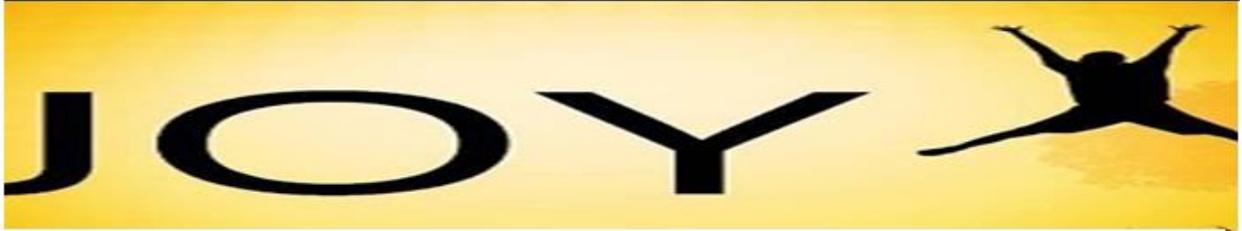


Prepared to Endure Through...



Karen Connell

*All Scripture is from the KJV or NKJV unless otherwise specified—all numbers are from the Strong's Concordance.

(Heb 12:1-2)

“...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us... looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who because of the JOY that was set before Him endured the cross...”

Every true believer in Jesus Christ has a destiny from God to fulfill. Our destiny is our mission— which is the Great Commission from Jesus Christ, to give those that are lost and oppressed the Good News (i.e. the gospel of Christ) so they have an opportunity to receive God's wonderful gift of being set free and delivered from being ruled by sin and demonic spiritual wickedness. The lives of people we love and people we don't even know are hanging in the balance, therefore we are in a “race” with time to save the lost. Time is running out for many all around us. In fact time is running out for the whole world period!

I think any true believer would say they want to participate in the race to bring lost sinners into God's kingdom. Many, professing Christians, however, don't stay in this race to save the lost and some never even enter

it! As I pondered the above verse, I began to see some things that reveal why this is the case with so many Christians, especially here, in the church of America.

First of all, multitudes who are born again Christians do not understand their God given mission and destiny. It is not being preached from many pulpits in our affluent western churches. Therefore, many think sharing the Gospel of Salvation is only for with a special “ministry”; as a result, many never enter this race for lost souls, or they opt out somewhere along the way.

Our Focus

If professing Christians do not have Jesus Christ as their 24/7 focus, He will not consume their life. Without Jesus consuming our life other things



surely will and we won't endure. (Heb 12:1) "...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us... looking unto Jesus..."

Anything we accomplish for God must be the result of or be done in faith. We must be convinced and not doubt for a moment that we have personally been “commanded” to share the Gospel with those that need to repent.... **But he who doubts is condemned ... for whatever is not (done) from faith is sin. (Rom 14:23)** ¹

When we doubt the Word because we haven't received the Word through “hearing” God speak it to us, for faith comes by hearing... we won't obey the Word and we won't fulfill our Great Commission. Disobedience robs us of

¹ In its context this verse is referring to eating and drinking but doubt regarding faith is a spiritual principle that applies to anything we do for God.

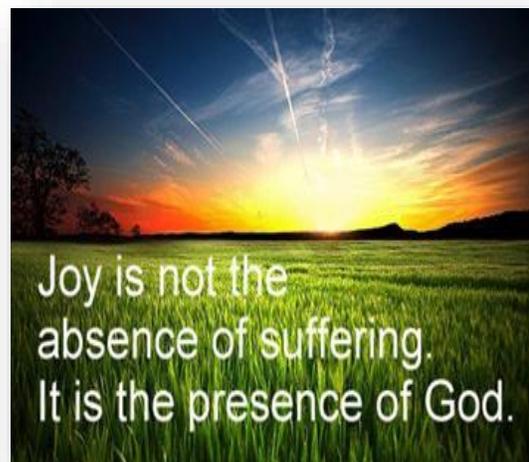
God's power, thus, anything else we choose to do for God only comes from our own efforts, carnal pride and our natural abilities, and this is not acceptable to God... **But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. (John 4:23) NKJV**

The word "worship" in the above verse is the Greek word Strong's #4352 *proskuneo* (pros-koo-neh'-o), which according to the CWSD means to show respect, allegiance and obedience. Many American Christians pledge allegiance to their flag and country, and are even willing to lay down their lives for it, but do not have the same allegiance to God's Holy Nation (the church), nor are they willing to sacrifice their lives for the mission we have been given by our Commander in Chief—Jesus Christ. Many times, I hear Christians say things like..."I'm not called to "evangelize" —my calling is this or that." How sad to forget the command of Jesus given to ALL of His followers... "**Go ye (that means all of us) into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15)**

Jesus said, "**why do you call Me Lord when you won't obey me?" (Lk 6:46)**. We need Jesus to be the author of our faith so we can finish the race. How many will be able to say, as Jesus did... **I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. (John 17:4)**

Endurance Requires Joy

Once we are convinced of our great commission and enter the race for lost souls, we must then endure. This requires joy... **because of the joy that was set before Him** He endured the



cross. (Heb 12:1-2) There is a costly entrance fee for this race. It requires carrying the cross of self-denial. The only way Jesus was able to bear His cross, is the same way needed to bear ours. That is by having JOY “set before us.” This phrase literally means: *to have present in the mind.* What needs to present in our mind is “Joy.” In Greek the word “joy” is *chara* Strong’s #5479, Which refers to: *a “calmness” that is coming from delight.* Joy is the result of our delight in God and His Word, and especially having delight in obeying His word... **Your testimonies (word) are my delight and my counselors... My soul clings to the dust** (means: rubbish); **Revive me**



according to Your word. (Ps 119:24-25) (Parenthesis mine).

Joy is not the same as “happiness.” Happiness means we are “delighted” by what is “happening.” When God’s joy is present in our minds, it produces a “calmness” (to be relaxed

and secure) — despite what is happening!

Walking in righteousness and obedience before God, gives us great calm during any storm, if—our delight is in obeying and serving God... **I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law** (i.e. What God has commanded us) **is within my heart. (Ps 40:8).**

Joy will rule our life, when God’s word and ways fills our mind, then great calmness (i.e. no anxiety and great security) comes into our heart through God’s words of encouragement, direction and even His words of correction... **Make me to hear joy...** (Ps 51:8) The word *joy* here means to

welcome what we hear — whatever God has to say bring strength and calmness to us, if we welcome it. The text continues to say.... **Restore unto me the joy of your salvation; and uphold me with your free spirit... Then will I teach transgressors your ways; and sinners shall be converted unto you. (Ps 51:12-13)**

The “joy of God’s salvation” goes far beyond our own salvation. This kind of joy is the result of having a part in God’s salvation for others. When



God gives us His vision and passion for the lost, we will be filled with great joy (great delight, calmness and strength) to lead oppressed sinners to Jesus, the living Word. Part of God’s vision for us, is the reality that without Him, people have no hope of spending eternity in heaven.

We have their key to Jesus who is the DOOR to heaven, and being able to give them this key, and see them receive it—knowing it will save them from an eternity in hell, is sheer joy! This joy is our strength and gives us sustaining and enduring power. It compels us to keep on running our race and offering the key to the “door of life” to all who will take it! The salvation of lost souls entrusted to us is our reward for being faithful and produces joy that cannot even be expressed... **You rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory... Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of souls.**² (1 Peter 1:8-9)

² Some translations say “your” souls—but the word “your” is not in the Greek text, it is implied by the translators.

God's joy keeps us out of sin and despair and keeps us focused on Jesus who is the "author and finisher of our faith". May we enter into the joy of the Lord by being God's hands — extending His salvation to those who are lost and being destroyed... **For we were bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath EXTENDED mercy unto us ...to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof... (Ezra 9:9) •**

