



Finishing Well

March 12, 2023

As we have been doing this series on God's Grand Story, the story of the Bible, I've noticed how few leaders do actually finish well. Even the good leaders, most of them don't finish well.

Let's take Moses for example. We would all consider him a good leader, but even he doesn't finish well.

Read Deuteronomy 32:48-52 – The LORD speaks to Moses on Mount Nebo, overlooking Canaan.

Read Numbers 20:7-12 – Moses claims ownership of the miracle of the water from the rock in the desert.

Be careful how you talk *to* Him and *about* Him, and you would be careful how you *act* and how you *speak*.

It is simply unbelief when you treat God as if He doesn't matter. Moses found out that it matters to God how we treat Him.

Leviticus 10:3 – "By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy. And before all the people I will be honored."

Isaiah 8:13 – "Remember that I the LORD Almighty, am holy; I am the One you must fear:"

What does it mean to fear the Lord?

To fear the Lord means that we live our lives in light of the fact that one day we will stand before Him and give an account. Everything we say and do matters.

Corinthians 5:9-11 – "Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, . . ."

Most don't finish well because they fall into unbelief, don't treat God as holy, and don't live in the fear of the Lord.

The Apostle Paul realized that and finished well.

2 Timothy 4:7-8 – "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."

Paul longed for the Day when he would see the Lord and receive the reward for his faithful service. Because he longed for that, he lived for that.

For the rest of your life, no matter how long or short that may be, what will you live for?

I want to suggest to you that we follow Paul's advice and live for that day when we will see the Lord and receive rewards for our faithfulness.

How did he live? He fought the good fight. He finished the race. And He kept the faith.

If you choose to live for that day, then there is a fight you must fight, a race that you must finish, and a faith that you must keep!

First, there is a fight you must fight!

According to Colossians 1:16 – **You have been created by Christ and you exist for Christ.**

You never have to wonder what your purpose in life is or why you're here. You exist for the glory of Christ. You're here to glorify Christ.

But there is a real enemy who wants to stop you from bringing glory to Christ, and he knows that he can't stop the message, but he can stop the messenger. So, he will bring pressures on you to try to stop you.

Pressure from the outside to try to intimidate you, and from the inside to try to get you to fold up morally. He will try to divide because he knows that a house divided will not stand.

We must resist him and the pressures. We must fight the good fight and fulfill our purpose on the earth for the glory of Christ.

Second, there is a race you must finish!

The book of Hebrews was written to a church that was losing its wartime mentality and starting to drift through life without focus, without vigilance, and without energy.

Hebrews 2:1, 3 — “we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.... How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?”

Hebrews 3:12-13 — “Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘Today,’ lest anyone of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

The book of Hebrews is written to teach them, and us, otherwise.

Hebrews 5:12 — “Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.”

Hebrews 12:1b — “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.”

Run the race set before you! Run as in a race with a finish line and with everything hanging on it.

Read Hebrews 11:39-41, 12:1-2

In order to do that effectively, verse 1 says, “lay aside every encumbrance, and sin which so easily entangles us.”

We must lay aside every weight, obstacle, person, time poorly spent, and pray our way through to resolve.

What is our motivation to finish our race?

A. The Great Cloud of Witnesses (Hebrews 12:1)

Verse 1: “Since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us . . . run . . .”

They are the saints that have lived and died so valiantly by faith in chapter 11.

B. Jesus (Hebrews 12:2)

Verse 2: “Look to Jesus the author and perfecter of your faith.”

Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus. Don't make your circumstances your focus. That is what makes you sink.

C. Future Reward and Glory (Hebrews 12:2)

Verse 2: “. . . fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross.”

Jesus looked forward to the reward and future glory. We are part of the reward Jesus was looking forward to, the church, His bride.

The sufferings of this present age are not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed to the children of God (Romans 8:18).

Finally, there is a faith that you must keep!

The evidence that you are not keeping the faith is that you no longer think walking with the Lord is worth the sacrifice, the pressure, the demands. So you give up.

Keep the faith. It is worth it!

Like Paul, we must be fiercely determined to fight and run in such a way that we will win the prize.

Picture that moment when it is your turn to stand before Christ...then fight the good fight, finish the race, and keep the faith!