**THEME FOR THE YEAR - THE BIBLE: HOPE FOR ALL**

**Sermon theme:** With the help of God, you can persevere to the end

**Scripture reading:** 2 Timothy 4:6-8

Objective/Summary: One realises that there are all sorts of challenges. Perseverance with the help of God is not something that you must take lightly. With his help you can persevere to the end and win.

**Author:** Andries Putter (Apostolic Faith Mission)

Sermon outline

For Paul to persevere to the end, was not easy. He mentioned that Demas (his loyal disciple) had deserted him and that Alexander had done him a great deal of harm. Paul himself says that nobody had stood by him through his first defence. But then Paul declares that the Lord had stood by him (cf 2 Timothy 4:17-18). To persevere to the end is only possible if God helps you. How did Paul have to trust God to persevere?

1. **Persevere despite the wrongs done**

The wrongs done to Paul were all but light oppression. At various times, Paul was physically disfigured in a way that rendered him unrecognisable and cruel beatings had left scars on his body. His whole being was filled with suffering and hardships (cf 2 Corinthians 11:23-29).

In Romans 8:35-38, Paul also tells us about things that could have overcome him, but how he progressed to a solution, is something to learn from. Paul declares that *nothing will separate us from the love of Christ Jesus, our LORD*. Nothing includes everything. Even though you sometimes make mistakes, you can persevere with God’s help.

1. **Perseverance despite competition**

In a spiritual sense, Paul had to compete against the best athletes. The competitors were:

1. *Idolatry:* This “athlete*”* whom Paul had to compete against provided many challenges and had a great lead (Acts 19:21;34) Demetrius’ temple statues; Diana). Idolatry also encompasses stubbornness (1 Samuel 15:23; Galatians 5:20; 1 Peter 4:3). The ego is like being stubborn. God can help you to deal with this “athlete*”*.
2. *The people who wanted to kill Paul (Acts 23:*15); Instead of fear, Paul gives God a spirit of power, love and self-discipline (2 Timothy 1:7).
3. *Competitors that represent your own people:* Paul had to compete against *Apollos* (1 Corinthians 3) and had to reprimand Peter as he was judgemental (Galatians 3:11). In life, you can also feel as though you constantly have to compete to prove yourself. Let Him help you.
4. **Perseverance in the midst of faith that can be tested and undermined**

Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the evil forces in the spiritual realm. Does your ability to persevere sometimes get deeply tested and undermined? Trust in God. He promises help for those who ask for it. When we struggle with trials, it can become difficult to persevere. Paul knew what awaited him, because the Holy Spirit had prepared him for that (Acts 20:24; 21:13; 23:11).

1. **Perseverance with a view of reward**

Paul mentioned that God had given him a crown, and to everyone who loved his appearing. Perseverance is thus not in vain, we receive a wonderful crown from Jesus. Do not give up, God is mighty to save you from stumbling and set you blameless before his glory (Jude 1:24).

**Crux of the message**

* God was Paul’s helper.
* The Bible provides guarantees that God will help you to persevere in the midst of wrongs; a competitive world; and your faith that will be tested and undermined.
* Paul quotes Romans 8 and mentions that nothing will separate us from the love of Christ.
* In Jesus, God ensures that any challenge or death is never the last chapter of our lives. Jesus had overcome death.
* Perseverance ensures that rewards await us.