

Sermon Notes
A Call to Persevere
Sunday, August 6, 2023

2 Timothy 4:7 - I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteousness Judge, will award to me on that day – and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Philippians 3:14 - I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 4:8 - Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteousness Judge, will award to me on that day – and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Hebrews 12:1-2 - ¹Therefore, 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, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Great cloud of witnesses - The faithful ones, like the apostle Paul, have already run their race, and their faithfulness to God, and God's faithfulness to them in the midst of their trials, serves as a witness to us as we run our race.

Our past, our hurts, hangups and habits, and our false belief systems are in the category of everything that hinders.

A lot of us are being held hostage. We come to church, and we hear about all of this power we have, all of this greatness we have, but just a little old chain holds us down. And we wonder what's wrong, how can we be such powerful beings and be held hostage by any little thing that shows up. It's a question of identity. – Tony Evans

Jesus came to heal us. To release us from our prisons of shame and guilt and to set us free from sin and the effects of sinful actions done against us.

If we don't know our identity as a child of God, we will continue to believe that we don't have the power to stop sinning.

Colossians 3:4-10 - ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. ⁵Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

We are to no longer identify with our sin. We used to walk according to our sinful nature. We were running headlong into sin. But now, in Christ Jesus, we are running a different race. We are running headlong into righteousness. Our identity is now in Christ and when we see him, we will appear with him in glory.

1 Corinthians 9:24-25 - ²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

We are able to run this life-long marathon with perseverance – that is cheerfully and hopefully - by fixing our eyes on Jesus who is our hope!

We cannot hope in something if we cannot identify with it. – Pastor Chris

Hebrews 12:2a (NIV) – fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith....

Hebrews 12:2a (KJV) – looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; ...

Hebrews 12:2a (ESV) – looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, ...

All these descriptions of Jesus come from the Greek word *archegos* which means the chief leader. One that takes the lead in anything and thus affords an example, a predecessor in a matter, pioneer.

Hebrews 1:13 - ¹³ To which of the angels did God ever say, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”?

1 Corinthians 15:25-28 - ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For he “has put everything under his feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. ²⁸ When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

Death entered the world when sin entered the world. Right now, because of Jesus’ victory over the grave, death has lost its sting. But the day will come when death will be no more.

Hebrews 11:39-40 - ³⁹ These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, ⁴⁰ since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

All of us collectively get to share in the joy of our salvation. Those who lived before the cross and those who lived when Jesus was alive on the earth, and all who have lived after the cross get to participate in the promise of the blessing that was fulfilled in Jesus together.

Revelation 21 is a description of the complete and final victory Jesus won when he endured the cross for the joy set before him and is also the finish line set before us as we run our race with perseverance, laying aside everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles us.

We must also heed the warning that is also contained in Revelation 21:8.