

Title: P.S.
Date: February 11, 2024
Subject: How to live in the light of Know, Grow, Go and God wrapping things up with a bow
Scripture: selected

P.S. When we put one at the end of a letter or note, it serves as a reminder. P.S. Don't forget to feed the dog. P.S. I love you. It gives supplemental information.

In our recent series about seeing life clearly: strive to know, endeavor to grow, get up and go, and the Lord will tie it all up and wrap it with a bow, there were thoughts running through my mind which are complementary. Not complimentary as in saying nice things, giving compliments. But complementary as in things which fit together.

The P.S. for today is how we're to live while we know, grow, go and wait for the bow.

I. Groan.

READ Romans 8:19 – 25

It can be hard to wait. Think of children fidgeting at the living room window with their faces pressed against the glass, looking down the street in anticipation of daddy coming home. Bouncing around.....

People often want immediate rewards. You may have seen experiments involving young children in a room with a marshmallow on a table. They've been told that if they wait until the researcher returns, in about 15 minutes, they can have two. The video show kids looking at the marshmallow from all angles, staring at it, rolling it on the table, picking it up in their hands with most of them giving and shoving it in their mouths.

People hate waiting. They poke fun at the lines at the DMV. Stores try to come up with ways to help people check out more quickly so they don't have to wait. We don't like waiting in traffic.

But life is essentially a waiting game. Maybe we should say the spiritual life is a waiting game. It doesn't take a lot of digging in Scripture to notice it says a lot about waiting. Much of what God promises to his people involves waiting for the fulfillment. People of the Old Testament had to wait for the Messiah to be revealed. Since Christ's death and resurrection, Christians have been in a waiting pattern for him to return and usher in the eternal kingdom.

Meanwhile, there's frustration and agitation. The passage brings up creation and its desire to be free from bondage to decay. Its response is to groan. It's likened to being in birth pains. No need for me to describe it to the women who've experienced it...or to the guys who've been in the delivery room when it's happening. Suffice it to say, there's pain, groaning and anticipation for that baby to be delivered.

The whole creation groans. Plant life groans. Rocks groan. Animals groan. The distant galaxies groan. People groan. You groan. I groan. We all groan. It's okay to groan as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. We groan because we don't have the fulfillment we long for. We're like the kids

standing at the window waiting for their daddy to come home except we're not waiting for daddy to come home. We're waiting for the Son of God to take us to daddy's home. This is our hope.

Each point this morning will be accompanied by songs. We're not going to sing them, but I'll mention them to one degree or another. They're also given in the sermon notes.

Two weeks ago, a song was at the forefront of my brain. I searched for various versions. I knew Selah had done one. I found another by Caleb and Kelsey. A couple other suggestions popped up that I listened to. Then I went to the Gaither Vocal Band. It opened with a massive choir. Then Guy Penrod and David Phelps rip into verses 3 and 4. Wow. Those incredible voices singing about waiting, groaning and proclaiming: "It Is Well With My Soul."

The other song is by MercyMe. It proclaims God's power, ability and the different ways he acts in response to what's happening in our lives. It's the song Even If.

II. Dependence, part one

READ Psalm 121:1, 2.

We aren't told who proclaimed their trust in the Lord. David? He certainly had lots of occasions where he needed to trust God: as a young shepherd when he fought a lion and a bear, when chased by Saul, when his son turned against him and forced him to flee from Jerusalem, when he was in agony over his sick child, after he finally repented of his sin that caused him to wander in the wilderness, as he was approaching death.

Moses? When he trembled at the thought of being God's spokesmen to confront Pharaoh but went, when he was surrounded by rebellious people who didn't want to enter the Promised Land and grumbled against him and the Lord, when he begged the Lord not to do away with the rebellious people, when he passed the torch to Joshua.

Paul? When he was hard pressed, perplexed, persecuted and struck down; when talking about Jesus as the Savior led to prison, flogging, beaten with rods, stoning, shipwrecks, danger from rivers, danger from bandits, danger from countrymen, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the country, danger at sea, and danger from false brothers.

The pastor I had while growing up liked to tell the story of the three young Hebrews in the fiery furnace whom he named Shake the Bed, Make the Bed and To Bed We Go. I think he figured it was okay since the Babylonian king had changed their Hebrew names to Babylonian ones – Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. What's another name change? What he did helped those names stick in my mind.

The three men refused to worship the image of gold made by king Nebuchadnezzar. They were given several opportunities but continued to refuse because they worshipped only the Lord God. They informed the king of their allegiance: "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up" (Daniel 3:16 - 18).

Neb didn't slap his head, "Wow. I never thought of that. Guys, you can do what you want." Nope. He was furious. He wasn't going to have anybody show him up. The three were firmly tied and thrown into a furnace heated seven times hotter than usual. The fire was so intense it killed the soldiers who threw Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego into it.

The Bible tells us: "Then king Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" They replied, "Certainly, O king." He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods" (Daniel 3:24, 25).

The king gave the command for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to come out of the fire. They were unharmed. The fire hadn't singed their clothing or hair and there was no smell of fire on them. Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged that they had trusted in God when they defied his command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any God except their own God.

????????????modern era Christians

The Lord has Peter write about the end times judgment coming on false teachers and those who haven't placed their trust in Christ as Savior. It's in the context of how God worked delivered Noah and Lot during the judgment that came through the flood and the fire that fell from heaven. A conclusion is drawn: "if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment" (2 Peter 2:9).

The Lord knows how to rescue. The Lord knows who to rescue. The Lord knows when to rescue.

Until that day, we pile on the reminders: "God did it before. He can and will do it again." We cling to Jesus words who said he wouldn't leave his followers as orphans but would give another counselor to be with us for forever (John 14:16, 18). In another place he promised: "I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). And God reminds us, "Never will I leave you; Never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

A man once told D. L. Moody he was worried because he didn't feel saved. Moody asked, "Was Noah safe in the ark?" "Certainly he was," the man replied. "Well, what made him safe, his feeling or the ark?"

The songs: Fires by Jordan St. Cyr: "I remember how You told me That life may not be easy. And everything that I need You've already given me. I remember how You told me I can trust You completely. So why am I doubting When You proved that You'd fight for me? You've walked me through fires, Pulled me from flames. If You're in this with me, I won't be afraid. When the smoke billows higher, and higher And it feels like I can barely breathe, I'll walk through these fires 'Cause You're walking with me."

The hymn I Need Thee Every Hour: "I need Thee every hour, Most gracious Lord; No tender voice like Thine Can peace afford. I need Thee, oh, I need Thee; Every hour I need Thee; Oh, bless me now, my Savior, I come to Thee."

III. Persevere

READ James 5:7, 8.

Patience and perseverance are common themes in the Bible. They're interconnected with lots of crossover. Perseverance is a character trait to be developed (2 Peter 1:6). It's a byproduct of suffering and the predecessor to character (Romans 5:3, 4). It's a straight up command: "You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised" (Hebrews 10:36).

James 5 speaks of being patient until the Lord comes and uses the example of the farmer who has to wait and wait and wait and wait. Patience is mingled with perseverance beginning in v. 10. The prophets are an example of being patient under suffering and Job is an example of perseverance.

Patient perseverance is needed because we live in a world full of suffering. Sometimes it's because we take a stand for Jesus Christ. Last week we eavesdropped on Jesus' conversation with a rich young man and his pronouncement it's hard for the rich to enter heaven. Peter wondered what was going to be in it for those who've followed him. Jesus assured him that those who'd left or been forced to leave things on earth would receive 100 times as much and will inherit eternal life. The account in Mark adds one thing to the list of what would be received - "and with them persecutions" (Mark 10:30). Not exactly what we desire, but it's reality.

Patient perseverance is needed because we're in a sin cursed world, in a battle against sin and the devil.

John Newton, writer of *Amazing Grace*, became a pastor after leaving the life of a slave trader and becoming a Christian. He wrote letters to younger pastors (*The Letters of John Newton*). To a 31 year old pastor he wrote, "You know, I find it depressing sometimes, because I thought that, by my 80s, I would no longer struggle with all these different sins. Some of those desires in me are stronger and more sinful than ever. What I've realized is that God allows us to continue to struggle against the flesh because growth in grace is not getting past a point where you need grace. It's growth in your awareness of how badly you do need it."

We can never get to the place where we say, "We're good. We've arrived. We've got it covered."

The Bible challenges us: "Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live wholly and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed it's coming... So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him" (2 Peter 3:11, 12, 14).

Keep on keeping on. Persevere to the end. We're to continue to add to our faith. This will keep us from being ineffective and unproductive in our knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We won't become nearsighted and blind. We won't forget that we've been cleansed from our past sins (2 Peter 1:8, 9). The challenge to us: "Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:10, 11).

Songs. The hymn: It will be worth it all when we see Christ. The second: You've Already Won by Shane & Shane: "I'm fighting a battle That you've already won. No matter what comes my way, I will overcome. I don't know what You're doing. But I know what You've done. I'm fighting a battle that You've already won."

It's not that we're needlessly fighting trying to gain the victory, but we're fighting, knowing we are victors because God has already provided the victory.

IV. Dependence. Part 2. Together

Read 1 Corinthians 12:20, 21.

God had Paul write about the body of Christ in a humorous fashion. The eye can't say to the hand, "I don't need you!" One of the necessities of being a good athlete is hand eye coordination. Imagine a baseball player's eyes telling his hands, "Your services aren't needed. I can hit a home run all by myself." What would happen? The bat would stay on the shoulder. The umpire would call "Strike three. You're out!" The batter would walk back to the dugout.

Suppose Usain Bolt's head said to his feet, "I don't need you! I can win the 100 meter dash all by my lonesome." Bolt would get in the starting blocks. The gun would go off. Bolt would lift his hands...and fall flat on his face.

The human body is designed and intended to function as a whole. The body of Christ is designed to function as a whole in cooperation with the other parts. Need to realize each part is dependent upon the rest.

Matthew West is an incredible songwriter in the way he captures scriptural truth. "Me On Your Mind" is an expression of amazement that the King of the world would give his life for me. He has a duet version with Anne Wilson. The comment at the top of the page (@worshipinstrumental8935 1 year ago): "I told my mother that I gave my life to Jesus and she said she will never regard me as her daughter anymore, but all that doesn't matter. I feel at peace after my decision. My trust in Jesus will never change. I love you Jesus."

The responses poured in: "Welcome sister. You have a bigger family in Christ." Another wrote "Welcome to the family. We're there for you" (@prome4985).

Song. The Family of God.

Children of God by Third Day.

I hope you don't mind a little more rhyme time in the scheme of our previous theme:

Though the winds of trials, difficulties, and suffering blow

seeking to bring us low

and work us woe,

and we go toe to toe with the devil our foe,

they won't blow us down.

We have something to crow about.

Stand firm.

We're in line to hear "Well done. Come share your Master's happiness" (Matthew 25:20, 23).