

“Finishing Well”

Hebrews 12:1-3

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- Rev. C. Jack Orr and *“finishing well”*
- Believers we have known who have *“finished well”*
- The apostle Paul as one who finished well.
 - 2 Timothy 4:6-7- *“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”*
- The purpose of the writer to the Hebrews is to encourage them not to give up, but to live a life of faith.
- Saving faith is more than intellectual assent to certain truths, but rather a commitment of one’s life to Christ. The faith that saves is a faith that works, but it also perseveres. It will go the distance.
- We need the encouragement from other believers to finish well.
- In the New Testament, the Christian life is repeatedly compared to everyday things, events, and practices.
 - Spiritual *“warfare”*-- Ephesians 6
 - Boxing match-- 2 Timothy 4:7; 1 Corinthians 9:26
 - A foot race-- 1 Corinthians 9:4; Philippians 2:16
- The attention of the world today on the summer Olympics games in Paris

“Finishing Well”

- Hebrews 12:1-3-- *“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.”*

A. *“Run with Endurance the Race”*

1. **The *“Race”* we are running is *“pure agony”***
2. **It demands perseverance, that is, steady determination**
3. **It also demands determination to win, that is, to finish.**
 - 1 Corinthians 9:24-- *“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.”*
 - a. Difference between *“casual”* and *“committed”* Christians.
 - b. Paul’s determination
 - 1 Corinthians 9:26-27-- *“Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.”*
 - Philippians 3:10-11-- *“know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so to somehow attain to the resurrection of the dead.”*
 - Philippians 3:12-- *“I press on, that I may take hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.”*
 - Philippians 3:13-14-- *“Brethren, I do not could myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus”.*

- c. The Competition is not about “works” but rather about “faith”. Our competition is not with each other, but rather with Satan and the demonic world.
- d. Our Motivation is the “Cloud of Witnesses” of Hebrews 11

B. *“Lay aside every weight and sin”*

- Hebrews 12:1-- *“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”*
1. *“Lay aside every weight”*
 - a. The “weight” could be something innocent or harmless
 - 1 Corinthians 6:12-- *“All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.”*
 - b. In context, for the Jewish believers the “weight” could be their old religious traditions.
 - c. There are good things in life hinder us from experiencing the “better” and the “best”.
 2. *“THE Sin that so easily entangles”*
 - a. “Sin” in general drains us of spiritual passion
 - b. “THE sin” that entangles, enslaves—that is, those that we are personally susceptible to, easily ensnared by them.

C. *“Looking on to Jesus”*

- Hebrews 12:2-3-- *“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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.”*
1. **Jesus as the “Author” of our Faith—the preeminent example.**
 - a. He was tempted in all ways just like we are tempted.
 - Hebrews 4:15-- *“tempted in all ways just as we are, yet without sin”*
 - b. He trusted His Father implicitly for everything and in everything.
 - John 5:30-- *“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.”*
 - c. In the Garden of Gethsemane, He submitted Himself to the will of His Father
 2. **Jesus as the “finisher” of our faith—the one who carried it through to completion.**
 3. **Consider the Motivation of Jesus. What motivated Jesus to run the race and finish well?**
 - a. He certainly did not do it for the “fun of it”.
 - b. He did it for the “glory” that he would receive—the “joy set before him” and the “seat at the Father’s right hand”
 - Hebrews 12:2-- *“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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*
 - John 17:4-5-- *“I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”*
 - c. Our prize is not heaven; but rather glorious crowns that we will one day lay in joyful exultation at the feet of Jesus.
 - Revelation 4:10-11-- *“cast their crowns before the throne, saying: You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power!”*
 - Hebrews 12:3-- *“consider him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.”*