RUNNING WITH PATIENCE

**DATE: 2/4/2015 Wed**

**TEXT: Hebrews 12:1-4**

**INTRODUCTION**

The *“****wherefore”*** at the beginning of **v.1** points us back to **chapter 11**

Whenever there is a *Wherefore* see what it is *Therefore*

Paul has just expounded on the Doctrine of Faith

He has backed up his teaching with the testimony of many of the Old Testament saints

Now Paul moves on (in **chapter 12**) to make an application of his teaching

**Application -** *the use something is put to* or *the process of putting it to use*

The first 3 verses of **Hebrews 12** are the climax of **Hebrews 11**

Just as God's people in the Old Testament endured sufferings and trial,

New Testament believers must realize they will do the same

At the end of **v.1** we have this statement made …

***“let us run with patience the race that is set before us”***

**Patience** - *the ability to endure waiting, delay, or provocation without becoming annoyed or upset, or to persevere calmly when faced with difficulties*

Let’s pray and then Look at this thought …

***“Running With Patience”***

***~~~Prayer~~~***

**I. THE “CONTEST” – v.1a**

***“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses …”***

Paul continues to draw upon the lives of the OT saints to illustrate the importance of Persistent Faith

The Persistent – *are those who continue despite problems or difficulties*

**A. The ‘Imagery’ – v.1a1**

***“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about…”***

The imagery here is taken from the Greek Olympics of Paul's day

Paul often used the metaphor of a foot race to describe the Christian life

We see this illustrated in …

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

**Galatians 5:7 – *“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?”***

**Philippians 2:16 – *“Holding forth the Word of Life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain”***

The Christian life is likened to a foot race

The race that Paul spoke of was not a sprint but a marathon

It’s a long grueling race that demands perseverance and endurance

The Christian life is not for spectators,

It’s a race of those who’ll run the distance for Christ

Unfortunately most so-called Christians are just that …

Spectators!

**Matt. 9:37 –** ***“… the labourers are few …”***

**The ‘Imagery’**

**B. The ‘Incentive’ – v.1a2**

Paul says, we are ***“compassed about”*** (surrounded) …

***“…with so great a cloud of witnesses …”***

Many of us have heard that these witnesses refer to OT saints who now sit in the heavenly grandstands and cheer us on in our race

The word ***“witness”*** used here carries the idea of *testifying*

It is the word from which we get our word *martyr*

A **martyr** is *someone who bears testimony with his life*

**John 15:13 –** ***“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life …”***

Now the word ***“witnesses”*** does not mean that these saints mentioned in **chapter 11** sit as spectators watching us from Heaven

How would you like Heaven … if you had to sit there

and watch everything that was happening in this sin-sick world?

The point made here is that the lives of these OT saints bear record of God's Faithfulness and the Fact that we must Persevere

They are not so much witnesses OF us,

But witness TO us

Their life is a testimony FOR us

The emphasis here is on the importance of Persistent Faith

**THE “CONTEST” is Running the Christian Race**

Unfortunately most people / Christians are on the side lines just watching

**II. THE “CHALLENGE” – v.1b**

***“… let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,”***

Something **Challenging** – *testing one's abilities; demanding*

The first Challenge is …

**A. ‘Readiness’ – v.1b1**

We must ***“… lay aside every weight,”***

The runner must be in good shape

You don't wait until the day of the race to start

The training takes place long before the competition begins

He must drop all excess weight lest you’re hindered in the race

The word *“****weight”*** means *a mass, a burden,* or *a hindrance*

A ***“weight”*** is anything that hinders us from running the Christian race

No one would run a race and expect to win if he was caring extra weight

Everyone knows that if you are going to run a race, you don't put on a backpack!

No one runs a race with a suitcase!

Athletes work out and train to lose excess body weight

Why? Because it slows them down

Now … Spiritually speaking

A weight is not an outright sin

However, a weight slows us down and hampers our run

There are a lot of Christians, who are not committing outright sin,

But their life is so weighed down that they are greatly hindered in their relationship with Christ

Paul said – *“****lay aside every weight”***

(That’s an Imperative, by the way!)

Anything which slows us down and hinders our race must be avoided

You may not be so concern today, but there’s coming a day when (if things don’t change) you’d wished you had done it differently

But then it will be too late

Readiness is also *Willingness*

**‘Readiness’**

The second **Challenge** will be …

**B. ‘Repentance’ – v.1b2**

***“…and the sin which doth so easily beset us,”***

The word *“****sin”*** speaks of that which *violates God's law*

It carries the idea of *missing the mark*

The idea is that of falling short of God’s Holy mark

**Romans 3:23 - *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”***

Sin causes us to miss the mark God has set for us

Do you know what God’s Expectations are?

Do you even care?

Notice the article ***“the” … “the sin”***

This speaks of specific sin(s)

Notice that *this sin* *“****doth … easily beset us”***

The word *“****beset”*** means *to surround, encompass entangle*

The picture is of something wrapped around the feet

Like an animal entangled in a net

We allow things to entangle us

And that is exactly what happens!

That is what sin does! It entangles us!

Therefore, we are to ***“lay aside”*** sin

That is … we are to Repent of it!

**‘Readiness’ –** *willingness*

**‘Repentance’ –** *change of direction*

The next Challenge is …

**C. ‘Resolve’ – v.1b3**

Next we are to …

***“… run with patience the race that is set before us,”***

The word ***“patience”*** is a compound word in the original language

The first part of the word means *under* and the second part means to *abide or to remain*

***“Patience”*** means *to remain under*

*The idea is to bear up under a load*

Our life ought to marked by perseverance and endurance

 We must **resolve** / have **determination -** *firmness of purpose*, be **decisive -** *a firm decision to do something*

No matter what’s going on

**THE “CONTEST”** is our Christian Race / our life

**THE “CHALLENGE”** is to lay aside the sin and weights

So … How are we going to be able to do that?

**III. THE “CONCENTRATION” – v.2**

We must Concentrate and Focus

**Concentrate** – *to think intensely, to devote effort to one thing*

We must Concentrate and Focus on the Lord Jesus Christ

***“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God”***

The word *“****looking”*** means *to focus or to keep the eyes fixed on*

It means to fix your gaze upon and to look exclusively without distraction

The idea is to give complete attention to that which is before you

Like a runner in a race Concentrates and focuses on the finish line, we are to have our eye fixed on Christ

Too many Christians are looking at the preacher or some other personality (whether positively or negatively)

Many are looking to movements of men and promoters of programs (whether positively or negatively)

Some poor preachers can't think outside of their Bible College education

They are looking everywhere … except to Jesus Christ

If we are going to do well in this race we must keep our eyes on the Lord

We are to Focus (Concentrate) on Christ because of...

**A. His ‘Preeminence’ – v. 2a**

He’s not the first of many, He’s the Only One

Jesus is ***“the author and finisher of our faith”***

I'm glad that it doesn't just say ***“author”***

Rather it makes it clear that He will finish what He started

**Phil. 1:6 – *“Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:”***

The word ***“confident”*** here in **Phil. 1:6** means to *be fully persuaded*

What an encouragement!

Despite life's doubts and difficulties, regardless of the failures and falls, in spite of the hindrances & hardships

We can have Confidence that our salvation is certain

**II Tim 1:12 – *“…for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day”***

Salvation isn’t just having your sin forgiven and having eternal life

Yes; you are Saved from the Penalty of Sin

But, we are now being Delivered from the Power of sin

And one day, we will be Freed from the Present of sin

When our race is finished we will be glorified

From the start Jesus Christ will see us through

It's all about Him!

According to **Col. 1:8** ***“in all things He”*** … is to … ***“have the preeminent”***

Jesus Christ is the author and finisher of our faith

That means that the whole race, from start to finish is for Him

We focus on Christ because of His **Preeminence,** and because of...

**B. His ‘Passion’ – v.2b**

He... ***“for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame”***

Jesus ran His race with Passion

His course took him from Heaven to Bethlehem

Then on to Gethsemane and finally to Calvary

With a willing and obedient faith, Christ ran the course His Father put before Him

**John 8:29 – *“…the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him”***

Jesus ***“endured the cross, despising the shame”***

Though we have the biblical account of His suffering,

Our finite minds can't even begin to comprehend all that it entails

The sinless and perfect Son of God came to this earth and was ridiculed, rejected, slapped, whipped, spit upon and nailed to a cross

He suffered the shame and agony of Calvary in the sinners place

We are to Focus on Christ because of **His ‘Preeminence’, His ‘Passion’** and...

**C. His ‘Position’ – v. 2c**

Now … Jesus … ***“is set down at the right hand of the throne of God”***

Jesus traded His glory for an old rugged cross and all the shame that goes with it

But now His work of salvation is finished and He is sitting again in the presence of God

There at the right hand of God, Jesus serves as our great High Priest

With Jesus there and ever serving to make intercession for me, I can ***“run with patience”***

**THE “CONTEST”** is our Christian Race / our life

**THE “CHALLENGE”** is to lay aside the sin and weights

**THE “CONCENTRATION”** is on the Author and Finisher of our Faith

**IV. THE “CONSIDERATION” – v.3**

**A. The ‘Encouragement’ – v.3a**

***“For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself,***

The word *“****consider”*** means to *take account of*

It carries the idea of calculation

As we run the race we are to Consider Christ who ran before us

We are to Focus on Him, Consider His Sufferings and Calculate His Reward

He has finished His course and is now seated at the right hand of God

We too will sit down some day with Him

**I Peter 1:21-23 – *“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps:” “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth:” “Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously:”***

**B. The ‘Warning’ - v.3b**

***“lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds”***

***“lest” –*** *in case, in order to prevent something happening, especially something causing fear*

**Gal. 6:9– *“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not”***

**CONCLUSION – v.4**

***“Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin”***

We are reminded as we close out these verses that our sufferings do not compare to the shame and punishment Christ endured in our place

We have not suffered near as much for our stand on behalf of Him as He did in standing for us

It has not cost us our blood to resist the onslaught of sin

I get tired of hearing folks whine about how much they had to give up to be a Christian

We need to keep in mind the terrible price Jesus Christ paid and we will realize that we have nothing to complain about

**THE “CONTENT”**

**THE “CHALLENGE”**

**THE “CONCENTRATION”**

**THE “CONSIDERATION”**