

## A MARAtHON – NOT A SPRINT

Scripture: Philippians 3:12-16

December 11, 2020

Message: “You find your amusement where you can” was a comment from a friend years ago when being able to buy a ticket to a movie was quite a treat. Back then, we learned to find amusement in small ways. That lesson carried on, I suppose, since I find some small amusements today in needling some (not all) of my friends who are Elders about being perfect. “Have you reached perfection today or are you still going on?” I sometimes ask at (in) opportune times. I often enjoyed this light banter with my friend Paul Stadelman. These discussions usually circled around the long struggle of trying to live up to Christ’s standards. We talked about the journey that may be long for some but very short for others, depending on how much life was left in them when they started that journey.

Most definitely, it is a ‘life-long’ marathon.

Paul the Apostle had been following the teachings of Jesus for at least 25 years when he wrote this letter to the Philippians. There is no question that Paul is one of the more outstanding and hardworking Christians – always reaching out for Christ. Even then, he repeated over and over that he was still in the journey: “Not that I have already obtained it,” “I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet” and one of his favorites, “I press on.”

“All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too, God will make clear to you.” When I heard that my friend Paul Stadelman had passed on to Glory, I smiled and thought: Friend, you finally made it.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, give me strength and patience to run the marathon and to finally reach, in the end, a full understanding of Your grace and love. Through Jesus Christ I pray. Amen.

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