

Series: Hebrews

Lesson: #53

Title: The Author and Finisher of Faith

Text: Hebrews 12: 1-2

Date: Sunday, October 19, 2008

Place: Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Princeton, New Jersey

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

After giving us so many examples of God's faithfulness toward those who trust him alone let us do as they did.

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,

A. The believer is compared to a runner in a race.

Illustration: The boy who won the race at Pennington High School track meet.

- He had on a full jogging suit while he warmed up.
- He would practice sprinting in front of us as we sat there on the wall.
- He wore that full jogging suit right up until time for the race to start but then he took it off.
- He had even shaved the hair off his legs so there would be less wind resistance.

1. The believer lays aside everything that will hinder us in this race.

- Noah laid aside any concern over what folks said about him.
- Abraham laid aside his land and his father's house.
- Moses laid aside fame and fortune because he trusted the Lord instead of riches
- Many of the saints literally laid down their own lives

2. The sin which doth so easily beset us may be some particular sin or it may be unbelief, but we lay it aside by casting all our care on him, for he careth for you.

- All the past sins, all the past dishonesty in religion and out, before conversion and since-- lay it aside--God says to the believer, I remember it no more, where remission of these is there is no more offering for sin.

The main point here is: Lay aside everything--whatever sacrifices are necessary--whatever it costs you and follow Christ.

V1: **Run with patience...**Paul said, *we faint not...* **the race that is set before us**

B. This race is set before us by God.

1. God set the course.
2. He determined before the foundation of the world who he would put in this race when he chose his people in Christ, if has put you in Christ and made Christ all to you his everlasting love will give you great patience to run in whatever mountains or valleys your course takes you through.
3. God set the precise moment he would cross your path with the gospel, he determined the pastor he would raise up, he gave him the heart to trust Christ and to preach his word in truth and in spirit, and in the hour of his love God sent his word to your heart through his gospel and put you in this race. His predestinating hand in all things will give you much patience to run this race.
4. God set every hurdle on this course you must run and declares plainly to us that we must through suffer much tribulation in this race--but the God who set the course is the God who supplies the grace and that is what he will teach us by these hurdles.
5. God set the length you would run--he has appointed the hour our race will end--and by his grace we will find that finish line to be the most glorious hour of all the hours of our lives.

Romans 5: 3:...we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4: And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Illustration: The boy who finished the race at Pennington.

- He got in the blocks. The gun fired. He started out as fast as the rest.
- Then just out of the first turn he came to the hurdles
- Several of the runners passed him.
- Through the straight on the far side of the track he fell back a little more.
- He never looked to the left or to the right, just straight down his lane.
- Running with patience

That's what the text teaches us...

Hebrews 12: 2: Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith;

A. This verse declares to us that this race can not be won by a carnal, temporal means.

1. He's commanding believer's in the heart through his word to lay aside the weights and sins *of* this world to Christ the Lord.
2. Believer, that dead body which you are carrying around is a weight which he will at last deliver us from-- **Romans 7: 4: O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25: I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.**
3. Therefore, understand this, this race is run by spiritual sight...sight which he gives for one purpose, to be--**Looking unto Jesus...**
4. That sight is the eye of faith...and faith does not behold anything but that which is spiritual--*it is the evidence of things not seen* by the carnal eye.
5. We are told here, what we are told in other places in his word--not only to begin looking to him, but to look away from everything below, and focus our attention on him alone.

Colossian 3: 1: If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2: Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3: For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

- Paul continues by saying, Mortify your members which on the earth
- How do I mortify my members? Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth...so we must look away from these earthly members unto Jesus...
- Are you looking to things below for eternal life? Justification? Righteousness? Sanctification? Preservation?
- Hear this precious word, believer, Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God...seek those things which are above, where Christ who is All and in All sits on God's right hand.

B. What is meant by the Author of our faith?

1. The word "our" is added. "Our" faith does begin only when he gives it and it is sustained and grown by his power and grace working in us--we would not have faith if it were not for Christ who gave us faith and put us in this race.

Ephesians 2: 8: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: 9: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

2. But take out the word "our" and we get the full meaning--**Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith.**

3. The meaning is: Christ Jesus our Lord has the preeminence in being the first to run this race of faith. If we would look to a Man to behold the only one who ran this race in perfection then look to the GodMan only.

Colossians 1:18: And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

- The word "beginning" is translated from the word "ar-kay"--meaning origin, the first to do anything. The word from which "Author" is translated is "ar-kay-gos"--means **to pioneer, one who takes the lead in a long procession of those to follow.**
- Just as preeminently as he is the Beginning so he is preeminently the Author of faith.
- The old testament saints ran this race by faith. Others lived and died and have been raised in spirit to be with him. But the Man Jesus is the preeminent Man of Faith.
- We are exhorted to look to Jesus the Pioneer of Faith, the Faithful One.
- This may be part of that "better thing" provided for us who live by faith after he ran this race. He entered this race, he ran it perfectly,...and he Finished the race,

V2:...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.

A. How did he finish the race?

...for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross

One sense can be "instead of" the joy. Instead of the riches he enjoyed with the Father in heaven...as here in:

- **2 Cor 8: 9: For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.**

1. The other sense is "Because of" the joy of promised people--**Isaiah 53: 11: He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.**

Illustration: Melinda in labor.

- After her travail and pain was over, she brought forth a little girl, and the joy made all the pain go away.
- Christ Jesus saw the joy of a multitude of souls regenerated, sanctified, justified, and brought to heaven, in consequence of him enduring the cross,
- For the joy that was set before him [he] endured the cross.

2. Because of the joy of glorifying his Father he endured the cross... **John 12: 27: Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. 28: Father, glorify thy name.**

3. Because of the joy of the glory he had with the Father from all eternity...**John 17: 5: And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.**

- Never was another so completely yielded to God's will, he said, "I live by the Father" (John 6:57)
- No one ever so completely obeyed God--"I must be about My Father's business" (Luke 2:49)
- "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it" (John 18:11)
- "I have set the Lord always before Me" (Psalm 16:8)
- "He that sent Me is with Me" (John 8:29)
- Those that mocked him, and treated him with the venom of depravity, ignorantly and unknowingly, bore testimony to his faith in the Lord, when they said, "He trusted in the Lord that He would deliver Him, let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him" (Psalm 22:8).
- And even after bearing the despised shame of the cross--of that shameful method of death on a cursed tree, of the shame he bore at the hands of men, of despising the shame of being made sin that we might be the made righteousness of God in him--even after it was over his last words were, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (Luke 23: 46.)

B. This word "Finisher" means Perfector, and at last that is how he finished the race.

V2:...and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 1: 3: Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; 4: Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

1. The fact that we are bidden to be looking unto Jesus as "the Leader and Finisher of faith" also denotes what he does in us as we run this race. We need something more than a perfect Example

- So Christ has not only gone before His own, He also dwells in the heart of the believer through faith and it is by him that we live and run this race.

Galatians 2:20: I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

David said the same thing as Paul...Psalm 23: 3: He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4: Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. 5: Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. 6: Surely goodness and mercy

shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

2. We will overcome by looking to these bodies, or to the hurdles in the course, or to others in the race? No, no...but

- By our Author and Finisher lifting faith's eye above, our hope enters in through the veil, to the very throne of God...**Hebrews 6: 20: Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.**
- And he refreshes his promise to our souls saying, "**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**" (Revelation 3:21.)

3. And as we move along the course we say with the apostle Paul,

- **Philippians 3: 13: Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14: I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.**

4. And at last, by the grace and strength of the Captain of our salvation, we shall say...

- **2 Ti 4:7: I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith:**

Illustration: The runner at the track meet in Pennington

- Rounded entered the last straight away
- He saw the finish line up ahead
- He tilted his head back, turned his hands in from the wind, and he poured on the steam
- He passed where I was sitting running like he just started the race...
- And he crossed the finish line...
- Did he win?

1 Co 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.

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith;