

Same Old You 6 Don't Give Up

INTRODUCTION

Today we are extending our *Same Old You* series by one last week. You can review the entire series on the church's web site. Last week Pastor Dave spoke about resolving conflict in a God honoring manner. If we want our future to be better than the past we can learn how to handle conflict in a transforming way.

Over the past couple months we have given several messages that contained specific insight about how we can do our part to face a better tomorrow. Today I would like to sum up this series by speaking to those who are weary and discouraged. If you have felt like giving in and giving up then today is for you.

READING THE TEXT

Isaiah 40:31

but they who **wait** for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Hebrews 12:3

Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

PREACHING THE TEXT

BE STRONG

Discouragement overtook the young man as he sat down to open the letter addressed from the academic dean's office. He knew what it would

say before he tore open the envelope's flap and pulled out the letter. As he brought the letter before his eyes his fears were confirmed.

“Dear Student, As one who was admitted to this institution on academic probation it was necessary for you to achieve at least a 2.5 grade point average. Your current gpa does not meet the necessary standard therefore i regret to inform you that you are not eligible to enroll in courses for the fall semester.”

This was not the first such letter received by this young man. This was the third letter from the third institution from which he had failed. The young man stood and began to pace back and forth speaking into the air holding a one sided conversation with God.

“I know you called me to ministry. From the day I was saved I could see myself preaching, teaching and even working with other pastors. But now the door is closed forever. Why am I not able to complete the path toward the calling you gave me?!” “If you called me on this path why don't you help me with my grades? How is it possible that you call someone and then don't let them achieve their calling?! Will you please let me understand!”

Nine years later this young man was surrounded by his staff at the Baxter Health Care facility in Mississippi where he had been working his way up the corporate ladder. One by one his staff demanded that he quit his job in management and go to seminary. After all each of them affirmed, “you were born to be a pastor.”

What this slightly older young man did not realize is that he would go on to achieve academic honors in a Bachelor's degree and later in three

masters degrees. This success was partially due to the advent of the personal computer. Unknown to him he had a learning disability that prevented him from reading small print textbooks printed on glossy paper. The text on a computer could be adjusted so that he could read and study class material like a normal person. But he almost failed to try again.

Fear of failure visited this young man as he turned in his resignation letter and enrolled in college courses back in Minneapolis. Here is the passage that gave this young man the course to try again.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

I know this to be true because that formerly young man is me. And that is my overcomers passage. Let's explore this passage a bit further.

It is not that Christ strengthens us to do whatever we come up with to accomplish in the flesh apart from the council of the Holy Spirit and of Scripture. It is that if Jesus Christ thinks up something for your life then He will strengthen you to accomplish the mission that He set you on. He will see you through on this quest. He will strengthen you when you can not come up with the strength on your own.

And when the Devil reminds you of your failures and weaknesses and fears and all the reasons that you will not succeed. When He convinced people around you to turn against you.

1 John 4:4 (ESV)

⁴ Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

TRUST

Recently I came across a quote that said many Christians were professing their faith in Christ but living functionally like atheists. One of the ways in which this shows up in our everyday life is that we learn to trust our own judgement rather than to trust God. In other words much of the time we call ourselves Christ followers but we never bother to see where Christ is leading so that we can follow Him. We are self followers who want God to be pleased with our lives despite the fact that we take little or no direction from one who we call Lord and King. So we end up far from home, perhaps making some money and chasing a career. All work can be redemptive work. But there may be something else God called you to do. And you have been fighting Him or doubting Him for years or even decades.

Here is the good news. God saw this coming. And Jesus paid enough to give you a second and third and fourth shot at a joy filled life. It is time to turn it around. It is time to stop stacking up wounds and lost dreams. And here is how to turn it around.

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

**In all thy ways acknowledge him,
and he shall direct thy paths.**

Psalm 112:6-7 Surely the righteous will never be shaken; they will be remembered forever. They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the LORD.

Some people like me end up miles away from God's calling on our life because there are so many things in this world to confuse us or pull our attention to the wrong things. Perhaps you have several doors open for various pursuits and the one that God does not want you to take is the one that pays the most. Know that there is a temptation to do things your way and get off track instead of living your life to the glory of Christ. Also know that you may be in the right place but you will be tempted to hide your faith in Christ and live your life to your own glory. Remember that there is a reward for following Christ and living for him.

It seems like just yesterday I finished high school. And now I'm getting older and in the blink of an eye I will pass away and be in the Lord's presence. That is where we are all headed. Please let that day be a day of reward. And in the meantime as we march closer to eternity keep this passage in mind.

THERE IS A DAY OF REWARD

Galatians 6:9

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Philippians 1:6

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

One of the guaranteed means of assuring failure is giving up. One of the main reasons I have been tempted to give up is that I took a setback in one area as a setback for the whole project. Another reason that contributed to a temptation to give up was that I was not realistic about the

resistance that I would face when I entered the endeavor. There are many factors that will tempt a believer to give up and move on to friendlier territory.

Warden gives four helpful general guidelines designed to reset one's mind and heart so that a person may cross the finish line:

RESET FOR THE FINISH LINE

1. Reconnect with the truth you know
2. Remember what God said to you
3. Reconcile yourself to the reality of the battle
4. Re-engage the fight

SUMMARY / CONCLUSION

****EXERCISE**** Pray for those who are weary and need God's strength

TAKING IT HOME

1. Can you describe your current level of motivation?
2. What has God been showing you about your desire to give up?
3. What is the Spirit of God saying to your heart right now?
4. What passages spoke to your heart today and how will you hang onto this passage so you can use it later when the hard times visit you?

BENEDICTION PASSAGES

Psalm 55:22

Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.