

These past weeks...

- 1 Cor 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts... NIV

Love always...

- 1 Cor 13:7 It (Love) always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.
- always hopes, always perseveres (endures)

Always hopes

- Hope
 - To look forward to with desire and reasonable confidence
 - To feel that something desired may happen
- Hope is the bedrock of faith
- One cannot exhibit faith if you have no hope that things can change

We must never forget that we may also find meaning in life even when confronted with a hopeless situation, when facing a fate that cannot be changed. For what then matters is to bear witness to the uniquely human potential at its best, which is to transform a personal tragedy into a triumph, to turn one's predicament into a human achievement. When we are no longer able to change a situation-just think of an incurable disease such as inoperable cancer-we are challenged to change ourselves.

Victor Frankl

Those who know how close the connection is between the state of mind of a man-his courage and hope, or lack of them-and the state of immunity of his body will understand that the sudden loss of hope and courage can have a deadly effect.

Victor Frankl

“Hopes all things”

- The writer, Paul says to the Ephesians “1:22 and he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, 23 which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all.” RSV
- Phil 4:13 I can do all things in him who strengthens me. RSV

Love always hopes in people

- People
 - Need people to believe in them
 - To believe that the way they are living is not the way they have to live
 - Need to see that the future can be different
 - Need to embrace the possibility of change for the better

Living Hope

- A 26 year experiment in believing in people
- Hoping that their life can be different
 - The apartment they live in can be better
 - The affliction they have can heal
 - The rift in their relationship can mend
 - The opportunity to start over is real
 - Abuse can end and wholeness be found

2 life verses for Pastor Greg

- 2 Cor 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. NASB
- 1 Cor 13: 7 If you love someone, you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him, and always stand your ground in defending him. Living Bible

Living Hope

- I believe that God can take a broken, seemingly worthless vessel (person) and make it (them) into something that is whole and of tremendous value.
- 1 Peter 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead
NIV

Endures all things

- ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. NIV

Always perseveres (endures)

- One of the cautions that Pastors learn:
sensitivity
 - Be careful when you talk about abortion; someone might have had abortion, etc.
 - Be careful when you talk about a lasting marriage, many marriages end in divorce
 - Positive: People who have had pain feel affirmed in their person
 - Negative: the church can sound like they stand for nothing

Love in marriage endures

- What about...?
 - Abuse
 - Affairs
 - Liars
 - Deadbeats who won't work
- There are a thousand reasons to call it quits
- But there is still something beautiful about a marriage that lasts

The “sentence” is longer than it use to be

- Used to be married as teenager, died in 40s.
- Today, life expectancies are in mid 80s.
- Every joke is based on how horrible it is to be married
 - No sexual variety
 - No escape
 - No winning an argument
 - The demands of bringing home the paycheck, nothing fun allowed!

The pain of divorce

- Divorce brings
 - Pain
 - A feeling of rejection
 - Complication when kids are involved
 - The expense of 2 households
 - The notion of being broken / flawed
 - The sense that “I made a mistake”

The pain of endurance

- Runner
 - Joints, lungs, dripping sweat, nausea,
 - Why? Because you are stronger at the end
 - 1 Cor 9:24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. 25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.
- LOVE ALWAYS ENDURES

Push through the pain

- Married 61 happy years:
 - Married 65 years but 61 were happy
- Some truth to this

The positives of a long marriage

- **MARRIED!**
 - Public statement that this is my spouse
 - A commitment
 - A co mingling of lives
 - If I get sick, you promised to stick with me
 - A friend for life: a companion for life
 - Shared memories
 - Shared intimacy
- Every person hopes their marriage will last

Hope and Endurance two sides of a coin

- I hope my child can turn his life around
 - Endure in prayer and love
- I hope my marriage can last a lifetime
 - Endure with love and forgiveness
- I hope my life can be different someday
 - Endure in taking steps to make it so
- You endure because you have hope!

The positives of a long relationship with Jesus

- God works slowly
 - over time to change you
 - over time to change situations
 - When your back is against the wall
- So you can say “ I am not the person I used to be.”

So What?

- Where have you given up hope?
- If God restored your hope, would you be willing to endure?
- Do you look back and wish you had endured?
- What person needs you to believe in them?
- Is there brokenness in your life that needs repaired by God?