

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

"Endurance" 1/17/23

We pray you will be continually strengthened with all the power which comes from God's glorious might; so you will be able to persevere and be patient in any situation, joyfully (Col 1:11)

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodg'd with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve **there** with my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?
I **fondly** ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies: "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts: who best
Bear his mild yoke, **they** serve him best. His state
Is **kingly**; thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve - **who only stand and wait.**

So writes John Milton in his poem, *On His Blindness*. When he lost his sight, Milton wondered if he could still serve God, if God could still use him. If he would be able to complete his **life's** work. How could God expect him to work when he could not see?

Finally, even though questioning, he grabs a hold of hope. Milton leaves the darkness, when God reminds him He does not need his work or his gifts; instead, all God asks is for Milton to bear God's mild yoke and to serve Him the best as he can. By knowing it is OK to wonder, to not be able to see, to speak, to laugh, or to be in pain, to know, even there, God loves us. Even there God gives us permission to stand and wait. Some days all we have to give is the ability to get up Sunday morning and go to church and just sit in a pew, knowing others will lift us up with their worship and God will meet us there.

Our willingness to endure speaks loudly, it witnesses to our faith in a great and loving God. God's got this. He only asks for our faith – even if it's a little shaky, our belief, our willingness. This speaks louder than the **s**spoken word. The wounded healer sounds so sweet as they share wisdom through their pain.

"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind **toward** each other which Christ Jesus had." (Rm 15:5)
God gives to us eternal life. We can find joy when we endure, knowing God's presence, His acceptance, His love.

Please pray with me.....

God of eternity, thank You for meeting us in the freezing cold of loss, in the heat of worry, in the fear of the unknown, for strengthening us to continue, to hold on, to endure. Thank You for Your permission to show up and just sit, and for Your promise of eternal life. Amen.