

**MORE
THAN**
CONQUERORS
SERMON SERIES

I'M HOLDING ON

ROMANS 8: 18 (NKJV)
OCTOBER 3 - 4, 2020

A SERMON BY
REV. DR. HOWARD-JOHN WESLEY, SENIOR PASTOR

@PASTORHJW



ALFREDSTREET.ORG @ALFREDSTREETBC



#IMHOLDINGON #MORETHANCONQUERORS

Sunday, October 4, 2020

Preacher: Pastor Howard-John Wesley

Sermon: I'm Holding On

Scripture: Romans 8:18 (KJV)



CURRICULUM GUIDE



Sermon Summary

In the fourth installment of the Romans 8 series, "More Than Conquerors," Pastor Wesley continues roaming through Romans by reminding us of the freedom we have to openly worship God and boldly proclaim our discipleship in Jesus Christ, without fear of persecution. This has not always been the case. Pastor Wesley teaches us that from 64 AD to 313 AD Christians endured personal and political persecution. Approximately 6,500 Christians were executed during this time. Why did Christians suffer during this time? Pastor outlines the following reasons:

1. Christians only believed in the Lordship of Jesus Christ, which was contrary to the Roman belief that Caesar was sovereign.
2. Christians were *monotheistic*, and they rebelled against Roman practice of *polytheism*.
3. The ethic of equality (for women and the poor) ran contrary to the Roman class system.
4. Christians were accused of being "cannibals" because of the eucharistic practice of communion.
5. Ancient Roman civilization believed that Christians were the cause of any natural disaster.

It is during this time of struggle and persecution that Paul encourages Christians to hold on! And it is during this present time that Pastor Wesley reminds us that in the midst of our suffering we need to hold on to the hope and help of Paul's message — that suffering is connected to God's glory!

Key Points:

The season of suffering cannot compare to the glory of God because:

1. God's glory shall be revealed **within** us. (private)
2. God's glory shall be revealed **upon** us. (public)
3. God's glory shall be revealed **to** us. (to see)

Notes for Facilitators:

Thanks for all that you do! Don't forget to be mindful of our new 75-minute gathering time frame. Also be sure to save time for your Village to share prayer requests.

Getting To Know You Questions:

1. What is your favorite verse in Romans 8? Which verse troubles you the most?
2. The sermon reminded us that our public experiences should encourage someone else. Give each Villager 60 seconds to encourage the Village with a testimony of how God brought them out of a struggle.
3. Pastor Wesley reminded us that he's a movie fan. Share your all-time favorite movie with your Village.



Into The Bible Questions:

1. Pastor stated that between 64 AD - 313 AD living as a Christian was very dangerous and could lead to persecution, exile, or even death. Imagine if being a Christian was like that today. How would your relationship with Christ be different? Would you behave or carry yourself any differently?
2. Pastor Wesley highlighted Psalm 27:13, "I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." What are some of your favorite ways to notice God's goodness showing up on a daily basis?

Life Application Questions:

1. Pastor Wesley taught us that the ethic of equality in the early church ran contrary to Roman cultural norms. In what ways do you see today's church promoting equality? In what ways can we help the church be more equitable?
2. This week we learned that sometimes darkness comes to reveal the glory of God. How has this season opened your eyes to give a clearer view of God's glory?
3. A key task of our faith is reminding ourselves not to see temporary circumstances as permanent. Looking back over your past, share something that you thought was permanent but has now come to an end.
4. Currently there is suffering in society (COVID pandemic, rampant death, questionable Supreme Court appointments, harmful Presidential actions, etc.). However, as Christians, we are reminded to "hold on" during these times and be ready for the glory that will be revealed in us. Can you identify 2-3 situations in your life that God has encouraged you about or that you see improvement for on the horizon (something worth HOLDING ON for)?



"Can I Push It?"

Suffering can be tricky to talk about as it relates to our faith because it forces us to ask hard questions: "Why didn't God prevent me from suffering?", or "Is God the cause of my suffering?" How do you reconcile a loving God with your experience of suffering?

Activity:

1. This week's sermon spoke to the inevitability of struggle. Thinking back to seasons of struggle that God brought you through, were there any signals that the season was ending? With three index cards, make a map of the season of struggle: the initiating event, resulting challenges, and resolution. Take note of any indications God gave you that this season was passing, and see if you can discern any similar signals from a current season of struggle this week.
2. *Glory Rooms*. Have your Village separate into three breakout rooms: within us, upon us, and to us. Give 7 minutes for the groups to share examples of how glory is being revealed in that way.



Spirit Work:

1. Child of God, you really are more than a conqueror! In your quiet time, meditate on the goodness of the Lord and watch the Holy Spirit reveal the glory within you, upon you, and to you. That glory will strengthen, establish and settle you through your sufferings.
2. This weekend's sermon gave us hope for seeing our way out of a season of suffering. This pandemic has taken a toll on us for the last six months, but we can still search for signs to see how things may be getting better. Take some time throughout this week to write down all of the things you've seen improve over the last few months. Allow this list to encourage you and provide signs that the seasons are changing.
3. A key takeaway from the sermon reminded us that, "the inevitability of my suffering is always connected to the assurance of God's glory." This is a good week to develop some daily assurance practices. Meditating, singing encouraging songs, taking walks in nature, all help us to relax and give us a chance to experience God's glory in clear ways. Take a chance on some different practices and see which one gives you "blessed assurance."

Readings for This Week:

Monday, October 5th	Psalm 27
Tuesday, October 6th	Ecclesiastes 3:1-7
Wednesday, October 7th	1 Peter 4:12-14
Thursday, October 8th	2 Corinthians 1:3-7
Friday, October 9th	Isaiah 40:21-31

Further Study:

Learn more about Emperor Nero and the Roman context of Paul's writing:
<https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/nero>