

The Journey, 5 pgs

Son, I had thought to begin this communication by writing a description of the facts that ultimately resulted in your family's current state of mind and disposition. I realized that is way beyond my ability to do so. If you have already written such an account, it belongs here. **Do not allow the wrongs of others discourage you and ruin your life.**

These few remarks are addressed to you as my friend and brother, and head of a household.

In The Pilgrim's Progress [subtitled From This World to That Which is to Come by John Bunyan], **Christian & Hopeful** wonder into the domain of **Giant Despair** and are captured. They found themselves imprisoned far from friends and acquaintances. The Giant made them miserable, beat them mercilessly, and locked them in **Doubting Castle**. They were eventually able to get out by using a key named **Promise** and escaped to **the King's Highway** once again on track for **the Celestial City**. May God enable you to escape the cruelty of Giant Despair and again take up your journey to the Celestial City on the King's Highway.

I once heard a sermon on **Gal.6:2**, *Carry each other's burdens [heavy loads], and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ [ie, love]; V.5*, *For each one will carry his own load [an individual responsibility each of us is to bear]*. The part that has stayed with me over the years was his admonition to those who have been discouraged or for some other reason have neglected their responsibility [*laid their burden down*]. His admonition was "pick it up!" Don't let Giant Despair keep you from moving on. You know you can't neglect this without harmful consequences, so "Go on, pick it back up!"

This is real spiritual warfare! We shouldn't expect not to be knocked down and hurt, but the battle rages on we're needed back on front lines. It's the burden we signed up for when we accepted Christ as savior, married, and started a family.

Summary of the Christian Life

Christianity is **founded upon** (one act) the finished work of Christ on the cross ... *Jesus said, "It is finished."* With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit, **Jn.19:30**;

The Christian life is **accessed by** (one requirement) believing in him ... *to all who received him ... who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God*, **Jn.1:12**. The only thing that can minimize Christ's saving work is our failing to lay hold of it by faith. This is the foundation, the underpinning, the universal constant for God's people.

It is practiced by continuing the discipline of carefully working out one's salvation ... *Therefore, my dear friends [Paul writing to Philippian believers], as you have always obeyed [listened to me, took seriously my words] —not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence— [an apostolic injunction to the church] [discipline yourselves (implied) to] continue working out your salvation [persevere in living true to your faith] with fear and trembling [a strong warning about doing what you know to be right], for it is God who is working in you [spiritually through the events and circumstances of your lives] to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose*, **Phil.2:12-13**.

Working out your salvation means figuring out how to navigate an antagonistic world pursuant to your faith. It boils down to discovering and acting upon **tier 3 (GT#6, p.1-4)** wisdom, knowledge, &

understanding. **This is not business (life) as usual.** It calls for nothing less than a serious, ongoing, intentional, effort in the power of the Spirit, **stage 3 (GT#2, p.6-7)**. Our endeavors are not to be undertaken in the flesh, but in the Spirit - supernaturally empowered by trusting in God.

*The righteous [supernaturally reborn, **Jn.1:12-13**] shall live [walk, carry on in this world] by means of faith, **Rom.1:17**.*

... his divine power has bestowed on us **everything necessary for [spiritual] life and godliness** through the rich knowledge of the one who called us by his own glory and excellence. Through these things he has bestowed on us **his precious and most magnificent promises**, **so that by means of [faith in] what was promised, you may become partakers of the divine nature [holiness]**, after escaping the worldly corruption that is produced by evil desire [lust, desiring things that are not rightfully ours] . For this very reason, make every effort to add to your **faith** excellence [virtue] , to excellence, knowledge; to knowledge, self-control; to self-control, perseverance [steadfastness, stick-to-it-iveness]; to perseverance, godliness; to godliness, brotherly affection; to brotherly affection, unselfish love. For if these things are really yours and are continually increasing, **they will keep you from becoming ineffective and unproductive in your pursuit of knowing our Lord Jesus Christ more intimately** ... Therefore, brothers and sisters, make every effort to make sure of [confirm, certify] your calling and election . For **by doing these** [carefully working out your salvation] **you will never stumble into sin** . For thus an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be richly provided for you, **2 Pt.1:3-11**

Christian Maturity, GT intro, p.4

Having to be told what to do and how is for children, the immature. Discerning what is right and how to go about it is for the mature. Paul describes it like this ... *herein do I exercise myself, to always have a [good, quiet, clear] conscience void of offense toward (a) God and toward (b) men, **Acts 24:16***. As a matter of maintaining a good conscience before God, always work out how to thoughtfully implement what you know IN YOUR HEART to be right, good, or according to God's will, even if you don't have a specific command or directions as to how to proceed, and **do not let fear hold you back from taking the appropriate course of action**, **1 Pt.3:16-17; 4:19; Gal.6:9-10; Jas.4:17**.

*On this topic [preceding discussion about Jesus' obedience and suffering] we have much [more] to say [but] it is difficult to explain [ie, for you to understand], since you have become dull [instead of progressing in the Christian life through **working out their salvation**, they had become spiritually sluggish and mentally lazy] in hearing [hearing & doing are like faith & works – they belong together as two sides of the same coin. **Jas.1:21-25; Mt.7:24-27; GT-#6, p.3-4**]. For though you should in fact be [trained] teachers by this time [you haven't progressed in your understanding], **you need someone to teach you the beginning elements of God's utterances [Heb.6:1-2 , all over again!]**. You have gone back [actually regressed – Don't think you can coast very long without losing ground once you stop working out your salvation. PRINCIPLE: one's skill level will always decline through lack of practice] to [the point where you once again] need milk, not [instead of] solid food. For everyone who lives on milk is inexperienced in the message of righteousness, because he is an infant [not capable of handling it]. But solid food is for the mature, whose perceptions are trained by [practicing righteousness] to discern both good and evil [distinguish appropriate from inappropriate], **Heb.5.11-14***

Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering ... So **do not throw away your confidence**; it will be richly rewarded. **You need to persevere** so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised ... my righteous one will [persevere & continue to] live by faith. **I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back**. But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have [continue in] faith and are saved, **Heb.10:32-39**

Therefore we must pay closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not **drift away** [by neglecting to work out our salvation]. For if the message spoken through angels proved to be so firm that every violation or disobedience received its just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? ... See to it ... that none of you has an evil, unbelieving heart that forsakes the living God. But exhort one another each day ... that none of you may become hardened by sin's deception. For we have become sharers with Christ, if in fact we hold our initial confidence firm until the end ... **Heb.2:1-3; 3:12-14; 2 Pt.2:20-22**.

I pray that according to the wealth of his glory the Father will grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person, that Christ will dwell in your hearts through faith, so that, because you have been **rooted and grounded in His love**, you will be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and thus to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you will be filled up to all the fullness of God, **Eph.3:16-19**.

Therefore, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord [by faith], **continue living your lives** [walking] in him, having been **rooted** [established] and being **built up** in him and **firm** [confirmed] in the faith just as you were taught [to exercise yourselves in working out your salvation], and overflowing [abounding] with thanksgiving, **Col.2:6-7**. **V.8** is a warning about being taken in by empty philosophy.

Do not be conformed to [molded by] this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind , so that [in the process of working out your salvation] you may [learn to] discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God, **Rom.12:2**.

So why do you keep calling me 'Lord, Lord!' when you don't do what I say? ... when someone comes to me, listens to my teaching, and then follows it [by working out his own salvation with care]. It is like a [wise] person building a house who digs deep and lays the foundation on solid rock. When the floodwaters rise and break against that house, it stands firm because it is well built. But anyone who hears and doesn't obey is like a [foolish] person who builds a house right on the ground, without a foundation. When the floods sweep down against that house, it will collapse into a heap of ruins, **Lk.6:46-49**

In the **Parable of the Sower**, Jesus taught about the qualification for entering the kingdom of God. The seeds a farmer was broadcasting represented the spreading of God's word in the world. The four different places seeds landed represent people that heard it and what happened. (1) Some seeds fell **along the path** where it were trampled on and the birds came and ate it up. This represents people who hear the word, then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. (2) Other seeds fell **on rocky places**. This represents

those who receive the word with joy. The plants sprang up quickly, but when the sun came up, the plants withered because because the soil was shallow. When these people were [tested by] trouble or persecution they quickly fall away. (3) Others, like seed sown **among thorns**, **hear the word**, [but fail to work out their salvation] so the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and desire for other things come in [lure them away] and choke the word making it unfruitful. (4) Still others, represented by the **good soil** are those with a noble and good heart, **who hear the word**, retain it and [by continuing to work out their salvation] **produce a valuable crop at harvest time**—thirty, sixty, a hundred times what was sown, **Mk.4:1-20; Mt.13:1-23; Lk.8:4-15**.

Endurance & Perseverance [GT#6, p.2 & 10; Dynamics of Gods Judgment]

*From James ... to the twelve tribes dispersed abroad [Jewish Christians scattered among the nations because of persecution] ... consider it nothing but joy [Gk. all joy, full joy, great joy] when you fall into all sorts of trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance^a [ie, it's not suppose to discourage you so you quit] . And let endurance have its perfect effect [intended outcome] , so that you will be perfect and complete, not deficient in anything ... Blessed is the one who endures testing, because **when he has proven to be genuine** [lit. having become approved] , **he will receive the crown of life that God promised to those who love him** , **Jas.1:1-4, 12** .*

a. Endurance is the ability to withstand or sustain prolonged stress or hardship without giving way, whereas perseverance is the steadfast determination to continue a task or goal despite difficulty or delay, actively working to overcome obstacles and achieve success. In essence, endurance focuses on resilience and holding on through a situation, while perseverance involves an active effort to move forward and adapt, resulting in growth and finally reward.

*From Peter ... to those temporarily residing abroad [people who have been forced by persecution to flee their homeland] ... who are **chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by being set apart by the Spirit** for obedience and for sprinkling with Jesus Christ's blood [**Heb.9:11-14, 9-28**] ... By his great mercy **he gave us new birth into a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, that is, into an inheritance imperishable, undefiled, and unfading [a better homeland] . **It is reserved in heaven for you, who by God's power are protected through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time** . This brings you great joy [Gk. in which you exult] , although you may have to suffer for a short time in various trials. Such trials [are meant to] show the proven character [genuineness] of your faith ... and will bring praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. You have not seen him, but you love him. You do not see him now but you believe in him, and so you rejoice [exult] with an indescribable and glorious (having been glorified) joy, **because you are attaining the goal of your faith —the salvation of your souls**, **1 Pt.1:1-9***

*... do not be astonished [surprised, taken aback] that a trial by fire [lit. burning] is occurring among you, as though something strange were happening to you. But **rejoice in the degree that you have shared in the sufferings of Christ**, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice and be **glad** . If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory, who is the Spirit of God, rests on you ... let those who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator as they do good, **4:12-19** .*

We sent Timothy ... to strengthen you and encourage you about your faith, so that no one would be shaken by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this. For in fact when we were with you, we were telling you in advance that we would suffer affliction ... 1 Thes.3:2-4.

*... by building yourselves up in your most holy faith, by praying in the Holy Spirit [the means] keep yourselves in the love of God, while anticipating [waiting for] the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that brings eternal life ... Now to the one who is able to keep you from falling, and to cause you to stand, rejoicing, without blemish before his glorious presence, to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time, and **now**, and for all eternity. Amen, **Jude 20-21, 24-25**.*

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I've had a lot of occurrences in my life that jolted me: the fire that partially burned our house in Nicholson; the fire that totally destroyed our house in Dalton with all the games I had collected by visiting thrift stores as well as the ones I designed and built; all the Scooper/diggers that I designed and built for sale; the unique CRDW-APE clear plastic engine that I never got back from an engineer I loaned it to for evaluation; loss of the DVDs of my CRDW & CRDS – APEs running (simulated) via barbecue motors; the articles (essays) I lost when my computer hard drive crashed; snapped rotator cuff tendon; kick-scooter accident that left me with permanent injuries; heart arrhythmia; enlarged prostate; etc.

*Though the damage & loss of these things, time, money, and effort was painful, God used them to change my direction & move me along my journey. I am absolutely convinced that they were **necessary** for my progress in the faith. I can't even describe the joy those (and other projects) gave me after I became a Christian, married Charlene, and raised you boys. My cup has run over repeatedly.*

*... these assets [Paul's Jewish lineage, righteousness under the law, zeal as a pharisee] I have come to regard as liabilities because of Christ. More than that, I now regard all things as liabilities compared to the far greater value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things—indeed, I regard them as dung!—that I may gain Christ, and be found in him ... because I have ... a righteousness from God that is in fact based on Christ's faithfulness. **My aim** is to know him, to experience the power of his resurrection, to share in his sufferings, and to be like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead ... **I strive**^a to lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus also laid hold of me ... **I am single-minded: Forgetting the things that are behind and reaching out for the things that are ahead**, with **this goal** in mind, **I strive** toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus ... **Phil.3:7-14**.*

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I'll end this letter with the last lines from a famous poem by Robert Frost: **Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening**

The woods are lovely, dark and deep, but I have promises to keep and miles to go before I sleep – miles to go before I sleep. Dad

COMPENDIUM: SOME OF THE THINGS LOST