

## Running the Race

Scripture: Hebrews 12:1-3

Date: March 31, 2021

Message: *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

*Hebrews 12:1-3*

Today's scripture reminds me of the time I ran my first (and last) 5K race. I had just retired and was feeling a bit unorganized with unfamiliar free time. When a former coworker invited me to join her in a running class, I decided to give it a try. At first, we walked and ran a little. As the weeks progressed, we ran more and walked less until the day came when we ran without stopping for the whole lesson. Then the day arrived – race day! It was a sunny and cold morning with hundreds of mostly young people ready to take off at the sound of the whistle.

I did finish that race, running the whole distance without having to stop or slow to a walk. But I could not have done this alone. My friend ran beside me, encouraging me to keep running and there were lots of people cheering from the sidelines along the route. We kept our eyes fixed on the people in front of us running at the same pace until we finally crossed the finish line.

The writer of Hebrews tells us that our Christian life can be likened to a race where we are running – not walking – toward our finish line. Likewise, there is a crowd of saints running along beside us and before us, pointing to that distant goal. We are to run with all our might, running the same path that Jesus ran, throwing off those unnecessary weights and extra baggage that slow us down, that tarnish our testimony, and to forsake the sin of unbelief that will prevent us from reaching the final goal – our heavenly home with our amazing God.

We are encouraged to hang in there and train every day by learning more about Jesus and how he lived, by spending time in prayer and meditation, and connecting with other Christians for encouragement. We are to look to Jesus and not lose heart – to keep our eyes on the prize, our heavenly finish line.

Prayer: *God, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to forge the path for us and to show us how to live. Help us to be bold and run the race for your glory and honor. Amen.*