

Responsive Reading

Romans 5:1-5; Ephesians 6:10-11 (NKJV)

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations,

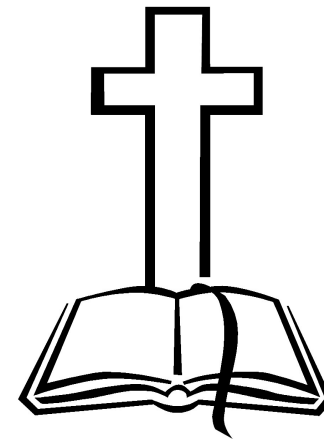
Knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Worship Service



Endurance

Order of Worship

Opening Prayer

Hymns

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"Endurance"

Poem

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Closing Prayer

O Lord, Abide with Me

From "The Hymnal" of the Episcopal Church, 1889

Abide with me: fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide:
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.

Swift to its ending ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away,
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou Who changest not, abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's
power?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with
me.

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless:
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy
victory?
I triumph still, if Thou, O Lord, abide with me.

"Endurance"

Opening Prayer: Holy Father God Almighty, we thank You for this time You have given us to gather together. We worship You and we ask Your blessing upon us as we reflect on Your marvelous Word. Minister to each of us just as we have need today. Amen.

Devotion:

Text: *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."* Romans 5:1-2 (KJV)

We are saved by grace through faith. What a wonderful gift our salvation is! Not faith in just anything – it is believing in the person and the work of Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. And there is a very important component in this great action that we call faith: faith does not stop believing! It just keeps on believing and believing. When it stops believing it is no longer faith, is it? This "non-stop believing" is also called perseverance, or endurance, or patience, or (*drum-roll*) faithfulness.

You will notice in our text the phrase, "wherein we stand." When the temptations pull...we stand. When the sorrows roll over us...we stand. When the fears assail us...we stand. When the doubts creep in...we stand. When the devil accuses...we stand. We stand on the promise of God, that whosoever believes in His only begotten Son, ***shall not perish but have everlasting life.*** We stumble, we struggle, we cry out in pain...but we stand.

Consider, as illustration, some trees that grow close along the seacoast. In your travels you may have noticed some beautiful old trees that stand firm against the winds coming in off the ocean. It is obvious that they have grown there and survived through good weather and through bad. There is one type of tree along the Atlantic coast that stands out: the water oak.

"Endurance" continued

The water oak is striking with its thick trunk, stout sprawling limbs and deep green, narrow leaves. Though not the tallest trees, they are the picture of sturdy and strong. These stately trees form a huge canopy of cool shade where children can play in the summertime. Adding to the impression of their strength is the way the prevailing ocean winds have shaped some of them over the years. Those nearest the ocean look swept away from the shore, with limbs leaning and bending inland. But they are just as vibrant and lush as they can be! They sway and give, but the howling Nor'easters of the Atlantic Ocean cannot break them. They are strong. Through all the children climbing and playing in their limbs, all the decades of cold fronts, all the summer thunder storms, all the hurricanes crashing in from the Atlantic... through it all the water oaks endure, they stand!

This is a picture of the perseverance of Christian faith. Through our "standing faith" God is lovingly, graciously working in our lives with each trial and tribulation that we face. He is nurturing our eternal hope by building it on this enduring faith in our hearts. Stand against the storms of pain and suffering. Stand against the howling winds of fear and doubt. Endure the trials. Trust Christ's saving grace: He is with you.

In the face of life's battles we can rejoice, because we know *"that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope."* And this hope is special as it *"does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us."* Here is the strength that every child of God can draw on and rely on. God is our Helper and He lives in our heart! Oh indeed, Lord Jesus, abide with me!!!

Closing Prayer: Father, please give each of us a fresh revelation of your abiding presence! Teach us to rely on Your strength to stand in our faith in Jesus Christ. Please grant that each of us be faithful till we hear our name on Your lips calling us home. Amen.