

Spc146 – Never Give Up – Psalm 125:1-2

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We're in a hard section of 1 Corinthians right now and I just felt like we could use some encouragement today. So... title of the message is, "Never Give Up." Our key verse is Psalm 125:1-2.

I am going to be flying through the scripture verses today, probably too fast to turn to them (or even write them down.) So, if you want the verses call or email us and I'll send you the notes.

We'll start in Psalm 125:1-2.

**Psalm 125:1–2 (NLT)**

*1 Those who trust in the Lord are as secure as Mount Zion; they will not be defeated but will endure forever.*

*2 Just as the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people, both now and forever.*

Let's pray. *Lord Jesus, as we trust in you we become as secure as Mount Zion. Lord we have your hand upon us. You hem us in. You protect us. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, Lord, so you surround us. We can be confident, we can be assured, we can have peace and Lord we can lean in. We can push on knowing that you are with us, that you have a plan, that you are at work as we trust in you, Lord. God, would you open that to us today? Would you speak to our hearts, Lord and Holy Spirit would you give us in our minds that thing in our life that you are specifically addressing with these words? Word of God – speak. Encourage, exhort and transform our lives in your name, Jesus, amen.*

I want to thank **Jon Bloom** and the last chapter of his book "**Things Not Seen**" for the inspiration of this message.

In Matthew 11:28 Jesus said,

**Matthew 11:28 (NLT)**

*28. . . "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.*

But that REST is NOT a CEASING of *following* him.

That REST is NOT a CEASING of *servicing* him.

That REST is NOT a CEASING of *fighting* the good fight of faith.

Jesus is talking about a rest that is *within the work* that he has MADE us to do.

It's *not* a rest as in "giving up." It's a supernatural rest that allows us to NEVER GIVE UP.

Surrendering OUR life – to God's will,  
Crucifying OUR life – so the life of Christ can live in us,  
Victoriously fighting the Spiritual battles so that he can use us,  
It all can get exhausting.

We can easily get tired. We can become discouraged and ultimately we can easily be tempted to *give up*. But we can't give up. How can we neglect such a great salvation and such a great calling?

In Philippians Chapter 3 Paul is wrapping up his personal testimony and he says this in Philippians 3:12 and 14.

**Philippians 3:12 & 14 (NLT)**

*12. . . I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me.  
14 I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.*

My message to you today is *PRESS ON AND NEVER GIVE UP*.

**NEVER GIVE UP** when that familiar sin that is still crouching at your door pounces on you again with the same old temptation...

**1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)**

*13 The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.*

NEVER give up *fighting* and NEVER give in to *sin*. God will enable you to endure if you will continue to fight the good fight.

**And NEVER GIVE UP** when you have stumbled or fallen *into sin*.

Stop wallowing in your guilt and your self-pity. Repent (again). Turn from that sin (again). Get your eyes off *yourself* (again) and fix your eyes firmly on *Jesus* (again). Then get back up and get back in the fight.

There is spiritual war going on and very often soldiers who have tasted defeat have come back to be the best fighters.

**1 John 1:9 (ESV)**

***9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.***

If we will confess and repent God will forgive and cleanse and we can return to fight the good fight another day.

**And NEVER GIVE UP** when the enemy's fiery darts of doubt and discouragement find their mark and send you reeling.

Ephesians 6:13 and following says,

**Ephesians 6:13 (ESV)**

***13. . . (don't GIVE UP – Instead ) take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.***

***14 Stand therefore . . . 16In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;***

We've got to learn to identify those flaming darts of the enemy. We've got to develop an "incoming missile warning system" and be prepared with the (iron dome) *shield of faith*. That "incoming missile warning system" is built on a *daily* relationship with Jesus Christ and walking in the light of his Spirit and it is only in *that* place that you can hold up the *shield of faith* to destroy the enemy's incoming missiles.

**And NEVER GIVE UP** even when it seems like your *prayers* are not being answered.

Jesus tells us in Luke 11:9,

**Luke 11:9 (NLT)**

***9 “. . . keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you.***

Does it seem like your prayers are not being answered? Jesus says ***never give up praying.***

**What does God have FOR YOU**

While you are ***continuing to pray?***

**What is God doing IN YOU**

While you are ***continuing to pray?***

**What is God doing AROUND YOU**

While you are ***continuing to Pray?***

We don't know ALL that *God is doing*. Then why does Jesus tell us to ***keep on asking, seeking and knocking***? Because we are called to walk (and pray) by *faith* not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). We keep praying because we know *WHO our God IS* and we know that *our God is at work* and we know *he will complete* the good work he's begun.

So, we never give up praying. We *pray without ceasing* – BY FAITH – NOT BY SIGHT.

**And NEVER GIVE UP** when it seems like the *pressures* and *hardships* are coming at you from every direction – all at once.

We are not the first servants of God to live under *seemingly overwhelming* pressures and hardships. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 6:4-10,

**2 Corinthians 6:4-10 (NLT)**

***4 . . . We patiently endure troubles and hardships and calamities of every kind. 5 We have been beaten, been put in prison, faced angry mobs, worked to exhaustion, endured sleepless nights, and gone without food . . .***

***v.8 We serve God whether people honor us or despise us, whether they slander us or praise us . . .***

***8 . . . We are honest, but they call us impostors. 9 We are ignored, even though we are well known. We live close to death, but we are still alive. We have been beaten, but we have not been killed.***

***10 Our hearts ache, but we always have joy . . .***

**Do not give up** because of your difficulties and hardships!! *What if God is at work* in the middle of your hardships, pressures and difficulties?

*What if God is at work* – for YOUR good  
or for SOMEONE ELSE'S good  
and for the KINGDOM'S good...

*Right in the middle of your hardship and difficulty?*

HE IS – God is at work – so we can **NEVER GIVE UP**.

**And NEVER GIVE UP** because the battle has been *long*, even seemingly with *no end*.

*If you will cling to the Lord alone and if you will take the steps to cause your faith to grow...*

Then God will supply *his grace* sufficient for *your need*.

Regarding his “thorn in the flesh” Paul says in 2 Corinthians 12:8-9,

**2 Corinthians 12:8–9(NLT)**

*8 Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away.*

*9 Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.*

What if *that* is what is happening in *your* life?

*What if this long, long difficulty is what is actually enabling you to be used by God – for his glory?*

**Trust God in the battle and NEVER GIVE UP.**

**And NEVER GIVE UP** if the field God has given you (to sow into) is *hard* or even if it looks like there is *no harvest coming?*

In Galatians Chapter 6 Paul is talking about *our responsibility to sow into* one another’s lives. And he says in Galatians 6:7-9,

**Galatians 6:7–9 (NLT)**

*7. . . You will always harvest what you plant. 8. . . those who live to please the Spirit (who sow to the Spirit) will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit.*

*9 So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up.*

“*Sowing To the Spirit*” – or “*Living to please the Spirit*” is walking by FAITH – NOT by sight and waiting for *God* to bring the harvest.

When living for Jesus Christ is hard don’t get tired of doing good because God will bring the harvest *in his time*.

**And NEVER GIVE UP** when you are serving in obscurity...

When no one sees your *sacrifice*, when no one sees your *service to the Lord*.

You’re wondering if all your “*serving the Lord*” and “*sowing to the spirit*” in other people’s lives – even matters.

But Jesus says in Matthew 6:1-4,

**Matthew 6:1–4 (NLT)**

*1 “Watch out! Don’t do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven.*

*. . . 3 But when you give to someone in need . . . 4 Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.*

Are you GIVING? Are you SACRIFICING? Are you laying your life down in a place where it seems *no one even notices*?

**Don't give up** because your Father in Heaven sees everything and he is the one who will reward you. It might not be *until heaven* – but that reward (in heaven) lasts for eternity.

**And NEVER GIVE UP** when your reputation (or character) is *attacked or maligned* while you are trying to be faithful to Jesus.

Jesus says in Matthew 5:11-12,

**Matthew 5:11–12 (NLT)**

***11 “God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers.***

***12 Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven . . .***

Guys, if there is a one word reason to *NEVER GIVE UP* following and serving Jesus Christ... it's the single word *HEAVEN!!!*

*WHY* must we never give up... HEAVEN!

*WHY* must we walk by faith and sow to the Spirit and cling to Jesus... HEAVEN!

HEAVEN is waiting! Heaven is worth it! So NEVER GIVE UP!

**And NEVER GIVE UP** when heaven seems – *too far away*.

When you're tired and you're weary and you feel like you can't fight the good fight for even ONE more DAY...

**LEARN** to **WAIT** on the **Lord**

**LEARN** to **TRUST** in the **Lord**

**LEARN** to put your **HOPE** in the **Lord alone**.

The Prophet Isaiah was pleading with Israel to *turn back* to the Lord in their times of trouble and he says in Isaiah 40:28-31,

**Isaiah 40:28–31 (NLT)**

***28 Have you never heard? Have you never understood? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding.***

**29 He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.**

**30 Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion.**

**31 But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength (WAIT, HOPE). They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.**

Those who *trust in* and *wait on* and *put* their *hope* in the Lord... *they* will find NEW strength!!! *They* will be RENEWED – *they* will WALK and NOT faint.

*NEVER GIVE UP following Jesus!!*

Alright – to close, I want to give you one secret that will keep you from EVER giving up.

We started with Paul’s exhortation for us to *press on* in Philippians 3:14 and I would like to end just a few verses from there. Paul’s “press on” exhortation was near the end of Chapter 3 and as Philippians Chapter 4 opens – Paul says in Philippians 4:4,

**Philippians 4:4 (NLT)**

***4 Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice!***

It may be surprising but this is written as a *command*. This is not the gentle encouragement of a mother. This is a COMMAND from a battle weary “lead soldier.”

The Philippian church remembered when Paul brought the gospel to them and they remember it got him arrested and beaten and thrown in prison – in stocks – in the darkest hole.

And they remember the Philippians jailer’s testimony – late into the night Paul and Silas were singing hymns, *worshipping God* in that dark hole of a situation. And now, as Paul is writing to them he’s in jail – again after too much hardship and difficulty to even list.

And he says in Philippians 4:4,

**Philippians 4:4 (NLT)**

***4 Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice!***

Paul, what do YOU have to rejoice about? Your life has been full of pain and difficulty ever since you first surrendered to Jesus Christ as Lord. *WHAT could you possibly have to REJOICE ABOUT??*

And that is the exact problem, isn’t it? The problem is we look at our *current circumstances* and we use our circumstances to determine if we have something to rejoice about. But *this life* and *those circumstances* have nothing to do with your *JOY* in

the Lord! We have been redeemed out of this life and out of the circumstances of this life!

We've been bought with an eternal price by the *God of Heaven* and we are headed to heaven to spend eternity with him. We've been saved from the *wrath of our SIN* and given the Holy Spirit to live IN us. We're looking for Jesus to crack the sky and take us *home to heaven* where we'll spend eternity with him as Children of God.

Our JOY doesn't come from the circumstances of this life. Our JOY comes from our great HOPE of Heaven.

### **1 Peter 1:3–6 says (NLT)**

***3 . . . Now we live with great expectation, 4 and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay.*** (and beyond the reach of your circumstances)

***5 And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation . . . 6 So be truly glad (REJOICE!). There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while.***

Our rejoicing can never be based on the circumstances of *this* life.

As Nehemiah told the People of Israel in the midst of their difficult trials (Nehemiah 8:10) ***“Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the LORD is your strength!”***

And the *JOY of the Lord* is your strength NOT the *JOY of your circumstances*. So why do we pray so hard that God would *change our circumstances* when we should be praying and seeking and learning *HOW* to experience ***the JOY of the Lord as our STRENGTH.***

Could this be *why* James writes in James 1:2,

### **James 1:2 (NLT)**

***2 Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.***

Because our circumstances and our difficulties are an opportunity for us to learn how to experience the joy of the Lord as our strength right in the midst of our trials.

And the *beginning* of learning that is: we must *measure our hardships against eternity*. This life and all its very real hardships *are a vapor* but eternity with the Lord – *is forever*.

And so, we must hold onto the faith that *sees* what *cannot be seen*. We must hold on to – *the faith that will never give up*.

**Hebrews 10:35–36 (NLT)**

***35 So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you!***

***36 Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised.***

WALK by FAITH – with the joy of the Lord *as your strength* and **NEVER GIVE UP!**

Let's pray. *Lord, Jesus, infuse us with that truth. Infuse us Lord. Give us patient endurance, God. Give us confident expectation. Teach us how to wait on you, how to trust in you, how to put our hope in you. Teach us Lord, the miracle of being full of joy in the midst of difficulty and hardship. We pray that you would do this radical work of transformation in our lives, that we would be a witness for you, a light in a dark place, that you would use us to point to you. We love you, we serve you. We commit today to serve you, to press on all the days of our lives. For your glory Jesus, and in your name, amen.*