

## *A Word from the Pastor*

Dear Persistent Saints,

My father was in the Navy. He was an aircraft mechanic, jets specifically. Because of that, we usually lived near Naval air stations. When I was younger, there were no restrictions on breaking the sound barrier over populated areas. Occasionally we would hear a loud boom from one of the jets breaking the sound barrier. I became accustomed to many different aircraft and was able to identify some by the sounds they would make taking off and landing. It was amazing to watch my father study for assessments from time to time by pouring over schematics of hydraulic designs for a particular jet engine. One of the highlights of growing up was watching the Blue Angels at an air show and getting to meet some of the pilots (my father had been a mechanic for the Blue Angels before Korea broke out).

When I stop and think about what I saw as a kid, and what I see today when I look up to the skies, I am filled with wonder that in the period of fifty years when I was a child and 120 years today we have come so far with heavier than air flight. In case you are wondering why I bring this up in this newsletter message, December 17 is National Wright Brothers Day, an official national day established by Congress years ago. It commemorates the first controlled heavier than air flight in the world. It occurred at Kill Devil Hill on Cape Hatteras North Carolina in 1903 where the winds were conducive to lift.

The Wright Brothers spent years perfecting their design. They had been involved in numerous ventures, newspaper ownership and bicycle repair to name two. When you read about the struggles they went through to develop their design and the extent to which they went to see it through to fruition, the only word I can find to describe their efforts over time is persistence. Indeed, even after they completed their flight, they kept much of what they had done out of the press until all the patents had been approved. Even at that, many others tried to claim that they were first in flight. They had to fight hard to protect their invention. Also, they received a much friendlier reception in Europe than in the United States.

As we think about the Wright brothers and their pursuit of a dream and willingness to stick with it, I want to call our attention to our own pursuit of a dream: the expectation of eternal life. The journey is not an easy one and many fall by the wayside never to return to the road to righteousness. We know, however, that the Lord is gracious and merciful, and that the presence of the Holy Spirit is there to lift us up and encourage us when we falter.

Paul's letter to the Romans in chapter 5 verses 1-5 addresses the issue of courage and persistence as follows: Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

When we focus on a goal with the intensity of two brothers trying to build and airplane enduring failure after failure, we will with God's help persist and endure as we move on toward perfection.

Grace and Peace  
Pastor Dennis