

## Walking Free Newsletter – November 2016

### Diligent Perseverance in Light of That Day

William Carey described himself as a plodder. But by plodding, this English cobbler went to India in 1794 and was able to translate the entire Bible into six languages and portions of the Bible into 29 other languages. He never attended high school or college, but he established the first Christian college in Asia, which continues today. He failed for two years to become ordained, because his preaching was boring. He had to overcome opposition in England to the idea of missions before he went to India. His first wife went insane after arriving in India. Both she and his second wife died, along with some of his children. His partner mismanaged the mission's funds. He faced numerous other setbacks, including a fire that destroyed years of translation work. He survived malaria, dysentery, cholera, tigers, and cobras, labouring for 41 years in India without a furlough (see Christian History, Issue 36).

You can't read stories like these and complain about minor (or even major) trials! They help you to persevere in following Christ.

Peter was a concerned shepherd who wanted his readers to persevere. So he again addresses his readers as "beloved" (3:1, 8, 14, 17) and ends his letter with this call to diligent

perseverance. He has refuted the errors of the false teachers, who scoffed at the notion that Christ will return to judge the earth. They were leading some astray with their message of sensuality and greed. Peter did not want his flock to be carried away by the error of these unprincipled men and fall from their own steadfastness (3:17). So he encourages them to diligent perseverance in light of that glorious day of Christ's return. He's saying,

God's coming day of judgment should motivate us to diligent perseverance in our walk with God.

This diligent perseverance rests on four things: the hope of His coming; the holiness necessary for a clear conscience; developing a heart for the lost, and laying hold help from the Scriptures.

1. To diligently persevere, maintain the hope of Christ's coming (3:14a).

"Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, ..." Peter repeats the verb "looking for" in verses 12, 13, and 14. It means to eagerly expect the promise of His coming and the new heavens and new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Peter assumes that his readers already are looking for these promises to be fulfilled, but he wants them to persevere in this hope.

I trust that we all subscribe to the truth that Christ is coming again in power and glory to judge the world, but how much do we think about it? Wouldn't it affect how we live if we kept in view the fact that He is coming and we will give an account to Him? Would husbands and wives argue about petty things if they both had in view that Christ is coming? Would churches fight over minor matters if the members were living in view of Christ's coming? Would we spend

money on all of the stuff that we think we need if we were living in view of Christ's coming? Would we waste our time in so many frivolous ways if we were living in view of Christ's coming? To diligently persevere, maintain the hope of His coming.

Martha Snell Nicholson who, for more than thirty-five years, was so transcendently triumphant through those many weary years that she wrote some of the finest Christian poetry which has ever been written. A number of years before she died she wrote about her hope of the coming of the Lord.

This is what she says: The best part is the blessed hope of his soon coming. How I ever lived before I grasped that wonderful truth, I do not know. How anyone lives without it these trying days I cannot imagine. Each morning I think, with a leap of the heart, "He may come today."

And each evening, "When I awake I may be in glory."

I continually look to understand what God is doing. The election of Donald Trump, the death of Fidel Castro are not just world events but God events. God, what are you doing? What has this to do with Christ's coming.

2. To diligently persevere, maintain the holiness needed for a clear conscience (3:14b).

"Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless ..." (3:14). Peter was fond of this word "diligent." He used the noun in 1:5 where he said, "Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence," etc. He used the verb in 1:10, "Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you

will never stumble.” He used it of his own efforts to stir up his readers in light of his own impending death (1:15), “And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.”

To be diligent implies giving our attention to something. It implies making every effort or exerting ourselves toward a goal. It doesn’t happen accidentally. It requires deliberate focus. The forces of the world and our flesh are so great that if we do not apply diligence, we will be carried along in the wrong direction.

The aim of our diligent effort is, “to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.” In a nutshell, this means maintaining the holy or godly behaviour that is needed to have a clear conscience. As Michael Green (The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude [Eerdmans], p. 142) puts it, “The look of hope must produce the life of holiness.”

Paul testified to the Governor Felix (Acts 24:16), “I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.” John Calvin (Calvin’s Commentaries [Baker], pp. 422-423) understands “peace” in our text to mean “a quiet state of conscience, founded on hope and patient waiting.” He adds, “This peace, then, is the quietness of a peaceable soul, which acquiesces in the word of God.”

If our conscience bothers us because we know that we have disobeyed God, like Adam in the garden we will try to hide from God or avoid Him. We won’t be at peace with Him. The same is true in our relationships with others. If we have wronged someone, we don’t want to see him (or her). If we see him coming down the aisle at the market, we quickly turn and go the other way. Our conscience is not at peace because we have sinned. The only God-given way to recover is to confess our sin to God and to go to our brother or sister and ask forgiveness for our wrong.

When Peter says that we are to be “spotless and blameless,” he is not implying that we can be perfect in this life. Rather, he is contrasting the behaviour of believers with that of these false teachers, who were “stains and blemishes” (2:13, the exact opposite words in Greek to “spotless and blameless”), and he is setting the high standard at which we must aim. We should not be aware of any sin, even sins in our private thoughts, which we have not repented of.

And we should not be aware of any wrongs towards another person that we have not sought to make right. As Paul puts it (Rom. 12:18), “If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.” He also writes (Rom. 14:19), “So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.” Pursuing peace has the same idea as being diligent to be found by Him in peace. It implies exerting the effort to work through relational problems so that your conscience is clear before God and before men.

Do you do that? Is your normal habit to “be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,” because you’re looking for the day of His coming? I often encounter professing Christians who harbor bitterness, rivalry, and anger towards others. Whether it is toward family members or toward fellow believers, it ought not to be. Think how foolish you will feel when Christ returns if you are not at peace with Him and others because you’re holding on to your sin!

So to diligently persevere, maintain the hope of His coming and maintain the holiness that is needed for a clear conscience.

3. To diligently persevere, develop a heart for the lost (3:15a).

Peter continues, “and regard the patience of the Lord as salvation.” He is going back to what he said in 3:9, “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.” In that verse, Peter is explaining one reason why the Lord’s coming seems to be delayed, namely, He is patiently waiting for sinners to come to repentance.

In both verses, the implied thought is, “Don’t get so caught up with your own problems that you’re crying for the Lord to come back and bail you out, but you’re forgetting about the lost.” The reason the Lord has not come back is that He is patiently waiting for sinners to repent. He is waiting for us to take the gospel to every nation (Matt. 24:14). Our trials are nothing compared with the eternal punishment that unrepentant sinners will experience. So get your focus off of yourself and onto those who need to hear the good news. Have the attitude of Paul, who wrote (2 Tim. 2:10), “For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.”

When the Lord returns, it will mean salvation not only for us, but also for all who have believed through our witness and through our efforts in world missions. Any discomfort that we have to endure through trials now will be more than worth it when we see in heaven those whom the Lord has saved because of our sacrifice. David Livingstone, who spent his life enduring hardship to take the gospel to Africa, wrote (from, “Global Prayer Digest,” July, 1984):

*For my own part, I have never ceased to rejoice that God has appointed me to such an office*

*[missionary]. People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of a great debt owing to our God, which we can never repay? Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blest reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter? Away with the word in such a view, and with such a thought! It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering, or danger, now and then, with a foregoing of the common conveniences and charities of this life, may make us pause, and cause the spirit to waver, and the soul to sink; but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall hereafter be revealed in and for us. I never made a sacrifice.*

So to persevere, we need to make God's focus our focus. He is delaying Christ's return because He is patiently waiting for the lost to come to salvation. If our focus is on reaching sinners with the gospel, our trials will not seem so big.

So diligent perseverance rests on maintaining the hope of His coming; the holiness necessary for a clear conscience; a heart for the lost; and, finally...

4. To diligently persevere, lay hold of the help that comes from understanding the Scriptures (3:15b-16).

Peter continues, "just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction."

We don't know which of Paul's letters Peter may be referring to, but Paul and Peter both wrote about the need for holiness in light of Christ's return (see 1 Thess. 3:13). Paul warned often about the dangers of false teachers. So Peter refers to all of Paul's letters, which were being circulated among the churches.

Why did Peter bring up Paul's name here? We can't say for sure, but it may be that the false teachers were using Paul's letters to defend their mistaken view of Christian liberty, which really was a license to sin (Rom. 3:8; 6:1). And, it could be that they were using Paul against Peter, much as children will try to pit dad against mom to get their own way. They may have pointed to Paul's rebuke of Peter (Gal. 2:11-14) as a way of discrediting Peter, and then wrongly claimed, "We're following Paul!" Peter shows that he and Paul were of one mind.

But don't let it faze you. Stick with what you learned and believed, sure of the integrity of your teachers—why, you took in the sacred Scriptures with your mother's milk! There's nothing like the written Word of God for showing you the way to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us.(2 timothy 3;16)

One of the most dramatic examples of the Bible's divine ability to transform men and women involved the famous mutiny on the "Bounty." Following their rebellion against the notorious Captain Bligh, nine mutineers, along with the Tahitian men and women who accompanied them,



found their way to Pitcairn Island, a tiny dot in the South Pacific only two miles long and a mile wide. Ten years later, drink and fighting had left only one man alive--John Adams. Eleven women and 23 children made up the rest of the Island's population. So far this is the familiar story made famous in the book and motion picture.

But the rest of the story is even more remarkable. About this time, Adams came across the "Bounty's" Bible in the bottom of an old chest. He began to read it, and the divine power of God's Word reached into the heart of that hardened murderer on a tiny volcanic speck in the vast Pacific Ocean--and changed his life forever. The peace and love that Adams found in the Bible entirely replaced the old life of quarrelling, brawling, and liquor. He began to teach the children from the Bible until every person on the island had experienced the same amazing change that he had found. Today, with a population of slightly less than 100, nearly every person on Pitcairn Island is a Christian.

## Conclusion

So Peter's message to us is: God's day of judgment is coming. That fact should motivate us to diligent perseverance. To persevere, maintain the hope of His coming; maintain the holiness needed for a clear conscience; develop a heart for the lost; and, lay hold of the help that comes from understanding the Scriptures.

**Walking Free:** We continue to see God breaking through into people's lives as he brings

revelation that unlocks their healing.

We are still praying for clients on Tuesdays, Thursdays and second Saturdays. We now have some young people coming to us for prayer. We are still seeing God healing our clients though some are still struggling with their fragmented lives.

During our team meetings as we pray for our clients, God gives us insight about the next area to pray for in a person's life. Lo and behold a week or so later when we pray for the client, it turns out the same area that God told us about. We are so grateful for Julie, Margaret, Dianne and Lesley who come each fortnight to pray with us.

I have sent my teaching notes on prayer to Kenya. They are being printed in a book to resource the pastors and their people about how to pray.

**Toowoomba Team:** Hal, Debbie, Stephanie are still praying for a client each week. They have been using effectively the *Taking to the Courts* prayer to set people free.

**Bible Studies:** I have been teaching on Monday Afternoons on 1,2,3, John and the book of Jude. We have local church people and clients so that they can be encouraged in their walk with Jesus.

**Finances:** Finances remain a challenge as we have lost some sponsorship. We are looking for

more sponsors to support the healing and teaching work of Jesus through Walking Free. No matter how small the donation, we welcome new donors. Remember that each donation to the gift fund is tax deductible.

If you would like to become a sponsor, it is a matter of a one off or regular donation to the following:

Walking Free Renewing Ministries Gift Fund                      BSB 084-961    ACC 82-215-5845.

Use your name if you would like a tax receipt at the end of the financial year.

**Praise God for His provision.**

- **Thank God for the healing and restoration He is bringing to our clients.**
- **Thank God for His financial provision for Walking Free.**
  
- **Pray for team in Adelaide who pray for the ministry: □ Margaret, Lesley, Dianne and Julie**
- **Please      pray for team at Toowoomba: Hal and Debbie, Stephanie, Charmaine and Craig.**

**Family Life** continues to be challenging as we support our children and their children.

Babysitting and hosting our family take up our spare time.

**Pray for Naomi, Jonathan and Jennifer; Jess; David and Maddy and Elijah.**

**India:** Pray for Pastor Devadas, Pastor CH and Rev Sambabu and their ministry amongst Hindu people. People are being healed and set free. Others are coming to Christ. But Hindu people are still difficult to evangelise. Healing and Deliverance is one key as the health system in rural areas is poor.

**Kenya:** The church in Garissa has new walls and roof. Recently Al Shabab raided Garissa and the local Christians. Latest report indicates that all were protected. Pray teaching manuals are being printed to teach the pastors on prayer. Walking Free pastors will be given material. There is interest from other churches for this material.