

Perseverance

By John Vansloten Oct. 3, 2004

For the past 3 months - I've been strongly considering participating - cross country bike ride... 7247 km!! Vancouver to Halifax!... thinking about it has been a real struggle!... go through all these **machinations** 'ups and downs' - "**I can do it... I can't do it**"... "You're 43 years old John!"... [TONE] "You're only 43 years old John!" **PAUSE**... as I've tentatively started training this summer - I've had rides - "**I can do this!**" others - [**been PASSED**]... there's **no way-do 7000k!**

"I don't know if I have the **strength... physically... mentally... (Butt muscles!!!)**... I don't know if I have what it takes to **persevere**... finish that **big** a journey!"

LONG PAUSE... Seems - this hypothetic struggle - **mirroring reality** for me as of late... **corporately (nhc)** days hear of people leaving... vision push back... look at fiscal challenges stepping into... crazy dreams - **no way we're gonna finish this race!... we're nuts!**

Last Monday - went on another big Bike ride - 90k to Elbow Falls (hour past Bragg Creek)... saw from a few slightly different angles - how the 'One no eye can see' - can help us persevere...

One big lesson - power that community brings to perseverance... one of the ways God shows himself to us - surrounding us with other people! [DRAFTING EXPLAINED] - Lance could never win Tour without...

Hebrews 11 - great reminder of Saints who've gone before... millions of others (peloton) journey/ race... - & your faith journey - **Drafting in behind those stories!** - so go over those stories!! (writer asks!)...

Don't have to be ancient stories!... in my **small group "DRAFT"** all the time... their **marriage** in behind ours... my **lack of energy** - in behind his strength... her **doubts** about the God in behind his Confidence...

Personally! - its also been a rough month... ever had times in life w/ **not sure you can make it?** keep head above water? that you have **strength to keep going?**

PAUSE... caught myself saying, "Its only September!" On one hand - best job in world... on other - feel so tired... discouraged... fearful - **my quasi depressive personality - gonna win out one day!**

Sometimes I simply feel like quitting... **LONG PAUSE** been **there?**... **PAUSE** are you **there?**.... **PAUSE**... (or - just want to get out of **here** - get too depressed!)

Truth is - those times - times we'll **all face!**... **PAUSE** - part of **human condition** (life is not perfect... we are not perfect!... things aren't way supposed to be!)... **PAUSE**... **We have to face that reality! - PAUSE but not necessarily ALONE!**...

Esp - as we consider **faith** part of this journey... how **God's presence influences our ability to persevere**

PAUSE... there is something about knowing God is near -huge **motivating, encouraging, strengthening** effect - on our

-- and we 'pull' each other... sometime - even carry!

(as was case one of the three guys that day... last 10k!... won't say his name... [COUGH "ketchum"]

There was another NB lesson I learned on that trip that day... **also helped me better understand how God can help us persevere...**

About 45k in... lead rider - turned to me & said - "Ok, we're almost there... but- huge hill just ahead... gonna want to get off and walk it... but try to make it up... b/c just over the crest - Elbow Falls!... So amazing!"... -- he knew - not a big climber (Actually I'm -very big climber-problem! - how get that carcass up hill!!)... -- he said to **inspire some hope!!**

Sure enough - get around next corner - there's the HILL!... put head down... dropped down a few gears... sweat my butt off all the way up... legs ached... sucking for air... sun bore down... persevered and pushed through... **PAUSE**...

Why? Because I knew what layed ahead!... and when I got there... head in water... colors... rest...

psyches/souls!...

Last May - **Ride out to Bragg Creek**... good run for me... started too late!... meant straight into Highway #8 westerly! "Nothing like a strong head wind - build perseverance"... remember- so tired... **wind whipped** olde hymn from childhood - came to mind - **focused/ strengthened me!**" -- sounds real corny (didn't want to tell you... weakling... weirdo!)

"Great is thy faithfulness, oh God my Father,

there is no shadow of turning with thee,

thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not,

as thou hast been thou forever wilt be..."

-- and I considered God's **Immutable strength**... God has been **faithful** all of my life... **never left me or forsaken me**... how his compassionate strength **never changes**... will never change - put gas in my tank!... life into my legs

Hebrews writer - Moses' story... "Prince of Egypt" left royal privilege - **suffer** with his people... get into

smiles... food... -- so beautiful!!!

In Chapter 12 of Hebrews (one after list)... turns persevering/faith story onto its main protagonist - Christ... "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:2

Jesus knew what laid beyond that terrible hill that he died upon... **PAUSE**... knew his Father and his faithfulness... knew that all of life - was in his hands... knew never changed... accomplish his plan... never let his boy go!.... -- that one day - be in Glory with his dad!... be like cool water on his head... most beautiful of fall colours...

That same Jesus - offers us same hope... says, "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. ²⁹Walk with me and work with me-- watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. ³⁰Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." ... "Draft behind me... and I'll pull you home!..." [**HETTIE CALL THIS POINT**]

the angry face- king/pharaoh - "Let my people go!"--

"By faith, Moses, when grown, refused the privileges of the Egyptian royal house. He chose a hard life with God's people rather than an opportunistic soft life of sin with the oppressors. ²⁶He valued suffering in the Messiah's camp far greater than Egyptian wealth because he was looking ahead, anticipating the payoff. By an act of faith, he turned his heel on Egypt, indifferent to the king's blind rage. He had his eye on the One no eye can see, and kept right on going. Hebrews 11:27

Keep your eye on the One no one can see!... **PAUSE**

(Yes -sang hymn out loud!- seen the cows' faces!)

LONG PAUSE... The ride home from Elbow falls... all tail wind for a while... seemed downhill... strength in legs like I never felt before -- gone even further - hopeful... next summer... for life!

PICS... cows... drafters... cyclist... Elbow hill... falls... Bragg creek sign... downhill slope beauty run...

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