

(Clip) Run The Race Set Before Us

by Steve Lawson

This sermon emphasizes the active pursuit of holiness in the Christian life, likening it to a marathon race that requires endurance, sacrifice, and perseverance. It challenges believers to resist passivity and engage in spiritual disciplines, prayer, repentance, and resisting temptation. The imagery of running the race with diligence, shedding excess weight of sin, and focusing on the ultimate goal of pleasing God is central to the message.

Scripture: Hebrews 12:1, 1 Corinthians 9:24, Philippians 3:13, 2 Timothy 4:7, Hebrews 12:2

Topics: "Pursuit of Holiness", "Endurance in Faith"

Description

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Transcript

Tonight I want us to look at the first verse in Hebrews chapter 12. Since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. We can't be passive.

We cannot be complacent. We've got to be in the race, and we've got to pursue holiness with all of the might by the grace of God that we can possibly give. Christian life is the agony.

It is the long-term marathon for the rest of your life. And the word agon indicates and pushing through the pain, and difficulty, and sweat, and sacrifice, and suffering. This is the part of the Christian life of which we need to be reminded tonight, that it's not let go and let God.

A passive Christianity that neuters us of human responsibility. But the Christian life is realized as we run the agon, as we run this agony, as we strive after holiness, as we resist temptation, as we flee worldliness, as we discipline ourselves for the purpose of godliness, as we buffet our body and make it our slave, as we fight the good fight, as we follow after Christ, as we take up our cross and move out in the Christian

life. And many times it is an uphill run.

It's not a passive thing. It is like running a race. It involves our pressing on to what lies ahead, to widening our stride, and picking up our pace, and pumping our knees, and pressing through the pain.

Running necessitates that you not remain where you are, but that you take decisive steps of faith, and you move forward in order to advance in godliness. There are too many spiritual couch potatoes who just want to sit on a sofa and eat popcorn, and watch television in Christian life. Instead, they ought to be disciplining themselves, and they ought to be disciplining themselves in prayer, disciplining themselves in the Word of God, disciplining themselves in coming to church, disciplining themselves in serving God, disciplining themselves in witnessing, disciplining themselves in giving of their resources to the Lord's work.

This running involves laboring in prayer, digging into the Word, soul-searching to apply the Word of God to our lives, repenting of sin, uprooting roots of bitterness, resisting temptation, staying on track, shedding excess weight, mortifying the flesh. This is all a part of living in prison. That the greats of the faith from the Old Testament, down through the centuries, have already run their race, and they are now seated in the grandstands of heaven above, and by the example of their lives, they are cheering us on, and this relay race, the gospel has come down to you and me in this century, and in this generation, and the baton now has been put into your hands, and there's the blood of the martyrs on this baton, and there is the sweat of those who have gone before us, and who have labored to get us a little bit of a lead to put the gospel into our hand, and now that it is in our hand, we must run with all the might and strength that God will give us.

We can't allow any sin to trip us up, and this is no time to be running with excess baggage and excess weight. It's time to let this world go, and to go for God, and to run the race that is set before us. There is coming a final day when we will stand at the judgment seat of Christ, and the judge of heaven and earth will be seated, and every runner in the race, on that last day, will stand before the Lord as if there had never been another runner on the track, and our entire life will come under review.

No sin will appear in that day, but how we ran the race will be the subject of that examination. Did we pursue holiness? Did we turn our back to the world? Did we press on to the upward call of God? Did we invest our life in the things of God? And he will take the crown of life, the Stephanos, and place it upon the heads of those who have run the race. He will say, well done, good and faithful servant.

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