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## **SUMMER SPEAKER SERIES 2023:**

### **“Persevering to Your Promise”**

I would like to start by posing a question. How many of you are waiting for a promise from God to be fulfilled in your life? Raise your hand if that describes you. If you are online drop a hand raise emoji in the chat. Now it is one thing to wait to receive a promise from God peacefully, but sometimes we have a hard wait. Sometimes our path to our promise leads us through some turbulence. Our wait becomes painful.

I am talking about the parents who are praying daily for a child to become part of the family of believers. They are standing on the promise that if you raise your children in the way they should go they will not depart. However, your child is getting further away from God and not closer.

I am thinking of the single man or woman who desire to be married, and have been asking and knocking for God to send them their spouse. However, after years of waiting on God to reveal their spouse they struggle daily with loneliness.

I believe my assignment today is to encourage those of us who are holding onto a promise from God by persevering through a hard wait.

### **Question:**

**What if our perseverance is the exact thing that God is requiring of us to get us ready to receive the promise we are waiting for?**

I'd love to give you the definition for the word Perseverance... Here it is: “Perseverance is persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in receiving success.”

In fact, after preparing to speak today I am convinced that this is the case for the greatest promises in our lives.

The title of my message is **“Persevering to Your Promise.”** Look at your neighbor and encourage them with this statement, Perseverance is required for your promise!

For the greatest promises in our lives, we often have to persevere through tests to get to the promise. King David after receiving a King's anointing had to wait 15 years to become a King. A portion of those years he spent as a fugitive of the nation that he would eventually lead. After studying what the scriptures had to say about perseverance, I was zoned in on Romans 5:3-5.

Why don't you all turn with me there to see what the Apostle Paul has to say about suffering and perseverance...

## I. ROMANS 5 ON PERSEVERANCE

- **Romans 5:3-5: 3 (NIV):**

*Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character, and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*

Paul caught my attention here... Who glories in their sufferings? I know I don't! I'm sad when I'm suffering. But Paul says to "glory" in our suffering. Why? Because God wants to use our sufferings to pull something out of us—greater perseverance. When perseverance is pulled out of us, character is formed in us. We are no longer just reading the Word of God, but *trusting* the Word of God. And once the promises of God get deep down into our hearts, our hope increases, because we are standing on the sure foundation of the Word of our Heavenly Father.

In my job, about 5 years ago, I took some time off during the holiday season to rest after a fruitful but difficult year. And I got a call from my head of sales saying that we had just unexpectedly lost our biggest client. Our budgets for the coming year were already finalized and approved by our board, and we were expecting the income from this major contract.

I went downstairs and my family knew something was wrong. I remember two things:

- My wife spoke into me and said, "I know this is hard, but you'll figure it out with the Lord..."
- After a couple hours, my father said: "Kevin, I want you to seek the Lord on what He is trying to do for this situation."

The next morning I went for a run, and the Lord said to me: "Kevin, this is a situation in which I want you to stand on my Word." I asked the Lord for a word, and He said: "I work all things together for the good of those who are called according to my purpose" (see Romans 8:28)

We had to make some difficult financial decisions, but we got through it. And 6 months later, a representative from that company reached out and we got that contract back—and in addition, they signed on for multiple years. The way things worked out, it was actually more profitable for our business than if they had just kept their original contract. Praise God!

So you see how that Scripture plays out? Unexpected suffering came; I began to believe more deeply in the Word of God, and my character was strengthened; and then hope came, because I saw God work for my good and will never be the same.

So let's go deeper into how God is specifically using our perseverance to prepare us to receive and keep the promises he has on our life. I believe there are three things that God wants to accomplish through our perseverance.

## II. TEACHING POINTS FROM ROMANS 5

In Romans 5, we see that there are three things God wants to accomplish through our perseverance...

1. He wants to develop our character
2. He wants to strengthen our obedience to his Word
3. He wants to show His glory through our Hope

### 1. He wants to develop our character

If you look at this passage in the original language, you see that there two Greek words that were translated into "Perseverance" and "Character."

- *Hupomone* (Perseverance): which means "To stand under"
- *Dokime* (Character): which means, "Trial, approved, tried character"

When we "stand still" under trial and trouble, God develops character within us that is "approved" by God!

Let's look at King David, who we just spoke about. His character was "approved by God" (1 Samuel 13:14). God could approve of David because He and David had been through some things together. God saw that even when King David was put through the fire, He would trust Him and persevere through the trial until God fulfilled His promise.

But I believe there is a second thing God is trying to do through our perseverance...

### 2. He wants to strengthen our obedience to his Word

In the book of Hebrews, the Word of God says this...

- *You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. (Hebrews 10:36 NIV)*

What does this mean? When your neighbor persecutes or lies on you – how will you respond? Will you try to get back at them, or will you do what the Word says, and “turn the other cheek” that you would “heap burning coals on their head”? (see Matthew 5:38-40 and Romans 12:20).

If we are faithful to obey God’s Word during our time of trial and testing, we will find that our promise is on the other side. Now, I want to look at a third thing that I believe God wants to do through our perseverance...

### 3. He wants to show his glory through our hope

Paul says that God won’t let our hope be put to shame... in other words, “God won’t leave you hanging!” And we see this same truth expressed in 1 Peter 5:10...

- *And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will HIMSELF restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast (NIV)*

Turn to your neighbor and say, “It’s just going to be a little while!”

And I just to encourage you, because its so easy to forget when you’re in the trial: You are a child of God!

- **Romans 8:17 (NIV):** *Now if we are children, then we are heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

I believe I have a word for someone: Suffering is your right now, but Glory is your Future!

I wonder if someone has a “right now” praise for a “future glory” that is going to come through your life?

Finally, I want us to look at three practical ways we can persevere through our time of trial...

### III. 3 PRACTICAL WAYS TO PERSEVERE

I don’t know about you, but I learn best when I have an example.

- **Summarize the story of Caleb (Joshua 14:6-15):** Caleb was 1 of only 2 spies who came back and gave a good report of the promised land, because he trusted God would help Israel inherit the land despite the formidable forces that stood in their way. And because of his faith, the Lord promised Caleb the very ground he stood on. And even when the people were forced to wander the wilderness for 40 years because of their disbelief, Caleb lived through it. Even after they went to enter the promised land, Caleb still had to engage in 5 years of fighting... But God delivered on his promise! He received his land, and named it Hebron.

I want to highlight three practical ways we see in this story to persevere through suffering...

### 1. Make the word of God your firm foundation

- **Joshua 14:7 (NIV):** *I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land. And I brought him back a report according to my CONVICTIONS.*

Jesus told us that in this life, we can either build our foundation on God's Word or on something else... anything else... even a good thing! But only a life built on the foundation of God's Word will endure (see Matthew 7:24-27)

This makes me think of a powerful testimony from my Grandmother, which she gave me permission to share. This is a time when my Grandmother was experiencing an intense struggle with depression. First, she went to mental health professions (which is an important thing to do if you are experiencing any mental health issues!) But then, she started trying out Spiritualists and Psychics, and was following all of the direction they were giving to her, because they said that she was "cursed." But one day as she walked to her door, she was weeping because nothing seemed to help her get out of the sorrow she felt; and as she opened the door, she looked up and it was the most beautiful sky she had ever seen. And she heard a singing voice that said, "Salvation is Free." She chose to put her trust in the Lord in that moment, and she went inside her house, and her tears of sorrow turned to joy. And from the moment forward, she said she never experienced a bout of depression again.

We've got to make the Word of God our firm foundation...

### 2. Lean on the strength of the Lord

- **Joshua 14:10-11 (NIV):** *Now then, just as the Lord promised, he has KEPT ME ALIVE for forty-five years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the*

*wilderness. So here I am today, eighty-five years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then.*

The word says we can do ALL THINGS through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13). The word says those that hope in the Lord will renew their strength... (Isaiah 40:31). When we lean on the Lord he is trustworthy to strengthen and keep us through our most difficult moments.

My third and final practical application...

### **3. Be willing to fight for your promise**

- **Joshua 14:12 (NIV):** *Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me that day, You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the Lord helping me; I will drive them out just as he said."*

This reminds me of a very personal testimony from my wife and I, during a very painful time of our trial and sorrow we walked through together. A time when we were believing in the Lord for the promise of a child. We went through deep sorrow and loss in that season. But there was a moment of expectation. My wife went to give some blood, and the nurse told my wife that they weren't sure if this pregnancy would be viable. My wife told me this, and I began seeking the Lord. And the Lord told me several things...

- "Kevin, I don't want your seed to be here on this earth"
- "Kevin, I am the author of life and not death"
- "Kevin – fight for your seed"

So I told my wife and some family, and we asked them to join us in praying and fasting for our child. We went in for the 12-week sonogram, and we heard the heartbeat! It was the sound of Life. He is the God of Life! Don't stop fighting for your promise!

## **IV. CONCLUSION**

Family, I know the wind is blowing hard for some of you right now. I truly believe I was sent here to tell you to keep on persevering in the Lord. Keep on fighting because your present sufferings will not be worth comparing to the future glory that will be revealed in you.

I like to think of God's promise in our life like getting on a flight:

- The Holy Spirit is the pilot guiding us through the skies
- Jesus is air-traffic control, He can see trouble ahead; and sometimes He guides us around it, but sometimes He guides us through it. He prays for us with the Holy Spirit to make it through safe.

- The Father is like the head of the Federal Aviation Administration; He is involved with all the flight plans, approves them, and makes sure we get to our destination

Sometimes when we have to go through the turbulence, life starts to shake; and the pilot comes over the loudspeaker to tell us to put on our seatbelts on and know that He is at the wheel and will not forsake us. Sometimes the oxygen masks even fall down – but if you don't jump out of the plane, eventually, things settle down and the pilot gets over the loudspeaker again. And he says those words: "Cleared for landing!"

Family, my assignment today was to come tell you that no matter how bad it gets, the Lord is faithful to strengthen you through it all. When perseverance has finished its work in you, the God of all grace will himself establish you! In other words, God will say CLEARED FOR LANDING!

In the story of Caleb, it ends with two verses that are so significant. I want to read them. Joshua 14;14-15: So Hebron has belonged to Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite ever since, because he followed the Lord, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly. 15 (Hebron used to be called Kiriath Arba after Arba, who was the greatest man among the Anakites). THEN THE LAND HAD REST FROM WAR.

Some of you are one battle away from being CLEARED FOR LANDING. One prayer away from your child giving their lives to Christ. One treatment away from your healing. One fast away from your deliverance. Stand strong! Allow perseverance to finish its work as James teaches us (James 1;4)... Don't stop until you get your promise from the Lord. And when you get cleared for landing, praise the Lord that he gave you the strength to persevere through suffering, so you could rest in the spacious place that he prepared for you! Hallelujah!

***End with prayer and Altar call***