

Maintaining Our Momentum

Gary Watson
August 15, 2021

Christian persecution rises as people refused aid in Covid crisis. (www.theguardian.com)

On Wednesday (Jan. 20), before the scattered chairs on the National Mall had even been collected, Tony Perkins, President of the Family Research Council, ominously “warned” his conservative Christian followers that President Joe Biden and his Democratic cronies would lead America to “new levels of radicalism” in which Christians would be persecuted and liberals would be “canceling anyone who disagrees.

“President Biden is adamant that the hallmark of his administration will be tearing down thousands of years of human history, morality, science, and gender norms,” Perkins wrote. (www.religionnews.com)

Robert Jeffress, senior pastor at First Baptist Dallas and one of former President Donald Trump’s advisers, had already sounded an alarm the previous Sunday in a sermon that predicted “savage times” in which “society begins to disintegrate.” He too prepared faithful Christians for increased “persecution” from the government. (www.religionnews.com)

On former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee’s talk show, evangelist Franklin Graham agreed, bemoaning the Democrat’s dystopian plan: “No question, Governor, the country is going to go through a very spiritually dark period of time.” (www.wordandway.org)

Jason Rantz reports, “Dems silent as Seattle’s homeless terrorize residents with homicide, attempted rape”.
(Foxnews.com)

These are a few of the recent headlines. Add to these headlines high unemployment rates, a shortage of workers while we have an increase in welfare recipients along with rising inflation, shortage of goods and services, and not to mention very high crime rate that continues to increase.

There are things going on in our country that we never thought we would see. The things we are seeing are things you would expect to see in a third world country.

We can sit around all day and discuss what’s going on and many people do because they are focused on the problem and not the solution.

You get up and read the news every morning and when you do it’s like the bad news never stops coming. When you look at what’s happening to our country, and then you add your own challenges and tests, you can easily let all of this overwhelm you.

It is easy for one to get their eyes off the “prize” and onto the events happening in our country today. Everyone discusses politics and what’s going on. If I hear one more thing about COVID I may shoot myself but I’m sick of listening to both sides of it.

I’m more interested in discussing the solution and our responsibility as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ than what’s happening in our country today. All the discussion in the world will not fix this nation. Only what we’re doing right

now will have ANY impact on our nation. Only God can fix the mess we've gotten ourselves into.

PRINCIPLE: Do you know someone who can overrule bad leadership or bad circumstances? Yes, you do! And get this: you're on HIS team!

So, this morning I'm going to give you some reminders and some things to focus on each day, so we can continue to sit back, relax, and watch what God is going to do! Will He bring us through this crazy period? Will we survive as a nation? Will the rapture occur? I think we've made our bed and now we must "reap what we've sowed" but no matter what, this is an absolutely amazing time to be alive and to have the opportunity for God to use you and me!

But remember God can only use "PREPARED" people. So as always, it starts with getting "PREPARED"!! THERE IS NO WAY AROUND IT.

There is so much fear in our country today that it makes me sick and I'm not talking about COVID either. Our pastor has been telling us for over a year there is no room for fear in the believer's life.

Not only is the general population operating on fear but Christians all over America are fearful!! About everything.

Have you ever complained because you didn't have such and such? Everything is going to hell in a hand basket and where's the Lord in all of this?

If you really want to know where you're at in your soul or if you really have contentment or if you're really trusting the

Lord or not, just do a review of your complaining in the last week.

Let me remind you. What is the worst thing man can do to you? Kill you, right? Guess what? He has just advanced you right into heaven. Right into the presence of the Lord. That's the worst he can do to you.

But most people are not happy and they are enslaved to their circumstances. When you ask them how their day is going most think...you have no idea how bad my day is going.

But as believers you can go through the most horrible things and still be content. If your contentment rests on things going perfectly...well, you're going to be a very unhappy person. You will not be copasetic.

We can be content in any circumstance because of Bible Doctrine in our soul and it's that Bible Doctrine we can apply. We are not slaves to our circumstances as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ!

We should have a great day every day!! Why? Because Jesus Christ went to the cross and died for our sins and through simple faith alone in Christ alone, we have eternal life.

Then, He left us the "Mind of Christ," His word, that we study and learn and can apply to whatever circumstances we face.

But it must be in your soul if you are to use it! You must study, learn, and grow, and you must have confidence God is working behind the scenes on our behalf.

Your happiness should not depend on your circumstances it should depend on your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

When that relationship is right, they can't take your happiness away from you but that takes knowledge of the Word of God.

Hebrews 13:5-6: “Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever abandon you,” Vs. 6: so that we confidently say, “The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”

Remember, the first thing we must do is to make sure we are not operating in the energy of the flesh, on our own puny power, so each day we immediately need to check ourselves and acknowledge any sins to God so that we are using divine viewpoint as we address those challenges and issues before us.

PRINCIPLE: Our power is nothing compared to the Holy Spirit's power.

PRINCIPLE: God's grace is always greater than our needs. It will give you courage, confidence, and stability and, by the way, He longs to be gracious to us.

We need to quit thinking like our neighbor or that person on the job or at the political rally that this is not fair, and we have every right to be angry. That's stinking thinking. That's human viewpoint and is not the way we need to be thinking.

That is not how God wants us to think, that everything is unfair and not right. We put our focus on the Lord which is

the solution. We use the Word of God in our soul and apply it to our life and circumstances.

We use the Problem-Solving Devices starting with #1, #2, and #3. YOU MUST BE ABLE TO USE THE Faith Rest Drill. We think about how He is always faithful. With the Faith Rest Drill, you have over 7,000 promises in the Bible to pull from.

We can choose to focus on our problems or on the solution to our problems which is the Lord Jesus Christ and His word.

When we focus on our problems, they get bigger and bigger but when we focus on the remedies of the Bible, our problems seem to shrink away.

Psalm 55:22: “Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.”

Isaiah 41:10: “Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will also help you, I will also uphold you with My righteous right hand.”

Isaiah 41:13: “For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand, Who says to you, ‘Do not fear, I will help you.’”

We have no control over our circumstances, but we can control the way we handle them. We can fall apart, get angry and bitter when we face unpleasant circumstances, or we can ask God for help.

Not that He will eliminate our problems, but that He will give us the patience, strength, and knowledge to keep trusting in

Him as He demonstrates His faithfulness in answering our prayers.

In heaven, Jesus Christ functions as a priest to the Father on behalf of all believers. He is our intercessor and the only patron we have before God the Father. We see this in Hebrews 5:10:

“Jesus being designated by God as a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.”

Melchizedek in the Old Testament was a king and a priest who came to Abraham and of course that makes Christ a King Priest.

A priest is someone who represents others before God.

Hebrews 3:1: “Therefore, Holy brethren partakers of a heavenly calling consider Jesus the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.”

Jesus Christ is unique in the sense He is the only High Priest who offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin. All other high priests of Israel offered animal sacrifices but never offered themselves.

The only ritual we have is the remembrance of the sacrifice for our sins of our High Priest. His death stopped all of those sacrifices because He was THE sacrifice. So having fulfilled His work as a Savior on earth, Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father and, now, He advocates and is an intercessor for you and me.

The scripture reveals many things of Christ in this intercessory work but perhaps the most outstanding feature of His priesthood is the fact of its immutability.

The priests of the Old Testament era varied in many ways. Some were sympathetic and faithful; others were cold and indifferent and faithless in their work but whichever it was, death claimed them all.

Not so for the resurrected One who is eternally in heaven at the right hand of the Father. Of Him the scripture says in Hebrews 7:24-25:

“But He on the one hand because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Vs.25: Hence, also He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through the Lord Jesus Christ, since He always lives to make intercession for them (That’s us – Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ).”

What is this intercession and advocacy that Christ, as our great High Priest in heaven, continually makes for us before God the Father?

He pleads the cause of righteousness and justice for believers who, while being previously justified at the moment of faith alone in Christ alone, continue to sin and, of course, continue to find adversity.

Since He took on humanity and He tasted human weakness, He tasted temptation and even death all without sinning. He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses and effectively intercede for us with the Father in our times of need.

We are always in trouble. We are always asking God for help in prayer when we are in trouble. Asking Him for relief and He is always there to represent us to the Father, and He also beseeches the Father that we might be protected not only from ourselves but from Satan and his minions.

So as believers we acquire this wonderful intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ and it is unceasing on our behalf. Even at this moment.

So, we are anointed as priests. Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2:9: “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession that you may proclaim the excellency of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

The Apostle Paul reveals how the believer functions in this priestly office in 1 Timothy 2:1-3:

Vs. 1: “First of all, then, I urge that requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made on behalf of all people, Vs.2: for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may live a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. Vs.3: This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.”

I think you should remember this verse in the days in which we live. Not only for those in need but for our leaders. No matter who they are.

Why? “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.”

It's an obligation. If we fail in our duties as priests, as intercessors, we suffer and others suffer with us. Perhaps one reason why some in authority in our nation are arrogant and have caused so much havoc is because we as royal priests have not functioned as intercessors as we are mandated to do. We are to pray for those in authority over us to the end that we may live a **“tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity”.**

That's not what we seem to be doing at this moment. Turmoil in national life is our alternative to our lack of intercession. We are in the midst of such turmoil. Pray for the Lord's deliverance that is intercession.

What is our responsibility when we pray?

How should we pray?

- 1. Be in fellowship and filled with the Holy Spirit. (1 John 1:9 & 1 Thessalonians 5:19)**
- 2. Address your prayer to God the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and close in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Matthew 6:6 & Ephesians 6:18)**

What to pray?

- 1. Gratitude & Thanksgiving. Give adoration and thanksgiving to God for His daily grace provisions. (1 Thessalonians 5:18 & Ephesians 5:20)**

2. **“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving”.** (Colossians 4:2)

3. Intercessions.

- A. Pray for others. (Ephesians 6:28)
- B. Pray for your nation and its leadership. (2 Chronicles 7:14 & Numbers 14:13)
- C. Pray for those who seek to do you harm. (Matthew 5:44 & Luke 6:28)

4. Petitions & Supplications.

- A. Pray for yourself (Hebrews 4:16)
- B. Request sanctification of food. (1 Timothy 4:4-5)

Why pray?

1. Help in time of need – **“Let us draw near with confidence to the throne room of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.”** (Hebrews 4:16)

2. Mandate from God.

- A. **“Pray without ceasing”.** (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- B. **“Call upon Me and come and pray to Me and I will listen to you”** (Jeremiah 29:12)

PRINCIPLE: Be patient and persistent in prayer. God answers in His timing, not yours!

So, prayer is an important part of your spiritual life, and we must pray for our nation and its leaders.

Also, we must remember that Christ is a King. By resurrection He is, as the scripture says, “**the first born from the dead**”. The humanity of Christ became the sovereign ruler of the church.

This emphasizes His privileges of leadership over us. He has dominion over His body. The body of Christ. He became the recipient of all things including you as the new spiritual creation.

He bought and paid for you by His work on the cross. Thus, He has provided for the eternal existence of the church as a kingdom of believers and, on a day yet to come, our Savior will return to this world to be King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

God promised David that his throne would never lack for a ruler and God will inevitably fulfill that promise to national Israel.

Revelation 1:5: “And from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the first born of the dead, and the ruler of the Kings of the earth (that means He is the King of Kings) to Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood (or the substitutionary spiritual death of our Lord Jesus Christ).”

While the Lord Jesus Christ is anointed as King, He is not yet exercising that office upon the throne of David. Likewise, every believer has received an anointing of kingship though our day has not yet come. Paul wrote in Romans 8:17:

“And if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.”

We will be glorified as will He at the Second Advent and in the Millennial kingdom when we return with Him in our resurrection bodies. Paul concludes in 1 Corinthians 3:21-23:

“So then, let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you, Vs. 22: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come; all things belong to you, Vs. 23: and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.”

Every church age believer anointed by God the Holy Spirit in Union with Christ, who positionally shares in everything that Christ is and everything that He has, also holds, then, the office of priest and king. You are a priest and a king, and we are moving towards the final hour of total triumph. Ruling with Him as Kings.

1 John 3:2: “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.”

These two grace gifts point to the moment when we shall sit with Him in glory actually judging the world with Him, which at one time judged us. And all this because one moment in time the Lord Jesus Christ paid the penalty of our sins on the cross.

PRINCIPLE: The enemy hasn't won. We are the ones who are on the winning team because we are trusting in God to handle our problems and the details of life, and He is ALWAYS faithful!

God is either testing us or using the dark side to take us to the next phase of His plan.

PRINCIPLE: When you concentrate on the Word of God in your soul and on the Lord Jesus Christ, He gets bigger and the problems around you shrink.

We don't have to carry around the burdens of the world. In fact, He says, "Don't do it. Trust Me." 1 Peter 5:7: "Cast all your burdens upon Him, because He cares for you".

The confidence we have is in the Word of God we know. The more Bible Doctrine you have in your soul that you can use is what allows you and me to face the world copesetic, no matter what the circumstances.

Listen to what the Apostle Paul said in Philippians 4:11-13:

"Not that I speak from need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. Vs. 12: I know how to get along with little, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. Vs. 13: I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

How could Paul boldly say such a thing? Because he knew that he had an all-sufficient Savior who could get him through anything and as long as he was focused on Him, he was going to have stability in a very unstable world.

Philippians 4:19-20: "And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Vs. 20: Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever."

We need to learn this. What kind of riches does God have in glory for us? They are infinite, unending, endless, vast, immeasurable, unlimited, never-ending, immense, boundless, stupendous, awesome, fantastic, stunning, and breathtaking.

So, we must use the Faith Rest Drill.

- 1. Happiness does not depend on circumstances; +H depends on what you think.**
- 2. You make decisions as to whether you will have stress or tranquility in your soul.**
- 3. Stress in the soul knocks out the filling of the Holy Spirit and doctrinal orientation.**
- 4. Adversity is an outside pressure; stress is an inside pressure of life.**
- 5. Adversity is what circumstances do to you. Stress is what you do to yourself.**
- 6. Adversity is inevitable; stress is optional.**
- 7. God did not design us to be slaves to our circumstances.**
- 8. A believer who consistently uses the Faith Rest Drill fulfills 2 Corinthians 5:7: “We walk by faith, not by sight”.**

9. God offers His rest to us. It is a place where there is contentment, security, stability, and peace of mind, even in the midst of adversity.

10. The way to get there is by faith, trusting in Him and His Word.

11. When we enter this rest, we stop working and start waiting on the Lord. Our job is complete when we trust the Lord.

12. Hebrews 4:11 commands us to “**be diligent**” to “**enter this rest.**”

13. Prayer is linked with Faith Rest. Hebrews 4:16: “**Let, us therefore, draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.**”

Philippians 4:6-7: “**Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Vs.7: And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**”

14. Philippians 4:11-12, tells us that we, like Paul, need to learn how to be content in every circumstance.

15. In Philippians 4:13, Paul said that he could “**do all things through Christ who strengthens us**”. That applied to Paul, and it applies to us too!

16. Philippians 4:19: “But my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

PRINCIPLE: Fear is the opposite of reciprocal love; you can't love God if you don't trust Him.

PRINCIPLE: Using the Faith-Rest Drill is how you put your trust in God.

PRINCIPLE: We must conquer our fears. We do that by going to the promises and the doctrines in God's word. That is what calms you down and that is what gives you courage. Its courage based on the Word of God.

I always hear about the children. I would be remiss if I closed without mentioning our children and grandchildren.

What about the world my children or grandchildren are growing up in?

Do you think God made a mistake bringing your “little one” into the world we live in now?

Don't feel sorry for or fear for your kids because the world they are going to grow up in is not what it used to be.

God created them and called them for the exact moment in time that they're in. Their life wasn't a coincidence or an accident.

He knows that your child can handle whatever challenge they face in their life. He created them specifically for it!