

Fixing our Eyes on Jesus: Running The Race

Pastor Peter Smith 10-26-14

“Such a large crowd of witnesses is all around us! So we must get rid of everything that slows us down, especially the sin that just won’t let go. And we must be determined to run the race that is ahead of us. ²We must keep our eyes on Jesus, who leads us and makes our faith complete. He endured the shame of being nailed to a cross, because he knew that later on he would be glad he did. Now he is seated at the right side of God’s throne!³ So keep your mind on Jesus, who put up with many insults from sinners. Then you won’t get discouraged and give up.”

-Heb. 12:1-3, CEV

To thrive spiritually:

1. We must **lay some things aside** (*renounce or reject*)

“Such a large crowd of witnesses is all around us! So we must get rid of everything that slows us down, especially the sin that just won’t let go. And we must be determined to run the race that is ahead of us.”

A. Remember, we are not alone in this race!

1. Others have gone before and are in it NOW!
2. An important reason to be connected to a local church is this reminder: public worship, bible studies, friendships, Chili Luncheons!

B. What should I / have I laid aside?

1. **"every weight" of this life**
 - a. things which slow down our spiritual progress
 - 1) “Big” things like "hatred, revenge, and cares of this life" and “Little” things like filthy language, gossip, partying or more
 - 2) False teachings (do this and God will love you! Instead of grace)
 - b. Such things make "running the race of faith" extra hard
2. **"sin that just won’t let go” (familiar sin, my sin)**
 - a. Of course, any and all sin should be laid aside

- b. But the writer is talking about sin around us, close to us, familiar to us
- c. Be diligent to big and little things in your walk

(To Thrive spiritually)

2. We must have **endurance**

A. Our race of faith is a Marathon, not a Sprint!

- 1. We think it's a "One Time Shot", fail, and then give up
- 2. But really our "race" requires endurance for a lifetime!

B. Endurance implies **patience**

- 1. Jesus taught His disciples this
 - a. In the parable of The Sower (growth takes time)
 - b. Kingdom of God is like yeast
- 2. The writer to the Hebrews says,
 - ¹¹ We wish that each of you would always be eager to show how strong and lasting your hope really is. ¹² Then you would never be lazy. You would be following the example of those who had faith and were patient until God kept his promise." –Heb. 6:11-12, CEV
 - How long will it be before God gives victory? We don't know! But He will!!!!
 - Hold on to God
- 3. We can develop such patience with the help of the Scriptures

"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope." -Rom. 15:4, NIV

So to thrive we need to lay aside sin, have endurance, and thirdly

III. We need to focus **on Jesus**

"We must focus on Jesus, the source and goal of our faith. He saw the joy ahead of him, so he endured death on the cross and ignored the disgrace it brought him. Then he received the highest position in

heaven, the one next to the throne of God.”
Translation

-vs. 3, God’s Word

A. “Keep Our Eyes on Jesus” (**Gaze**) not other things

1. Get to know Him, read about Him, talk to Him daily, never look away as you run your race
 - It’s ok to look to the examples of others, but Jesus is always the best example!
2. Jesus is "the author and finisher of our faith"
 - Faith begins and ends in Him
3. Jesus finished his race by looking at "the joy set before Him"
 - He would sit with God
 - He would make a way for all of us to be with him
 - Though hard, His life had purpose, meaning

B. Focus before the cross and after

1. **Before:** He endured the hardship of a life dedicated to God—so made it, so can we. Stay committed to God
2. **After:** He offers forgiveness, fresh starts, do-overs!

CONCLUSION

1. “**The Race Of Faith**” is for a lifetime
 - Develop good habits NOW that will help you win
 - Get rid of sin TODAY
 - Stay connected to help you Gaze on Jesus

Listen to God’s Promise:

"For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise..." (Hebrews 10:36)