

To Be Continued...

When I was growing up, I loved a certain sci-fi series. Each episode ended with the words '*to be continued*'. What excitement to think that this was not the end of the story by that there were more adventure-filled episodes to follow. One day, the TV station announced that the series had been discontinued. Many years later (already as an adult), I ended up buying the whole 3 seasons on DVD and I even bought some of the toys, but no more stories and adventures followed, no more episodes, just the memory of some fantastic stories.

I want to talk to you today about your life with God and how the words '*to be continued*' relate to that life. In other words, you should never be at a place where your adventures with God cease or where you discontinue your relationship with Him.

Opening Scripture: 1 John 5:11-13 - *11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.*

The Bible says that we need to *continue* to believe. Receiving Jesus is not the arrival hall but the departure gate – God takes us deeper and deeper in Him, changes us from glory to glory in an amazing process that the enemy would love to interrupt – and that is why the scripture says, *continue!*

None of us is a finished product, God is at work in all of us. We need to continue in the Potters' wheel, allowing Him to change us and fashion us to become like Jesus.

1 John 3:2 - *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

'To be continued...' was a regular message in the early Church:

Acts 11:21 - 23 - *21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. 22 Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. 23 When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.*

To these new Christians they preached how this new life was 'to be continued...' – not just a one-off decision.

Acts 13:43 - *43 Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.*

Acts 14:22 - ²¹ And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, ²² strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

There are trials and tribulations designed by the devil to discontinue your history with God, but you need to continue in the faith.

Luke 22:28 - "But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials"

God's Word describes 5 areas where we need to 'continue':

1. Continue in faith

We saw this in **Acts 14:22**.

Colossians 1:23: if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Hebrews 10:38-39 - Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." ³⁹ But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

2. Continue in the Word

2 Timothy 3:13-17 - ¹³ But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴ But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Continue to grow – don't allow 'arrested growth syndrome' in your life. Do not stagnate.

Be sure to graduate from the milk to meat.

3. Continue in prayer

Colossians 4:2 - Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving

4. Continue in love

Hebrews 13:1 - Let brotherly love continue.

You may have been disappointed at people, mistreated even, you may have thought whether they deserved love. However, Jesus said that we are to love - even our enemies. Do not discontinue love. Let brotherly love continue!

5. Continue in fellowship

Acts 2:42 - *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

The devil loves to isolate Christians, but we were created for community. The Trinity is a community. The church is a community. We belong together. We are stronger together.

(Hebrews 10:25)

Final thoughts

This message is about living a Christian life that is "to be continued". There are more episodes of blessing and adventure in God.

This message is about not stopping what God has started or leave it half way. The word says that God is a Finisher (He is the Author and Finisher of our faith – Hebrews 12:2). The word also says that "*He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ*" (**Philippians 1:6**).

- a) What about those times when we face problems, trials, demonic resistance or hinderances – those times when we have even been tempted to give up?

1 Thessalonians 2:17-18 - *¹⁷ But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured more eagerly to see your face with great desire. ¹⁸ Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us.*

"*satan hindered us*" – the word in Greek means "to hit an impasse". It also carries the image of someone running but being elbowed out of the lane.

We need to keep going even when the enemy tries to push us out of the race. It happens to everyone: "*even I, Paul*"

- b) What about when I fall?

So many people face the temptation to discontinue their relationship with God because of a sense of failure on their part to live the Christian life.

Micah 7:8 - *Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; when I fall, I will arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me.*

Don't run from God, run to God!

Proverbs 24:16 - *For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again, but the wicked shall fall by calamity.*

When you fall, repent and bounce back! Continue. Do not discontinue your Faith, your prayer life, the reading of God's word, fellowship with other believers or love.

