FAITH AND ENDURANCE FOR THE BLESSING

ILLUS: Not too long ago, our family held a boxing tournament in honor of my late father. My dad was a boxing coach for over 40 years. He was well known in the community for his dedicated service of over 4 decades of volunteering his time and resources to helping inner city youth.

What also made this tournament special was my nephew was going to fight his first fight. There were over 50 of us there for this monumental day.

When my nephew went up to fight, you could hear us all in the stands. We had our fathers memorial shirts on and were cheering him on for his first fight.

He got tired, he got weary we yelled come on Frito you got this. Jab, side step, keep going. Bob and Weave You got this. **Good News He Won the Fight.**

This morning, I have a message for the weary, the tired, those waiting, those wondering, those that are believing for a new season, breakthrough, and a second wind. Those in the ring. In the battle. In the fight.

SCRIPT: **Hebrews 12:1**
Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.

Frito had his fans in the stands. I'm here to encourage you this morning, you have your fans in the stands.

ILLUS: The Hebrew author pictured these previous champions of faith as spectators from the heavens, cheering us as we press on to overcome present discouragement, a challenging season, a waiting period, a demonic attack, as if we were in an athletic competition.

The author thought of many more than just the 18 specifically mentioned in Hebrews 11. The ancient Greek word translated cloud was a figure of speech indicating a large group, which probably includes great men and women of God who have come since those Hebrews 11 saints, known and unknown to history.

- **IMAGINE THAT- The book of Hebrews was written thousands of years ago.**
- **I'm encouraged to know that there are millions in the stands cheering me on.**

Throughout the book of Hebrews there are TWO RESOUNDING, REPEATING and PROVOKING ACTION WORDS if we are going to EXPERIENCE THE BLESSING of God.

The writer urges believers to hold fast to their faith ("don't drift") and to have endurance when challenges arise.

There are two key qualities

Faith- It means conviction, belief, trust, confidence, reliance, and fidelity (derived from the verb *peithō*, meaning "to be persuaded"). Rather than a blind leap or a wish list, *it is a* relational trust in someone—God—who is proven worthy of reliance.

Endurance- Greek Hypomeno- Cheerful, active steadfastness and constancy to stand firm under trials and pressure.

It describes the courageous, hopeful capacity to hold your course, bear up under heavy trials or persecution, and refuse to swerve or collapse when worn down by difficult circumstances.

This morning, my message is the very words that pierced my heart during my devotional time with the Lord the past two weeks.

May you be encouraged and propelled to have FAITH & ENDURANCE for the BLESSING!

1. **FAITH & ENDURANCE IN PRAYER**

Hebrews 4:14-16

14 So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. 15 This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. 16 So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

Because we have a High Priest who is both omnipotent and compassionate, we can come boldly to His throne.

- **Boldly means we may come *constantly*.**
- **Boldly means we may come *without reservation*.**
- **Boldly means we can come freely, *without fancy words*.**
- **Boldly means we can come with *confidence*.**
- **Boldly means we should come with *persistence*.**

APPLY: The throne of God is a throne of grace. When we come, we may obtain mercy (this is *not getting* what we deserve) and find grace (this is *getting* what we don't deserve) in our time of need.

Ancient Jewish Rabbis taught that God had two thrones, one of mercy and one of judgment. They said this because they knew that God was both merciful and just, but they could not reconcile these two attributes of God.

They thought that perhaps God had two thrones to display the two aspects of His character. On one throne He showed judgment and on the other throne mercy. But here, in light of the finished work of Jesus, we see mercy and judgment reconciled into one throne of grace.

Thankfully, God provides help in our time of need. No request is too small, because He wants us to *be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer… let your requests be made known to God*. (Philippians 4:6)

APPLY: He understands our weaknesses. The key is to have faith and endurance to go to His throne of grace no matter how we are feeling, if we have made a mistake, no matter the discouragement and to COME BOLDLY!

2. FAITH & ENDURANCE TO GROW

Hebrews 5:11-14

[11] There is much more we would like to say about this, but it is difficult to explain, especially since you are spiritually dull and don't seem to listen. [12] You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. [13] For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn't know how to do what is right. [14] Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.

- **SAY CAN THE WORD OF GOD CHALLENGE US.**

There is nothing more delightful than a true babe in Jesus. But there is nothing more irritating and frustrating than someone who *should* be mature but who has *become* a babe.

- **IT TAKES FAITH & ENDURANCE TO GROW.**

a. Have you become a babe? Perhaps your Christian life is unstable. Babies are handed from one person to another, and spiritual babes are *tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine* (Ephesians 4:14-16).

b. Have you become a babe? Perhaps you are star-struck by Christian celebrities of one kind or another. Babies are focused on one particular person (their mother), and spiritual babes glory in men (*I am of Paul, I am of Apollos*, as in 1 Corinthians 1:12).

c. Have you become a babe? Perhaps you are spiritually asleep. Babies need a lot of sleep, and spiritual babes spend much time spiritually asleep.

d. Have you become a babe? Perhaps you are fussy and cranky with others. Babies can be cranky, and spiritual babes will fuss over any little thing.

APPLY: It's going to take some faith and endurance to grow.

It's time to go from milk to meat as we enter our 6th year.
The scripture tells us we MATURE through training.

Through Next Steps, Wednesday Nights, Small Groups, Prayer Line, Men's Events, Women's Events.

APPLY: I shared what a baby looks like, but let me share what a mature man and woman of God looks like.

a. **Psalms 1- A tree planted along the riverbanks. Not tossed to and fro. But immovable bearing fruit in every season.**

b. **Doesn't get fed off an internet Pastor, or someone else's revelation. But knows how to dig into the word and be fed. Honors the man of God of this house and is receptive to the word. Hebrews 13:17**

c. **Mature person never Lacks Zeal Romans 12 but keeps their spiritual fervor serving the Lord enthusiastically.**

d. **Mature person Doesn't complain. Forgives quickly. But has a purpose that wakes them up in the morning. A joy that is contagious. Honors all. And Serves all. Col. Does everything unto the Lord**

3. FAITH & ENDURANCE to KEEP DOING THE RIGHT THING

Hebrews 6:10-12

10 For God is not unjust. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love to him by caring for other believers,[b] as you still do. 11 Our great desire is that you will keep on loving others as long as life lasts, in order to make certain that what you hope for will come true. 12 Then you will not become spiritually dull and indifferent. Instead, you will follow the example of those who are going to inherit God's promises because of their faith and endurance.

APPLY: When we are discouraged we sometimes think God forgets us and all we have done for Him and for His people. But God would deny His own nature if He forgot such things God sees and remembers.

- Sometimes our fear that God forgot our work and labor of love comes from relying on the attention and applause of people. It is true that some *people* may forget your work and labor of love, but God never will.

- The writer to the Hebrews encouraged like a coach, urging believers to press on. The followers of Jesus must keep up their good work; press on with that hope until the end; and imitate those who inherit (not earn) God's promises.

- When we fail to do this, discouragement often makes us become sluggish.

- **First, we lose the desire to *press* on; then we lose the desire to *go* on. FAITH & ENDURANCE SPURS US TO GO ON!!!!!!**

- Catch yourself when you're losing the desire to press on.

- Instead of giving in to discouragement, imitate those who found the key to gaining God's promises. FAITH & ENDURANCE

4. FAITH & ENDURANCE TO STAY TOGETHER

Hebrews 10:23-25

[23] Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. [24] Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. [25] And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

APPLY: Discouragement can make us avoid community at the very time we need it most.

- **One another: "This is the only place where the author uses the expression 'one another' (*allelous*), though it is frequently found in the New Testament. He is speaking of a mutual activity, one in which believers encourage one another, not one where leaders direct the rest as to what they are to do."**

- **Forsaking fellowship is a sure way to give place to discouragement. This discouragement festers where God's people are not exhorting one another.**

- **Some only go to church if they feel they "need it" at the time. But our motivation for fellowship must be to obey God and *to give to others*.**

- **We can and should gather with believers to encourage someone who needs to stand strong against a tide of discouragement.**

Who do we need to encourage?

1. **The new believer**
2. **Those newly joining our church (David)**
3. **The faithful pillars and leaders (John & Olga)**
4. **Those we haven't seen in a while.**
5. **Our Pastor**
6. **EVERYONE!!!!**

There needs to be a strong spirit of encouragement in the house of God. We face too many battles from without to have to face discouragement from within. Spur one another scripture. encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

5. IMITATE THE FAITH & ENDURANCE OF OUR LEADERS

Hebrews 13:7
[7] Remember your leaders who taught you the word of God. Think of all the good that has come from their lives, and follow the example of their faith.

Hebrews 13:17
Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit.

David Wilkerson- from the suburbs of Pennsylvania. Had enough faith and endurance to go to NYC. Nicky Cruz I will cut you in a 1,000 pieces.

Pastor Sonny started a church for drug addicts and their families. The projects of EAST LA.
A few years in, he wanted to give up. A pastor told him don't you BELIEVE IT.

SAY FAITH & ENDURANCE.
Hebrews 12:1
Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.

EXCESS WEIGHT SLOWS OUR RACE DOWN

- **Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin: Sin can hold us back. But there are also things that may not be sin (every weight) but are merely hindrances that can keep us from running effectively the race God has for us.**

- **Our choices are not always between right and wrong, but between something that may hinder us and something else that may not. Is there a weight in your life you must lay aside?**

Today, I came to encourage the BODY. I CAME TO ENCOURAGE MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE LORD.

THROW OFF THE WEIGHT OF

- **Discouragement**
- **Slothfulness**
- **Immaturity**
- **Isolation**
- **Offense**

- **Judgement**
- **Mediocrity**
- **Enemies attacks.**

CONCLUSION:

Hebrews 12:2

We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. [3] Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up.