

Christian Character Building Messages

Making a Determined Effort

Ken Birks, Pastor/Teacher

I. Introductory Remarks.

In this message I want to talk about the importance of making a determined effort in everything that we are involved in, both spiritual and natural. Determination is a necessity in our walk with the Lord. We will not endure to the end without it.

You can have plenty of vision, insight and purpose, but without determination you will not get the job done. When your vision and purpose fail, your determination must kick in to keep you going in the midst of doubt and uncertainty.

Proverbs 4:23-27 *Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put perverse lips far from you. Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your foot from evil.*

Determination is the inner fortitude and strength of character – being disciplined to remain consistent, strong and diligent regardless of the odds or the demands. It is the act of deciding definitely and firmly, or coming to a resolve. Determination is acting in faith when we temporarily lose sight of where we are going.

Without determination we will find ourselves being tossed here and there and beat to a pulp when the enemy comes against us. When the pressure is on we will find ourselves reacting in a way that is contradictory to what we believe. We must have the inner fortitude and strength of character to remain consistent, strong and diligent regardless of the odds or the demands.

II. Determination Is An Important Part Of Our Spiritual Warfare.

1 Corinthians 16:13 *Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.*

Ephesians 6:13 *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

The thing that we must realize is that the devil is making a determined effort towards us and if he is more determined to keep us from moving forward in God than we are, he will win.

1. The Example of Manasseh and the Canaanites.

God had given all of the tribes of Israel the command to go forth into the Promised Land and to drive all of its inhabitants out. He not only commanded them, but promised them that He would help them.

Joshua 1:9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

With this promise the children of Israel were to go forth conquering all of the inhabitants of the Promised Land. We find that this did not happen in all cases, because of the determination of their enemies to continue to dwell in the land.

Joshua 17:12-13 Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities, but the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land. And it happened, when the children of Israel grew strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not utterly drive them out.

The reason the children of Manasseh were not able to drive the Canaanites completely out of the land was because they lacked the determination to do so. The Canaanites were more determined to stay then the Tribe of Manasseh was to drive them out.

2. Through A Determined Effort, We Are To Drive Out Our Enemies.

How many of us give place to the devil, because we lack the determination to completely drive him out of our lives? God has given us the authority and the power to defeat the enemy.

Luke 10:19 "Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you."

We all have strongholds in our lives that the enemy is trying to hold on to with a determined effort. The thing that we have to realize is that we must have more of a determined effort than the enemy realizing that greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world.

1 John 4:4 *You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*

The enemy doesn't give us that easily. He is determined, so therefore you must realize that it takes a determined effort to defeat him. We are wrestling against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6:12-13 *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

Many Christians fail in many areas because they fail to make a determined effort. Marriages, children, jobs, business, ministry, bondage to sin, and prayer life are areas that the enemy wants to continue to dwell in. Are you letting him, simply because he is more determined than you are?

Do you have the inner fortitude and strength of character to remain consistent, strong and diligent regardless of the odds or the demands that are being placed upon you in these areas.

Without determination you will find yourselves being tossed here and there and beat to a pulp when the enemy comes against you. When the pressure is on you will find yourselves reacting in a way that is contradictory to what you really believe.

1 Peter 5:8-9 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.*

II. The Kingdom Is Extended Through Determination.

1. The Example Of Solomon Being Determined To Build The Temple.

2 Chronicles 2:1 *Then Solomon determined to build a temple for the name of the LORD, and a royal house for himself.*

The kingdom that was established under Solomon's reign was the greatest and most glorious of all the kingdoms of the earth. I'm sure that Solomon had his obstacles that he faced along the way. But he was determined to complete the task he had been given. He had the inner fortitude and strength of character to remain consistent, strong and diligent regardless of the odds or the demands that were placed upon him.

2. We Too Must Be Determined To See The Kingdom Extended.

Matthew 11:12 *"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.*

We must make a determined effort in establishing the kingdom of God in our midst. We have experienced many defeats, setbacks, discouragements and other hindrances, but we must be like the apostle Paul who said, "none of these things move me."

Acts 20:24 *"But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.*

3. Illustrations.

A page from John Wesley's Diary reads as follows:

- Sunday morning, May 5, preached in St. Ann's, was asked not to come back anymore.
- Sunday p.m., May 5, preached at St. John's, deacons said, "Get out and stay out."
- Sunday a.m., May 12, preached at St. Jude's, can't go back there either.
- Sunday p.m., May 12, preached at St. George's, kicked out again.
- Sunday a.m., May 19, preached at St. somebody else's, deacons called special meeting and said I couldn't return.
- Sunday p.m., May 19, preached on the street, kicked off the street.
- Sunday a.m., May 26, preached in meadow, chased out of meadow as a bull was turned loose during the services.
- Sunday a.m., June 2, preached out at the edge of town, kicked off the highway.
- Sunday p.m., June 2, afternoon service, preached in a pasture, 10,000 people came to hear me.

Harold Sherman wrote a book entitled, "How To Turn Failure Into Success." In it he gives a code of persistence. He says:

- 1) I will never give up so long as I know I am right.
- 2) I will believe that all things will work out for me if I hang on to the end.
- 3) I will be courageous and undismayed in the face of odds.
- 4) I will not permit anyone to intimidate or deter me from my goals.
- 5) I will fight to overcome all physical handicaps and setbacks.
- 6) I will try again and again and yet again to accomplish what I desire.
- 7) I will take new faith and resolution from the knowledge that all successful men and women have had to fight defeat and adversity.
- 8) I will never surrender to discouragement or despair no matter what seeming obstacles may confront me.

In 1873 D. L. Moody and Ira Sankey sailed to England for a series of evangelistic meetings. But once there they found to their dismay that all three of their prime contacts had died. Meetings had to be hastily arranged. Some of the pastors who had endorsed Moody's ministry turned against him. At Sunderland, a group of pastors covered the public buildings with material warning about the Americans and their "questionable procedure" and probable evil results." Rumors about Moody traveled ahead of him. He and Sankey went to Scotland, only to encounter deep skepticism. But Moody persevered, and revival swept the British Isles. -- Moody, 5-10-91