

# ENDURANCE

Safe Harbor Celebration  
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Endurance. It means a lot. 'How many more miles,' wonders the tired, torn, churning racer. 'How many days left,' wonders the broken, beaten child sitting on the floor of his jail cell, or even just behind a desk watching his teacher, back and forth, back and forth, knowing that summer is just a few more weeks away.

'How much longer, how much longer will this last,' wonders the abused child hiding from her father. 'How much longer, Lord, how much longer,' wonders the dirty discouraged preacher, 'until a break in the clouds.' 'How much longer, Lord, how much longer,' wonders the muddled and angry mother, knowing that her baby is crying and hasn't ever had enough to eat. Endurance.

We tell ourselves one day at a time, one week, one hour! Yet, inside we still sit and wonder how much more, how much longer must we endure? We look for guidance and all we receive from God and the scriptures is, have patience, endure, wait. Four little words that bring us through all the bad times with the hope of something different, perhaps even better.

Unfortunately, this is one of the worst times for a new Christian and certainly no easy pickle for an old one either. The world comes crashing down, you fall into the black abyss of pain, and all God can say, or will say, is have patience, endure wait. In our impatience, we cry out, wait for what? We need to fix this, we need help, NOW! What will help us later? Things will be better then! Yet, still God remains solid, a rock, have patience, endure, wait.

The problems of this world have us calling out to God, what is going on? Why are you not doing something about this? And again God tells us have patience endure. But, there is no waiting involved here, no, a little voice; a faint echo comes back from the great black abyss. Why aren't you doing anything about it? For that is what you are called to do. And that is what we are called to do. We are here as God's children, to take care of all God's children to help God's children to love.

The multitude of feelings, emotions and moments that come out of this working, this caring, can itself tear us down and build us up, confusing us past belief, then giving us sweet moments of epiphany and understanding. Then, we can call out into the black abyss with words of Praise, thanksgiving, rejoicing. Words like, thank you Lord! I can, we can, with your help do something about this and in the process, look who we find, you, God! Persistently, that little voice, the faint echo from beyond the abyss it always has the last say, softly it comes, 'See, God does work in the world, he does so through the people, his Children, you.'

In our praise, thanksgiving, joy, we remember Paul's words to the Corinthians, that so sadly, we forget in our suffering and pain, in the suffering and pain all around us that though we may be afflicted, perplexed, persecuted and struck down, with God on our side, we will never be crushed, driven to despair, forsaken or destroyed. God has given us this Great news. That through everything we can endure.

Unfortunately there are thousands of people, parents, and children, believing themselves to be crushed and forsaken. But that is why we are here, to celebrate, the true life God has given us and to share it with others. Through showing, sharing, telling, we show the world that all people are God's people and that all children are God's children. Every single child deserves the very best, they are, after all, are all God's children and we wouldn't want to treat God without all of our best because we have found God in everyone around us, from the happy child to the lonely older widow.

By working with people and walking the road of life, journeying, enduring with them God calls us to follow Jesus' command, To give to God the things that are God's, in prayer and in works doing the best we can, because, only if we are giving our best to all those around us and to those we reach out to can we ever possibly hope to give our best to God. And if you ever fail, and you will, we all do, I have some reminders, laugh, remember that there have always been hard times and you have made it through before, and know that you are never forsaken or destroyed, that with God, and God is always with you, you can take what tomorrow brings, you can endure.