

August 1st, Keeping Your Eyes on Jesus
Part 4 in the series, 'The End is Near'

What were some things from last Sunday's message that resonated with you?

Was there anything you wrestled with?

READ Hebrews 10:32-39

32 Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering. **33** Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. **34** You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. **35** So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.

36 You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. **37** For,

“In just a little while,
he who is coming will come
and will not delay.”

38 And,

“But my righteous one will live by faith.
And I take no pleasure
in the one who shrinks back.”

39 But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.

What strikes you most about this passage?

How is confidence intertwined with faith?

How do verses 32-34 present the response to individual suffering and the response to suffering in a community?

How do verses 32-34 encourage Christians to step out of their own comfort?

READ 2 Corinthians 4:7-12

7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. **8** We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; **9** persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. **10** We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. **11** For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. **12** So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

Why do you think God choose to put such great treasure in such weak, everyday vessels (jars of clay)?

Why do you think Paul was able to see so clearly the power and victory of Christ in his life?

What do you think Paul meant when he said “We always carry around in our bodies the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.”?

READ 2 Corinthians 12:9–10

9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. **10** That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Do you think God is impressed with our strength, endurance and ability to persevere on our own?

What do you think Paul means when he says “Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses”?

Why do you think Paul goes as far as saying he *delights* in weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and difficulties? Surely if they are as such, they aren’t very delightful things to go through!

READ and discuss this quote from C.S. Lewis

“If you are a nice person — if virtue comes easily to you — beware! Much is expected from those to whom much is given. If you mistake for your own merits what are really God’s gifts to you through nature, and if you are contented with simply being nice, you are still a rebel: and all those gifts will only make your fall more terrible, your corruption more complicated, your bad example more disastrous. The Devil was an archangel once; his natural gifts were as far above yours as yours are above those of a chimpanzee.

But if you are a poor creature — poisoned by a wretched upbringing in some house full of vulgar jealousies and senseless quarrels — saddled, by no choice of your own, with some loathsome sexual perversion — nagged day in and day out by an inferiority complex that makes you snap at your best friends — do not despair. He knows all about it. You are one of the poor whom He blessed. He knows what a wretched machine you are trying to drive. Keep on. Do what you can. One day (perhaps in another world, but perhaps far sooner than that) He will fling it on the scrap-heap and give you a new one. And then you may astonish us all — not least yourself: for you have learned your driving in a hard school.”