

MIND GIRDING

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May 6, 2012

Sermon in a sentence: Living for God at our highest potential demands that we “gird up the loins of our mind” and live in the *light* and *truth* of the Word of God.

Scriptures: KJV: 1 Pet. 1:3-16. NASB: Ps. 42 & 43; Ph. 3:16; Ps. 73; Ps. 119:105; John 17:17

1 Peter 1:3-16 (KJV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord **Jesus Christ**, which according to his abundant mercy **hath begotten us** again **unto a lively hope** by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, **reserved in heaven** for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 **Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now** for a season, if need be, **ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:** 7 **That the trial of your faith,** being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, **might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:** 8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. 10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: 11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. 12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. 13 **Wherefore gird up the loins of**

your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 **As obedient children,** not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: 15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so **be ye holy in all manner of conversation;** 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

There are 14 mountain peaks in the world higher than 8,000 meters (26,000 ft.)¹, and despite the incredible dangers, the greatest climbers in the world have accepted the challenge of trying to climb them. *(These mountains are 14 to 16 times higher than the CN Tower!)* In 2011, a 40-year-old Austrian woman named Gerlinde Kaltenbrunner became the first woman to accomplish the feat of having reached the summit of these 14 peaks, all the more noteworthy in that she did not use bottled oxygen in any of these climbs.

Many before have tried and failed. On her last peak, K2, her husband, who is also a world class climber, got to the point where he felt it was just too dangerous to continue, and returned to the base camp while she and a couple of other climbers continued on to the summit. (Long ago, she and her husband made a pact that neither one would ever

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Mountain	Location	Height	
		Meters	Feet
1. Everest	Nepal/Tibet	8,850	29,035
2. K2 (Godwin Austen)	Pakistan/China	8,611	28,250
3. Kangchenjunga	Nepal/India	8,586	28,169
4. Lhotse	Nepal/Tibet	8,516	27,940
5. Makalu	Nepal/Tibet	8,463	27,766
6. Cho Oyu	Nepal/Tibet	8,201	26,906
7. Dhaulagiri	Nepal	8,167	26,795
8. Manaslu	Nepal	8,163	26,781
9. Nanga Parbat	Pakistan	8,125	26,660
10. Annapurna	Nepal	8,091	26,545
11. Gasherbrum I	Pakistan/China	8,068	26,470
12. Broad Peak	Pakistan/China	8,047	26,400
13. Gasherbrum II	Pakistan/China	8,035	26,360
14. Shisha Pangma	Tibet	8,013	26,289

stand in the other's way with regard to their climbing. For them, climbing supersedes loss of life or the survival of their marriage!)

During previous climbs, she has watched friends and fellow climbers die as they have been swept away by avalanches and assorted other hazards.²

These mountains are enormously high and the challenges are exceedingly great.



Gerlinde Kaltenbrunner

Obviously, nobody is forced to risk their lives and accept these challenges, but for some, the life-changing thrill and fulfillment of accomplishment far outweighs the attendant dangers and hardships.

² Read her story in the April 2012 issue of National Geographic Magazine

These people don't make big money and very few become famous outside the fraternity of climbers, but they are all driven to excel, and gladly do all that is required to succeed in their ventures.

Temporal rewards? Minimal. Value to humanity? Providing inspiration for some. Opposition and misunderstanding? Abundant. Eternal reward? Zero.

Many view the Christian life the same way. A tremendous mountain to climb that not many are willing to tackle – certainly not to the highest levels. Unbelieving onlookers criticize, fellow Christians misunderstand, demonic forces attack, and we get tired.

In spite of all the issues, problems and opposition however, there is a remnant that says:

As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God (Ps. 42:1-2).

I am going to climb this mountain, despite the difficulties! Sometimes people see the struggles I face and

... say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" (Ps. 42:3b, 10).

If we are to continue with this analogy of comparing high level Christianity with high-level mountaineering, there is a very important concept we need to understand. People at these levels do not compare themselves with others who have not attained the same levels of achievement.

They gladly learn from others, get help and counsel from others, acknowledge and utilize the strengths and skills of

others, without ever losing their own keen edge of desire, dedication and hard work to achieve their objectives.

It is crucial that we get to the place where we cease to be angry, resentful or bitter against any of our brothers and sisters, even when they are not performing as they should, (in our own 'humble' opinion).

Let us give God thanks it is not our responsibility to 'fix' everybody. (We have more than enough to do in fixing ourselves.)

Christianity is often a very lonely walk of

... working out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Ph. 2:12).

Paul goes even further to say:

... it is *God* who is at work in you, both to *will* and to *work* for His good pleasure (Ph. 2:13, emphasis added).

When we say "how come she gets away with this and he gets away with that", we are focusing on the wrong thing. One who climbs the highest mountains does not expect others to do as they do, except for those who have bonded with them in pursuit of the summit. And they are well aware that even some of those especially hand picked teammates may not make it all the way to the top with them!

2 Corinthians 10:12 (NASB) For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but **when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.**

People at the highest levels do not look down upon those who have not dedicated themselves in the same way. They understand they are ‘outliers’, possessing an uncommon commitment to their cause. They love, honour and respect ALL people, but do not live in frustration that others have not attained the same levels as themselves. The failings or lack of devotion in others does not hinder them in the slightest from pursuing their goals.

Philippians 3:16 (NASB) However, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.

Consider the lives of:

- Abraham
- Moses
- Caleb
- Paul
- Abraham Lincoln
- Mahatma Gandhi
- Nelson Mandela
- Martin Luther King Jr.
- Mother Theresa
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- David K. Bernard

This is not to imply that high achievers are superhuman, devoid of the normal feelings and weaknesses we see in others. They are not immune to disappointment and discouragement. They also wonder at times why bad things happen to good people and why their road is so hard, just as Asaph did in Psalm 73:

Psalm 73:1-28 (NASB) Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart! 2 But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling, my steps had almost slipped. 3 For I was envious of the arrogant As I saw the prosperity of the wicked. 4 For there are no pains in their death,

and their body is fat. 5 They are not in trouble as other men, nor are they plagued like mankind. 6 Therefore pride is their necklace; the garment of violence covers them. 7 Their eye bulges from fatness; the imaginations of their heart run riot. 8 They mock and wickedly speak of oppression; they speak from on high. 9 They have set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue parades through the earth. 10 Therefore his people return to this place, and waters of abundance are drunk by them. 11 They say, "How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?" 12 Behold, these are the wicked; and always at ease, they have increased in wealth. 13 Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure And washed my hands in innocence; 14 For I have been stricken all day long and chastened every morning. 15 If I had said, "I will speak thus," Behold, I would have betrayed the generation of Your children. 16 When I pondered to understand this, it was troublesome in my sight 17 Until I came into the sanctuary of God; then I perceived their end. 18 Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. 19 How they are destroyed in a moment! They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors! 20 Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord, when aroused, You will despise their form. 21 When my heart was embittered and I was pierced within, 22 Then I was senseless and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. 23 Nevertheless I am continually with You; You have taken hold of my right hand. 24 With Your counsel You will guide me, and afterward receive me to glory. 25 Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. 26 My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. 27 For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You. 28 But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all Your works.

They have feelings just like ours!

So what is it that pushes, inspires and motivates these people of God to go to the greatest heights in Him? What is it that makes them pant after God? Nothing less than the Light and Truth we find in His Word.

O send out Your **light** and Your **truth**, let them lead me; **Let them bring me to Your holy hill and to Your dwelling places.** 4 Then **I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy;** And upon the lyre **I shall praise** You, O God, **my God** (Ps. 43:3-4)

**** We need to be immersed in, consumed, directed and inspired by the Word of God. ****

Truly, as David said, the Word of God is: "... a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (Ps. 119:105). In Jesus' 'high priestly prayer' in John 17, He prayed to His Father: "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth" (Jn 17:17).

When we are *in* the Word, we see a different world. We perceive things differently. Our forefathers and biblical mentors in the faith give us incredible hope and inspiration. We see from an Everest vantage point, not just from sea level. At that level, we are above the clouds, where the sun always shines.

Through His Word, we can gird up the loins of our mind, think sober and godly thoughts and excel in the work God has called us to do.

Psalm 42:1-11 (NASB)

For the Choir Director. A Maskil of the sons of Korah. (A psalm of lament.)

As the deer pants for the water brooks, so **my soul pants for You, O God.** 2 **My soul thirsts for God,** for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God? 3 My tears have been my food day and night, while **they say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"** 4 These things I remember and I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go along with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God, with the voice of joy and thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival. 5 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him for the help of His presence.

6 O my God, **my soul is in despair** within me; Therefore I remember You from the land of the Jordan And the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar. 7 Deep calls to deep at the sound of Your waterfalls; All Your breakers and Your waves have rolled over me. 8 The Lord will command His loving-kindness in the daytime; And His song will be with me in the night, a prayer to the God of my life. 9 I will say to God my rock, "Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?" 10 As a shattering of my bones, my adversaries revile me, while **they say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"** 11 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.

Psalms 43:1-5 (NASB) **Vindicate me, O God,** and plead my case against an ungodly nation; O **deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man!** 2 For You are the God of my strength; why have You rejected me? Why do **I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?** 3. 5 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.