Our scripture this morning comes from 1 Thessalonians 1:2-5. While you’re finding that, An older couple was lying in bed one morning. They’d just woken from a good night's sleep. The husband reached over and tried to take his wife’s hand. She pulled away. He reached again and she responded, "Don't touch me." "Why not?" he asked. She answered, "Because I'm dead." The husband responded, "What are you talking about? We're both lying here in bed together and talking to one another." She said, "No, I'm definitely dead." He insisted, "Don’t be silly, What in the world makes you think you're dead?" She said, “I woke up this morning and absolutely nothing hurts.” I bet there are some this morning who would love to wake up and have nothing hurt.

**1 Thessalonians 1:2-5 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, 3remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, 4knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. 5For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.**

The last several weeks, we’ve been talking about ROSEs in God’s garden. Reverent, Obedient, Self-controlled, and Enduring Christians. God is looking for these characteristics in His children. This week, we’re looking at endurance.

The Bible has a lot to say about endurance, also known as patience, long-suffering, and other names. In fact, the Bible is a book full of stories of endurance – people endure, nations endure, faith endures… God endures.

I think we can all agree that nearly everyone sitting in this place this morning is facing some kind of trial, some kind of tribulation. Maybe the youngest of us aren’t, but the rest are. These can be trials of health, family, or finances. Some may be facing trials of a loved one declining or grief of a loved one departed. Jesus told us in John 16:33, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” He didn’t say we might have trials – He said we WILL have trials. It is a sure thing. But, trials offer the opportunity to grow in our faith! There can never be a testimony without there first being a test. Many want the testimony – few want the test.

How we endure the trials, tests, and tribulations of life is more important to God than what we endure. I’m going to say that again – how we endure… the attitude we take… the way we approach our trials and sufferings is more important to God than what we endure. What we endure is the trial He allowed to help us grow in our faith… The Bible is clear. God is watching how we endure. God is looking for the depth of the roots that we have planted in Him. Where are our eyes? God is listening to how well we endure. Listen to James 1:2-3 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into trials, **3**knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. The Greek word used for patience is hupomone. It means hopeful endurance. It is exactly the same word used in our scripture this morning in verse 3. 1 Peter 1:6 says In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials… sounds like hopeful endurance. Romans 12:12 says rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer… sounds an awful lot like hopeful endurance doesn’t it?

Endurance is all about the focus. Where is the focus of our hope? Is our hope in the next doctor, the next pill, the next dollar, or the next person? Is our hope in the next day or is it in the coming New Day? 1 Thessalonians 1:3 makes it clear where our hope is to be… our hope rest in Jesus Christ. Going back to John 16:33, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” In Christ we find peace. We are to be of good cheer… why? Because no trials or temptations will come our way? No. We are to be of good cheer because Christ has overcome the world. Matthew 24:11-13 **11**Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. **12**And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. **13**But he who endures to the end shall be saved. Remember in the parable of the seed and the sower, Jesus said some would not endure because they have no root. 1 Timothy 4:1 says - Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.

The way that we endure reveals the focus of our faith. In times of trial, are we seeking God’s Face… or only His Hand? Are we seeking how we might grow and serve and endure or are we asking for a way out? How we endure is more important to God than what we endure. Where we endure, what we endure, when we endure are all in God’s sovereign control. How we endure is in ours. God is seeking Kingdom focused endurance. We reverence God through faithful endurance.