.

2. Loss of Family:

- A mighty wind collapsed the house where his ten children were feasting, killing them all (Job 1:18–19).

3. Loss of Health:

- Job was afflicted with painful sores from head to foot (Job 2:7).
- He sat in ashes and scraped himself with pottery in his anguish.

4. Loss of Social Standing:

- He became an object of scorn, even by friends and servants.
- His wife urged him to curse God and die (Job 2:9).
- His friends accused him of hidden sin.

Despite these overwhelming trials, **Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing** (Job 1:22; 2:10).

Job's Restoration (Job 42:10–17)

After Job humbly repented and interceded for his friends, God restored him:

1. Restoration of Fortune:

- *“The Lord restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before.”* (Job 42:10)

2. Reconciliation with Community:

- His family and friends returned to comfort him, and each gave him gifts (Job 42:11).

3. Increase in Wealth:

- 14,000 sheep (previously 7,000)
- 6,000 camels (previously 3,000)
- 1,000 yoke of oxen (previously 500)
- 1,000 donkeys (previously 500) (Job 42:12)

4. Restoration of Family:

- Job had **seven sons and three daughters** again.
- His daughters—Jemimah, Keziah, and Keren-Happuch—were known for their beauty and received an inheritance alongside their brothers (Job 42:13–15).

5. Longevity and Peace:

- Job lived **140 more years**, long enough to see four generations of his descendants (Job 42:16).
- “*And so Job died, old and full of days.*” (Job 42:17)

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Mark 6:45-48 ESV

Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them,

Matthew 14:22-25 (ESV)

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea.

John 6:16-21 (ESV)

When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the

boat, and they were frightened. But he said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.” Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

Summary of the Three Gospel Accounts (Mark 6:45–48, Matthew 14:22–25, John 6:16–21)

- Jesus **sent** the disciples to get into the boat and cross ahead of Him.
- Jesus went up a mountain **alone to pray** after dismissing the crowd.
- Evening fell; **it became dark** and Jesus had not yet joined them.
- The disciples were **alone on the sea** while Jesus was still on land.
- A **strong wind arose**, causing the **sea to become rough**.
- The **boat was beaten by the waves**, and the **wind was against them**.
- They were **struggling and making painful headway**, rowing most of the night.
- They had **rowed 3–4 miles** after many hours.
- Jesus **saw them straining at the oars**, even from a distance (Mark).
- Jesus came to them **walking on the sea**, during the **fourth watch of the night** (between 3–6 am).
- The disciples were **frightened** when they saw Him—they **did not recognize Him** immediately.
- Jesus spoke words of comfort: **“It is I; do not be afraid.”**
- Once Jesus entered the boat, they **immediately reached the shore** (John’s account).

To be honest, this account reminds me of what we experience in life. The disciples were doing what Jesus had asked them to do. The wind was against them and the waves were big. It was so bad that they were straining to keep it all together and keep moving in the right direction. They rowed all night and rowed 3-4 miles! A reasonable swimmer could swim that far in 2 hours! It must have been really rough!

1. He sees you.

Psalms 139:11-12 (AMP)

If I say, “Surely the darkness will cover me,

*And the night will be the only light around me,”
Even the darkness is not dark to You and conceals nothing from You,
But the night shines as bright as the day;
Darkness and light are alike to You.*

2. Never Give up

James 5:11 (NKJV)

Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

3. This race is not forever

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NKJV)

The Race of Faith

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.

Annie J Flint hymn:

1. He giveth more grace as our burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength as our labors increase;
To added afflictions He addeth His mercy,
To multiplied trials He multiplies peace.

2. When we have exhausted our store of endurance,
When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources
Our Father's full giving is only begun.

4. His love has no limits, His grace has no measure,
His power no boundary known unto men;
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.