

TEXT- Hebrews 12:1-2 *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, 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 is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

INTRO – Hebrews 11 reveals how the great saints of the OT who won the race of life through faith.

The Hebrews believers are urged to “look away to Jesus” and have their faith and hope strengthened. Most of all, they must keep their eyes on Christ as the goal!

I. The Depiction

“Wherefore” - **In view of what has been said in the previous chapter.**

“Seeing we also are encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses”

The picture here is of an arena; the spectators are the heroes of faith listed in the previous chapter; the runners are the believers going through trials.

(This image does not necessarily imply that people in heaven watch us or know what is going on here on earth. It is an illustration, not a revelation.)

If the Christians are to win the race, they must get rid of the weights and sins that make it hard for them to run.

A. The Christian life is like a race

- **A race requires great effort.**
- **This race requires patience**
- **The race requires endurance**
- **Our race is set before us and determined by Christ.**

Psa 37:23-24 *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. 24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.*

Eph 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

There is no indication of winning the race by defeating others, rather to run our race with patience.

1 Co 9:24-27 *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 But I keep under*

my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

**B. The men and women of faith testify of how they ran
They are not merely spectators but testify of their great faith.
“The Hall of Faith”**

C. The goal – Looking to Jesus

- 1. Author and finisher of our faith**
- 2. Endured the cross**

Php 2:6-8 *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

II. The Motivation

A. The great clouds of witnesses Heb. 11

B. Jesus the author and finisher of our faith

The greatest motivation for us who are in the race is to please the Lord.

1 Jn 4:19 *We love him, because he first loved us.*

C. Jesus our example

1. The joy that was set before Him

The joy of triumphant victory in glory

2. Endured the cross

All its shame and His suffering

III. The Limitation

The hindrance to running is excessive weight

You don't see overweight people running a race.

Runners must be trim and fit. Being as thin as possible, while also retaining muscle, is a key to all runners.

A. Worldliness is a hindrance

B. Sin is a hindrance

Beset is to be surrounded

C. We can easily be distracted by the issues of life

Making money, finding love, worldliness and sin all distract the believer from running well.

CONCL - Gal 5:7 *Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?*

The goal of this race is not necessarily to defeat other runners but to run well and finish the race set before us.

Mar 14:8 *She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.*

Mar 12:41-44 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. 42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. 43 And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, *Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:* 44 *For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.*

CONCL – Los Angeles summer Olympics 1984 – Gabriela Andersen Schiess finished 37th

The crowd gasped as she staggered onto the track, her torso twisted, her left arm limp, her right leg mostly seized. She waved away medical personnel who rushed to help her, knowing that if they touched her she would be disqualified. The L.A. Coliseum crowd applauded as she limped around the track in the race's final 400 meters, occasionally stopping and holding her head. Her entrance to the Olympic stadium and the struggle over the last 400m took five minutes and forty four seconds to complete. As she crossed the line she was carried by the trainers for medical help.