

MESSAGE 1: WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE GIVING UP
Parts 1-3

HEBREWS 11:35-12:4

"BUT others trusted God and were tortured, preferring to die rather than turn from God and be free. They placed their hope in the resurrection to a better life. Some were mocked, and their backs were cut open with whips. Others were chained in dungeons. Some died by stoning, and some were sawed in half; others were killed with the sword. Some went about in skins of sheep and goats, hungry and oppressed and mistreated. They were too good for this world. They wandered over deserts and mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground. All of these people we have mentioned received God's approval because of their faith, yet none of them received ALL that God had promised! For God had far better things in mind for us that would also benefit them, for they can't receive the prize at the end of the race until WE finish the race!"

- Faith doesn't spare us from all pain!
- Some of God's promises will be fulfilled in eternity!
- We're runners in a historical relay race!

"THEREFORE since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish. He was willing to die a shameful death on the cross because of the joy he knew would be his afterward. Now he is seated in the place of highest honor beside God's throne in heaven. Think about all he endured when sinful people did such terrible things to him, so that you don't become weary and give up. After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin!" (NLT)

1. _____
"THEREFORE since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith..."
Hebrews 12:1a
2. _____
"...let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress..."
Hebrews 12:1b

WEIGHTS:

SINS:

3. _____
"And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us." Hebrews 12:1c

4. "We do this *by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish.*" Hebrews 12:2a
5. "He was willing to die a shameful death on the cross *because of the joy he knew would be his AFTERWARD.* NOW he is seated in the place of *highest honor* beside God's throne in heaven!" Hebrews 12:2b
- "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest IF we do not give up." Galatians 6:9 (NIV)
6. "Think about all he endured when sinful people did such terrible things to him, *so that you don't become weary and give up.* After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin!" Hebrews 12:3-4

What have I started that I need to finish?

"Finish what you started a year ago... for you were the first to begin doing something about it! Now you should carry this project through to completion just as enthusiastically as you began it. Give whatever you can according to what you have!" 2 Corinthians 8:10-11 (NLT)

"Don't throw it all away now. You were sure of yourselves then. It's still a sure thing! But you need to stick it out, staying with God's plan so you'll be there for the promised completion." Hebrews 10:35-36 (MSG)

MESSAGE 2: WINNING THE BATTLE INSIDE ME
*Parts 1-4*ROMANS 7:15-25 (LB)
THE COST OF THE BATTLE

1. _____
"I don't understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I can't. I do what I don't want to – what I hate." Vs. 15
2. _____
"I know perfectly well that what I am doing is wrong, and my bad conscience proves that I agree with these laws I am breaking." Vs. 16
3. _____
"But I can't help myself because I'm no longer doing it. It is sin inside me that is stronger than I am, that makes me do these evil things." Vs. 17
4. _____
"I know I am rotten inside as far as my old sinful nature is concerned." Vs. 18a
5. _____
"No matter which way I turn I can't make myself do right. I want to but I can't! When I want to do good, I don't; and when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway! Now if I am doing what I don't want to, it is plain where the trouble is: sin still has me in its evil grasp." Vs. 18b-20
6. _____
"It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong...In my mind I want to be God's willing servant, but instead I find myself still enslaved to sin." Vs. 21 & 23

THE CAUSE: I HAVE TWO NATURES!

"I love to do God's will so far as my new nature is concerned; but there is something else deep within me, in my lower nature, that is at war with my mind and wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me." Vs. 21 & 23

"So you see how it is: my new life tells me to do right, but the old nature that is still inside me loves to sin. Oh, what a terrible predicament I'm in!" Vs. 24a

GOD'S BATTLE PLAN FOR MY VICTORY

1.

"Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin? Thank God! The answer is through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Romans 7:24-25 (NLT)

"Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to its lustful desires...Instead, give yourselves completely to God since you have been given new life." Romans 6:12-13 (NLT)

"For the new spiritual principle of life in Jesus Christ lifts me out of the old vicious cycle of sin." Romans 8:2 (Ph)

2.

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." 1 John 1:8 (NIV)

- Behind every self-defeating act is _____
- To stop defeating myself, I must _____

"When you know the truth, the truth will set you free." John 8:32 (NIV)

3.

"Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so God can heal you. When a believing person prays, great things happen." James 5:16 (NCV)

"Live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit. Then you won't do what your sinful nature craves." Galatians 5:16 (NLT)

MESSAGE 3: SET FREE FROM ME

Parts 1-4

ROMANS 8

1.

"So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. For the power of the life-giving SPIRIT has freed you through Christ Jesus from the power of sin that leads to death. The law of Moses could not save us, because of our sinful nature. But God put into effect a different plan to save us. He sent his own Son in a human body like ours, except that ours are sinful. God destroyed sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. He did this so the requirement of the law would be fully accomplished for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow THE SPIRIT." Romans 8:1-4 (NLT)
2.

"Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the SPIRIT have their minds set on what the SPIRIT desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the SPIRIT is life and peace." Romans 8:5-6 (NIV)

"The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God." Romans 8:7-8 (NIV)
3.

"But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are now controlled by the SPIRIT if you have the SPIRIT of God living in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ living in them does not belong to Christ." Romans 8:9 (NLT)

"So, dear brothers, you have no obligations anymore to your old sinful nature to do what it begs you to do." Romans 8:12 (LB)
4.

"Those who are led by God's Spirit are God's children. For the Spirit that God has given you does not make you slaves and cause you to be afraid; instead, the Spirit makes you God's children, and by the Spirit's power we cry out to God, 'Father! My Father!' God's Spirit joins himself to our spirits to declare that we are God's children!" Romans 8:14-16 (TEV)

5. "Since we are his children, we **WILL possess the blessings** he keeps for his people, and also we **WILL possess** with Christ what God has kept for him! For if we share Christ's suffering, we will also share his glory! I consider that what we **suffer at this present time** cannot be compared at all with the **glory that is going to be revealed** to us." Romans 8:17-18 (TEV)
6. "Also, **the Spirit helps us with our weakness**. We do not know how to pray as we should. But **the Spirit himself** speaks to God **for us**, and even begs God for us with deep feelings that words cannot explain. God can see what is in our hearts... and the Spirit speaks to God for his people in the way God wants." Romans 8:26-27 (NCV)
- "AND we know that in **ALL things** God works for the good of those who love Him, who've been called according to **His purpose**." Romans 8:28 (NIV)
- "So what can we say about such wonderful things as these? **If God is for us**, who can ever be against us? And since God did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't God, who gave us Christ, **also give us everything else?**" Romans 8:31-32 (NLT)
- "Since God did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't God, who gave us Christ, also give us **everything else?**" Romans 8:32 (NLT)
7. "I am convinced that **nothing can ever separate us from his love**. Death can't, and life can't. The angels can't, and the demons can't. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, and even the powers of hell can't keep God's love away. Whether we are high above the sky or in the deepest ocean, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed **in Christ Jesus** our Lord." Romans 8:38-39 (NLT)

MESSAGE 4: MAKING THE HARD CHANGES IN ME

Parts 1-4

WHY IS IT SO HARD TO CHANGE MYSELF?

“Since you have heard all about Jesus and have learned the truth that is in him, throw off your old evil nature and your former way of life, which is rotten through and through, full of lust and deception. Instead, there must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes. You must put on your new nature because you are a new person, created in God's likeness—righteous, holy, and true. So put away all falsehood and tell your neighbor the truth because we belong to each other. Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil.” Ephesians 4:21-27(NLT)

PRINCIPLES FOR PERSONAL CHANGE

1. _____
“Since you have heard all about Jesus and have learned the truth that is in him...”
Ephesians 4:21

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT)
2. _____
“...throw off your old evil nature and your former way of life, which is rotten through and through, full of lust and deception.” Ephesians 4:22

“... Continue to WORK OUT your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who WORKS IN you to will and to act according to his good purpose.” Philippians 2:12-13
3. _____
“Instead, there must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes.” Ephesians 4:23

Think → Feel → Act

“Let the same mind and attitude be in you which was in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 2:5 (Amp)
4. _____
“You must put on your new nature because you are a new person, created in God's likeness—righteous, holy, and true.” Ephesians 4:24

"As the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like Him."
1 Corinthians 3:18 (LB)

5. So put away all falsehood and tell your neighbor the truth because we belong to each other. Ephesians 4:25

"By helping each other with your troubles, you truly obey the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2 (NCV)

6. Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil.
Ephesians 4:26-27

MESSAGE 5: WHY IS LIFE IN THIS WORLD SO HARD?

Parts 1-3

"Why is life so hard? Why do we suffer?" Job 7:1 (CEV)

I. THE CAUSE:

"Sin came into the world because of what one man did, and with sin came death."
Romans 5:12

"ALL of us have strayed away like sheep. We have left God's path to follow our own paths." Isaiah 53:6

"No one can say, 'I am innocent; I have never done anything wrong.'" Proverbs 20:9

3 KINDS OF REBELLION

_____ = missing the mark; falling short, not measuring up

_____ = going beyond the set boundary

_____ = intention to hurt, damage, do evil

"I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not cover up my iniquity. I confessed my transgressions and you forgave my guilt." Psalm 32:5

II. THE DAMAGE: _____

1. NATURAL _____

"Creation was condemned to lose its purpose..." Romans 8:20 (GNB)

"Creation is confused..." Romans 8:20 (CEV)

"All of creation groans with pain..." Romans 8:22

2. PHYSICAL _____

"No one can control the wind or stop his own death." Ecclesiastes 8:8 (NCV)

"Our physical body is becoming older and weaker." 2 Corinthians 4:16

"Everyone dies because all of us are related to Adam, the first man." 1 Corinthians 15:22

3. EMOTIONAL _____

"Everything under the sun is meaningless, like chasing the wind. What is wrong cannot be righted. What is missing cannot be recovered." Ecclesiastes 1:14-15 (NLT)

4. RELATIONAL _____

"I saw all the people who were mistreated here on earth. I saw their tears and that they had no one to comfort them." Ecclesiastes 4:1 (NCV)

"...they suddenly felt ashamed of their nakedness. So they strung fig leaves together to cover themselves up." Genesis 3:7

"I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." Genesis 3:10

5. FINANCIAL & VOCATIONAL _____

"Here is a terrible thing that I have seen in this world: people save up their money for a time when they may need it, and then lose it all in some bad deal and end up with nothing left to pass on to their children." Ecclesiastes 5:13-14 (TEV)

"I hated life, because the work I did under the sun was meaningless to me.... So I turned in despair from hard work. It was not the answer to my search for satisfaction in this life." Ecclesiastes 2:17+20 (NLT)

6. SPIRITUAL _____

"I am like a caravan, lost in the desert searching for water." Job 6:18

"They've refused for so long to deal with God that they've lost touch not only with God but with reality itself." Ephesians 4:18 (MSG)

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

"Jesus said, 'In this world you WILL have trouble. But take heart! I HAVE OVERCOME the world.'" John 16:33

“Jesus said, ‘I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't be stumbling through the darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.’” John 8:12

MESSAGE 6: BEING FAITHFUL IN A FAITHLESS WORLD
Parts 1-3

Jesus: "When I, the Son of Man, return, how many will I find on earth who have faith?"
Luke 18:8 (NLT)

GOD IS LOOKING _____

"For the eyes of the Lord search back and forth across the whole earth, looking for people whose hearts are perfect toward him, so that he can show his great power in helping them."
2 Chronicles 16:9 (LB)

FAITHFUL PEOPLE _____

"Everyone talks about how faithful he is, but it is difficult to find someone who really is!"
Proverbs 20:6

"God looks down from heaven at the children of man to see if a single one is wise and one seeks God. But all have proven faithless, all have been corrupted, and not one of them always does right." Psalm 53:2-3

FAITHFULNESS _____

"Every child of God can defeat the world, and it is our faith that gives us this victory. No one can defeat the world without having faith in Jesus as the Son of God."

1 John 5:4-5 (CEV)

"A faithful man will be richly blessed." Proverbs 28:20

HOW CAN I BE FAITHFUL TO GOD?

1. _____

"Whoever is faithful in small matters will be faithful in large ones, and whoever is dishonest in small matters will be dishonest in large ones." Luke 16:10

"And if you have not been faithful with that which belongs to someone else, who will give you what belongs to you?" Luke 16:12

2. _____
“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.” 1 Peter 4:10

“Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.”
1 Corinthians 4:2 (NIV)

3. _____
“This is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. For our present troubles are quite small and won't last very long, but they will produce for us an immeasurably great glory that will last forever! So we don't look at the troubles we can see right now; rather, we look forward to what we have not yet seen. For the troubles we see will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever!”
2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NLT)

“Don't get tired of doing what's right. You WILL be rewarded when the time is right, if you don't give up.” Galatians 6:9

4. _____
Jesus: “I tell you, use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends for eternity. In this way, your generosity stores up a reward for you in heaven... BUT if you are unfaithful with your worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven?... You cannot serve both God and money.” Luke 16:9-14 (NLT)

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

5. _____
“Some men brought to Jesus a paralytic friend, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, ‘Take heart, son! Your sins are forgiven.’” Matthew 9:2

6. _____
“The things you've learned from me in the presence of many witnesses you are to entrust to other faithful people who will also be qualified to pass it on to others.” 2 Timothy 2:2

“Peter, Satan has asked to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith will not completely fail. So after you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen and build up the faith of your brothers.” Luke 22:31-32 (LB)

MESSAGE 7: WHEN YOUR WORLD FALLS APART*Parts 1-3****JEREMIAH'S LAMENTATION AGAINST GOD***

1.

“I am a man who has seen affliction, by the rod of his wrath. He has driven me away and made me walk in darkness rather than light; he has turned his hand against me again and again, all day long. He has made my skin grow old and broken my bones. He has surrounded me with bitterness and hardship. He has made me dwell in darkness like the dead. He has walled me in so I cannot escape; he has weighed me down with chains. Even when I call out or cry for help, he shuts out my prayer. He has barred my way with blocks of stone; he has made my paths crooked.” Lamentation 3:1-10 (NIV)

2.

“The thought of my pain and my homelessness is bitter poison. I think of it constantly, and my spirit is depressed. Yet hope returns when I remember this one thing: The Lord's unfailing love and mercy still continue, fresh as the morning, as sure as the sunrise. The Lord is all I have, so in him I put my hope.” Lamentation 3:19-26 (TEV)

“The Lord is merciful and will not reject us forever. He may bring us sorrow, but his love for us is sure and strong. He takes no pleasure in causing us grief or pain.” Lamentation 3:31-33 (TEV)

3.

“When life is heavy and hard to take, go off by yourself. Enter the silence. Bow in prayer. Don't ask questions: Wait for hope to appear.” Lamentation 3:28-29 (MSG)

“The Lord is good to everyone who trusts in him, so it is best for us to wait in patience—to wait for him to save us.” Lamentation 3:25-26 (TEV)

4.

“Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.”
Lamentation 3:40 (NIV)
5.

“My enemies threw me into a pit and dropped stones on me. The water flowed above my head, and I cried out, ‘This is the end!’ But I called on your name, Lord, from deep within the well, and you heard me! You listened to my pleading; you heard my weeping! Yes, you came at my despairing cry and told me, ‘Do not fear!’” Lamentation 3:53-57 (NLT)
6.

“Restore us, O Lord, and bring us back to you again! Give us back the joys we once had!”
Lamentation 5:21 (NLT)

MESSAGE 8: NEVER FIGHT YOUR BATTLES UNDRESSED!*Parts 1-3***EPHESIANS 6:10-18
TO WIN THE INVISIBLE WAR I MUST...**

“A final word: Be strong with the Lord’s mighty power. Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies and tricks of the Devil.”
Ephesians 6:10-11

“For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms.” Ephesians 6:12

“Use every piece of God's armor to resist the enemy in the time of evil, so that after the battle you will still be standing firm!” Ephesians 6:13

THE 6 PIECES OF SPIRITUAL ARMOR

1.

“So stand ready, with the Belt of Truth tight around your waist...” Ephesians 6:14a
2.

“...with the Breastplate of Righteousness protecting your chest.” Ephesians 6:14b

3. _____
“On your feet wear the Shoes of Good News, prepared to share the Gospel of peace.”
Ephesians 6:15
4. _____
“At all times carry the Shield of Faith; for with it you will be able to put out all the burning
arrows shot by the Evil One.” Ephesians 6:16
5. _____
“Put on the Helmet of Salvation...” Ephesians 6:17a
6. _____
“...and take the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” Ephesians 6:17b

“Do all of this in prayer, asking for God's help. Pray on every occasion, as the Spirit
leads. For this reason keep alert and never give up; always praying for all God's people.”
Ephesians 6:18 (TEV)