

**17 May 2020 Lasting Faith Ps John Bendixen (WTB Studio)**

**Scripture Reference: Hebrews 10:32 -36, 38 (NLT)**

Good morning, church. I don't think you have any idea how much Pastor Sharon and I miss you. You know, I am a pastor, God has put shepherding in my heart and that fundamentally means connecting with people and I can't connect with you the way I really want to connect with you. I really want to be able to just shake your hand or just hug you or you know, give you a fist pump or do something that can just show a human connection. In the meantime, this will have to do. We have some things planned in the weeks ahead that we will be able to engage with you more on a Sunday and other times of the week, so please just watch our social media platforms. We will be communicating with you, asking you some questions, asking you to engage with us, particularly on a Sunday service. It is possible that we might be in a phased lock-down, diminishing phased lock-down in the rest of the country over the next while, might be four weeks, six weeks might be as long as ten weeks or even longer. We don't really know at this point in time how long this can continue where we will be prevented from having church services.

I am grateful that the Lord really placed it in my heart, even before the lockdown that we needed to have more opportunities to connect with each other and to be engaged spiritually and for us, Pastor Sharon and I and the ministry, to keep your spiritual levels and keep your spirits engaged with the Word as you go about the life that you are now living which might look very different to the life that you lived a couple of months ago. So welcome to church, welcome to Heritage of Faith service this morning, it is wonderful to be with you, even though I can't see your face, but you can see me and I trust that the Word is going to have a wonderful and powerful impact on your life.

I want to start off today by asking for your agreement wherever you are right now, wanting you to agree with me that our president is surrounded by people that will not try and defeat him in his objective but will assist him and help him in achieving his objective. We pray that the wisdom of God and the supreme intelligence of God is his portion. And that as we pray for him, and as we continue to ask God to change our world around us, positively, that the life that we live is a life of prosperity and peace because that is what we pray for. The Bible says that we must pray for those that are in authority over us so that we can live a life that is filled with prosperity and with peace. That's why we pray for our leaders. I want you to just agree with me that he is surrounded with people that will help him, not defeat him, that will help all of South Africa get through this pandemic and will be in a position where we come out as a country with the right ideas, the right concepts, the right perspectives so that our country can recover quickly, people can get jobs back, and that we can as a whole nation we can prosper. Will you agree with me that prosperity is our portion. Good leadership is ordained by God because we asked the Heavenly Father to engage with our leaders at this point in time. We thank You, Father, now in the Name of Jesus that you help President Cyril Ramaphosa that whoever is around him that shouldn't be around him, please remove them and those people that need to be around him, bring them into his space that he will have supreme intelligence, wisdom

and understanding that he can work and navigate politics and processes and procedures that need to be navigated for our certain good so that the nation can prosper and that we can all be in peace and in good health; in Jesus Name. Amen.

Well, thank you for joining me in this moment of agreement and declaration for God to do something mighty on our behalf because of our prayers.

It is a sure thing that when you are born into the earth you are born whether you like it or not, sorry to say it, but whether you like it or not, you are born into conflict. This is not something new that I've said, that I'm saying to you. Something I've said over and over again, for those that have been with me for years, you are born into conflict. So what is the conflict? The conflict is that you have the sin nature that you are born with that wants to respond to the forces of darkness in the world, and of course, the forces of darkness in the world want you to cooperate with them, they do not want you to cooperate with God.

When you get born again and you become a child of God, you automatically have the power to be an overcomer, and victorious in life because of the life of Christ. So you're in conflict with yourself when you're not born again. When you do become born again you become in conflict with darkness because you're now a person of the light. This is a fact of our life as a human being.

This is a most joyful moment. Well, how can you say that Pastor John that it's a most joyful moment? Well, it's a joyful moment because from the day that a child gets born that child has to deal with resistance. The resistance of gravity, the resistance of growing and developing muscles that can only develop, that coordination can only develop because of resistance. As a child grows up and they learn to crawl and they learn to walk, gravity is always pulling them down, their muscle development is conditional to them trying to resist gravity and begin to work against gravity in order to become mobile. The more mobile a child becomes the better their muscles develop, the stronger they become. It's just a fact of life that if you want to be a strong, healthy, well rounded human being, you've got to have good nutrition and you've got to be able to build muscles as a basis because of resistance.

If you were out in space and you have no gravity there is a very real danger that your muscles can deteriorate and will atrophy because there is no resistance. Resistance is actually a healthy function of muscle growth. Having said that; it's a joyful thing to see someone build structure, muscle development, become a solid, well strong, healthy human being and none of it would be possible without resistance.

I want to read to you a passage of scripture in the book of Hebrews and I'm going to read this passage of scripture today from the New Living Translation and I'm going to read from verse 32. The scripture reads as follows. <sup>32</sup>**Think back on those early days when you first learned about Christ. Remember how you remained faithful even though it meant terrible suffering.** <sup>33</sup>**Sometimes you were exposed to public ridicule and were beaten (Hebrews 10:32-33 NLT).** Obviously this is the writer of Hebrews talking to the people in the day, in the years immediately after the death and resurrection of Christ. **And sometimes you helped others who were**

**suffering the same things. <sup>34</sup>You suffered along with those who were thrown into jail, and when all you owned was taken from you, you accepted it with joy. You knew there were better things waiting for you that will last forever (Hebrews 10:34 NLT).**

Here's the Apostle Paul, or the writer, people commonly think it was Apostle Paul that wrote Hebrews but the writer of Hebrews is addressing people and saying; when you first got born again you had to make some significant decisions and some of those decisions that you had to make was that you were going to serve Jesus, love Jesus and love the people that love Jesus. To the point where you remained faithful even though you, it meant there were terrible sufferings. Part of the sufferings that people experienced in those days was that if you announced that you were a Christian sometimes they actually would beat you, take it to you physically or they would come and just steal your goods, take your goods, just remove all earthly possessions from you if you did not renounce Christ and or renounce the other Christians that were Christ's people.

What an amazing dilemma to be in; you are alive, you have a family, you have goods, you have a house that you live in and someone comes in and says, "I'm going to take all your goods unless you renounce Christ. I'm going to beat you, I'm going to physically abuse you if you don't renounce Christ and or renounce the Christians and the people around you." I mean, that is a level of suffering, that is a level of really abuse and persecution that we as people have not experienced that - most Christians in our modern-day society have not experienced anything like that. The writer here is talking about things and he says, and you accepted it with joy. The reason you accepted it with joy is that you knew there was something better waiting for you that would last forever. So now, I just want to say to you; if you consider what he was talking about here, the level of uncertainty in the human world, in the material world, in the things that surrounded you and your world that you lived in. If you consider that how devastating some of those outcomes were, and these people said, he says about these people that they did it with joy because they knew actually something was happening that is going to last forever, and it was that forever that they were more concerned with. They had a knowledge and understanding of forever. They had a recognition that their salvation was forever.

He then goes in to say what I think is one of the most valuable passage of scripture in the Bible, and he says in verse 35 in the New Living Translation, he says <sup>35</sup>**So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord (Hebrews 10:35 NLT).** Do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. In other words, you have been through so much because you have such love in the Lord, you have such trust in the Lord, you have developed this trust to the point where any kind of physical, material world suffering that you have, has been so significant, and you took it all with joy. Now is not a time for you to say, "I'm just going to throw this confident trust away." What is the thing to cause you to throw this confident trust away? Remember, he says; the great reward that it brings you, in other words, keep in mind that this trust that you have in God, this joy that you have in God, it is really not misplaced. It really is of great value to you, both now and in the future, it is of great value.

Well, I think that the unseen enemy that we are facing now, this unseen enemy of Covid19, the Coronavirus, the unseen enemy of economic lockdown, and we don't really know how long this is going to continue, but I do want to say that this that we are experiencing, it will pass, but don't throw away this trust that you have in the Lord. Don't throw it away with unproductive words, with useless imaginations of fears and anxieties of what may or may not come into your life, or may or may not be there as you move forward in life. <sup>35</sup>**So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord, remember the great reward that it brings you (Hebrews 10:35 NLT).** Here's what he says next, <sup>36</sup>**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 (Hebrews 10:36 NLT).** Don't give up on your trust, this confidence that you have in God. Don't give up on that now, don't let it go now. This is the time when it is your time to shine, this is your time when it is your time to actually do something really significant and great spiritually for yourself, for your family, for the people around you.

It's time for you to stand up. It's time for you to make a significant stand; a faith stand. It's time for you to make a stand of your love and trust, and confident expectations of God, and do it with joy and gladness. And remember, it brings a great reward, not only now but in time to come.

The Word says to us in the book of John that we will in this lifetime and in the lifetime to come, we will receive a hundredfold return. There is everything for us to gain to stay connected to the Word and stay connected to God's people in this lifetime and in this season, right now.

I believe with all my heart, I believe this virus was orchestrated by the sin factor in the earth, and this is a way that the enemy of God can try and defeat the Church, can try and defeat legitimate governments that God has placed in the earth, is trying to defeat prosperity and peace and all of the things that God has promised us, wellbeing. The enemy of God is like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. But as for you, child of God, submit yourself to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you. When he comes to you to try and undermine your faith and try and undermine your walk with God, you must recognise, you must recognise that even a little thought process of 'I don't know if I'm going to make it at the end of the month, I don't know if God can come through for me,' you must recognise that God is great enough to take care of your needs, that God is great enough. He is powerful enough. He has given us authority on the earth to be able to declare that we are safe under the shadow of the Almighty. We are protected under the shadow of the Almighty. He is our refuge, He is our fortress, He is our God in whom we can truly trust and depend on. He is the One that's got us covered. He is the One that is really deeply committed and interested and got your back every moment of every day, in every single way. Praise the Lord. He is my God and I will praise Him. He is my Lord and Saviour and I will put my trust in Him. He is the One who causes me to triumph in Christ Jesus. He is the One who said that greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world. It doesn't matter what's in the world, the Greater One is in me.

What's my job right now? What's your job right now? My job right now is to be patient. He says here in the Word, patient endurance is what you need now, right

now. You need patient endurance right now. So this is not a time for you to actually quit on your patience and quit on your enduring capability. Right now is the time to have patient endurance, **so that you will continue to do God's will and that you will receive all that He has promised (Hebrews 10:36 NLT)**. I don't know about you but I want to receive all that God has promised to me; all of it, all of it, all of it. Hallelujah.

The Bible says in verse 38, **<sup>38</sup>And my righteous ones will live by faith, but I will take no pleasure in anyone who turns away (Hebrews 10:38 NLT)**.

The Bible is very clear that there's great reward if you have endurance, and you have patience, and if you are the righteous one who lives by faith, you've got it good. But if you turn away then the Word of God says, **<sup>38</sup>I will take no pleasure in anyone who turns away (Hebrews 10:38 NLT)**. In other words, don't quit on your faith, don't make shipwreck out of your faith, don't allow anything to come against your faith that is going to undermine your faith. You have to take those thoughts captive, you have to take those ideas, those concepts, those things that want to come against you and pull you down, you've got to take it captive.

I want to just share with you an image that the Lord gave me. The Lord gave me an image of a ship that is on the ocean of life. Let's say that that ship is your life and you are on this ship and you are heading towards land, you're heading towards safe harbour, you're heading towards a port, and you have lighthouses that are placed on the shoreline to make sure that as you're heading into the port, a place of destination, the place of where you need to get to, you have lighthouses that rotate and shine a light to alert people in a ship of danger, of rocks, of land, of you getting close to something that could make a shipwreck of your faith; of your life.

Now what will happen if that light gets turned off and now you don't know how close you are to the rocks and how dangerous the tides are that are bringing you in, and the different currents that are flowing in and perhaps the wind that is taking you in a certain direction and you wouldn't know how close you were to rocks and land that could cause you to make shipwreck of your life or of the journey that you're taking.

I had this image that the Lord showed me that really what the enemy is trying to do within the world right now is he's trying to switch off the lighthouses because what he wants to do is he wants to make shipwreck of economies, he wants to make shipwreck of people's families, of relationships, of many things in life, he wants to make a shipwreck of that. Don't let him. Don't allow the world system that is designed to try and defeat you, don't allow that to take you and pull you down.

I believe with all my heart that God is always the God of the moment, He's the God of now, and He's always wanting to navigate you into a safe place, into a safe harbour so that He can always show you that He's taking care of you and that He is your God. There is no question to me in our lives that we are required to go and live life, be out on the waters, be out in the oceans of life, be out on the sea and as we journey we will experience God, we will experience things, we will have things happening to us, but always we must know that we have a lighthouse that can guide

us. We have a God who's going to bring us back to a port, He's going to bring us back to a destination we will always be able to turn back to God and be safe in everything that we do.

Many, many years ago now, I was in a situation where it was necessary for me to jump out of aeroplanes and to jump into places where I needed to be able to navigate from a place of where we landed to - if I can use the terminology - you had a drop zone, a landing zone and then you would have a pickup point where you would perhaps have to walk to get to the pickup point. So you're in an aeroplane and you're about to jump, and when you're flying, as you're flying over a particular area, I would be standing and often it would be me standing in the door of the aeroplane and getting ready to jump. There's a couple of things that I had to be sure of right at that moment. I had to be sure that my parachute was packed correctly. I had to be confident that when I jumped out of that plane and certainly in many of the instances when I would jump we would jump at very low levels; 800 feet, a 1000 feet. By the time your ripcord opens, by the time you get out, there's not a lot of time for you to land. I remember you hook your ripcord onto a cable and the guy behind you has to check that you're properly hooked up and you're getting ready to jump out of that aeroplane. You have to have confidence, you have to have confidence that your shoot is packed, you're connected properly and everything is going to work. If you don't you had an emergency shoot and you could pull the ripcord of the emergency cord if you had to and all the while you're heading and plummeting towards the earth.

That's the first phase that you have to have, the first phase of confidence, the first phase of trust, the first phase of engaging in a new course of action. When you get onto the earth, you now have to collect your stuff and you go do whatever your mission was that you set out to do, and then you have to make your way from the drop zone, the landing zone, to your pickup point. Oftentimes we would make a journey that would be through a lot of trees, a lot of bushes, a lot of forests where there were no hills, just flat, flat, flat land, and no hills. There wasn't anything that you could say, you could look at a point and say, "I see that hill or that mountain or that place and so I'm going to head towards that, that's the place or the point." It was all compass-driven. It was all, you know, different ways of readings that you would need and counting out steps that you would have to walk - a journey that you would take. Literally you would count, you know, a meter at a time; one step, two steps, three steps, meters that you would count. You would have someone counting that you have walked and in those days we would call them, we'd walk one click, two clicks, three clicks, which was for, in other words, one kilometre, two kilometres. We just called them clicks and so you would pace out how far you would walk. You would keep track of the distance that you were walking so that you could keep yourself on course, based on all of your compass readings and all of the places that you need to go, the navigation points that you needed to get to.

Well I, you know, if I look back on those days, it is no use in me sitting where I'm at right now and trying to imagine how God was working for me then. It was more important for me in those moments to know that God is working for me right then, because if God didn't work for me and wasn't with me right then, in that moment,

then I may not have been here talking to you today. It was important for me to know that God was with me right at that moment.

You may find yourself in a situation where you can project and say, "One day when we get through this," it's important for you to know God right now. It's important for you to know that God is with you right now. I want to say this almost, the first step that you have to take is, you have to trust God, you have to be confident like I was confident when I jumped out of that aeroplane. I was confident that certain things had been done properly. I was confident that my parachute was packed, I was confident that if I jumped, the ripcord will be pulled properly. I was confident that as I came out of that aeroplane, I knew the drills, I knew how to actually prepare myself, get myself ready for landing. I knew how to look for where I was going to land. I was aware of things like, is their ground rush involved and be aware of ground rush, and many other things that you would be aware of when you are trained to jump out of aeroplanes. I was aware of all of those things, but I always had to have confident trust in that moment. The reward at that stage for me was coming out alive, coming out in a condition where none of what I was doing, was going to actually negatively impact my future. I put all my trust in God in those moments of my life.

I'm using this example, because sometimes and right at this moment, you might feel like you're on an ocean of high waves and seas that are bouncing you up and down, strong winds, and you might feel like you have no port where you can go and harbour for safety. You might feel like there's no lighthouse that actually is guiding you. I want to tell you that Jesus is your light, the Word of God is your light. He is your navigation, He is your captain of your ship. He is your everything. He will never leave you, He will never forsake you, He will never let you down. Your job is to have patient endurance. Stay steady, day after day, day after day. Stay steady. For me, you might feel like you jump out of an aeroplane and you might feel like, "Well, this is freefall. I don't know where I'm going to land. I don't know how it's going to happen." Trust this that God is the One who has got you covered. He is making sure that your parachute is open. He's making sure that your landing place is sure. He's making sure that once you've actually landed, that you've got what it takes to make it out of the place, the hot zone that you've dropped into, and that you can get to your pickup point. He's wanting to pick you up and He's wanting to do good for you. So emotionally, spiritually, and in every way, God is wanting to take care of your life. Do not lose heart, do not faint, do not grow weary, do not lose your patience and be strong in endurance.

Finally, I want to use, and I've used two analogies already, but I feel I want to just share this with you, one more time. I want to just use an analogy for you of days of my cycling, and just recently I was thinking quite deeply about this when in 2014 when I really felt strongly to go and ride a cycle race, and it was really a big spiritual breakthrough in my life, and in a time when God needed me to be spiritually making breakthroughs. I was going through, I was riding long distances, and at one day I was riding, I was climbing mountains, and I was doing many things. Temperatures were 40 degrees out there, Celsius, it was very hot, it was very uncomfortable. I was weary, but I knew I have one more mountain pass of climbing to do on my bike, it's only ten more kilometres out of a hundred and forty kilometre stage. The temperature is scorching, the heat coming off the tarmac is just unbearable. Yes, I've

got water, but I am, I have to make sure that I'm hydrated. I'm really fatigued, I'm really tired, and I'm sore all over, but I know I've got one more mountain to climb. What is the thing that I needed the most in that moment? Patient endurance.

For me it wasn't even, I've got ten kilometres to get through. I've just got to keep pedalling. I've just got to keep pedalling. I've just got to keep going. I've just got to keep moving forward on this bicycle because the reward is when I've crossed that finish line and my race was done, I would have a cold shower. I would have some wonderful, cool refreshments and hydrate properly; water and energy drinks, and I would be able to eat a wonderful meal to replace the calories that had been consumed by me in that day. Then I would be able to rest, and I'd be in a place where I'd say my patient endurance allowed me to finish the course, finish the race, and finish what I needed to do.

Well, we are no different right now. Right now, in this season, in this moment of time we just have to keep peddling. We have to keep – do not throw away your confidence, you must remember there's great reward that it brings you. So be patient and have endurance, is what you need now so that you will continue to do God's will. Because when you continue to do God's will, God is pleased. God is pleased. The Bible says that He is a rewarder of those who continually seek Him, He's a rewarder of those who love Him, He's a rewarder of those who walk in faith.

Stay strong, people. Stay strong. I look forward to further connecting with you. I look forward to, as you go through the week and you stay connected to social media, you will find out some ways that we are going to be able to engage with you more completely and have more of an interaction in a virtual, digital world.

In the meantime, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. May the peace of God rest upon you, and may there be no anxiety and fear, or any kind of dark thoughts or any dark issues – may they not overwhelm you and overcome you. But be strong and sure, and with this knowledge, that the blood of Jesus has paid the price for you, the blood of Jesus has paid the price for you to live in confident trust in the Lord your God.

So, be at peace. Be at peace, people, and may the Lord bless you and may His face shine upon you. May the peace that He gives you pass all understanding. I pray that whatever it is that you need from God to supply your need, that you will have patient endurance to get to the finish line.

Thank you for watching, thank you for listening to me, and God bless you.