

*O LORD. We join together in asking that truth would be free
to make her sorties upon us all, which way You please.
Guide our minds for your designs. We ask that,
nothing smothers truth's golden beams. (Spurgeon)*

The New Testament introduces two facets of faith. The first facet we will call, **beginning faith**. It is what the sinner first, by the grace of God, executes in order to set out on his journey as a believer. It is what is necessary unto salvation. The second aspect we'll call, **enduring faith**. It is an ever-present companion of the believer, to assist him along his earthly journey. The gift of **beginning faith** is a finished work in the life of the believer. His name has been written in the Book of Life by the blood of the Lord Jesus, and can never be erased. **Enduring faith**, on the other hand is an indispensable tool for the completion of the journey.

The Church as a whole is quite familiar with **beginning faith**. Some attribute it correctly to the grace of God. To the believer it is a priceless jewel. But when it comes to **enduring faith**, the same Church experientially is not as familiar with it, though it's in our consciousness. We know the Bible is loaded with calls to **enduring faith** yet, in our times of testings, failures and sins, we must confess, as close of a companion as it is, we're not as familiar with it as we ought to be.

Perhaps you would agree with me that miraculous as **beginning faith** is, life's tempest, esp. those of a personal nature, batter the gunwales of **enduring faith** to a greater degree. Such thoughts as, *I don't measure up to God's expectations, unconquered besetting sins, our tongues, our thoughts, sensed lack of thirst and hunger, how quickly we stumble and sin*, just to name a few, are relentless waves that batter our gunwales in an attempt to finish off **enduring faith**. **Beginning faith** has already finished its work; our salvation is secure yet, the enemy doggedly attempts to topple the very thing that stands between him and us ...our **enduring faith**.

A weak **enduring faith** is more often than not, not because we haven't tried hard enough, but rather attributable to the absence of *remembering* and *trusting*. The Jews are to be commended for their tireless effort. It was their object that failed and betrayed them.

Perhaps you've discovered that it's possible to have a clear and biblical understanding of **beginning faith** yet, be comparatively ignorant about **enduring faith**. The tenets are all in place, like an engine ready to be started, but the key of practical living has been misplaced. Too often we go to our spiritual work sheds, even praying as we go, but as we begin to mix up the paint of **enduring faith** we forget to add the two hardeners of **remembrance** and **trust**, resulting in a faith with no backbone, and unable to withstand storms.

Hardener has been added to the paint on our cars, hardening it from buffeting winds, beating rains and the relentless blaze of a brassy sun. In the same way our **enduring faith** is hardened against life's storms by the hardeners of **remembrance** and **trust**.

BUT! It is not an aimless affair neither is it beating the air. **Enduring faith** can only be injected with vigor if the **Object** of **remembrance** and **trust** is right. It is not a mere mental exercise. No painter, after having dipped his brush in the bucket, starts slinging aimlessly. **Remembrance** is not aimlessly recalling happier days or times, or beating the air by filling our minds with happy thoughts. No. It is something much more focused. Neither is it a *trusting* in ourselves, to pull ourselves up by our boot straps. It is correctly answering the question, "*What am I remembering? What am I trusting?*"

The New Testament is full of phrases which suggest **enduring faith**. ... *run that you may obtain the prize (1 Cor 9.24); I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air (1 Cor 9.26); let us run with endurance the race that is set before us (Heb 12.1); and if only I may finish my course (Acts 20.24).*

This morning I want to look at an Old Testament passage that is overflowing with New Testament truth. BUT, it must be read not with the tool of **beginning faith** in hand, but rather, with the tool of an **enduring faith**, *ready to be sharpened and tempered* by **remembrance** and **trust**. Simply stated, that involves reading it in faith, **remembering** and **trusting** what God's thoughts towards you are as His child; this in spite of all your shortcomings, age, physical weaknesses, etc., etc.

As I've already stated above, the efficient execution of **enduring faith** involves two functions; calling to **remembrance** and **believing/trusting** what God says and thinks about you as His child.

 Now let's apply this formula to the passage in front of us.

Zeph 3.17: The LORD your God is in your midst¹, a mighty one who will save²; he will rejoice over you with gladness³; he will quiet you by his love⁴; he will exult over you with loud singing⁵.

! Dear saint, talk to yourself with David, *Why are you cast down, O my soul?(Psa 42.5)* If once is not enough, repeat after him the second time. *Why are you cast down, O my soul? (Psa 42.11)*. If twice is not enough, repeat after him the third time. *Why are you cast down, O my soul?(Psa 43.5)* Let these three feeble strokes of your broom of hope, no matter how weak they may be, bring out the dust of your forgetfulness and unbelief, and expose it to the light of God's Word. *Hope in God. Hope in God. Hope in God.*

! Remember, child of God, you who were marked before the worlds were founded ... you, by whom God WILL get His glory ... you to whom He gave a new spirit as a vessel of grace, endowed with eternity, so that your thousands and ten thousands of years at His feet might exude endless glory and honor to His name and Being ... Nurture **remembrance** and **trust**, which is an exercise of a regenerated heart. Join David in his **remembrance** and **trust**, which will in time redound to **enduring faith**.

1 Your faith will only maintain its essence of **endurance** if you...
... **remember** that ... *the LORD is [yet] your God*, and **trust** that He will never relinquish His position and commitment to you.
... **remember** that ... *He is [yet] in your midst*, and trust His unrelenting pleasure to be ever present with you.

2 Your faith will only maintain its essence of **endurance** if you...
... **remember** that ... *the LORD [is still] mighty*, and **take Him at His Word**, that He is mighty enough to conquer your sins and the enemies of your soul, because He says so.
... **remember** that ... *The LORD [still] saves*, and **trust** that His saving work didn't expire a few days after you were born again, but it continues and continues no matter the breakers that batter your gunwales, until you are safely within the walls of His celestial kingdom.

3 Your faith can only maintain its essence of **endurance** if you...
... **remember** that ... *The LORD will [yet] rejoice over you with gladness*. Why are you cast down, O soul? Has a pebble, a boulder or a raging deluge along life's journey robbed your strength and rejoicing, leaving only traces of what used to be? Then **remember**

and **trust** how your Lord feels about you? Go ahead and mention them, but to grovel in your failures as the pagans do, as the pagans do, is not a worthy sacrifice to your resurrected God.

4 Your faith will only maintain its essence of **endurance** if you...
... **remember** that ... *The LORD will [yet] quiet you by his love*, and as much of it that you've used up, **trust** Him when by His Spirit he speaks through the word this morning, the words, *I will quiet you by my love*. And when you lend an ear to doubt, watch Him as He points to the cross and says, *"Do you see yonder cross. My Son was quieted by the whip, in order that I might quiet you with my love. Trust me."*

5 Your faith will only maintain its essence of **endurance** if you...
... **remember** that ... *The LORD will [yet] exult over you with loud singing*, and though within Him is all wealth, all pleasure, and all joy, **remember** and **trust** Him when he says *I will exult over you with loud singing*. Have you lost your *spiritual memory* and *trustful hearing*?

! The next time you pick up the paintbrush of **enduring faith**, be sure to apply it to life, hardened against the flower of doubt that would rob your Lord of His pleasing aroma. Temper it with **remembrance** of God and **trust** in what He says.

! Finally in closing, *like the Israelites, each of us owns a horse named "emotion."* Dear saint, *throw a rope around it and lead it firmly to the furthest corner of the ranch of your earthly journey, where stands a lone tree, thick in its girth, and who boughs are full and leaves ever a spring green. The years of stormy winds, killing winters and drought have all be helpless to weaken it. There, lash it to Calvary's bloodstained bark, and abandon it there under its shade. Throw the saddle of **remembrance** and **trust** on that other horse named "Enduring Faith."* Make it your favorite mount.

 Armed now with an **Enduring Faith**, by God's grace, our journey continues this evening with a traverse through **A Valley Bordered by Two Mountains**, on either side, distinct in their sights and sounds.