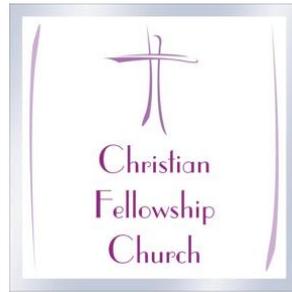


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Ministry of the Word

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by Vincent Gannon

**Scripture:** Hebrews 12: 1-4

**Subject:** Part 40 – Finishing Well the Race

*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> 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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup> For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. <sup>4</sup> You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.*

**Therefore**, as we know, means, in the light of what we have looked at. Now as we enter into this chapter, there is a change of intensity because the author of Hebrews is saying, now in the light of all those examples, how are **you** getting on? I don't want you to shout out the answer to me, but as we go through these four verses, you will be required to really reflect on this question, and if you want to grow as a Christian, be honest with yourself, God already knows the truth. When we read the bible, we see that Christian living is compared to many things, for instances to warfare. Paul exhorts us to endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ in 2 Timothy 2:3, remember to put on the full armour of God ready for war in Ephesians 6:11, It is compared to a fight, fought by a boxer in 1 Corinthians 9:26 and 2 Timothy 4:7. The Christian is often referred to as a slave of Jesus Christ, a title that Paul often used to describe himself. Jesus described us as light and salt in the world in Matthew 5:13-16. On the other hand, Peter describes only young believers as babies and all Christians as living stones in 1 Peter 2:2 and 5.

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Here in these verses, we are compared to “runners” in a race. The Race as is described here, is from where you are to eternity. To compete you have to be one of “us” which is used in verse 1, that is to say, a believer in Christ. You will meet many professors at the starting line and along the way but not across the finishing line. It reminds me of the story about the tortoise and the hare. Do you remember that? The hare started off well but he got complacent and didn’t finish well. This is a concern within the Book of Hebrews. One of the chief problems with the Hebrew Christians to whom this letter is addressed is that they have set out on the race but, after a good start (10:32-34), are now slackening in the will to persevere: their effort is decreasing (2:1), sin is holding them back (3:17&4:1), they need to recover their intensity of purpose (4:11), to shake off the sluggish mood into which they have fallen (6:11), to regain their confidence (10:35&39) and their competitive spirit (12:12). The consideration that they are performing, as it were, in the presence and with the example of the veterans of the faith who courageously bore testimony in the centuries leading up to Christ's advent, should remind them that they are engaging in a contest of the utmost seriousness and that their goal belongs not to the realm of time but of eternity.

No-one starts a race to end poorly, but one runs a race to end well. We need to learn not just how to start well but how to finish well. Finishing well is vital to the Christian journey. How are we, in our day and age, able to finish well? As Christian this should be our goal in life, to say like Paul ‘I’ve fought the good fight’, and that you finished well, keeping the faith.

### **Run with Endurance**

If you want to finish well, you need to run with endurance. The Christian life is not a 100 metre dash, it’s more like a marathon. It’s a long distance run. When you look at a long race, some start off racing ahead, at full speed. If they stay like that for a while, they will soon run out of energy and the others will pass by. The thing is, you only win when you cross the finish line at the end. It’s not good enough for you just to start well, but you must end well. The application is this, some of you as young believers, had great passion, but as you went on, life taking over and so does its toll, some start to slow down, even fall back, maybe without even realising it.

Some remember the old days, the days of glory, but this is not good enough. You need to look forward to what God still has in store for you. You need to be open to what God wants

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you to do. You are still in the race. Years ago you may have had great Godly ambitions, Many of us, and I'm including myself said, *'I'm going to do this for God, lay down my life, it doesn't matter'*. That was your passion then, but, *how about now?* Surrounded by friends, family, daily living, daily struggles, you have cooled off, you have stopped running, you've said to yourself *'I ran very well in the days when I was younger, surely that's good enough'*. But that is like those who take off quickly in a race, cheering themselves on in the first few 100 metres, but then the race gets hard and they fall back. Remember the winners are those who preserve and finish.

Some of you are better half-ers. You think *'I served the Lord for 20/30/40 years of my life. It's time for me to relax and slow down, let the younger generation take over'*. But take over what? It's your race! If you want them to rise up and serve, and you want to mentor and be a help to them, that's wonderful but if you want them to rise so you can sit on the side lines, well, that's a different story. Don't let yourself do that, watching them run. That's like running half way in a race then stepping to the side and saying that you'll cheer everyone else on, but what's the point in that, why start off in the first place then? You have to run your race, right up until the end, not just start well but finish well. *God has not called you home yet folks!*

Some think they're already home, they think they are the ultimate saint. Their attitude is, *'I've served with great passion in the past, I'm a very good example of what a Christian is, (well on the outside anyway), now I've reached retirement.'* No!! No such thing!! The Heroes of the Faith didn't retire, you need to run with endurance. This is not the 100 metre dash, it's a marathon.

Please don't think what I'm saying is out of a mean spirit, but this is really important to how you run and finish *your* race. We can mince around with words all day, but this is the bottom line. You may have 10, 20, even more years, or you may have 5 years or less, but don't stop until you've reached the finishing line. You need to go over the finishing line. In order to do so, the Bible tells us that we must run with endurance. It's not easy and no-where in the bible will you see that it is. In fact, Jesus warned us that we would face many troubles. G.K. Chesterton wrote – ***Jesus promised his disciples three things, that they would be completely fearless, absurdly happy and in constant trouble'***

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The word *race* here in the original Greek is Agon. It's a close relation to agonas meaning agony. This race demands great energy and great effort. This is not a stroll in the park, it can be agonising, that is what this is saying. Anyone who runs will tell you of the physical and mental pain they face. Athletes are required to prepare for the race and the Christian life requires commitment, discipline, and great perseverance. Let's be clear. God is not against effort but He is against earning. You can't earn your way to heaven, you can't earn to please Him or earn His favour; but, you need to put in effort into your Christian walk. You need to pursue God. Put in the effort. Put in the effort to spend time with God, to read His word, to Hear the preaching, to speak with God, to wait on Him, Listen to Him, Put in the effort to serve Him, to give to Him, to use your talents, it may require sacrifice. It's all necessary.

So if you are a better half-er, or someone who has slowed down in their race in life, it's time to step up again, it's time to enter back into your agon, your effort is required because that's what it take to finish well.

### **Endurance**

The word for endurance in the Greek is Hupomone, meaning steadfastness, constancy, to bear under pressure. This word endurance is actually key in this chapter, verses 1, 2, 3, 7 and 20. It's the exhortation for people who were looking to give up, unsure if they can hold on, and they are being encouraged to hold on, don't let go, endure. Endurance is a lost virtue in our society. These days when life is difficult we tend to want to quite, give up, get out from under the situation. But in order to go forward and finish well, the bible says you need to endure, you need to stay under that difficulty, stay under and allow God to be God in the situation and move for your benefit in the situation, under the pain, through the persecution, under the difficult circumstance. Don't quite, keep going! Then you will finish well. Some of you are going through sickness, pain, trials, broken-hearts, brokenness, family problems, uncertainty, fears, doubts, loss of income. It can be tempting to just throw your hands in the air and say that's enough, I've had enough. I'm not going to follow Jesus, I'm going to just to my own thing. Then you would have just dropped out of your race, don't do that, run with the joy set before you.

Let me share with you a story, that maybe some of you will remember or even just know. In 1968, Mexico held the Olympics. As the closing ceremony was just over and the medals had

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all been given out, and people were beginning to leave the stadium, an announcement came over the speakers saying *'Ladies and Gentlemen, if you could please stay back'*. Then the next thing they heard was police and ambulance sirens coming closer and then they saw flashing lights coming into the stadium. From a distance, one man could be seen limping and trudging into the stadium. Then another announcement came, *'Ladies and Gentlemen, please be seated, we have the last runner from the marathon.'* Everyone was shocked. What, the last runner from the marathon? The awards had been given already, the closing ceremony had ended, and this is the last runner? It was over an hour since the last man had made the journey. Then as they looked on quistively, the story of this man was made known.

This last man was from Tanzania. His name was John Steven Akhwari. He was limping into the stadium because half way, he had a very bad fall. As a result, he damaged his shoulder, dislocated his knee, banged his head and was trampled on by several runners. But he got up, it is said that a voice from within, told him to keep going and so he agonised his way towards the stadium, towards the finish line. The crowds that were left, were amazed. Who is this man from Tanzania? So they got behind him and cheered him on, and eventual he crossed the line. When he did, it is reported that the crowd were so loud, and there was so much cheering and applauding that the crowd was actually louder, than it had been for the winner of the marathon that year. It is said that Akhwari had the greatest last place finish ever. The next day when he was asked 'Sir, why didn't you just quite, why didn't you just drop out? You were seriously injured and in pain, why continue? He answered them saying 'My country did not send me 5,000 miles to start the race. They sent me 5,000 miles to finish it'.

God did not send you here to just to start a race, but He saved you, He redeemed you and has kept you so that you may finish your race. Champions finish what they start. Christians finish what God had started in their lives. The lesson here is clear. May God give us the grace to continue the race like John Steven Akhwari.

But to finish well we are given advice in verse 1 as the Amplified Bible puts it –  
***let us strip off and throw aside every encumbrance (unnecessary weight) and that sin which so readily (deftly and cleverly) clings to and entangles us***

The unfettered Christian is the one who is fit and ready to run the race that is set before them and does so with perseverance. Here we see two things that must be dealt with;

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encumbrances and sin. Two different things, but both can slow you down. We are reminded that we need to remove our encumbrances. Encumbrances are anything that is unnecessary which weighs you down, that is, everything that would hinder you and hold you back.

This makes sense, if you want to run fast and you really want to finish well, than make it easier on yourself, and remove the things that weigh you down. The best runners are always the really skinny ones, without an ounce of fat on them. They wear lose, light and small clothing. They don't wear coats, hats, scarves, hiking boots, haversacks. If you want to finish the race than you need to deal with the weight problem. This Weight problem is very significant and how we deal with it is also important. It reminds me of the story, of a man who gets on the weighing scales and sucks his tummy in. His wife, happens to be walking past just at the right time, and says to him *'Dear, that's not going to help you in anyway'* and he says *'Of course it will, how else am I going to see the numbers'*. You see if you don't deal with it properly, you will probably still be holding onto the weight, maybe just in a different way.

So what are these things that are being referred to here. These may refer to things that may be innocent in and of themselves, in fact, there are many things that are not necessarily sinful but can weigh you down and **for you**, they need to put aside. They are the things that interfere with your relationship with God. Perhaps computer games, football, crafts, television, movies, music, books, things that are not bad in and of themselves, but they can weigh you down. Why? Because they are interfering with your relationship with God. We need to be honest in our approach to this. These encumbrances take away our time from serving God or seeking God. We need to prioritize. When we look at our spiritual life, and we're not spending the time as we should with God, we are not coming to church, or maybe we are coming to church but it's becoming routine, a box to be ticked, we're annoyed that it takes longer than what we want it to, we must be honest and say, there is a problem. We must say, this is enough. There are things that may be important but your spiritual life is far more important. God is more important. We need to lay aside those things. Jobs, studies, lifestyles, hobbies, all not bad things but if they keep you from moving forward well then, they are weighing you down. It's time to prioritize.

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J. Wilbur Chapman said – *'My life is governed by this rule: Anything that dims my vision of Christ or takes away my taste for Bible study, or cramps my prayer life or makes Christian work difficult is wrong for me, and I must as a Christian, turn away from it.'*

What is the weight in your life? You must be honest with yourself and before God. Is it a relationship, a job, part of your lifestyle, study, ambition, hobbies, a possession, a title? Are these things wrong? No, not necessarily, but if it hinders you then it becomes wrong for you. Even emotions such fear or anxiety can weigh you down. If it stops you from running the race that is set before you, you need to set it aside, or deal with it so you can continue. As Christians, we need to discipline ourselves and shun every excess which hampers or incapacitates us as a participant in the greatest of all contests.

Then there is Sin, which is a different issue. Sin wages war against the soul, it hinders us from following God. This is clear and we know this. Remember we were told not to be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. We need to divest sin which clings to us so closely. It is sin of whatever kind that impedes us, it can make us numb or it can slow us down in the spiritual race. Indeed, self-discipline is itself an integral part of the daily spiritual contest, for *"the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh"*; the two are *"opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would,"* and only through *"living by the Spirit"* will this conflict be won (Galatians 5:16-25; Romans 7:14-25). I'm sure we all know that we have to put aside sin, we need to repent of our sins and ask God for forgiveness so that we may finish well.

A runner doesn't put on her high heels and dress up with jewellery and what not, she may look lovely running but she won't run long. Would a real runner want to run like that? No way! Because a real runner has a very clear goal, finish the race well, therefore, lay down the unnecessary things. Choose what is best, not what is o.k. or what looks good on the outside. Maybe some of you are choosing what is good over what is great. That's your problem. Many Christians don't necessarily choose bad things, some do and need to lay aside sin, but sometimes you choose good. But the good things hinder us from the great things. We need to make a choice.

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Many of the Hebrew Christians to whom this letter was written had started well. They had seen signs and wonders and were thrilled with their new lives (Hebrews 2:4). But as the new wore away a bit and the problems began to arise, they began to lose their enthusiasm and their confidence. They started looking back at the old ways of Judaism, and around them and ahead of them at the persecution and suffering, and they began to weaken and waver. The Spirit of God cries out to all in that state with the words as found in Philippians 2:15 which says –

*that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,*

There is nothing as meaningless as being in a race where you have no desire to win. I believe that this lack of desire to win is a basic problem with many today. They are content only to be saved and to wait to go to heaven. They lack endurance, desire to be the best that they can be for the Lord. They don't mind holding back from the Lord but they would be terribly upset if they even thought that the Lord held back from them. The author of Hebrews is telling us, we need to run with endurance, put in the effort and keep going on. Make your life easier by removing the things that are weighing you down and remove sin from your lives. Choices in life need to be made, lay aside good for great.

To finish well, remember the **encouragement**.

There are many encouragements in the Scripture. I'm going to have to take after the author of this book in Hebrews and say, for the time would fail me to go through them all. Here in this chapter, the author says '**look behind you**'. Behind us, as we've been through already, is chapter 11 and looked at the great examples given. Here in this verse, the picture is painted that we are contenders for the faith, in the arena of life, surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, namely, those champions of faith and the perseverance of earlier generations, crowded, as it were, row upon row within the encircling amphitheatre. They are witnesses to us, in the sense that they have proven themselves to be unflinching processors of the faith and have overcome by the word of their testimony. Let's just turn to Revelation 12:11 –

*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.*

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They are "the glorious company of martyrs", faithful in their witness both in life and even in death. They all had faith, they all endured, that all ran their race, they all finished well and because they've done it, so can you. Where they perfect, no, but they kept going. They all had their own course to run, each one was different, yet they had the same goal. Their focus was the same, to end well. These were ordinary people who done it, and they did so because of the power of faith. Be encouraged. All those examples went through many difficulties in their lives, and their lives are there to be read by us, to inspire us and encourage us. Romans 15:4 tells us - *For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*

The supreme concern in Scripture is that you endure in your pilgrimage, that you keep obeying, serving and following Christ. They have triumphantly completed their course, and we who are now contestants in the arena should be inspired by their example to give of our utmost in the struggle.

Not only does it tell us to look back, but it tells us to look up in verse 2. **Look up** to Jesus. So, we look to Jesus as "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession" (Hebrews 3:1). He is our perfect example. Jesus gave us our faith, the founder and perfecter of our faith. He is the finisher of our faith also. Finisher in the Greek means to bring to an ultimate end. As Philippians 1 verse 6 tells us – *“being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”*

Verses 2 and 3 invites us to consider Jesus. In His whole earthly life He endured. Verse 3 tells us that He *endured such hostility from sinners against Himself.* The word for *Hostility* in the Greek is *anti-logia*, which means to *speak against*, in *opposition* and its used in Jude, where this same word is translated as *rebellion*. The sinners spoken of here includes, you and I. Verse 3 is what He had to endure because of what we done to Him. In Verse 2 He *endured the cross, despising the shame.* This is what He endured on our behalf. It is important to recognize that the shame of the cross, where Christ bore the sins of the world, is something infinitely more intense than just the pain of the cross. Others suffered the pain of crucifixion, but he alone endured the shame of human depravity in all its foulness and degradation. He endured separation from God as He bore our sin and the sins of all those who would believe

in Him, throughout all the ages. He became "*the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him*" (Hebrews 5:8).

Jesus had to endure so much in His life, such as poverty, persecution, rejection, pain, grief, betrayal, mocked, afflicted, slander against, unjustly treated, falsely accused; in all these things and more, Jesus is our greatest example because throughout it all, He remained perfect, He remained obedient to the Father, He embodied compassion and grace, He continually trusted God, He was total dependant on the Father, He did the will of the Father, although tempted, He never gave into it, He was entirely committed in His relationship with the Father. In looking up to Jesus, then, we are looking to him who is the supreme champion of faith, the one who, beyond all others, not only set out on the course of faith but also pursued it without wavering to the end. He, accordingly, is uniquely qualified to be the supplier and Sustainer of the faith of His followers.

We must continually concentrate on Jesus, our only Mediator, who is not ashamed to call us brethren (2:11) and who, when our faith is being tested, not only shines as an example for us to follow but also supplies the grace for us to go on. Like Stephen in the hour of his martyrdom (Acts 7:55.) we need to be so totally involved that, with singleness of purpose and undistracted by all that is going on around us, we need to fix our gaze firmly on Him, who is both the goal and the prize. The apostle Paul could testify that he had suffered the loss of things which this world counts dear but he regarded them as rubbish, in order that he might win Christ (Philippians 3:8). This same intensity of purpose that Stephen and Paul shared, is same characteristics of the victors of faith who had competed prior to Christ coming. Moses, for example, as we were reminded in chapter 11 verse 26, considered the agonies of the race greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt precisely because he looked away from present sufferings and fixed his attention on Him who is the reward, for "*he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.*"

One of the major things we can learn from Jesus as our example, is how He ran his race. It was not just the endurance, but also He had his eyes set on the eternal. Verse 2 tells us that his focus was on *the joy that was set before.* What was the joy? Well there are many suggestions by scholars. There's lots of good answers and possibilities. One is that the joy He seen was, you and I, the redeemed. We see in John 17 verses 20 to 26 as Jesus spoke to His

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Father, He prayed that we would have a shared identity in the truth as well as a shared glory with Him. Jesus went to that cross so that He would conquer sin and death, He did not need it for Himself but He did it for us. He was victorious over sin and death when he arose and after 40 days He ascended into Heaven. Then He *sat down at the right hand of the throne of God*. Our living and Loving Redeemer told us in Revelation 3:21:

*“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”*

Now wonder it says in the end of verse 3 - *lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls*. In modern terms, we would say, it's when a runner hits the wall. It's a place of exhaustion, it's a place when your body begins to shut down, this is when endurance is required, time to put one foot in front of the other. Spiritually speaking we can hit the wall. The enemy will do everything in its power to distract you from your goal. Satan is the king of distraction. He will do whatever to either distract you or get you down so as to take you out of the race.

Verse 4 tells us - *You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin*.

Who can strive against sin by bloodshed? There are two possible ways to look at this verse.

Firstly it could be, that the first sin that is being spoken of in this verse is sin, as in our nature. How could anyone shed blood in their struggle against sin. You could see bloodshed and percussion for your faith, but not for your sin. Only Jesus could have done this for us, because only Jesus is the perfect lamb able to take away our sin. The way to resist this sin isn't just by reading the bible but living it out, as well as the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly it could be, the sin of turning away from God so as not to experience bloodshed. The sin is being tempted to step out of the race, so as not to face persecution or death. We need to think about what Jesus had to suffer in light of our own suffering and think about the Joy also that awaits us. Therefore, the author is saying in light of this don't quite, keep moving, fixing your eyes on Jesus as our example and what he has done, resist temptation to step out of the race and keep running, run until the finish line.

Corrie Ten Boom said – *“If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you'll be depressed. But if you look at Christ, you'll be at rest”*

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Look up! Jesus enables us. This is the great hope. You know unlike any other race, the Christian race is not ran by yourself. God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, Yes the Triune God, comes and helps us. If you are thinking of giving up, look up to Jesus.

So not only do we look around us, look up but we can **look forward**.

Like Jesus who looked at the joy set before him, we too, must run this race being encouraged that we too can look forward to the joy set before us. 1 Corinthians 9v24&25 tells us –

*Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.*

The athletes motivation was a perishable wreath or crown, but as Christians our crown is imperishable, its eternal. Therefore don't quit, because you too will get a wreath or a crown of honour, like Abraham, like Moses. They looked forward to the heavenly city and the riches in Christ. That should and will, keep you going. Warren Wiersbe said – '*For the Christian, Heaven isn't simply a destination, it's a motivation*'.

Let me tell you one more story of an amazing athlete – some of you may be familiar with him. In 1992, the Olympics was in Barcelona. Derek Redman was running for Great Britain and He won a place in the 400 m semi-final race. If he raced well, he would be in with a chance to run in the final and compete for the gold medal. He started off the blocks like everyone else, neck and neck. But somewhere in between the 200 and 300 mark, suddenly, he felt a sharp pain in his right leg and tight. It stop him in his tracks.

He knew immediately that he had blown his ham string and anyone who does sport or follows it, knows that a ham string injury takes everyone out. It's extremely painful, it needs time and rest to recover. He collapsed to the floor knowing that his race was over. Medical persons ran over to his attention, security were around him, everyone one in the rest of the race were well ahead. But then he said, 'I want to get up', so he did and without any help, he start to limp on the track. From the side lines, a man ran on to the track, the security people were holding him back but he pushed through and went on to the track, it was Derek's father.

He said 'Son you don't have to do this, you can give up' But Derek said 'No, I won't give up, I have to do this'. So his father said to him 'If you have to do this, I'm going with to do this with you.' So father and son went around the last 100 or so meters of the race together and finished to a standing novation from the crowd. Derek didn't win the medal, but he

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finished his race. He knew that his father would be with him to the end of the race. Too many of us quite or take time out of our race. But Champions finish what they start. Followers of Jesus should finish what we start, our great hope is that Jesus is the finisher and author of our faith.

No-one said that the Christian life is easy. Anyone who has been a Christian for a while will tell you it can be extremely tough, even difficult at times. We live in a world that is against the Lord Jesus Christ. We live in a world that doesn't value truth any more. We face ridicule, even opposition to add to that there are trials, pain, sickness, for some persecution, as well as difficulties that come our way. When you go through all that, it is so easy for us to say *'I'm tired of this, I just want to throw in the towel'* or we can allow distractions to distract us or think that it's time to slow down in our race, we can think *'I need to take care of my career, I need more time to relax, or on my hobbies, I need to take care of my family, my children, my grandchildren, I need to make sure I've enough for my retirement. I want to make sure I've enough so everyone is secure. God I don't have much time for you any more'*, or maybe we are not that honest about it. Maybe we can think *'After all I've done, it's enough, I've lived days of glory 5,10,15,20 years ago'*.

But this morning God is saying to you, it's not how you started in the past, it's about how you are doing now, in the present. Are you enduring, are you running the race today? Friends, how are you doing in your marathon in life? This isn't about comparison, comparing yourself with someone else, this is about you and your race that God has set before you. You are personally responsible for this race and He has given you opportunity, talents, gifts, resources, so that you can run this race for His Glory. So run it well. Run with endurance. You may have to lay aside some weights. Make some cuts maybe in relationships, in some careers, with some hobbies all which may be good in and of themselves, but they are distractions. You need to choose great not just simply good. Remember Christ, he will run with you, and he is the author and finisher of your faith as well as the enabler. He's done it. At the end of this life we all have to come before God for judgement and reward. Imagine what that day will be like. ***Now, live your life in preparation for it.*** God, by his Grace, will say *'Well done, you good and faithful servant. You obeyed my Word, you laboured with your life, you have persecuted me, and finished the course well. You fought the good fight.'*

*Amén.*