

TITLE Intro: Psalm 13:1–6 (ESV) ¹ *How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?* ² *How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?* ³ *Consider and answer me, O Lord my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,* ⁴ *lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed over him,” lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.* ⁵ *But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.* ⁶ *I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.*

David, cried to the Lord in desperation! “HOW LONG?” “WILL YOU FORGET ME FOREVER?”

- **SUFFERING** – whether people turn on you because of faith, long-term sickness, struggles with mental health, you are a caregiver for someone else with long-term illness, you experience loss and the death of loved ones or have kids that have walked away from the Lord...
- **Inevitably, we join with David asking, “how long, Lord? What did I do? What must I do?”** We easily slip into believing that ALL suffering and hardship within our lives is a direct result of our SIN or GOD’S DISPLEASURE WITH US.

SERMON TITLE: Holy Spirit: Gives us Strength to Endure

If you have QUESTIONS as the series moves along, please email stefand@mysouthland.com or info@mysouthland.com.

A. The Holy Spirit is “WITH & IN” us through Suffering

John 16:33 (ESV) ³³ *I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation (trouble). But take heart; I have overcome the world.”*

Romans 8:28 (ESV) ²⁸ *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

Candy & Sheldon are one of many of our people who suffer on a daily basis. Yet, HOLD FAST THEIR FAITH IN GOD & you can SEE HIM BEARING FRUIT IN THEM.

WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF THEIR STRENGTH? How do we face impossible circumstances?

Isaiah 43:2 (NIV): *“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze”.*

Psalm 34:18 (NIV): *“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit”.*

Psalm 23:4 (ESV): *“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me”.*

John 14:16–18 (ESV) ¹⁶ *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,* ¹⁷ *even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.* ¹⁸ *“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.*

The KEY to enduring hardship is WALKING IN STEP WITH GOD’S SPIRIT!

B. The Spirit is the Source of Perseverance, Hope, & Faith

Let's take a journey through Paul's 2nd letter to the Church of Corinth.

The Spirit enables us to WALK BY FAITH – what is the context? 2 Cor 5:5-7

2 Corinthians 1:3–11 (ESV) ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵ For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. ⁶ If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. ⁷ Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

- Paul knew the Holy Spirit's COMFORT in his afflictions!
- And could see how the COMFORT given was not just for Himself, but also for others – that others who suffered would be ENCOURAGED through his suffering and find the SAME comfort.
- **Paul's consistent theme in his letters:** use your freedoms for others, use your gifts for others, AND USE YOUR SUFFERING & COMFORT for others – RADICAL LIVING!

⁸ For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. ⁹ Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death.

- Paul's suffering was so severe he despaired of life... there are many in our church who are IN despair right now! DEATH would be a relief for the pain they are going through.
- Paul doesn't condemn this feeling. Rather, he is just honest about how he felt.
- **Psalm 13:1–6 (ESV)** ¹ How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?

But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. ¹⁰ He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. ¹¹

- Paul learned to TRUST the Holy Spirit – who raised Jesus from the dead. This was his source of HOPE.
- Joni Earickson Tada, "Every day is a battle. A battle to hold onto HOPE."
 - She says every day she leans on the Spirit – she prays for the strength to face the day, to smile, to give God glory!
- **Romans 15:13 (ESV)** ¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.
- THIS TOO IS A ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT – to make us hold onto HOPE.

You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

- Paul called upon the CHURCH – TO HELP THROUGH PRAYER!
- **STOP & PRAY TOGETHER:** Heavenly Father, we lift up those in our church who are suffering right now. We ask that You would fill them anew with Your Holy Spirit. That You would reveal Your Presence to them, granting them strength to endure, giving them fresh hope, and empowering them to stand firm in faith.

2 Corinthians 4:7–18 (ESV) ⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. ⁸ We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to

despair;⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;¹⁰ always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our bodies

- **V. 7 Paul points us back to a HIGHER PURPOSE for our brokenness! TO GLORIFY GOD!**
- When he sustains you IN THE FIRE – God receives glory!
- **Example:** my mom has reported that MANY people have told her that they have been strengthened watching HER persevere in faith through sickness and wayward teens. GOD GETS GLORY!

.¹³ Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, “I believed, and so I spoke,” we also believe, and so we also speak,¹⁴ knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.

- **The HOLY SPIRIT is the KEY to perseverance! The KEY to HOPE! The KEY to FAITH!**
- **The Bible does not give all the reasons for why God allows evil...** EXAMPLE: why do kids die of cancer? Why does God not heal your sickness right now? (when he doesn't) Why did God allow the Holocaust? I just read of a teenage Irania girl who was hanged for being raped. EVIL.
- **The Bible does say: “God is working All things for GOOD and for his GLORY!”**
- SUFFERING IS REAL – DEATH IS REAL – Yet – Paul reminds us the SAME SPIRIT that raised Jesus WILL RAISE US UP!
- The Holy Spirit will not leave us as ORPHANS. He is our paraclete! COMFORTER! HELPER! COUNSELOR!
- **FOUNDATION:** God demonstrated His love through Jesus' death for our sins! He is committed to destroying ALL evil and sin and SAVING those who TRUST HIM. Is this enough for us to LOVE & TRUST Him in return?
- **QUESTION:** And consistently ask yourself, “IF this is God's assignment for me – to glorify His Name – am I willing to ACCEPT it? To SURRENDER to it? To GLORIFY HIM IN IT?”

¹⁵ For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, **to the glory of God.** ¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

- Paul is not minimizing YOUR pain or suffering! NO! He is PUTTING IT IN PERSPECTIVE!
- Paul urges US – those who are suffering to look BEYOND what is causing you pain right now – to place your HOPE in Jesus' promise to us! To RESTORE ALL THINGS!
- What about those times when you FALL APART and have NO STRENGTH and DESPAIR....??

2 Corinthians 5:2–8 (ESV) 2 For in this tent (body) we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, ...For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—...5 He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

- Walk by FAITH and not be SIGHT – the context here is for those times in your life when you have NO STRENGTH LEFT!
- You don't understand the WHY... you don't know WHAT to do... PAUL urges us, “WALK BY FAITH AND NOT BY SIGHT.”

2 Corinthians 12:7–10 (ESV) Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. 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 of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 For the sake

of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Standing firm through suffering: (who in here is suffering? Who in here feels lost? Despair?)

- **Hold onto your FAITH – even if it’s all you can do – choose to TRUST in JESUS.**
 - THIS ALONE gives God glory! And testifies to those around YOU! EVEN IF YOU CAN’T DO ANYTHING ELSE!
 - **Romans 4:20–24 (ESV)** No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.” But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord,
 - **STEFAN example:** I pray daily for 20 people from our church who are suffering! I watch them continue in their faith and I AM ENCOURAGED! I am STRENGTHENED!! BY THEIR SIMPLE FAITH IN JESUS! DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE WHAT GOD CAN DO THROUGH YOUR SIMPLE TRUST & FAITH.
 - **Don’t believe me? Hebrews 11:6, 35-40 (ESV)** ⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him...³⁵ Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. ³⁶ Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— ³⁸**of whom the world was not worthy**—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. ³⁹ And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.
 - **Your continued FAITH glorifies God! And impacts those around you!**
- **Pray for the Holy Spirit to give you strength each day**
- **Be honest with God & those close to you – you are allowed to have bad days!**
- **Commit in your heart – “whatever is His way, is your way.” You will love Him, even IF nothing else changes.**

C. Be the Church – ALL of us have a role! “no one stands alone”

When you see someone suffering:

- **Pray:** You can pray for them privately & ask them how you can pray for them.
- **Serve:** Look for ways to serve & help when possible: ask when you aren’t sure.
- **Love:** Never judge & always show compassion: Romans 12 “weep with those who weep.”
- **Be Present:** Don’t try to fix the problem (Job’s friends). Just be present.