

Word Notes Sunday 10/09/17
Roy Wheeler: Persevering through trials

Summary *(read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday, listen to the podcast if you missed the talk <http://www.newmarketcommunitychurch.co.uk/podcasts.htm>)*

Key Text: James 1:2-4 & v 12

In John 16:33 – Jesus tells us that “*in this world you will have troubles*” or trials. If you are not experiencing any now, it’s certain you will at some time. Spiritually we understand that the enemy is behind all these attacks yet James says that when we face trials, if we respond aright, with perseverance God is with us and while the enemy intends them for our harm, God turns them for our good when we respond aright and cause us to become more fruitful as we become more dependent on God (Jn 15:4-7).

A trial invariably involves a test. The trial is an outside challenge, the test is how we react inwardly. The test looks at our spiritual condition to see if we are “genuine or fake”. They reveal if God’s promises have taken root in our hearts or not. In the New Testament, it’s usually regarding our loyalty, faith, patience and character. God’s testing reveals to us the strength of our faith in Him, how mature we are regarding Christ-like character. The devil wants you to give up but God wants you to grow up.

One model of the Christian life is an endurance race where the goal is to finish and finish well. We are not racing against each other but to complete the course. (2 Tim 2:5-7, 1 Cor 9:24,25). So what can we learn from winning athletes?

- 1, Desire to do well and to win. The HS might ask us if we have a keen desire to live our lives well, to compete by the rules, be loving and forgiving (1 Cor 9:25).
- 2, Dedication to their sport. Are we totally devoted to God and to living His ways (1 Tim 4:8)?
- 3, Disciplined – time, money, diet etc, all their life is under discipline. For the Christian there are two biggies: word and prayer
- 4, Determination – to develop and do their best, even improve every time they set out.

In the letter to Hebrews (10:24,25) we are encouraged to spur one another along, even more as the finish line approaches.

Application *(this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)*

1, Trials

What is your first reaction when a trial or testing event occurs in your life?

Do you get stuck at that point or do you have ways to move on into faith and perseverance?

Is the result instantaneous or delayed and how do you persevere if the latter?

Are there trials in your life which seem insurmountable, or which you struggle to keep your heart and mind fixed on Jesus?

2, Helps

Roy brought out several helps found in Hebrews 12:1-11 for perseverance. What encouragements can you find there?

3, Spurring each other on

If others were to encourage you and spur you on what would form would that take to be most effective? (Think not just spoken but practical and spiritual action).

Witness *(this is the bit where the cell talks, plans and prays about how to share the Good News)*

How can our reaction to life’s trials be an encouragement and support to not-yet-believers? Are you a support and encouragement in times of shared trial?