

Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, 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. 2 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.

**Our subject** is A Race to Run and a race to finish.

We must all remember we were once not in a race, we were not even on the right road, we were on the broad road to destruction. We did not heed and listen to the Lords voice, we accepted no correction or instruction. We did not trust the Lord our God. But the Lord our God came as a savior He came as a redeemer. To us who were limping who were lame who sin had crippled. Behold the Lord Came and undid our fate, the cure The Balm of Giliad . We are restored from sin that was ready to throw us down He made us soldiers, He saved us that were lame our lives were miserable and maimed. He took us who were so undeserving and set us in the race, where we are to run and win a crown. What grace our saviour has. What praise will go unto Him taking such a bent over people like us and qualifying us to run in this race.

When speaking of our duties and what is expected of us in running, we must keep before us that Salvation is by Grace through Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The root of the whole of our Christianity is FAITH in the Lord Jesus Christ. **Never faith in my works or efforts.**

Remember the Scripture that says our righteousness at its best is as filthy rags, and we all do fade like leaves that fall from the tree and are swirled away by the wind of iniquity. It's a great mistake to think to have faith in my own doings for righteousness. A mistake to depend upon myself.

**It is not doing that is required but believing.** Not working but trusting. It's not perfect obedience , but humble faith. We must settle it in our minds that in Christ Jesus We are completely forgiven We are made Completely righteous by His obedience and death upon the Cross Righteousness is imputed to them that believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.

Those who have laid hold of Salvation in Christ are seen by God, or God looks upon them as completely forgiven- completely righteous. Completely pure. These ones have nothing more to do with the Law as a condition they must fulfil or they will die. The LORD DOES NOT SAY be perfect and you will live. No Christ has given us LIFE. And for His sake we long to and aim at walking perfectly.

**Now comes the question - why are we then striving to finish the race,** Why are we throwing off weights that so easily beset us Why should we hunger and thirst after righteousness – If God already sees us as perfect. If He has already paid our great debt.

The answer is simple – because we love Him, because we have a debt of gratitude.

We do not strive after righteousness and holiness in order to be forgiven. No we strive for it because we are forgiven and chosen in Him, we are sealed by the Spirit in Him, we have been bought with a price. **We can not help but honour Him** and be obedient to Him **who has given us so very much** Who gave Himself for us.

We run this race and search after Holiness because **our FATHER loves Holiness.** We desire to be Holy because it is written Be ye holy; for I am holy.

**We desire to be pure** because our master loves purity. *“He who loves pureness of heart, grace is on his lips; the king shall be his friend.” (Proverbs 22:11, LITV)* We have a hope therefore we purify ourselves for He is pure. We long to be like Jesus our Lord and we hope to be with Him one day for ever and forever.

**Yet we all live in a fallen world,** we are constantly warring with the world the flesh and the devil. Often, we are ready to faint and give up. Sometimes we ask ourselves am I really a Christian? Im so lame in prayer, Im so lame in in praise unto my God, Im lame in faith I am lame in patience and oh is there hope for a cripple like me? Here is advise on how to navigate and finish the race. Here is grace and strength to the slowest in the race.

1. WE all have a race to run.
2. Many have run before us
3. We must lay aside every weight.
4. We must run with Patience
5. We must continuously look unto Jesus

1 **We have a race to run.** Don't understand this to be, if I run well I will win a place or earn a place in heaven. My arm, my doings, cannot open the gate of eternity. **His strong arm and sacrifice upon the Cross opens the Gate of Eternity.** Salvation is far from that- it is all Grace.

Rather it means a willingness to take up our cross daily and follow Him. To make up our minds we will endure any hardship, I will give myself totally to this race. I will purpose to avoid temptations, I will watch carefully for snares, **I will be careful of my own treacherous heart within that wants its way.** I'll watch out **and watch** against **ungodly and unscriptural advice** from friends and family. I'll be zealous in prayer - With all this in mind being a fruitful and pleasing Christian is no light and easy matter.

**There are those who call themselves Christian,** they say they are running the race, **but they are resting on the wayside** they are far more interested in worldly pursuits and amusements than the condition of their own souls. They boast of their achievements. Yet are these ones running the race to obtain a prize. Is it their main goal to finish well. Are their eyes fixed upon the narrow path- are they looking unto Jesus Christ the Author and finisher of our Faith.

The verse opens with **Wherefore.** *For which reason- or consequently.* Implying we have a duty- Wherefore seeing those worthies in Hebrews 11 finished their race through faith. **We have them as an example,** their actions were not recorded just for our information but our learning. *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."* (Romans 15:4, KJV)

There are some that say the Old Testament is only written for those of its day. **Yet there are deep and spiritual lessons to be learned.** There is a pastoral message to be gained. All scripture is profitable, and all scripture is inspired and helpful. **So, we are surrounded by these that have run before us.** All those that ran in Hebrews Ch 11. By faith were examples to us. Patterns that **we can draw encouragement from.** They faced much harder problems than we do yet they remained faithful to God. **We take courage and imitate them.** They were able to stand even when they didn't have the privileges we have in Christ. We ought to be stirred by their example.

**Many have run before us.** I used to think that they were like spectators, those Patriarchs watching us run cheering us on. But more accurately as we go to

scripture and open the pages of scripture we are surrounded by this great crowd of witnesses. **We see how they ran we see how they overcome.** How they were **Faithful.** We draw strength. It seems wherever we turn in scripture we are surrounded by these examples these witnesses. **These ones approved and pleasing to God.** These ones that are patterns unto us. They show us that the race can be run by those who have the will, and the race can be finished.

By faith they **confessed themselves strangers and pilgrims** on the earth Through Faith they **subdued Kingdoms,** Wrought Righteousness, **obtained promises** - stopped the mouths of lions. Waxed valiant in fight. Woman received their dead raised to life again. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.” **But grace exceedingly abounded,** and all **fought a good fight** and finished **their Race and kept the faith,** and to the God of gods appeared every one of them. Take courage, fainting Christians: you are encompassed with a great cloud of witnesses; the race that you are running has been run by millions before; you think that no one ever had such trials as you have had, but every step that you are taking has been safely taken by others; the valley of the shadow of death has been securely passed by many a trembling, and doubting one like ourselves. Men just like ourselves they did not perish they arrived safely.

The next point to be considered is to **LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT.** But this he means give up everything that is hurtful to the soul. We must cast away **the obvious things** which hinder us on the road to heaven The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life the love of pleasures and riches and honour. We must cast off all Luke warmth and careless attitude towards sin. All these must be uprooted and forsaken if we are to win a prize. **We must also mortify the deeds of the Body.** We must crucify our affection for the world. We must look carefully at our habits and actions and find anything that could hinder. **The Idol of the age** in which we live is an **excessive love of pleasure,** which leads to self-indulgence. I heard a testimony – a young man went to university and was very very clever – wanting to make the most of it he joined all the clubs **Sport** and **music** and **science** every day he had an activity, none of these things were wrong or sinful, but he left no time at all for the Lord's work and service and worship. He was so busy with all these activities he didn't even have time for private devotions. Can you see how we need to be careful and wise and throw off weights that hinder. Another example would be a

**businessperson selling maybe second hand clothing.** They are so committed to this. One day they are in this market and the next they move to another market even mid-week they can't make the Church prayer meeting. When they get home after a long day they are too tired to even open their bible. They will soon be driven to start selling Sundays as well. Their commitment to Church will suffer and the Growth of their spiritual life will cease. **The Writer of Hebrews says lay aside every weight.** We must lay it aside even if it is as painful as cutting off a hand or gouging our one eye. Mark 9:34. We have a long course to run we can't afford to carry any weight.

Throw off those besetting sins that keep us back.

**Let us run with PATIENCE.** The course that is set before us. We run Gods way We run His course, we can't just plot our own course. We run with commitment and patience His coerce. **Satan may try to get us to look back to Egypt** He may bring up some lies about the promised land we must not faint because the Journey is long, We must press forward without mummering. **Look at MOSES in Hebrews 11** *"When he was come to years, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward; he endured as seeing Him who is invisible."*

This last point is perhaps the most important. **LOOKING UNTO JESUS** We trust Him we renounce all trust in our schemes. *"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."* (Hebrews 12:2, KJV)

The look of confidence. - A look of dependence. - It is a look of hope and joyful expectation. **We learn from our master** Remember how steady and firm he was in carrying on the great work of redemption; he set his face like a flint against all the storms and obstacles that lay in his way; **"he did not faint, nor was he discouraged,"** but "travelled on in the greatness of his strength, enduring the cross, and **despising the shame;**"

for he said on the cross, "It is finished."

This is Christs example for us to follow. **No matter how difficult our race is** look to Him trust Him look to Him as your good Shepherd, look to Him as king and Lord of all, Look to Him as advocate High priest intercessor. and He shall

strengthen you. Put your **hand in His hand**. **Trust Him** more and more Oh **Hide under the shadow of His wing**. Depend **upon His promise**, Wait upon Him more and more. Oh, there is a race to be run, no sitting and wasting time watching the poison of tv soaps. No moments thrown away by just sitting in worthless Gossip – No, no there is live given to us, A race set before us to run Souls to reach, prayers to pray. The time is short, the work is great, and the outcome is for eternity!

**let your eye be heavenward**, seeking daily help and grace from above. Be ever looking unto Jesus as your great Pattern and Example, and also as the source of all supplies, of wisdom, strength, and consolation!

I read of a competition between young ploughmen who were set to plough for a prize. **The most of them made very crooked work of it**. After they **had ended**, one of the judges said, "Young man, where did you look while you were ploughing?" "I kept **my eyes well on the plough handles, sir**, and saw what I had to hold." "Yes," the judge said, "and your plough didn't go very straight. " **He asked the next ploughman**, "And where did you look?" "Well, sir," he answered, "I looked at my furrow; I kept my eye always on the furrow that I was making. I thought I should **make it straight that way**." "But **you did not**," answered the judge, "you were **all over the place**." To the next he said, "What did you look at?" "Well, sir," he said, "I looked **between the two horses to a tree that stood in the hedge at the other end of the field**, right in front of me." **Now that man went straight because he had a fixed mark to guide him**.

This helps us to understand the wisdom of the text, "**Looking unto Jesus**." Run: run straight: you cannot run straight except you keep your eye on the One who is always the same. "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith," you will have a sure preservative from wandering. Spiritual ploughmen, take heed that ye look not back, but plough a straight furrow towards Jesus on the throne!

"Let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith!" [Heb 12:1-2](#)