

## Never Turning Back

### **Philippians 1:6**

**He who began a good work in you is faithful to complete it!**

This summer PJ has talked about being a follower and not a fan of Jesus.

I would like to stay in that mentality and talk to you today about staying the course and maintaining vision.

Sometimes things don't always go the way you hope and you have to maintain your focus

- Tennessee fans
- Packers fans in the 80s

When things get tough do you find a new team? Or new religion?

Do we lose all hope and leave our faith unfinished?

How many of us have unfinished projects around our houses?

Before we left our old house I had to finish a few things like a bathroom vent and a few others that were nagging on my mind.

I just couldn't leave them undone.

Little things can sometimes be left undone, they could be forgotten for long periods because life has it's own ideas of what is necessary and important at the time.

But little things add up to big things if they are never taken care of.

Making sure we are faithful in the little means we are faithful in the big.

The difference between a master craftsman and a person who thinks they can wood work is the attention to the details, knowing what you want to see, and working hard to bring out that vision of the final product.

We are all called to a life with God. We were created with a longing to be in a relationship with him through Jesus Christ.

In this we are called to raise up our children in that knowledge and in a relationship with Christ as well.

God promises to establish relationship and blessings onto our children to the third and fourth generations if we are faithful and maintain that vision over our lives and in our homes.

God is the master craftsman and in his hands we become something beautiful to behold but it takes time, it takes effort, and it takes trust to allow God to mold us and shape us.

It is our life's work to example this to our families and to our children, our calling as men and women to leave a Godly heritage as what people remember about us long after we are gone.

I have found some keys to this process that will help us and keep us on the right path.

### **Key 1. Know the end from the beginning!**

When you begin a project you have to have a vision of what you are working for, a picture of the end product.

You never just wing it, unless you want to produce a project that looks like a tornado took it.

### **Our God is a God that calls the end forth and knows what it is supposed to be like.**

When our God created the Earth he spoke it into being, he knew what it looked like before he began the process and called the end forth from the beginning.

He knows you as well, what he created you to be and what you are to become in him. He sees you as you were meant to be, not as you are but as you were meant to be in Him!

He always has had a plan to bring you and the rest of the world to salvation!

### **Micah 5:2**

### **God knows how to maintain the vision!**

How many people plant?

When you plant seeds into the ground you first start with a picture of what it is you want to see produced.

You have an expectation of the fruit of your labors; you believe that with a little hard work, a little rain, and some time you will have a harvest of fruit, flowers or veggies.

We never begin a process with the desire to fail, or to never gather in the fruit of our labor!

We never start out with a vision of failure, but that sometimes the image we give off when we let the enemy of our souls into our lives by our choices.

If we do not keep the vision before us, we allow the devil to sow doubt, fear, and frustration into our hearts.

We might lose hope of the harvest, get frustrated with all the hard work, lose patience and mow the whole lot down.

Even in the best of conditions it takes months to harvest fruit or vegetables and countless hours of weeding and hoeing.

Then throw in some distractions like the car breaking down, kids getting sick, losing a job and your vision seems more distant than ever.

God knows we're prone to getting distracted, and He encourages us to keep facing forward.

### **Joshua 1:9**

The children of Israel are not unlike we are today.

We get distracted by everything around us.

There are so many things all fighting for your attention that without any effort at all we are lost to movies, games, videos or social media.

This is getting so bad that there are new diagnosis out describing joint pain from texting too much.

**Keeping the vision in front of your eyes daily is key to a successful life.**

### **Key 2. Roll up your sleeves!**

It takes time to feel like we're seeing some progress.

When doing a project sometimes it seems like you're going so slowly, and its taking forever to complete.

Sanding wood is like this, you start with 100 grain then 150 then 220 then 400 and then you're ready to stain.

When your project is a large piece of furniture tt is easy to begin thinking 150 is smooth enough.

Thank God he doesn't do short cuts.

**Anything worth doing is worth doing right!**

**Maintaining a vision takes daily cultivation and attention.**

When Father God sent Jesus to be the sacrifice for our sins he didn't go the easy route and have him just show up, and then get it over with in a few seconds.

Christ was born as a baby and had to grow up, be tempted in every way we are and then go through a process no one else could have gone through, hours and hours of pain and agony to become the payment for our sin.

Joshua also had to go through a process to take what was promised to him and the rest of the children of Israel.

Step by step they took the Promised land and it took Joshua his entire remaining life to carve out their land of heritage.

I have gone through some events that seemed like eternities, going through college and waiting to find a job afterwards seemed like that to me. Waiting to find my wife also made me think I was destined to remain single my entire life!

- **Selling our house**

Even growing up can feel like an eternity to a child waiting to test his or her wings and wits.

Many don't want to wait and our society of 'have it now' has made things much worse for those who have a patience problem.

We live in a day of instant everything, minute rice, instant pudding, miracle grow are just a few things. Instant media coverage feeds our every desire not to wait for anything and we are glued to our phone screens for the latest face book updates to see what others are doing and experiencing in the midst of taking a selfie a hundred times a day cleaning, mowing the lawn, getting ice cream .....

This mentality has been perpetuated by all facets of our lives, our parents, our media, our foods and it makes us impatient for anything that takes more than a few seconds.

What is worse we begin to apply this understanding to everything. Our work, relationships and our vision suffers as well.

If we have to work at it or if it doesn't feel good then it must not fit into our feel good, immediate gratification life style.

How many of you appreciate the following;

- Responsibility
- Relationships
- Integrity
- Conflict resolution

These are things we all need to work at and don't come easy even to the most gifted and skilled persons.

Delayed Gratification is one of the most important things you can learn and teach your kids.

If we get caught up into a 'have it now mentality' we lose sight of our goal in life and settle for whatever is in front of you.

Nothing worth having occurs overnight.

Patience is a virtue for sure as well as hard work.

How many of us here have felt like all our labors have been in vain. Like not matter how hard we try we still feel like the same old Joe.

God knows how it feels to wait. He waited thousands of years to send Jesus and has waited another 2 thousand to come back.

Jesus spoke countless parables and encouraged the disciples over and over to get them to stick things out and to be faithful.

**Key 3. Know that he who called you is faithful and has already given you all you need in Christ.**

### **Isaiah 55:10-11**

God knows our hearts and what we face each day of our lives. He knows the trials and temptations and he doesn't leave us like orphans.

When God does something he calls it forth as it should be and he knows that it will come to pass.

He sees the end from the beginning!

In life the things we face and the experiences we have are called character builders.

Do you think you have enough character yet?

Each day poses a choice that we make to follow Christ and his plan or try to get there by the short cut our own way.

Jesus was great at calling those people out and challenging them to give up their way and trust in him completely.

Remember the rich young ruler Pastor Jimmy talked about a few weeks ago?

Jesus challenges us to give up the things we currently feel secure in and trust in him alone, but he doesn't do that without showing us his love and compassion.

#### **Luke 9:62**

He asks us to count the cost, to know the risks and then see what looks best.

How many of us have found Jesus to be the best?

Knowing what to do most of the time is easy, but doing it can be very hard.

#### **Matthew 19:27-30**

That is His promise to us, to give us eternal life, a life full of joy, fill us with purpose, give us hope, shower us with love, fill us with a peace that passes all understanding, to protect us from all evil, to be our refuge and strength.

All if we trust in him and keep the vision before us and before our kids.

#### **Proverbs 3:5-6**

If we can lay aside our fears, and trust in him he promises that he will be with us, he will never leave us, he will provide for us from his vast riches of Glory.

The best thing is that he knows the end from the beginning and he has already planned our complete victory, in him things are yes and amen. Yes and Amen.

#### **Proverbs 1:6**

He who began a work in you is faithful and just to bring it into fulfillment. Not 50% complete, not 75% complete but 100% percent complete!

He has called it forth and it shall be so, trust in Him, believe in Him don't be afraid, let Him lead and guide you from this time forth and you will experience all that he has for you and you will leave a heritage for your children and your children's children for 4 and 5 generations if the Lord tarries.

Come forward to receive prayer for this right now.