

OVERCOMING "DISCOURAGEMENT" (Part 2)

With Bishop Ronald K. Powell

A. Focused On The Person

Of Jesus -

[Isaiah 45:22 King James Version \(KJV\)](#)

²²Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

- **"Looking unto Jesus."** That is how the Christian life began! It all began with a look. Looking got us into this race and keeping our eyes on Him helps us to do well as we run this race!
- **Heb 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,

Notice the phrase in verse 1, "*the race that is set before us*."

- Notice the phrase in **verse 1**, "***the race that is set before us***."
- This seems to me to indicate that we each run our own race. I can't run your race and you can't run my race.
- Now, if I spend my time looking at you and how well you are doing, I may become discouraged in my own race.
- I might become defeated because I am not doing as well as you are. Then, I might try to run in your lane! Or, I might stumble over pride if I begin to think that I am doing better than you.

Looking at others

- I might even get discouraged if I think that the way you are running has an affect on my own race. If I allow your failures and stumbles to hinder me.
- In other words, if I keep my eyes on you and how you are running I am in trouble!
- The only way that any of can run well is for us to keep our eyes focused on Jesus. He is the only One we have to run for.

Jesus judges the race!

- Jesus is the race Judge. He is the Author and the Finisher of the race of life!
- He gives out the rewards. He disqualifies the runners. He calls the race and He is the One, the only One to watch as the race progresses.
- Get your eyes off the other racers and how they are doing! Get you eyes on Jesus alone and run a better race.

B. Focused On The Performance Of Jesus

- Not only should we keep our eyes on the Lord's Person as we run, but also on His Performance.

1. He Finished Our Race For Us

- As we run the race of life, let us take courage in the fact that Jesus Christ has already passed this way.
- He ran the race ahead of us and He has completed His race. In doing so, He completed ours as well!

- That means that as we run and face the pressures of life, we have Him to help us along the way. He knew His share of trials in the race of life, but He successfully navigated His course. Look at what He endured:

Hebrews 4:15-16 King James Version (KJV)

¹⁵ For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Jesus knew His share of trials

- He knew His share of trials in the race of life, but He successfully navigated His course. Look at what He endured, When You Think You Have It Bad:
- 1. He was born to an unwed mother - Mt. 1:18-19
- 2. He was born in a stable - Lk. 2:7
- 3. Born to poor parents - Luke 2:24
- 4. His life was threatened as a baby - Matt. 2:13ff
- 5. His birth was the cause of terrible suffering - Mt. 2:16ff
- 6. He was moved as a baby - Matt. 2:13ff
- 7. He was raised in a despicable town - Nazareth - Luke 2:39
- 8. His father died when He was young - Mt. 13:53-58
- 9. He had to support His family - Mt. 13:55-58
- 10. He had no home and no place to lay His head - Mt. 8:20; Luke 9:58
- 11. He was hated and opposed by others - Mark 14:1-2
- 12. He was charged with insanity - Mark 3:21
- 13. He was charged with demon possession - Mark 3:22
- 14. He opposed by His family - Mark 3:21-22
- 15. He was rejected, hated and opposed by the audiences who came to hear Him speak - Matt. 13:53-58; Luke 4:28-29.
- 16. He was betrayed by a close friend - Mark 14:10-11; 18
- 17. He was left alone, rejected and forsaken by all of His friends - Mark 14:50.
- 18. He was tried before the high court of the land and tried for treason - John 18:33.
- 19. He was executed as a common criminal by means of crucifixion - John 19:16ff.

Christ endured it all!

- Jesus has been through it all and He is the perfect Coach for those running the race today.
- So, instead of looking every else for the help you need, find your help in Jesus and in Him alone!

2. He Fixed Our Race For Us

- I will let you in on a secret this morning. Jesus has not only already run our race, but He has fixed it so that you cannot lose! He has already won the victory, and He shares that with us.

- **1Cor 15:57 But thanks [be] to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**
- He has already fixed the end of the race, and has assured all of His children that they will arrive safely at home.
- This thing is fixed! I am already a winner in the race of life. I already have the victory. All He asks me to do is keep my eyes on Him and run my race with patience.

I have fought a good fight

- Not in competition with you or anyone. This is my race! I have already won. All that remains is just to finish my course.
- However, I want to do well, so that I too can say what Paul said at the end of his own race,
- **"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:", 2 Tim. 4:7.**

III. COMMIT TO A LIFE OF FULFILLED RUNNING

- Another lesson that we can draw from this passage is the truth that this life does not have to be a discouraging venture, but that it can be a fulfilling adventure.
- Let me share three brief truths that make this a reality for you and me:

A. The Fulfillment Of Remembering

- Jesus has run His race and paved the way for you and me. He has already assumed His place at the Father's right hand. He sat down there, signifying that His work of salvation was finished forever.
- But, may I remind you, that when the clouds of discouragement begin to gather on the horizon of your life, that what Jesus enjoys this morning in heaven is also mine and yours?
- His heaven is our heaven! His place of reward is ours too. He promised us that He would make a place for us there and that He would return to take us home some day, **John 14:1-3.**

B. That is enough sunshine for the cloudiest of days

- Instead of being discouraged as you run your race, **always remember that it is not in vain, 1 Cor 15:58.**
- There is a fulfillment in knowing that God is keeping records and **one day He will reward those who have run the race faithfully.**

C. The Fulfillment Of Resting

- Even as we run the race there are times when our steps grow heavy and our pace slows down. We get weary here.
- However, let us remember that we are not home yet. **There is a rest for the people of the Lord, Heb. 4:9.** There will come a day when we can un-harness the burdens from our shoulders and sit at the feet of the Master in glory.
- There will come a day when **He will wipe away the tears of sorrow and exhaustion from our eyes, Rev. 21:4.**

D. Life The Place of Labor

- Let us remember that this life is not the place of rest for the servants of the Lord. It is the place of labor and faithful service!

- **Therefore, do not grow weary, Gal. 6:9.** One day, we will join Jesus by the river of life in glory and there we will rest in His presence from the burdens of this life.

E. Resting in the race

- By the way, it is possible to rest in this life, even as we run the race.
- How? **By keeping the focus on Jesus and by learning to abide in Him, John 15:5; Matt. 11:28-30.**
- He will let you run a race that will leave you fulfilled and rested.

Conclusion:

- Don't let discouragement get you down!
- If you are battling today come to Jesus. Let Him refocus your priorities, lighten your load and equip you to patiently run your race for His glory.
- There is help in Him, don't leave His House without it!