

Luke 21:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In your patience possess ye your souls.

Analysis

Jesus promises: 'In your patience possess ye your souls.' The Greek 'hypomonē' (ὑπομονή, patience/endurance) means steadfast endurance under pressure. 'Possess ye your souls' (Greek 'ktēsasthe tas psychas hymōn,' κτήσασθε τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν) means gain/preserve your lives. The promise is counterintuitive—you preserve life through enduring, not escaping. This follows Jesus' warnings about persecution (vv. 12-18). Enduring faithfully through suffering preserves spiritual life even if physical life is lost. Impatient apostasy to avoid suffering loses the soul; patient endurance saves it. Perseverance proves genuine faith and secures eternal life.

Historical Context

This teaching came during Jesus' Olivet Discourse about Jerusalem's destruction and end times (vv. 5-36). Disciples would face persecution—betrayal, imprisonment, martyrdom (vv. 12, 16). Natural response is panic or apostasy, but Jesus commands patience—steadfast endurance trusting God. The phrase 'possess your souls' echoes Jesus' earlier teaching about losing life to save it (Luke 9:24). Early Christians faced exactly this—Nero's persecution, AD 70 Jerusalem destruction, ongoing martyrdom. Those enduring faithfully secured eternal life; those recanting to preserve physical life lost their souls. Church history demonstrates that perseverance under persecution distinguishes genuine faith from false profession.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does possessing your soul through patience contradict natural instincts for self-preservation and avoidance of suffering?
2. What does this promise teach about the relationship between faithful endurance and assurance of salvation?

Interlinear Text

ἐν	τῇ	ὑπομονῇ	ὑμῶν	κτήσασθε	τὰς	ψυχὰς	ὑμῶν
In	G3588	patience	your	possess ye	G3588	souls	your
G1722		G5281	G5216	G2932		G5590	G5216

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 10:36 (Parallel theme): For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

Matthew 10:22 (Parallel theme): And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

James 1:3 (Parallel theme): Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

Romans 5:3 (Parallel theme): And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

Revelation 3:10 (Parallel theme): Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Romans 2:7 (Parallel theme): To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

Revelation 13:10 (Parallel theme): He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Psalms 37:7 (Parallel theme): Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

Revelation 14:12 (Parallel theme): Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Hebrews 6:11 (Parallel theme): And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: