

Perilous times

There is little doubt that we are living in a world that is growing increasingly hostile to the knowledge of God. Times of great stress, lawlessness, and betrayal are coming upon the church and we will need to know how to endure until the end so that we will be saved. Thankfully, Jesus has given us the word of His perseverance as a command. He said that we should keep 'the word of My perseverance' and 'hold fast what you have, so that no-one will take your crown'. If we will live in first love and obey His 'sound doctrine' regarding godly living, He will deliver us from every evil work and preserve us unto His everlasting kingdom.

Jesus warned us that before the time of the end, trouble will increase in the world. Nations and kingdoms will rise up in war and threaten each other as they seek to establish their own security and authority. Natural disasters, such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, famine and pestilences, will increase throughout the earth. On account of this turmoil, it might seem as though we have come to the time of the end. However, Jesus told us that these events are not signalling the end of the world. Rather, they are 'the beginning of birth pains' and 'the fullness of times'.

We recognise that we are living in this particular phase of God's purpose because we observe these events increasing in the world today. The increase of trouble or 'birth pains' among the nations and in nature itself is evidence that the seventh world kingdom is beginning to be established across the world. At the same time, the restoration of the lampstand administration of the church is signalling that the fullness of times is already coming upon us. This is the phase of history when God will gather all things into Christ.

References:

Rev 3:10-11

2Ti 4:3-4, 18 KJV

Mat 24:6, 8

Eph 1:10

1Co 15:28

Further Study: Colossians 3

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 2

Lawlessness will increase

Jesus said that in our day there will be an increase in lawlessness, or iniquity, and this will cause the love of most believers to grow cold. By this, He meant that as Christians, they would cease loving one another. Lawlessness is at work in the church when people reject the name and work that God has given them. This happens when they do not accept and submit to God's authority in the church, nor lay their life down for their brethren. Because they reject the authority of God, given to those in the body of Christ for their benefit, they become lawless.

Lawlessness and opposition are the hallmarks of the spirit of antichrist. A lawless person will seek to establish their own name at the expense of others. Rather than being able to hear and obey the authority of Christ in the church, they will do what is right in their own eyes, or what they think is best for themselves. Those who oppose the culture of godliness, do so because they want to be accepted and relevant to people in the world. For this reason, they allow a culture of compromise with the world, in opposition to the godly culture of God's household. If we maintain our commitment and do not let go of our perseverance in the face of these pressures, we will gain our own lives.

As Christians living in this phase of history, we are being stressed and harassed by the spirit of the world as it sends a flood of its ungodly and lawless culture against the people of God. The apostle Paul wrote that this 'mystery of lawlessness' is already at work in the world and is energised by Satan's power. This antichrist spirit wants to impose upon our lives, and discourage us so that we cease to obey His word of perseverance. We need to remember Jesus' word, that only the one who endures to the end will be saved.

References:

Mat 24:12 Psa 18:4
Deu 12:8-9 Mar 13:13
Luk 21:19 Gal 6:9

Further Study: 2 Thessalonians 3

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 3

The word of His perseverance

In the book of Revelation, Jesus commended the church at Philadelphia for keeping His word and for not denying His name. This meant that they had been able to endure in their warfare against lawlessness, by keeping the word of His perseverance. Jesus promised that because they had kept His word, He would also keep them from the hour of temptation which is coming upon the whole world, before the end.

We need to remember that Jesus' word to the church at Philadelphia was recorded for our sake. His command to persevere was given to us so that we would know that we can endure in first love during times of stress. At times, we can feel tormented by the world's pressures because its culture is at war with the culture of the body of Christ.

As we seek to persevere in this cultural conflict, we may experience anxiety, fear and trauma as the spirit of the world and the spirit of antichrist come against us. We may become timid and tempted to compromise our godly culture because we might encounter opposition from those at church or in the community. It is at these times that we should remember that God's word has been written for our instruction. God has spoken His word to us so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope and not be discouraged.

If we will give attention to His sound doctrine when it is taught to us, God will give us His perseverance and encouragement. This is His capacity given to us so that in the midst of trial and tribulation, we can endure until the end and be saved. With this capacity, we as members of the body of Christ can serve others in their trials by being able ministers of His consolation and encouragement to them.

References:

Rev 3:10 1Ti 4:6
Rom 15:4-6 1Pe 1:13
Act 14:22 Psa 119:81-83

Further Study: Hebrews 6

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 4

Rest for our souls

The Scriptures encourage us in the hope of our sonship because they teach us how to live as a son of God, even in times of stress and opposition. There are many things we encounter that have now become the normal pressures of life in this present age. The spirit of antichrist in the world is unashamedly promoting secular beliefs and ungodly behaviours and cultures as though they are normal human experiences. Immorality, impurity and idolatry are bringing the judgement of God upon the sons of disobedience. These cultural pressures to compromise our culture as sons of God will continue to increase, and we will need to know how to cope with these pressures as we persevere in the word of Christ.

The Scriptures contain the instruction of sound doctrine so that from them, we can be encouraged to persevere in the hope of our sonship. We need to come to Christ and learn from Him so that He can give us His peace in every circumstance. Jesus said that if we will come to Him, take up His yoke and learn from Him, then we will find rest for our souls. As we trust Him in all of the difficulties in our life, He will give us freedom from anxiety and wisdom for every circumstance.

As with Abraham's nephew Lot, our souls can become tormented day after day because of the lawless deeds of those around us in the world. We should understand that the spirit of antichrist is strongly opposed to the will of God. This is why all who call themselves 'sons of God' will be opposed by the spirit of antichrist in the world. We will only find rest if we come to Christ and take up the word of His cross. If we unite ourselves with Him, He promised that we will find rest for our souls.

References:

Eph 5:5-6 2Pe 2:8
2Th 3:16 Psa 116:7
Mat 11:28-30 Jer 6:16

Further Study:

Isaiah 55

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 5

The perseverance of the saints

As individual disciples and as Christian families, we need to learn how to cope with a hostile spiritual environment in the church and in the world. We need to understand how to seek and find peace as a family. Then, having found peace, we can also help others to cope with what has now become the normal pressures that beset us as Christians. If we unite ourselves with Christ, His sound doctrine enables us to openly speak of the virtues of Him who called us out of darkness and into His light. This means that we will be able to serve and support others with the same encouragement and consolation that we ourselves have received. This is an important understanding for us, because the God who gives perseverance and encouragement is also 'the God of all comfort'. He is not only bringing forth many sons to glory, He is also helping them with His capacity to persevere. He is comforting them with His comfort as they enter the everlasting kingdom through tribulation.

With the capacity we have received from God, we are able to comfort one another with His comfort and encouragement. When those who fear the Lord speak to one another, they are not simply speaking into the air without any purpose or effect. They are speaking of His virtues, learned as sound doctrine and lived in the power of His perseverance. With this word, they are able to encourage their brethren with His comfort. In faith and love, they can support each other to persevere in whatever circumstance God has asked them to walk. The Scriptures call this, 'The perseverance and faith of the saints'. As Christians, we have an obligation to keep Christian community alive by maintaining viable fellowship and first love, and maintaining offering. When we give or offer ourselves to the fellowship of the body of Christ, our aim is to promote and support the perseverance of the saints.

References:

1Pe 2:9-10 LITV Mal 3:16
Rom 15:5-6 Rev 13:10
Php 2:4-5 Rom 14:19

Further Study: 2 Corinthians 1

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 6

Sound doctrine

The apostle Paul taught the early churches the most fundamental aspects of Christian living. These foundations are able to equip followers in every place to maintain godly lives and godly relationships. The teaching in the Scriptures about how Christians should live and relate is called 'sound doctrine'. Sound doctrine is simply God's word concerning *godly living and godly relationships*. Paul wrote extensively on these matters in his letters to Timothy and Titus. It is essential that we become disciples of sound doctrine, receiving instruction from those who are able to teach us. We will persevere until the end by holding fast to the pattern of sound doctrine.

Present truth is the word that the Holy Spirit is presently illuminating to us. It is the word that we hear at the communion table each week. As it comes, it is new and fresh. And even though present truth is always in our view, we must not neglect to also give attention to sound doctrine. Sound doctrine teaches us the foundations of Christian living. We continuously seek to understand and be established in sound doctrine so that we can know how to live as Christians.

Sound doctrine is always applicable to us. Let us consider an example of sound doctrine teaching. We have learned from the Scriptures that children are to obey their parents. This is how children rightly relate with their parents. However, what happens when the instruction to 'obey your parents' is not specifically spoken at church on a Sunday? Does this mean that children are not required to obey their parents during the following week? Clearly this is not so. Sound doctrine is an ever-present reality. As Christians, we take heed to the instructions of sound doctrine throughout every season and stage of our life.

References:

2Th 2:15

Heb 13:7

1Co 2:13

2Ti 1:13

2Ti 2:2

Eph 6:1

Further Study: 2 Timothy 3**Daily Proverb:** Proverbs 9

Godly living

Paul explained to Timothy that the word of sound doctrine *conforms* us to godliness. Godliness is the culture of Christian living. Christian disciples are taught to live sensibly, righteously and in a godly manner in this present age. Sound doctrine addresses our whole life; every aspect and every context. We do not present a form of godly living on Sunday and yet live another way throughout the week.

It is important to realise that the culture of Christian living does not come naturally to any one of us. Rather, we learn the culture of godliness as we receive the instruction and training of leaders and older men and women in the faith. Timothy had known the Scriptures from his childhood, being raised in the way of faith by his mother and grandmother. However, Timothy needed instruction from Paul regarding the culture of Christian faith. Paul taught Timothy the words of sound doctrine, and Timothy became a disciple who was nourished in this doctrine.

We are nourished in our spirits when we heed the words of sound doctrine. By this, we are able to live a godly life! The word of sound doctrine produces confidence in young people. They are confident because they are being conformed to the culture of godliness. Paul listed the qualities of godliness that will be evident in us when we become followers of sound doctrine. We live in reality and full acceptance of our identity. We live a godly lifestyle in a sincere and truthful manner. We know how to participate in an active, perfecting process. We know how to find the will of God for our lives. We live by faith and a good conscience. We recognise strange doctrines and refuse to heed these alternatives to the truth. And we are able to guard ourselves from ungodly living. There are many other qualities that pertain to godliness listed throughout the Scriptures.

References:

1Ti 6:3

2Ti 1:5, 9

1Ti 4:6, 12

1Ti 1:2-5, 10, 19

2Ti 3:5, 12, 14-15

Eph 4:1

Further Study:

Daily Proverb:

Titus 2

Proverbs 10

Godly relationships

Sound doctrine includes the instruction concerning godly relationships. In his letters to Timothy and Titus, Paul explained the way Christians are to relate together. He wrote to Timothy, 'Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.'

The book of Titus clearly outlines the sound doctrine of godly living and relating. Paul explained the manner in which older godly men are to conduct themselves (e.g. worthy of respect, self-controlled, sound in faith, love and perseverance). Likewise, he highlighted how older godly women are to live (i.e. reverent in their behaviour, not malicious gossips, not given to much wine, teaching what is good). Because of their example, the older women can then encourage the young women in the culture of godliness. They are to be discreet, pure and kind, so that the word of God may not be blasphemed. Paul also exhorted Titus to urge the young men to be self-controlled, or 'sober-minded'; and that young men should receive the admonition of older godly men. And Titus was to be an example to the young men by being pure in doctrine, dignified and truthful in what he spoke.

The sound doctrine of godly relating continues throughout Paul's writings. We are to honour those in authority over us. We are to be subject to the ruling authorities in the world. We should show respect and care to all people. We need to be hospitable. We obey our boss. We obey our parents. And we submit to those who lead in the church. In all of these things, we learn that the sound doctrine of godly relating is both instructive and clear.

References:	Further Study:	1 Timothy 6
1Ti 5:1-2	Tit 3:1-2	
Gal 6:10	Col 3:20	Daily Proverb: Proverbs 11
Tit 2:2-10	1Th 5:12-13	

Constantly nourished

Timothy was encouraged to be constantly nourished by the words of sound doctrine. In so doing, he was sustained in his spiritual walk. Likewise, we are nourished as we diligently apply ourselves to understand the sound doctrine of Christian living. We need to consider the sound doctrine implications that are relevant to our age and stage of life. We should 'dwell on these things'.

Sound doctrine is described as the pure milk of the word. Just like newborn babes, we are to crave this pure, spiritual milk, so that we can be nourished and grow up in our salvation. By this means, we mature in the Christian faith, having been trained to discern good and evil. This is the discernment that enables us to make right choices. Paul compares the training of our physical bodies to training for the purpose of godliness. Physical training is of some value. However, godliness is profitable for all things. It is profitable not only for this life, but also for the life to come.

Jesus taught that we become a disciple of the kingdom when we practise this culture of Christian living. A disciple is someone who is trained. And a disciple guards the treasures that have been entrusted to them. Jesus said, 'A disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old'. New treasure is the word of present truth; that is, the truth that is presently being illuminated by the Holy Spirit. Old treasure is sound doctrine. It is the word from the beginning and, in one sense, it never changes. It is incumbent upon us, as disciples of Christ, to seek the treasures that are both 'new' (present truth) and 'old' (sound doctrine). We need to actively seek fellowship and receive training from those who teach us sound doctrine, at every age and stage of our life.

References:

1Ti 4:6-8

Php 4:8

1Pe 2:2

Heb 5:14

2Ti 1:14

Mat 13:52

Further Study:

1 John 2

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 12

Being and example to others

Paul wrote to the Corinthians about the ‘traditions’ that the messengers of Christ had passed on to the churches. These traditions included sound instruction about Christian living. Paul said to the Corinthian church, ‘Hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you’. These traditions had been delivered to the churches not only by word-of-mouth and by letter, but they were also *demonstrated* by the messengers as they lived among them. This is why Paul exhorted the churches to imitate the way he lived, just as he imitated Christ. Interestingly, when you teach others, they will always follow the *way you live*, much more than the things you say.

We are an example of sound doctrine by the way we live. Even in our youth, we are to be an example of good works in all aspects of our lives. Our good works bear witness to the effect of sound doctrine teaching upon us. And we should be able to also instruct others in the traditions we have been taught. Both of these things will be a positive example to others; that is, our sound conduct and our sound speech.

We need to persevere in the word of sound doctrine. We can be assured that sound doctrine will conform us to godliness. However, we firstly need perseverance. Peter’s first epistle clearly teaches us that the fruit of godliness is added to us *after* we show forth the fruit of perseverance. We remember Christ’s command to us, to keep the word of His perseverance. The word of present truth is the word of His perseverance. And the reality is that present truth will constantly highlight implications regarding the *way we are living* as Christians. In this way, present truth always leads us back to give attention to sound doctrine. Furthermore, the word of present truth equips us to *endure* sound doctrine.

References:

2Th 2:15 1Ti 6:3
 1Co 11:1-2 2Pe 1:6
 Tit 2:7-8 Rev 3:10

Further Study:

2 Corinthians 2

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 13

Christian accountability

Living in an accountable manner as a son of God can all too often be mistaken as living according to a set of rules or principles, in the hope of achieving a certain outcome. You may think that if you attend the weekly prayer meeting, practise your instrument and do your devotions daily, then you will somehow be closer to where you need to be as a son of God. You may well learn some valuable disciplines for your life in keeping to such a routine, but accountability has an altogether different focus. Christian accountability is based on the simple fact that God knows you. Before you were inclined to want to know God, He knew you. The amazing truth of the gospel message is that God had a plan for your life even before He created the heavens and the earth. He knew you before you were even aware of yourself! To live accountably, then, is to be the person whom God foreknew. The challenge for each of us is to understand what God knows concerning us.

Accountability is often viewed as a person's 'acceptance of responsibility'. From this definition, it follows that an individual who shows accountability is someone who takes ownership of his or her decisions and behaviours. However, for a son of God, a more helpful understanding of accountability embraces the relational elements of being answerable, or responsible, to someone. In other words, we recognise that the points of reference for our accountability do not begin with us, and neither are we the measure of what is 'good' or 'right'. A helpful illustration is given in the parable of the talents, where each slave was called by the master to give an account of how they had stewarded his possessions in his absence. How would you give an account to the Master for how you have stewarded what He has given you?

References:

Psa 139:13

1Co 8:3

Gal 4:9

2Ti 2:19

Rom 8:29

1Pe 1:1-2

Further Study: Matthew 25:14-30

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 16

Sonship and discipleship

The Scriptures state that ‘God knows us’. Our names and works were recorded in the Lamb’s book of life before the foundation of the world. Whilst this is a promising reality, it is also worth remembering the words of Christ, that ‘many will say to Me on that day, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?” And then I will declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness”.’ These are sobering words and describe the person who refuses to be constrained to their predestination as a son of God; refusing to be and do what was named for them by God.

The Father is completely committed to who you are and who you are to become as a son of God. The Son is completely committed to making you useful by training you as His disciple. Christ is not firstly interested in your identity as a person; rather, His desire is for you to take His yoke so that you learn of Him. He is focused on the accountable response that you have made concerning what the Father knows about you, and your commitment to be that.

We can be assured that the Father knows us. We have to be and become the person He planned us to be. This is only possible as we become a disciple of Christ. Christ learnt obedience through suffering, and He trains us as His disciples in the same way. As the Son is making us useful, we are being given capacity to hear and obey the Father’s will. The Father’s will concerning every son is that we join the fellowship of the body of Christ, which is the only place where our name is found.

References:

Rom 8:29 Heb 5:8
Eph 1:4 Mat 11:28-30
Mat 7:21-23 2Ti 2:19

Further Study:

Psalm 139

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 17

Your name and identity

Your name defines everything about you. It defines your predestination as a son of God with an eternal inheritance in the new heavens and new earth. However, it is important to note that 'name' is not precisely the same thing as 'identity', even though to have a name is to have identity. Your name is what you will 'be' and 'do' as a person with an eternal identity. Your name is you, and can only be revealed and known in the community, or fellowship, of the body of Christ.

Your name describes who you are, all your capacities, and what your works will be. Accordingly, it becomes a personal possession and the measure to which you are answerable, or accountable, to the Lord. When we speak of the 'works' of your name, we are describing how your name is expressed. It's possible for a person to 'do' all kinds of 'works' in the context of Christ's name. And yet, if these are not the works, or the expression, of their particular name, then the Son will say, 'Depart from Me, I never knew you'.

To be given possession of our spiritual identity means that we have the dignity to choose what direction and pathway we are going to walk. But we do not have possession of our name. It's as though it's held in trust until we are born of God and begin the journey of being known by God. Our name is being revealed to us in the fellowship of the body of Christ. Only when we join this fellowship are we able to find our name and have true connection to God. Our name defines our relational connection to God because He knows us by this name; and we are on a journey to be who He knows in every season of our lives.

References:

Rev 2:17 Exo 33:12, 17
Rev 3:12 Rom 8:29
Isa 49:1, 5 Luk 1:76

Further Study:

Jeremiah 1

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 18

Standing in accountability

Accountability is the appropriation of our faith, and faith comes by hearing the word of Christ. His messengers proclaim our name to us through the preaching of the word from the beginning. As we receive the word, we can join a fellowship where our name will be revealed to us. Fellowship is the context in which we are known, because the testimony of who we are is confirmed in the light of fellowship. Equally, we have to know when we are behaving in a way that the Father does not recognise. This is also confirmed in fellowship. When a person does not know who they are, they attempt to make a name for themselves. The Father will not meet us this way; neither will He accept the name we have made for ourselves. If we are being other than who the Father made us to be, for long enough, He will say as the Son said, 'I never knew you'.

An important step in growing toward accountability is letting go of self-definition and the need to control who we say we are. Our own desires and the vain longings of what we think to be true can rob us from hearing the very name that God has declared concerning us.

A Christian who is standing accountably is committed to live and walk in fellowship as a member of the body of Christ. We need to regularly seek fellowship with those whom God has called to care for His people. In this fellowship together, we are able to discuss all matters of life. We are beginning to live accountably when we accept our grace and call in Christ, which is confirmed by the witness within ourselves and by a witness among our brethren. This demonstrates that we trust the sight of our brethren and embrace their input in our lives.

References:

Heb 13:17 Jer 18:4-6
1Jn 1:7 Isa 29:16
Mat 7:23 2Co 3:1-3

Further Study: Isaiah 45

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 19

Effective discipline

Long before a child is able to be accountable, they are asked to give an account. When a parent brings discipline to a child, the child is being taught to give an account for what they do. As we grow and develop, we learn to give account, acknowledging that there are consequences for our actions. So, if a child receives effective discipline, they learn to make a decision and to account for the consequences of their decisions. They learn that obedience to parental instruction has a good consequence, and this is what the Lord is teaching each of us. If we begin to head off track, God will by some means, meet us and bring us to some kind of crisis (i.e. health, career, relational, family, faith, identity). Think of the prophet Jonah as one who was under the crisis of judgement. The judgement of God is, then, an important part of accountability. It is a tool that God uses to bring us back on track when we stray from our name and who He knows us to be.

This kind of crisis can be thought of as God's righteous judgement and is a discipline upon us. We read in the book of Hebrews that 'no discipline seems pleasant at the time but for those who have been trained by it, afterwards it produces the peaceable fruits of righteousness'. To be trained by discipline suggests that we are in submission to the discipline and to the one administering the discipline. 'For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.' As we persevere through the seasons of life and submit to the discipline of the Lord, He brings forth His righteousness in us. This means that the will of God is being done in us.

References:

Heb 12:6,11

Psa 89:30-34

Psa 119:92

Pro 3:12

Jas 5:11

2Sa 7:14

Further Study: Psalm 119:49-80

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 20

A journey with a hope

The journey of every Christian should lead them to the fulfilment of a hope. This is the hope of receiving an eternal inheritance as a son of God. The plans for this journey, including its start and finish, were written in God's book of life before the foundation of the world. Until we know the hope of His calling on our lives, the Scriptures describe our journey through life as aimless and futile. However, with the hope of sonship set before us, we continue on our journey by faith. This journey takes us through many ups and downs and will require us to persevere in faith. While at times we may be tempted to give up and to lose heart, it is important that we always keep our hope firmly set before us.

When Paul said that we need to walk by faith, he was speaking of this journey. Faith comes to us through the word of God, and becomes ours as we believe, trust and obey His word. The capacity to believe is not sourced in ourselves, but is given to us in the word of God. The proceeding word of God is the daily provision for our journey. Jesus didn't do anything until there was a word from the Father. He even described this as His 'food'. His constant testimony was, 'I do only the things the Father has spoken'. Jesus could not be persuaded to live by another will. He would not allow His trust in the word of God, or His connection with the Father, to be broken. He kept Himself in the love of God and remained under trial and suffering by the power of God. By this means, many sons were brought to glory. The hope of sonship is available to all men through the offering of the cross and the resurrection. This was the faith of the Son of God, and it is the faith that we are to receive from Him.

References:

Php 3:20-21 Eph 2:10-12
Rom 8:23-25 Rom 10:17
Psa 139:16 Joh 4:34

Further Study: Ephesians 1

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 23

Hoping with perseverance

Paul taught that 'hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.' If we hope for what we don't see, then we are hoping for something God has promised to give us, but we don't yet have. We can be certain that God will do what He promises. However, we find that there is a gap between hearing the promise of sonship and receiving it in full. As we journey between these points, we are to live and persevere by faith.

The psalmist said of Joseph that 'until the time that His word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him'. Joseph patiently endured slavery, injustice, prison, and neglect. Through this process he proved, or attained to, the word of faith that he had received in his youth. Time and chance didn't try Joseph. It was the word of God that tested and refined him. God, being faithful, will not allow us to be tested beyond our ability, or beyond the measure of faith that is ours.

Simply stated, God wants us to believe. We believe that God is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. We are then to maintain trust and connection with Him as 'God fearers'. The fear of the Lord keeps us on the journey towards the fullness of our hope. We know that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. We need wisdom because, without it, we don't know how to walk the journey. As we pray for wisdom, God gives it to us so that we can maintain the journey of faith, all the way to the finish.

References:

Rom 8:24-25 Psa 105:19
Rom 4:21 Act 7:10
1Ti 6:11-12 Pro 9:10

Further Study: Romans 12

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 24

Inheriting the immortal

Our hope is that our mortal body will be changed to an immortal body for the new heavens and new earth. We have received eternal identity, but we have a weak mortal body. Our body has to be transformed into an immortal body. The perishable must put on the imperishable, and the mortal must put on immortality. Wherever there is a hope for an inheritance, there needs to be perseverance. Only the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Persevering on this journey to inherit our hope is critical. We continue in the way by faith, but we need help. The Holy Spirit is going to help us on the journey. Jesus, knowing our weaknesses, sent the Holy Spirit to be our strength and Helper. He has come to walk with us and guide us into all truth. 'All truth' means the truth of realising and inheriting *all that* God has promised to each one of us. The Holy Spirit helps us by guiding us into the truth of who we are as sons of God.

Christ gives us the Holy Spirit and we abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Knowing our weakness, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us so that we can receive our hope. Our weakness is that we don't know how to pray for what we can't see. This is where He helps us. When we begin to pray in the Spirit, He intercedes for us with groanings that are too deep for words. The Son, also, searching our heart and knowing the mind of the Spirit, intercedes for us according to the Father's will. The Father gives grace so that we can continue on the journey of hope without drawing back into unbelief.

References:

Php 3:20-21

Mat 24:13

Joh 14:26

Rom 15:13

Rom 8:26-27

Psa 139:23-24

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 15

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 25

The nature of our faith

Faith is an attitude that accepts responsibility to maintain trust and connection with God. If you believe, you are going to trust. In the midst of the fiery trials that we face in our Christian walk, we are to keep ourselves connected to God through faith. We are to keep trusting God, keep seeking wisdom, keep fearing God, and maintain relational connection with our brethren.

The fiery trial is the trial of faith. There are circumstances of life where our faith for sonship comes under pressure. In the midst of these times, it can seem as though God isn't answering our prayers. It's at these times that we are tempted to say, 'God doesn't love me', or even, 'There is no God'. We can feel as though God has let us down. The temptation in the midst of our trials is to question the love of God. However, faith is the attitude that accepts responsibility to keep ourselves in the love of God. We do this by putting off disappointment and anger. Our constant endeavour is to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace with our brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. Such faith, working by love, can be likened to a mustard seed. Just a small amount will remove relational difficulties that seem like a mountain.

Everyone knows that life can get difficult. There are many things that can come against us and cause us to consider giving up on the journey of sonship. Satan wants us to stop persevering in faith, to become discouraged, and to abandon our hope. This is where we have to watch our spirit and our attitude. As we persevere in faith, we put off all the temptations of the flesh, especially unbelief. We have to be resolved that we are not going to give up on our hope.

References:

Pro 3:5-6

Jud 1:20-21

Mat 17:20

Eph 6:18

1Pe 4:12-13

Gal 5:5-6

Further Study:

Daily Proverb:

Ephesians 4

Proverbs 26

The reward of our faith

Psalm 23 is an encouragement to keep ourselves in the love of God and to persevere in faith. We are to keep trusting the Lord and not fear evil, even when we feel as though the shadow of death looms over us. In this passage of Scripture, we are encouraged by the truth that Christ, our Good Shepherd, leads those who are obedient to His voice. Our assurance is that He is leading us through the trial of our faith. We know that the Lord is with us. We can know His comfort, His encouragement and His strength.

The Good Shepherd leads us into the valley of the shadow of death so we can receive the reward of faith. As He leads, He asks us to trust Him. Jesus endured the cross and despised its shame, all for the joy that was set before Him. In doing so, He became the author and perfecter of our faith. We now run with endurance the race set before us, keeping our eyes fixed on Him.

The apostle John declared, 'Beloved now we are the sons of God... and such we are!' We already have the promise of sonship and the firstfruits of the Spirit. But our hope has not yet been fulfilled. Our sonship is not fully realised. We don't have the resurrection body yet. Instead, we are waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons; the redemption of our bodies. And so we keep the hope of salvation before us. We know in part what the Lord has for us, but we yearn to know it fully. We see through a mirror dimly, but we yearn to see Him face to face. We have this treasure in an earthen vessel, but we yearn for this mortal to put on immortality, and this perishable to put on the imperishable. We yearn to be clothed in light. In this way, we rejoice in hope as sons of God.

References:

Jas 1:12

Heb 12:1-2

IJn 3:1-3

Rom 8:23

2Co 4:6-7

1Co 13:9-13

Further Study:

Daily Proverb:

Psalm 23

Proverbs 27