

## Never Giving Up

TEXT: Various

THESIS: To be faithful in God, we must put away worldliness.

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Not too long ago, in the middle of Tennessee, there was a congregation of the Lord's body who was struck to tears.
  - a. They were weeping over a good teacher and sister in Christ who had been murdered by a student.
    - i. There was also a 14 year old girl killed and another teacher wounded.
  - b. What terrible news and, like all the horrible tragedies of this life, where does one turn when such horrifying information is heard?
    - i. Will the family of the victims seek revenge?
    - ii. Will church members blame God and quit attending?
      - (1) What is the challenge?
      - (2) The Christian has a motto by which he lives: Never, never, give up!
2. Sadly, many have "thrown up their hands" in disgust and quit the Lord when failures happen.
  - a. But, the advice from God is, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways (James 1:2-8, KJV).
3. In thinking about never giving up, I want to look at:
  - a. Why is this challenge needed?
  - b. What kind of person will not quit?
  - c. What was Jesus' attitude?
  - d. What kind of person fails?
  - e. We must win the race to heaven.
4. You know, Paul wrote, I can do all things through Christ who keeps on strengthening me (Phil. 4:13).
  - a. And, not giving up requires us to make adjustments in life.
  - b. Brethren, let's all hold on to the hope which anchors the soul (Heb. 6:18-19).

### DISCUSSION

#### I. WHY THE CHALLENGE?

- A. Many claim that, "The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatsoever to do with

the salvation of their souls.”

1. People claim that, “All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer.”
2. They further claim, “The justification of the human soul is through the atonement of Christ and not through the efforts of man.”
  - a. But, this is not truthful.
  - b. There is still the admission that falling away is a concern.
  - c. The Bible teaches that there is a danger to one who might quit because they will lose their soul.

B. In fact, Paul wrote about his concern for his own faithfulness: “But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor. 9:27).

1. Paul wanted to be genuine and not fake.
2. And so, Paul used an Old Testament account of the falling away of those Jews who escaped from Egypt (1 Cor. 10:1-4).
  - a. Here, Paul is describing some who were “baptized” or overwhelmed in a miraculous journey across the dry ground of the Red Sea and were protected by God.
    - (1) Yet, as Paul was fearful of being a castaway, so the children of Israel fell.
  - b. Many of them, as you know, were overthrown in the wilderness from lust, idolatry, fornication, tempting God, and murmuring (1 Cor. 10:5-9).
    - (1) This word overthrown is transliterated into English as catastrophic and means that there could be no hope, no results and would end in ruin.
    - (2) Paul said, all these things were examples for us, “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (2 Cor. 11-13).

C. The children of Israel surrendered to their feelings that their difficulties were greater than anyone’s elses.

1. They felt their problems were special and did not think they should have many difficulties.
2. They felt that God and Moses left them alone when they were at Mount Sinai.
3. So, Paul concluded that when one thinks that one’s trial or trials are

greater than any others, when we think we are having a special difficulty, Paul says, that person is ready to fall (1 Cor. 10:12)!

- a. One is “worshipping” self by imagining that no one has ever suffered in such manner (1 Cor. 10:14).
  - b. The self is the “idol” in Paul’s conclusion.
- D. The problem is that there is no trial in existence, nor that has ever existed, that many of mankind have not already suffered with (1 Cor. 10:13).
1. No one is given some “special” trial by God, and no one is to think of self so highly that he blames God for one’s difficulty and then “gives up.”
  2. The word temptation here primarily is a test such as when the Israelites were tested by the trial and then gave in to the temptation for they failed to realize that God had not deserted them, for “God is faithful” (1 Cor. 10:13).
- E. The tests of life are always present.
1. The “escape” is to remember that God is faithful and one is not to surrender but is to conquer.
  2. “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).

## II. WHO WILL NOT GIVE UP?

- A. Who can abide with God and be in a position to win the Christian race?
1. Well, the person who “walks uprightly” and keeps on doing what is right before God is one who can abide with God (Psa. 15:2).
  2. Peter discovered this eternal truth and said: “. . . he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34-35).
- B. Second, “he that backbiteth not with his tongue” is in position to abide with God (Psa. 15:3).
1. James tells us that, “the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison” (James 3:5-8).
- C. Third, one is not to do “evil to his neighbor” (Psa. 15:3).
1. This includes our friends or companions.
  2. These are intimate relationships and evil/hurtful actions lead them and us away from God.
  3. So many have given up because of false reports about them!
- D. Fourth, the one who has the best chance to avoid stumbling and falling away from God, “swareth to his own hurt and changeth not” (Psa. 15:4b).
1. One keeps their promises even if it may cost us more than we first thought.

- E. Fifth, a faithful, honest, moral child of God is an “abider.”
1. They abide in God, that is, they never depart His side, they remain always loyal, they continue with Him, endure with Him.
  2. There are some things in life that are unstable, but a man of God cannot be moved.

### III. JESUS DID NOT QUIT

- A. The Christ had a mission to “seek and save the lost” (Luke 19:10).
1. He set His face toward His crucifixion in Jerusalem and never looked back (Luke 9:53).
  2. In fact, He said: “...No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven” (Luke 9:62).
- B. On one occasion, Peter rebuked Jesus for insisting on completing His mission.
1. “From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee” (Matt. 16:21-22).
  2. Christ, obviously disappointed by Peter’s lack of understanding, turned and said to Peter: “Get thee behind me Satan: thou are an offence to me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (Matt. 16:23).
    - a. This is a strong admonition to all who would be disciples of Christ.
    - b. For, Jesus then said unto his disciples, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matt. 16:24).
- C. The persevering saint will “deny himself,” which was a revolutionary idea in Jesus’ day (and still is).
1. Greek philosophers, in that ancient time, taught that men should “know” themselves in order to have happiness.
  2. Jesus’ instruction was to empty self and “take up” the cross (Matt. 16:24b).
    - a. A cross, then, was used to put one to death.
    - b. You know, it is far easier to be in the frame of mind not to quit the Christian race, if one is dead to self.
      - (1) Paul wrote, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Col. 3:1-3).
- D. Now, suppose that Jesus had decided that all the torture, abuse, and humiliation were too much and he would just quit!
1. How petty are the excuses given for not finishing the Christian’s mission

of entering heaven.

2. Christ is the example and Christians can follow Him (1 Peter 2:21).

#### IV. WHO DOES FAIL?

- A. The inspired wisdom of Solomon, he lists some who will fall away from God.
  1. First, “Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18).
  2. This is one who thinks that he is great, the big shot.
    - a. In Isa. 16:6, we learn of Moab who was proud of his pride.
    - b. But, Solomon shows that it is better to have a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud (Prov. 16:19).
- B. Second, “The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way; but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness” (Prov. 11:5).
  1. Wickedness or ungodliness is lethal to those who strive to go to heaven.
  2. When people enjoy wickedness, they are restless.
    - a. They are tossed about with various evil passions and desires.
- C. Third, “He that trusteth in his riches shall fall; but the righteous shall flourish as a branch” (Prov. 11:28).
  1. The worldly are quitters.
  2. Jesus spake of those who obeyed the gospel but were later hindered by “the deceitfulness of riches” (Matt. 13:22).
    - a. After all, the “love of money” is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim. 6:10).
- D. Fourth, “He that hath a forward heart findeth no good: and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief” (Prov. 17:20).
  1. Those who cannot control their evil desires and misuse their tongues are most minded to fall away.
  2. Out of a deceitful heart arises the need to use one’s tongue in a perverse manner.
    - a. Perversed manners are those who use their tongues in deceitful ways, tale-bearing, back-biting, and hate-mongering.
    - b. Such people are failures.
- E. Fifth, “Happy is the man that feareth always: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief” (Prov. 28:14).
  1. The hard-hearted are going to fall.
  2. When one has a hard heart, they stumble because they have little interest in God or have quit Him altogether.
  3. In Hos. 4:5, we read there about Northern Israel being quitters.
    - a. They gave up on God and fell away because of her wickedness.
    - b. The prideful, wicked, worldly, deceitful, hard-hearted are, in reality, quitters who have opted for this world instead of the next one.
- F. Yet, we are told to lay aside every weight and sin which easily clings to us (Heb.

12:1-4).

1. There is a race set before Christians that involves faith and trust in God.
    - a. Using Jesus as the “polar star,” one can look to Him who captained the race and who finished His mission.
    - b. Many have had difficult lives.
- G. This idea of running a race is a image that Paul uses many times.
1. This race is a favorite image of Paul’s (1 Cor. 9:24; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7).
  2. But, this race is an backbreaking struggle (1 Peter 4:18).
    - a. The Christian’s life is not a stroll, but a race.
    - b. There is a goal to be kept in mind for the race is in front and the prize is to be won.
      - (1) The Christian must run with steadfastness and not allow his zeal, his fire to decline.
      - (2) The Christian can finish for an eternal home!
- H. Now, the conditions to being successful in the race are to lay aside any encumbrances, that is, any hindrances of doubt, sin, and unbelief and run!
1. But be careful that you do not make “shipwreck” your faith (1 Tim. 1:19).
  2. Even the largest and most attractive Christian faiths are not impervious to the whims of sin.
  3. Many can feel they are successful in their Christianity.
    - a. But, Paul tells us to hold the faith and have a good conscious (1 Tim. 1:19) because our lives can be wrecked and ruined by winds and waves of passion.
    - b. A walk down any city street gives tragic testimony to this truth.
      - (1) Ruined lives are very apparent because of sin.
      - (2) They are in a losing battle, they are walking dead, they are hopelessly locked in their loneliness, despair and sin.
- I. But, there is a greater force than sin.
1. Christ has a way of stilling the storms in our lives (Mk. 4:37-39) and when He is involved, there is a great calm.
  2. Although our lives are driven by mighty forces that would shipwreck us, there is a Master of the ship who can always be with us to calm the seas.
    - a. He can salvage those who have been stranded on the shores of despair.
    - b. God said that His Son would “give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness” (Isa. 61:3).
  3. There is a song entitled, “Master the Tempest is Raging,” which says, “Whether the wrath of the storm-tossed sea, Or demons or men, or whatever it be, No water can swallow the ship where lies The Master of ocean and earth, and skies; They all shall sweetly obey His will, Peace be still, Peace be still.”

**CONCLUSION:**

1. Despite all of the overwhelming disappointments and tragedies in life, the Christian must “Never, NEVER, Give Up!”
  - a. The Bible recognizes the challenges of fear, loneliness, and grief and gives the way out by remembering that God is faithful (1 Cor. 10:13).
  - b. The one who abides is upright, honest, and practices the “golden rule” (Psa. 15; Matt. 7:12).
2. Those who quit have given in to wickedness springing from self-deception and perverseness.
  - a. Jesus never quit and even though the race may at times be agonizing, to make shipwreck of the faith is far worse than struggling to finish the toilsome journey.
  - b. Christians are not out for a nice walk, but God has said, “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb. 13:5-6).
3. My brethren, do you count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations?
  - a. If not, you are not as close to God as you think you are.
4. Do you have pride?
  - a. Are you living in wickedness?
  - b. Do you trust in your riches?
  - c. Do you have a perverted tongue?
  - d. Is your heart hardened from God?
5. Lay aside every weight and sin which easily clings to you and make your life right with God.
  - a. Don’t be double minded.
  - b. Don’t be unstable in all your ways.
  - c. Make your life right with Him by being baptized into Christ, or for those who are already in the Christian race, stop going down the broad road which leads to destruction.
    - i. Make your life right by coming to God and ask for His forgiveness.