

*Calvary Chapel of El Paso Morning Ladies' Bible Study – The Book of Hebrews
April 20, 2021 – “Let Us Run the Race” – Hebrews 12:1-15*

*Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize?
So run, that ye may obtain. – 1 Corinthians 9:24*

*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. – James 1:12*

Paul told the Christians to run their spiritual race in the same way as the Greeks who competed for their prize. Our prize is SO much greater! The crown of life! We all win.

Paul's Encouragement to the Hebrew Christians

Through Hebrews 10:18 Paul taught them doctrine.

Then he turned to practical teaching on how to live it. As we near today's passage in Chapter 12, Paul had written of faith several times. Hebrews 10:38 *Now the just shall live by faith...* THEN he gave the many examples from the Old Testament of God's people living by faith. The Hebrews greatly treasured the law of the Old Covenant, but here Paul gives them living examples from that time of how the saints run the race of faith to the end. And how is that?

READ Heb.12:1-4

Hebrews 12:1-2 – keep your eyes on Jesus. Of our faith, He is:

{The author – brought it into being, and is the Captain and Prince of our faith.

{The finisher – completer, He will take us to the end of the race in victory.

As did for the “cloud of witnesses” who had gone on before. Two great examples are:

Abraham: Hebrews 11:10 *For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

Moses: Hebrews 11:26 *Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. (Christ = Messiah)*

These and the other Old Testament saints looked to God and the reward they would receive in heaven.. They certainly did not know about or understand the details, but they knew that their God would reward them. So they persevered to the end of their lives. Therefore they are great examples to us.

The Race – not a competition with each other, but with oneself and with the enemy of our souls who hinders us.

We are to: Verse 1 *see, lay aside, run*; verse 2 *look*; verse 3 *consider*

Verse 12ff *lift up, make straight, follow, look*

Basically, what we do is look to Jesus and get rid of whatever hinders us. As we do so, it stops Satan from hindering us, verse 1 *the weight and sin that so easily besets us.*

The weights are burdens – within ourselves; from our circumstances; things from outside ourselves – sometimes they are unexpected. I Pet. 5:7 *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

Sin – temptations can trap us, so get rid of them. Deal with sin when it arises:
1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

So this race is similar to the way we do marathons today. There are winners who run faster, but really everyone who finishes is considered a winner. Anyone who has ever run a marathon, or knows someone who did, knows that it is a very big victory just to finish the 26.2 miles. They train for months. They also lay aside whatever would keep them from doing well – extra pounds, etc.; mental doubts; discouragement from those around them; whatever else would keep them back. Another similarity to our marathons is the encouragement the racers give each other. If one falters, others help them and cheer them on.

This physical race shows our spiritual race. So if we are not competing with each other, where's our problem? Satan.

The picture of this race in verse one is someone patiently plugging along with “stuff” coming at him from all sides trying to stop him. And in this spiritual race, it is Satan trying whatever he can – temptations, burdens, troubles.

The answer? Verse 2-4 – look to Jesus.

He started our “race” in faith, and He will finish it for/in us.

He had it way worse.

Verse 3 – He had joy because He knew He would end up in heaven. And we, too, are to leap for joy!

Luke 6:22 *Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. 23 Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.*

Verses 2-4 tell of how much more our Lord suffered: The cross, the shame, even *unto blood* in that He died for us. Yet He knew that He would be at His Father's right hand. So as we suffer we, too, can know that we will be there with Him in the end. But He suffered so greatly for us, so that could be true!

God instructs, disciplines and trains us because we are His children READ verses 5-11

Verse 5 *Ye have forgotten* – perhaps the Hebrews felt so secure in the Law that they thought they did not need to be corrected.

“chastisement = loving way of bringing the child back to the right path.”

Verse 6 *chasten* in the Bible mostly means to teach, train.

scourge in the Bible means discipline that is physical. So the spiritual meaning of it, in our walk with the Lord, is those hard things on us that cause us to look to the Lord and to learn to follow Him more closely.

Verse 7-10 Paul compared earthly fathers with our heavenly Father. When earthly fathers correct us, we respect them; so even more we should respect our heavenly Father when He corrects us.

Deut. 8:5 *Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee. 6 Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.*

Yet there is a difference in the way earthly fathers and our heavenly Father correct their children. Sometimes earthly fathers do it for their own good – perhaps so the child will be more willing to do things for him; perhaps for the father’s reputation; etc. But our heavenly Father corrects us for our own good.

Note that often the chastening of the Father is simply letting us “reap what we sow” – letting us see the results of not following Him closely, not obeying Him.

The results:

Verse 10 to be *partakers of His holiness* – He makes us righteous. The following verses speak to those caught in the Law, in trying to make themselves “right”:

Phil. 3:8 *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*

Verse 11 the *peaceable fruit of righteousness*:

James 3:17 *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.*

exercised = trained – as we are trained by God, we produce the peaceable fruit of righteousness. We are in training!

Heb. 5:14 their senses were to be exercised to discern good and evil; 1 Tim 4:7 they were to exercise themselves to godliness.

So are you ready to race?

As we consider this passage, keep in mind that these truths apply (1) to each of us individually, and also (2) to us as the body of believers together. (1 Cor. 12:12-25)

READ Heb. 12:12-15

Verse 12 – “buck up” and look to the Lord.

Isaiah 35:3 *Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. 4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.*

Strengthen hands – to be able to hold on

Confirm knees – strengthen, to be able to stand your ground

Verse 13 – do not get distracted, look to the Lord. So that the crippled will not fall away but rather be healed and come along. This means to keep to a straight path, even

making it smooth before you, so that any weak limb will not be put out of joint. It will rather be healed, made stronger. How? Keep you eyes on Jesus and let Him strengthen you.

Lame – weak in faith; halt (stumbling) between two opinions – the Law and grace

Proverbs 4:25 *Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.* 26 *Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.* 27 *Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.*

In our walk with the Lord:

Verse 14 – pursue peace with all

pursue holiness – or cannot see God: *see* – gaze intently, even in amazement

Mat. 5:8 *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*

Verse 15 – or will be distracted and pulled off course.

Looking diligently = beware, take the oversight. YOU are responsible.

Then we will all get to the finish line, AND serve God well along the way.

Then a warning – verse 15

Do not fail of the grace of God, that is, fall short. This is getting caught in the works of the flesh, in hindrances or in sin. It is NOT losing salvation, it is just not enjoying God's grace in you life at that time.

Do not let a root of bitterness sprout up in you. This causes trouble and causes you to sin. Who plants the seed of it? Satan. The seed of it is errors, heresies, and various kinds of sins. Often others stir it up in us through their sin.

Just be aware.

Let God help you out of this trap if it ever tries to get hold of you.

1 Pet. 5:6 *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:* 7 *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.* 8 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:* 9 *Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.* 10 *But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.* 11 *To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

So picture yourself ready to race, there with the other children of God. We look to Jesus – He is at the starting gate and all the way to the finish line. Keep looking at HIM. Stuff tries to throw you off – just keep going, just flick off those nuisances, looking unto the Lord. Accept the Lord's "course corrections" and keep going. We will all win!

23 *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;*

24 *Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance:
for ye serve the Lord Christ.*

– Colossians 3:23-24