

Running the Christian Race for all Its Worth

What benefits you get from persevering?

- We don't give motivation for people to persevere, we give them the reality (and this drives them to persevere)

You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.

“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—

At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you ahead of time. (Matthew 24:6-8, 15, 23-25 NIV)

See things your physical eyes cannot see, then only you will get into fighting -- spiritual reality

The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the **Abyss**. (*influence of darkness, lure people to give up their walks with God*). When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. And out of the smoke locusts came down on the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the **seal (HS)** of God on their foreheads. (Revelation 9:1-4 NIV)

Global scales (see the spiritual reality behind all these)

- **Calamities**
- **Same sex marriage**
- *We are living in the era of sins, but also an era where people **institutionalise** and celebrate and rationalise sins -- **blurring holiness and truth***
- **God is merciful (not slow)** that's why he is allowing the world to persist (waiting for the elect to turn back)
- Supernatural forces working against us -- **influencing your heart away from the truth (very hard to pray in the morning, into acts of praying, lessen your desire to pray, and pray effectively and deeply)**

Knowing this is not asking you to escape.

Don't get yourself comfortable (wait for the pain to go past before you pray) --> **all the more run the Christian race! If not you can't get rid of all these things**

God put you through these so that you can learn persevering prayers

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off (how?....) everything that hinders (**things that slow you down - kinship, work related, what others will think of you**) and the sin (**sinful desire and passions that stop us from running the race - greed, lustful desires etc --> keep running even more!**) that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, (Hebrews 12:1 NIV)

What race?

- Race - a journey that requires full focus, competitive in nature, challenging (blister, stamina..), rules to abide to in order to win the prize, a crown for those who finish the race beautifully and cross finishing line
1. A race to live by faith --> you'll face great struggle by the flesh
 - So difficult to sustain godly values, and keep up with meetings, **struggle to live by the message** (this struggle = you are running the race to keep the faith)
 - You can be weak, sin --> **you deal with it rather compromising and accepting it! you do not let it become your habit/nature --> you wrestle against your flesh**
 - **Brokenness after your struggle, it will stop you from staying contented with your sins**
 - **Brokenness deals with sin (hardness cause you greater disobedience) --**god gives graces to the humble, and opposes the proud
 - Brokenness will lead you to increase in faith
 2. A race towards end times (esp internet -> ever increasing connections and disillusionings)
 - Race gets easier (last lap - HS work is greatest) and harder (blister etc..)
 - Freemason and illuminati
 - **Does your prayer reach the throne of heaven? (Satan knows)**
 - **Don't run the race of end times with half-believe attitude (does it get real to you?)**
 - **Internet spiritualism**
 - So what if people think that you are fanatic. If you are not actively evangelising, you will be negatively influenced by the internet (**darkness is just so strong**)
 3. **It's our own race - get your own calling**
 - **You are competing with yourself to fulfill your calling** (great commission)
 - Personal calling is in the great commission --> fulfill it, and this is how you are part of great commission
 - **Hurdles** to cross
 - As you pray, remember - No, I strike a blow to my **body(your flesh, nail it to the cross everyday, your sinful passions, self-pity, sense of lack etc)** and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. (1 Corinthians 9:27 NIV)
 - Why can't you get your personal calling? Because we look at what others do well, and you want to do well like them (and you become restless because nothing works)
 - **You need deep confirmation with The Lord on what He has called you to do**
 - **Joseph**

- He had a dream --> promise of God that you will save your people (= great commission)
- Given circumstances - after knowing the promise of God, there'll be a given circumstances (family not rich... Boss not favouring you ..). **Your problem is not the circumstances, is when your heart is trapped / controlled by the circumstances (God has given you an infinite spirit)**
- **Experience Immanuel through the promise of God, live through the circumstances** (gen 39:2) -- pray(always go back to the promise, when you sense your heart isn't changed) till your heart goes beyond the circumstances
- **Breakthrough in their time schedule**

4. A race that you run with your brethren

- **Therefore, 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, (Hebrews 12:1 NIV)
- **Witnesses (Peter, Abr, David) - people who lived by faith, that Christ is their perfect inspiration, they are your encouragers today!**
- Since we are surrounded by them, we are in the list of the man of faith. Recall how they overcome, and run likewise.
- Because you have encouragers, you have co-runners (**pray for acceptance, unity, genuine coworking in our midst**)
- **Pray for genuine relationship.. Honest with one another in Christ love (reflection, introspection, striking blow to our own body..)**

5. A race that makes you strong in the grace of The Lord

- You then, my son, be **strong** in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2:1 NIV)
 - **Soldier - one mindedness**
 - **Athlete - rules - not for quick outcomes or shortcuts, just go with the will of God**
 - **Farmers - perseverance**
- You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this. (2 Timothy 2:1-7 NIV)

God makes you run the race **to make you strong** (not cause you to be limited by your circumstances or weakness, but for you to look to his grace and infinite work of HS that can be done through you). Stand corrected, rebuked.