

# **By Endurance We Conquer**

## **Split Sermon**

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In the early 1900's there was an English explorer by the name of Sir Ernest Shackleton. He lived from February 1874 – January 1922. Now Shackleton had other expeditions, but the one we'll focus on is his Imperial Trans-Antarctic expedition, which began in January 1914. This expedition was an attempt to cross Antarctica, which would be an 1800 mile journey after they left the ship. The First World War broke out on August 3, 1914, but The Endurance was directed by the first Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, to proceed.

It left British waters on August 8<sup>th</sup>. Shackleton delayed his own departure until September 27<sup>th</sup>, meeting the ship in Buenos Aries. The Endurance departed from South Georgia for the Wendal Sea on December 5<sup>th</sup>, heading for Bashal Bay. As The Endurance moved southward, navigating in first year ice (and that's opposed to multiyear ice) was encountered and it slowed the progress. Deep in the Wendal Sea conditions gradually grew worse until on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 1915, The Endurance became frozen fast in an ice floe. On February 24<sup>th</sup>, realizing she would be trapped until the following spring, Shackleton ordered the abandonment of ship's routine and her conversion to a winter station. She drifted slowly northward with the ice through the following months.

When spring arrived in September the breaking of the ice and its movements put extreme pressure on the hull of the ship. Until this point Shackleton hoped that the ship, when released from the ice, could work her way back towards Bashal Bay. On October 24<sup>th</sup> water began to pour into the ship and after a few days he gave the orders to abandon ship. The men transferred the provisions and equipment to camps on the ice.

On November 21<sup>st</sup> the wreck finally slipped below the surface. For almost 2 months Shackleton and his party camped on the large flat flow hoping it would drift toward Pullit Island, approximately 250 miles. It was know that there were stores cached there. But after attempts to march across the ice to this island, Shackleton decided to set up more permanent camp he called 'Patience Camp' on another floe, and trust the drift of the ice to take them to a safe landing. By March 17<sup>th</sup> there ice camp was within 60 miles of Pullit Island, but separated by impassable ice and they were unable to reach it.

On April 9<sup>th</sup> their ice floe broke in two and Shackleton ordered the crew into the lifeboats to head towards the nearest island. After five days at sea the men landed there three lifeboats at Elephant Island; 346 miles from where The Endurance sank. This was the first time they had stood on solid ground for 497 days. Elephant Island was an inhospitable place, far from any shipping routes. Rescue upon chance discovery was

very unlikely. So Shackleton decided to risk an open boat journey to the South Georgia whaling stations: a distance of 720 nautical miles. This is where he knew help was available. The strongest of the 20' lifeboats was chosen for the ship. Ship's carpenter, Harry McNeesh, made various improvements which included raising the sides, strengthening the keel and building a makeshift deck of wood and canvas. Shackleton chose five companions for the journey: Frank Worsely, The Endurance Captain, who was responsible for navigation. Tom Crane, who had just begged to go, and two strong sailors in John Vincent and Timothy McCarthy, and finally the carpenter, McNeesh.

Shackleton refused to pack supplies for more than four weeks; knowing that if they did not reach South Georgia within that time, the boat and its crew would be lost. And the men left on Elephant Island would need those supplies. The reoutfitted lifeboat, christened The James Card, after the expedition's chief sponsor, was launched on April 24, 1916, just ten days after their arrival on Elephant Island. It started the 720 nautical mile journey to South Georgia. It sailed through waters of the southern sea at the mercy of the stormy seas, in constant peril of capsizing. On May 8<sup>th</sup>, just fifteen days after they launched, thanks to Worsely's navigational skills, the cliffs of South Georgia came into site. But hurricane force winds prevented the possibility of landing. The party was forced to ride out the storm off shore, while in constant danger of being dashed against the rocks. They later learned that the same hurricane had sunk a 500 ton steamer bound from South Georgia for Buenos Aires. On the following day they were able to land on the unoccupied southern shore. After a period of rest and recuperation, rather than putting to sea again to reach the whaling stations on the northern coast, Shackleton decided to attempt a land crossing on the island on a route no one had attempted before.

For their journey they were only equipped with boots they had pushed screws into to act as climbing boots, and a carpenter's adz and fifty feet of rope. Leaving McNeesh, Vincent and McCarthy at the landing port on South Georgia, Shackleton traveled 32 miles with Worsely and Crane over extremely dangerous mountain terrain for 36 hours to reach the whaling station at Strongness on May 20<sup>th</sup>. The next successful crossing of South Georgia was in October, 1955, by a British explorer, Duncan Carss, who traveled much the same route as the Shackleton party. In tribute to their achievement, he wrote "I do not know how they did it, except they had to. Three men of the heroic age of Antarctic exploration with 50' of rope between them, and a carpenter's adz." Shackleton immediately sent a boat to pick up the three men he had left on the other side of South Georgia while he set to work to rescue the men on Elephant Island. His first three attempts were foiled by sea ice, which blocked the approaches to the island. He appealed to the Chilean government, which offered the use of Yotcho, a small sea going tub from its navy. Yotcho, commanded by Louis Pardo and the British whaler SS Southern Sky, reached Elephant Island on August 30<sup>th</sup>, at which point the men had been isolated there for four and a half months. Shackleton quickly evacuated all 22 men, and amazingly, all the men of The Endurance survived the ordeal. The Yotcho took the crew first to Pointe Aries and then after some days to Valparaiso in Chile, where crowds warmly welcomed them back to civilization.

This account of the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition that started out on the ship *Endurance*, was an exercise in endurance. There have been many publications of books written about Sir Ernest Shackleton that include this, as well as many other expeditions. One of the books, written by Michael Smith, has the title *By Endurance We Conquer*. This is also from a quote of Shackleton's which says 'through endurance we conquer', which also reported to be his family motto. This is an excellent story of enduring, but when we look at the outcome, how easy is it to forget about the suffering they went through? Or just through what is not emphasized in the story, like being stuck on a ship for eight months while *The Endurance* was stuck in the ice. And like living on ice for five months after the ship sank. Did they ever get warm? I can imagine when I look at the snow on the ground from the comfort of my living room with the fireplace on and a cold chill runs down my back, so that I have to get up and warm up by the fire. But they were in constant danger of hyperthermia and frostbite and needed to ration food to keep from running out; especially with the uncertainty of when they were to be able to get help.

When they got in the twenty foot lifeboats and headed for Elephant Island, the threat of being capsized in the rough seas would mean certain death in the frigid waters of the southern oceans. Once they got there, how long would it be before they were rescued? Would they run out of food? One could imagine that Shackleton was encouraging the men by telling them they would conquer the ordeal by enduring it. Could it be that he reminded them daily? Is it why, in an effort to keep up morale of the men, he named the ice floe camp *Patience Camp*?

So what is endurance? Is it just riding it out, or is it an act of endeavor? Is it something that just happens to you or is it something you work at? Let's look at the definition of the noun endurance, and the verb endure. I went to [Webster's 1828 Dictionary](#), in part because it was close to the time that Shackleton lived his life, and it also provides Scripture with definitions. First let's look at the word endure; it means to last, continue in the same state without perishing, to remain, to abide.

***Psalms 9:7.*** *The Lord shall endure forever. (NKJV)*

To bear, to suffer without resistance or without yielding.

***Esther 8:6.*** *How can I endure to see the evil that shall come of my people. (NKJV)*

To bear, to sustain, to support without breaking or yielding to force or pressure, to bear with patience, to bear without opposition or sinking under pressure.

***2 Timothy 2:3.*** *Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake. If you endure chastening God deals with you as sons. (NKJV)*

***Hebrews 12:7.*** *To undergo, to sustain. (NKJV)*

Now for the definition of the noun endurance: continuance, a state of lasting or duration, lastingness, a bearing or suffering, a continuing under pain or duress without resistance or without sinking or yielding to the pressure, sufferance, patience. So can we find Shackleton's phrase *through endurance we conquer* in some form in the Bible? Well, not exactly. We can find plenty of verses that talk to us about endurance. Consider the one's given in Webster's 1828 Dictionary definition of endure.

**Hebrews 12:7.** *If you endure chastening, God dealeth with you as sons. For what son is he who the Father chasteneth not? (NKJV)*

**Matthew 24:13.** *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. (NKJV)*

This is enduring. But what about conquer? The KJV only uses the word 'conquer' once.

**Revelations 6:2.** *And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. (NKJV)*

The transliteration of the word conquer is nikonti, which means to subdue, conquer, overcome, prevail, get the victory. But you know that nikonti is used in other places in the New Testament, but translated with a different work.

**Revelations 2:7.** *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. (NKJV)*

Overcometh comes from the same Greek word nikonti. And we find this word is used in conclusion to each of the letters to the churches in Revelations, as well as

**Revelations 21:7.** *He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. (NKJV)*

This is part of the conclusion to Revelations. One might say that Matthew 24:13, as stated above, is saying the same thing as this scripture. Let's reread;

**Matthew 24:13.** *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. (NKJV)*

But it may be more correct to look at as the enduring is happening up until the end, and when you've conquered or overcame, just like in Shackleton's expedition they were enduring right up to the point of him making it to the whaling station on South Georgia. The men that were left behind endured until the boat showed up and rescued them.

Then they conquered, they had won the victory. So for us, we endure until the end, but then have overcome and will inherit all things.

Consider this point that is a variation of endurance is that we conquer. Through enduring temptation we conquer sin.

**James 1:12.** *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

13) *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:*

14) *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

15) *Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. (NKJV)*

Strong's number 5278 transliterated as hupomeno, means to bear trials, have fortitude, abide, endure, take patiently, suffer. We need to persevere or endure temptation to the end, and the context of this makes no doubt it is talking about sin. When we have endured by resisting that temptation, we have conquered that sin. Through endurance we conquer sin. The same could be said about trials. Through enduring trials we conquer them.

**Matthew 24:13.** *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. This makes it clear the enduring isn't just for a time, but to the end. (NKJV)*

**Mark 4:16.** *And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;*

17) *And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. (NKJV)*

This makes it clear the enduring not just for a while. The seed on stony ground only endured for a time, and did not endure to the end as Shackleton and his crew. If Shackleton and his crew would have quit doing the things they needed to survive and said 'what is the use, the odds are against us', they wouldn't have made it. It took work for them, as it takes work for us, to endure. The word of God does not use the word endure in noun form, only as a verb, which indicates action is involved. Actively doing something, not just waiting it out. What are the actions for enduring?

**2 Corinthians 10:4.** *(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)*

5) *Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. (NKJV)*

We see that the weapons come from God, the power of God. To access this we need to utilize the tools God has given us; prayer, to ask for His assistance, fasting to humble ourselves before Him, and meditation to ponder the laws and ways of God for better understanding as brought out in the sermon last week by Mr. Railston. These tools will help us to pull down sins, cast out down thinking and anything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. Bringing all of our thoughts to obeying God and Jesus Christ. As a result, we will endure to the end.

Shackleton and his crew didn't have any promises of being rescued. They could only imagine it and it must have been a challenge for them not to lose hope that they would be rescued. For us, brethren, we have a promise in Revelations

***Revelations 21:7.*** *He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. (KJV)*

God has shown us the end, something to look forward to, something to inspire our endurance. In closing, brethren, at the time when we are beginning to examine ourselves, let's ask ourselves "are we enduring or are we just riding it out?" Do we pray for God's guidance? Do we fast to humble ourselves so that our examination is done in a state of humility? To help us endure do we meditate on the kingdom of God? Do we meditate on the marriage supper of the Lamb? Do we meditate on the promise of eternal life with God and Jesus Christ?

This is the end game. We know this. God, who cannot lie, told us this. Hopefully, by meditating on these things it will help us to bear the trials and difficulties and endure to the end so that we will have overcome. See the comments of the Apostle Paul to Timothy.

***2 Timothy 4:7.*** *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:*

*8) Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. (NKJV)*