## The Race!

#### Introduction

#### Scripture Reading: John 5:19-29

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. Sometimes we can gain the most profitable Bible lessons from common occurrences.
- 2. The Christian life can be compared to a race. We can gain further insight to the passage of Hebrews 12:1 when we look at the different features that are associated with a race and the Christian life.
- 3. Some of those features we want to look at in this morning's lesson are:
  - A. The race course
  - B. The preparation of the contestants (preparing to run)
  - C. The spectators (witnesses) that are assembled
  - D. The rules that govern the race
  - E. The judge appointed to award the prize

# The Race Course

- 1. Those running the race cannot prescribe for themselves where they want to run but must rather keep to the course that has been laid out.
- 2. Before one can run the race, he must first enter the course.
  - A. Each individual must likewise enter the right course before they can run the race.

Matthew 7:13-14 Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

- B. But how does one enter the course?
  - 1) Through faith, repentance, confession, and baptism. Then as a result one becomes a Christian.

### **Preparing to Run**

- 1. Before a contestant can hope to win the race before him, he must first have prepared himself for the race. This takes diligent preparation (practice, practice).
- 2. The Christian must also prepare for the race before him. This is accomplished by:
  - A. Obeying the truth.

Galatians 5:7 You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?

B. By forgetting past failures, and pressing on toward the goal.

Philippians 3:13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

C. By laying aside all the cumbersome weights.

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,

#### The Witnesses

- 1. There are many spectators that witness a race. The more important the race, the more witnesses that are present (Olympics).
- 2. In our race, the Christian is compassed about with many witnesses. (Hebrews 12:1).
  - A. The apostles were the spectacle to the world, angels and men.

1 Corinthians 4:9 For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

- B. Our neighbors are watching our profession and practice every day! As we practice, are we aware of the many spectators that are witnesses to what we are doing?
- C. Even the heavenly eyes are upon us.

Luke 15:10 Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

- 1) As the spectators watch the race, the more that do, it inspires the runner to try even harder. It widens the glory of victory and it also deepens the shame of defeat.
- 2) Since so many are watching our race, we should be inspired to try harder to set the Christian example!

### Rules Governing the Race

- 1. Each contestant must strive to obey the rules of the race. If they do not, then they will become disqualified.
- 2. Christians must likewise strive to lawfully obey the rules of the race.

2 Timothy 2:5 And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.

A. It does no good to try and establish our own rules for the race.

Romans 10:3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

3. An empty profession will not do.

Titus 1:16 They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

- 4. Some rules that Christians must observe.
  - A. Must have patience.

Hebrews 12:1

B. Must have self-control.

1 Corinthians 9:25

C. Must be zealous.

Philippians 3:14

D. Must look unto Jesus for guidance.

Hebrews 12:2

### The Judge

- 1. The runner that crosses the finish line first will be judged the winner by the designated judge. The winner will then receive the reward that was promised for his efforts.
- 2. The Lord is our judge, who will deliver on His promise of the reward.

  Notice:

John 5:22, 27 2 Timothy 4:7-8

3. We will be rewarded as we deserve to be.

Revelation 20:11-12 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

### Where the Races Differ

- 1. In the reward.
  - A. The runners race: Little profit (corruptible medal, etc.)

1 Timothy 4:8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

B. The Christian's crown described:

James 1:12 1 Peter 5:4

#### 2. In the number of victors:

A. Only one runner can receive the prize.

1 Corinthians 9:24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.

- B. All who run lawfully in the Christian race can win!
- 3. In the consequences to the non-participants:
  - A. Those that did not enter the race suffered no disadvantage.
  - B. Every Christian that does not run the race will be called to account.

Matthew 7:26-27

- 4. In the results to those who fail:
  - A. The runners lost only their labor or were humiliated but there was no punishment.
  - B. The Christian must persevere or be condemned.

Matthew 10:22 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

Hebrews 10:38 NOW THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; BUT IF ANYONE DRAWS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM.

2 Peter 2:20-21

#### Conclusion

- 1. If we are told that we needed to run for our life then we would all certainly make haste!
- 2. Souls are even more valuable. The consequences for not running the race are terrible.
- 3. But there is no choice for mankind. We must all run the race of life. Only those that endure to the end, obeying all of God's laws will be able to have a home with Him eternally in heaven.

Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

# Invitation

Place	Date

The Race.wpd Richie Thetford, 1995 – Reworked April 2024