**River of Life Christian Centre, Felixstowe**

**Bible School 2019**

Studies in Discipleship

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**Module 4: FIXING YOUR ANCHOR**

# KEY CONCEPTS

* Adversity is to be expected in the life of the believer
* Since God is for us, we are more than conquerors, through him who loved us
* In times of extreme adversity, progress be extremely difficult
* God has provided us with an anchor for the soul
* The anchor for the soul will ensure that we do not regress in times of difficulty

# Key scriptures on adversity and trouble in the life of jesus’ disciples

*“Jn 16:33 I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

Jesus prepared his disciples for days of adversity. He wanted them to enjoy peace in the midst of their troubles. *“In this world you will have trouble!”* The devil believed that the only reason Job served God, was because of the blessing he received. He told God that if he allowed adversity to come into Job’s life he would no longer serve God. Satan was profoundly mistaken. Job came through all of his trials, purified like pure gold, and with a deeper walk with God than he had ever had.

Jesus encouraged his disciples by his personal testimony: *Take heart! I have overcome the world!*

*2Co 1:3-7 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, (4) who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.  (5)  For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.  (6)  If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.  (7)  And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.*

Paul knew God as *the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our troubles.* As a disciple of Christ, learn to expect trouble in your life. Only immature believers think that they have the right to a trouble-free life. James, the Lord’s half-brother, tells the early believers: *“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, (3) because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.  (4)  Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything (Jas 1:2-4).*

Our sufferings are part of our ministry preparation. The comfort we have received from God equips us to strengthen and comfort others.

*Ro 8:35-39 “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? (36) As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." (37) No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (38) For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, (39) neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Suffering is not a sign of separation from God. Suffering is a normal part of our human existence. The good news is that none of the difficulties of life or adversity of persecution for Christ have any power to *separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* In him we are *more than conquerors!*

*Php 3:10-11 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, (11) and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.*

Our sufferings for Christ lead us to a fuller knowledge of Christ and the gospel. Paul knew that suffering was an essential part of his spiritual development. That is why he welcomed a participation in the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings.

*1Pe 4:12-13 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.  (13)  But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*

Peter comforted the believers by telling them not to be amazed at the *fiery ordeal* that had come to test them. He assured them that it was completely normal and predictable, and nothing strange at all. By sharing in Christ’s sufferings they would also share in his glory. Paul told Timothy: *“Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; (12) if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; (13) if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself (2Ti 2:11-13).*

# fixing your anchor

*Heb 6:13-20 When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, (14) saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants."  (15)  And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.  (16)  People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument.  (17)  Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.  (18)  God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged.  (19)  We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, (20) where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.*

In times of trouble, our security is in the faithfulness of God.

God’s call upon the life of Abraham was extremely demanding and he had to wait many years to receive his promised heir. During the intervening time, God wanted him to know that he could count on God. To assure him he confirmed his promise *by tow unchangeable things – his person and his promise.*

The writer to the Hebrews applies this covenantal relationship between God and Abraham to the life of the believer. He says: *We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, (20) where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek (Hb 6:19-20).*

This is the only place where the term *an anchor for the soul* exists in all the Bible. It is one of the most comforting words of all Scripture for believers who are troubled with distress and doubt. There are days when because of trouble and adversity, progress is impossible. However in those days, we need to set our spiritual anchors so that we do not regress. In such a day, Paul told the Ephesians: *“Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand” (Eph 6:13).*

The power of the anchor is in the strength of its cable and the firmness of its grip onto something solid and immovable. The anchor for the soul is secured by the covenantal love of God, and it is anchored to a point behind the veil, in the inner sanctuary of the heavenly temple, where Christ has already entered.

The Bible tells us:  *Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, (4) which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant (Heb 9:3-4).*

The anchor is attached to the ark of the covenant and its contents. The ark of the covenant describes the covenantal love of God. God pledged himself to his people is a formal, irrevocable way. There is no possibility of God changing this covenant because of a mood swing. He has sworn by himself! The contents of the Ark of the Covenant are illustrative of what sustains our anchor:

1. The gold jar of manna – speaking of the Providence of God.
2. Aaron’s staff the had budded – speaking of the Power of God
3. The tablets of the covenant – speaking of the Promises of God

The manna reminds us of God’s provision for his people during 40 years in the wilderness. No one could have carried enough food to supply the nation’s bread basket, but everyday God provided for his people—even when they lived rebellious lives before him.

The psalmist said: *“The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.  (2)  He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, (3) he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.  (4)  Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.  (5)  You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.  (6)  Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever” (Psa 23:1-6).*

Aaron’s staff that had budded reminds is of the power of God to designate his appointed leaders. There was a leadership crisis in Israel. *“Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and certain Reubenites—Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth—became insolent (Num 16:1 ).* A leadership dispute arose against Moses and Aaron. The 3 rebels and their supporters died, and 14,700 others died from a plague. Then God settled the leadership dispute in an extraordinary way.

God ordered that a dry leadership staff from each of the tribal leaders be placed overnight in the Tent of Meeting. He told the people *“The staff belonging to the man I choose will sprout, and I will rid myself of this constant grumbling against you by the Israelites." (Num 17:5).* The next day Aaron’s rod had not only budded, it had blossomed and produced almonds!

The anchor of our soul is anchored to the power of God through a God-given, God-chosen leadership!

The Tables of The Covenant speak of the promises of God. Although the tables contained the 10 Commandments, all of those commands regulated the promises of God.

*“I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God” (Eze 11:19-20).*

In times of adversity and persecution, never lose sight of the promises of God. *For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God (2Co 1:20).*

*1. Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,  
when the clouds unfold their wings of strife?  
When the strong tides lift and the cables strain,  
will your anchor drift or firm remain?  
  
We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
steadfast and sure while the billows roll,  
fastened to the rock which cannot move,  
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!  
  
2. Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear,  
when the breakers roar and the reef is near?  
While the surges rave and the wild winds blow,  
shall the angry waves then your bark o'er flow?  
  
3. Will your eyes behold through the morning light  
the city of gold and the harbour bright?  
Will you anchor safe by the heavenly shore,  
when life's storms are past forever more?*