



Bethel South Sermon Notes – “*Finish Well*”

Speaker: Ps Julie Gowans

Series: Jesus Is Better

Scripture: Hebrews 12–13

Main Idea

Because Jesus is better, we can run our race with endurance. He has given us access to an unshakable kingdom, so we don't have to quit when life gets hard—we keep our eyes fixed on Him and encourage one another to finish well.

1. Run Your Race with Endurance

The writer of Hebrews addresses believers who were spiritually exhausted. They loved Jesus, but they were growing weary and were tempted to give up.

That picture isn't far from where many people find themselves today. We live in an age of exhaustion, where weariness often reaches beyond our bodies into our souls.

But we are not running alone.

Hebrews reminds us that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses—men and women who faithfully finished their race and now testify that following Jesus is worth it.

To run well, we must intentionally remove anything that slows us down.

Not everything that hinders us is sinful.

There are:

- **Sinful things that entangle us.**
- **Permissible things that aren't wrong but still weigh us down.**
- **Beneficial things that strengthen our walk with Christ.**

One practical example is how we begin our day. Reaching for our phones first can immediately fill our minds with stress, distraction, and anxiety. Giving God our first attention instead positions our hearts to run the race with endurance.

2. Keep Your Eyes on Jesus

Jesus is both the Author and the Finisher of our faith.

He has already completed the race perfectly and now sits at the finish line, inviting us to keep running toward Him.

Our confidence is not found in our own strength but in His finished work.

He has already provided everything we need for life and godliness.

The goal is not simply to survive life.

The goal is to faithfully finish.

3. See Trials as Training, Not Punishment

One of the enemy's greatest lies is convincing believers that hardship means God is angry with them.

Hebrews teaches the opposite.

Jesus already took the punishment for our sins on the cross.

God does not punish His children.

He lovingly disciplines and trains them.

Just as a loving father develops his children, God uses difficulties to mature us, strengthen our faith, and help us become more like Christ.

Rather than resisting every trial, we can trust that God is producing something eternal through it.

Transformation often waits on the other side of perseverance.

4. Run Together

The Christian life was never designed to be lived alone.

The command to strengthen weak knees and weary hands is given to the Church as a community.

We need one another.

We are called to:

- **Encourage one another.**
- **Help each other stay on course.**
- **Watch for bitterness before it takes root.**
- **Strengthen those who are growing weary.**

Isolation makes us vulnerable.

Biblical community keeps us moving forward.

Like Esau, we can be tempted to settle for temporary relief instead of lasting blessing.

Instead of running toward quick fixes, we are called to run toward Jesus.

5. Live as Citizens of an Unshakable Kingdom

Hebrews contrasts two mountains.

Mount Sinai represented fear, distance, and the holiness of God under the Old Covenant.

Mount Zion represents God's presence made accessible through Jesus Christ.

God has not become less holy.

Our access has become greater.

Through the blood of Jesus, we can confidently approach God because the barrier between us has been removed.

Everything built on this world will eventually be shaken.

Only God's kingdom remains.

Because we belong to His unshakable kingdom, we should build our lives on Christ—the only foundation that cannot be moved.

Living the "Jesus Is Better" Life

Hebrews concludes with practical instructions for everyday discipleship.

As citizens of God's kingdom, we are called to:

- **Love one another sincerely.**
- **Practice hospitality.**
- **Honor and pray for spiritual leaders.**
- **Live with gratitude and reverence.**
- **Continue doing good.**
- **Finish the race with perseverance.**

Our lives should demonstrate that Jesus truly is better than anything this world has to offer.

Final Challenge

Don't quit.

Lay aside every weight that is slowing you down.

Fix your eyes on Jesus.

Trust that every trial can become training in God's hands.

Stay connected to God's family.

Build your life on His unshakable kingdom, and keep running until you faithfully finish the race He has set before you.

Discussion Questions

1. Hebrews encourages us to "lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us." What's one weight in your life that may not be sinful but is keeping you from running your race well?

2. Ps Mike described the difference between permissible things and beneficial things. How can you become more intentional about choosing what is beneficial instead of simply what is permissible?
3. How does understanding that trials are God's loving discipline—not His punishment—change the way you view difficult seasons in your life?
4. The sermon emphasized that following Jesus is a community journey, not a solo one. How have other believers strengthened your faith, and how can you intentionally strengthen someone else this week?
5. Hebrews reminds us that we are receiving an unshakable kingdom. What are you currently building your life on, and what practical step can you take this week to keep your eyes fixed on Jesus rather than temporary things?