

Running to Win

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 May 2011

Preacher: Nathaniel Hutchison

[0:00] Now I'm going to select several different verses from chapter 11 and then read the first three verses of chapter 12. Hebrews chapter 11 and we'll begin in verses 1 and 2.

! Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. Verse 6.

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Verse 39. These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised.

God had planned something better for us, so that only together with us would they be made perfect. 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.

[1:18] Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Amen. Well, good evening again to all of you.

We will look at Hebrews 12 this evening. Do any of you remember who Edison Pena is or was? He was the Chilean coal miner or mining something.

I don't know if it was coal, but trapped 700 meters underground for 69 days. And this man was one of many that was rescued. And during his time, underneath, he was jogging in his work boots in the dark.

He had no light. He was jogging in those short hallways. He took his work boots and cut off the leather side support pieces, and he was jogging about, I think, 6 to 10 kilometers every day down there in the dark.

[2:33] And his goal was to one day run a marathon. And he completed the New York City Marathon in the last running. And he, as far as I know, did not stop. He had a bad knee. And he ran it in about 4 hours and 50 minutes.

And that's the largest marathon in the world. That illustration may help us understand the call in Hebrews 12 for us to run the race with endurance. And he's a good example of one that did this, something he wanted to do when he came out.

And we are, too, called to run the race with endurance. And I trust that may help you as we think about this verse and these verses for a few minutes. Very simple tonight.

The first point that I want to emphasize in verse 1 is run your race well. That's what the author is teaching us. And I should emphasize here that the running that is described, we are not running to be justified.

We are running because we have been justified. I'm not a Catholic. I'm not a moralist. We run because of what Christ has done for us. An author is going to tell us here, remove anything that will slow you down.

[3:44] That's one of the first things he begins to say. Why is that? Well, there are some important witnesses that may be watching you. In verse 1, right, we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses.

And then he tells us to lay aside. Kent Hughes, when I read his commentary, he told about the day when he was a young pastor in a church in the Chicago area. And he was a person that liked to prepare well for sermons, liked to study so that he knew well what he was going to say.

And one morning he didn't feel prepared like he should be. And so he is in his office before the service. And he is going over those notes really fast, trying to get his last-minute review in before he walks out.

And one of his fellow elders comes up and, hey, Kent, I want to get some good news for you. There are two pastors come to visit you today, Dr. Alan Redpath and Dr. Stephen Olford. And, of course, these were famous older pastors from New York and Chicago.

And he began to sweat. Oh, he's not prepared. And he's got to speak in notable witnesses. And he recognized that all of us do when we know that someone is going to be present in a crowd.

[4:53] It might be a sporting event or whatever it might be. We tend to sit up. We take notice. And we are careful on our performance, aren't we? And if we knew and remember that important witnesses are watching us as we run the race, it may help all of us to run better.

Young people understand that if they have a hobby or sport that they like to participate in. It's baseball season now in the U.S. Imagine if Derek Jeter just walked into Bremen up to the Diamond and talked to some of you young men and said, hey, I'm going to hit a few grounders here to see how you can field the ball.

You would play as hard as you could, wouldn't you? You might even be willing to get bruised a little bit to catch that ball to prove to him how good of a player you are.

Who are these witnesses? As we think about this verse, we are surrounded by these witnesses.

And one of the reasons why I asked to read the beginning of verse 1 of chapter 11 and some of the verses in between is, you know, the hall of faith.

Well, it's all those people. There are certainly witnesses that are aware that we are running the race. So that's the first, at least one of several indicators of who they are.

[6:05] And I think this is our spiritual family. People who have died in faith are not dead. They're alive. And it wouldn't surprise me if they know what is going on. It wouldn't surprise me if they are praying for us.

We don't pray to them. We pray only to the Father through Jesus. But they may be praying for us that we are running well. The author doesn't state why he mentions they're in the text.

In a sense, he leaves it for us to come to the right conclusion. All people who have died in faith are those, I think, that are in this, in a sense, great coliseum watching us run.

And we are called to run well. And that may be one of the reasons why 16 names are listed there, plus the prophets and others, some ladies. By faith they lived, not having obtained all the fulfillment of the promises in their lifetime.

But they, too, had a race to run, and they ran it in faith. All of them were sinners. All of them failed at different points in their life. But by God's grace, they ran.

[7:06] Remove anything that hinders you from running well. In the next part of the verse, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely.

And you know that Scripture often presents the Christian life as a race. And we are called to run that race. Paul talks about that in 1 Corinthians. He runs like an athlete with self-control.

He doesn't run aimlessly. In 2 Timothy 4, he says, I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. He said that while he was living. He knew he was not yet perfect.

But he could say that at the end of his life. And that wasn't boastful. That wasn't proud. He knew that he had run the race well. And that's amazing that someone could say that in their life.

Finishing the race there, I think, simply means keeping the faith. And all of us know that a marathon, a long race like that, is not easy. I've never done it.

[8:06] I don't know if I ever will. But all of us recognize there's some agony. There's probably a lot of pain in running a long-distance race. Those first Olympic Games, they didn't wear much.

They certainly didn't have the shoes we have to wear today and all the high-tech gear to run. But even with all of the high-tech gear and gadgets, it's still pretty hard to run, isn't it?

It doesn't make running all that easier. It still takes a lot of hard work. And so the author reminds us that we are called to run. I remember in high school, I ran track a little bit.

My brother ran track. We had a track meet one time. You know, the kids at that time didn't have the iPods. They had maybe the bigger earphones, the old clunky stuff. And this one guy shows up with his sweatpants and everything.

A cold day. Got ready for the race and got ready to take everything off. And a little bit too much came off. He wasn't ready to run. He had to put a little bit back on. He was so excited in the rush to

meet the race.

[9:04] But we are called to take the heavy things off when we run. And that's the picture here. The author calls us to lay aside anything that hinders us from following Jesus.

And so the question is very simple. In your life now, this week, this past month, is there anything that is hindering you from following Jesus? Could be different things for you, different things for you. We all face different trials and temptation. But is there anything in your life right now that is slowing you down from serving Jesus? And the author wants us, like a coach, he wants us to run well. There are good things that can slow us down. And there are bad, sinful things that can weigh us down. And again, a helpful illustration in a book that I read, the sundew plant.

It's a plant that flies like. They're attracted to the nectar or something sweet on that plant. And when they land on the plant, there are three finger-like hairs that come up.

[10:06] And they touch the tops of the wings. And the fly can't go anywhere. In fact, the more the fly moves to try to escape, the quicker death comes. And the fly was enticed by something.

And when landed on this sundew plant, it's death. And they are going to die. And so the same thing is true for us with sin in our life. Sin can get a death grip on us, can't it?

And so we have to ask ourselves, is there anything in my life, anything in our life, that is slowing us down from following Jesus in this race of faith?

There are many examples of things that can entangle us. One of the greatest overarching themes in Hebrews is simply unbelief. And there are many expressions of unbelief that we know in our own lives as well.

Unbelief could be coveting something. It could be envious or jealous of what someone has. Unbelief could be rejecting change when it's needed. It could be criticism, laziness, hatred, lust, unthankfulness, pride.

[11:12] Whatever it is, we are called to strip it off and lay it aside so that we can follow Jesus better. Jesus says in Matthew 5, he says, If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out.

It's better that you lose one of your members and that your whole body be thrown into hell. That's a graphic example of laying aside the things which easily entangle us.

For some of us, it might be worry. I used to be a worry wart years ago. Maybe a little bit still, my wife might say. But the Lord has helped me not to worry about things that often never happen anyways. And some of us, we look at the future, and as we heard earlier, we haven't taken account into the full stock that we have our spiritual stock and the riches there.

And we're concerned that we're going to lose something in this life or something terrible is going to happen to someone that we love. And worry may control us, and we're called to cast off worry if that's something that we are struggling with.

[12:16] These besetting sins, indwelling sins, all these things John Owen said, kill sin or sin will kill you. That's another reminder of how we need to throw off these things and follow Jesus.

In the second part of verse 1, run the course with disciplined endurance. We not only have to run and take off the things that hinder us, but we need to run with a disciplined endurance.

The race that is set before us. This race is a race that requires not simply speed, but endurance. It's not a sprint. The Christian race is again here viewed as a long-distance foot race, a marathon.

The race requires time, takes energy. Last year in 2010, there was a cruise ship off of Mexico-California border. I don't know if you remember this story, but the cruise ship lost power. Something happened at sea. Maybe an engine stopped. So the people on board had no power, no hot water. I don't know if any of you were on that ship, but they were complaining when they got off.

[13:24] They had nothing until the people came, the tugboats came out to sea to rescue them. They were so glad to get off that boat, that ship, and to get back onto land. But you know, there are Christians that are stranded.

They've gone away from the church. They've gone away from Jesus and the gospel. And when people, loving members, go to try to help bring them back, they slap your hand, right? They don't want that help. They're happy in the condition that they're in.

And they don't realize that you've come to give help, to rescue them, so that they can run with a bit more disciplined endurance. And many Christians are not interested in that. And we need to encourage one another when we fall away, when we drift away.

So we are called to look after one another. And it takes incredible endurance to run this race, great stamina to finish. It's not a sprint that's over in 15 seconds.

It's a marathon run that will last us our entire life. But again, it's not for eternity. It's only for a time, isn't it? It's only in this life. This is where the analogy, in a sense, may break down.

[14:31] In a race that you would enter in this world, the first person that crosses the finish line gets the prize. If you stop to help someone else, you could be disqualified and so on.

But in this race, you are not disqualified for stopping and helping a fellow pilgrim when they fall and stumble and help them up. You're not penalized for going back and getting someone and rescuing them and pulling them along with you in this race of faith.

We all know many athletes famous who are incredibly disciplined in the way that they live their lives. In the Philippines, perhaps our most famous athlete is the boxer, the international champion, Manny Pacquiao.

He's won several big, I think three world-class divisions. And he's a great boxer. And he lives, from what we've heard, an incredibly disciplined life.

And his eating habits, his training habits, long before the fight, he leaves his family in a different location. And he will devote two or three months all by himself to training with his trainers.

[15:34] He's willing to endure all of that for the sake of the goal of winning. And here we can be reminded that the word endurance is related to the word agonize.

It gives you a little bit of an idea what type of run sometimes this entails. It's not always an easy run. As we live the Christian life, there are many dangers that will tempt us to quit and to just give up. It's not worth it to serve the Lord. It's not worth it to worship at church. I could be doing something far more productive with my climb, especially when the steep hills come into our lives and we want to quit.

Those of you that have done any jogging over the years, you run a flat course, it's nice, and then you see a hill and you're not looking forward to going up that hill. And when you get to the top and you're rejoicing that you've made it to the top, sometimes there's a corner in another hill and you can't believe you've got to continue to climb higher.

Sometimes the Christian life is like that. It's a trail run that sometimes can have steep, narrow pathways to climb. And God calls us in His grace to work disciplined in this area.

[16:47] On BBC News, they had a report several months ago. It was called the Gumpathon. I don't know if you've ever heard of this. Remember the movie Forrest Gump? They had about five or six soldiers, mostly British, I think one American.

And these were people, soldiers, who were running for wounded military veterans. Some of the people that were involved in this race, and I have some of the names of them in my notes.

They called it the Gumpathon after the movie, running across the U.S. They ran from the East Coast to the West Coast, 3,530 miles. It took them eight weeks.

One of these guys had kind of a prosthetic leg on his knee on down. It was a running odyssey that they went through three deserts, four time zones, 10 mountain ranges, 16 states, and 785-89 towns.

Most of us, if we ever do work out, we may burn a couple hundred calories. The good ones are going to burn 1,000 calories. These guys were burning about 6,000 calories a day. And when they asked, why are you doing it?

[17:49] They said, we're doing it for the wounded soldiers. If we can see that in human society, people caring for one another, then what we should understand as we follow Jesus Christ is that we should run with a disciplined endurance as well.

And God gives us the grace. We need one another with stamina to run this race, not simply for a temporal cause, but for an eternal cause.

Christ has saved us by his work, and we are called to run with a purpose, this great race of faith. We are not in competition with one another.

This is another reason why this passage is not completely identical to an earthly race. It isn't simply the first one to finish gets the prize. He says here, the race that is set before us.

And this is where I've picked up a couple helpful things from other sermons and commentators. And he points out, one author says, note that he says, the race that is set before us.

[18:50] God is the one that designs the race for your life. It isn't me. It isn't the church leaders. God designs a distinct course for each one of us to run.

He places us in the race when, by his spirit, we are regenerated. He declares us just. He adopts us, and he says, I'm placing you on the starting line, and I expect you to run all the way to the end in my

grace.

God personally designs this course for each of us, and they're not all the same. I think all of us who have been living for Jesus know that. Some of us have flat courses that could appear to be boring. Others of you are given steep courses that seem to be dangerous and frightening. I don't know why God does that, but in his wisdom, he does do that, doesn't he? When we were visiting Phoenix, the city of Phoenix is in a flat valley.

It's a pancake city in some sense, but it's surrounded by mountains. And the city is laid out in a grid, a very even, organized grid, and some people are just running on that flat course.

[19 : 56] And then one day we went to climb Squaw Peak. It's a mile climb, beautiful hike, up in the kind of a canyon. And it's hard. We found a snake, and we found lizards on the way, and there's a little bit of danger there.

You've got to take water with you. And some reason God puts some of us on a flat race course to run, and other people have a very dangerous, so to speak, journey.

It takes care and run. And we don't believe in luck. We don't believe in chance. God isn't trying to trick us on this course. He is not trying to trip you on the course, is he? He has given you the exact course that you need to run in your life.

And that is according to his great wisdom. I don't know why some people have to deal with sickness and disease for decades in their life. And other Christians are given great health with athletic abilities.

Some Christians are struggling financially, while others are not. Some Christians experience broken homes and the pain of rebellious children. Other Christians seem to have wonderful marriages with children that all believe the gospel.

[21 : 04] I don't know why that happens. And yet God has designed a course for each of us. Some Christians live for decades with loneliness and sorrow and sometimes even depression.

And yet we believe that God never misleads us. He is always in control. And he does know what is best for us. In our church in the Philippines, we have some rich and a lot of poor people.

And it's a joy to see how God has used those that are given wealth to help those that don't have much wealth. And they share with one another to help each other along this way.

And if God has placed you in a situation where you are to be the receiver, receive with joy. If God has placed you in a situation to be a giver, give with thanksgiving in your heart.

We are helping each other to run the race well. Can't quit. And so in verses 2 through 3, cross the finish line. We are called to run our race.

[22 : 03] Cross the finish line. Don't you dare quit this race. Never take your eyes off Jesus. Verse 2, look into Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross.

Jesus is our goal in the sense that we focus intently upon him. Our life is to be moving forward in that constant motion that I'm following my Savior, Jesus Christ.

Farmers know how to plow by looking down the field, right? Today it's all GPS. They can look around. But before they had to look at something across the field, right? That would keep the row straight.

And you know that when you've watched a race, a running race, there was a famous one in 1954, the Miracle Mile was dubbed, Roger Bannister versus John Landy.

One of them looked back and lost his sense of direction, and he was ahead. And because of that, he lost the race. And when we don't fix our eyes upon Jesus, again, when we look at the distractions in life, we can easily become discouraged and just want to give up the race altogether.

[23 : 12] Sprinters have looked back, and they have fallen, become disqualified. They lose their sense of direction, and Jesus keeps our eyes fixed on the goal, on himself.

He is our object. Marion Jones, the great Olympic runner, lost all of her medals. They had them taken away because they found out she was disqualified because she did not compete according to the rules.

And Paul says in 2 Timothy 2.5, An athlete is not crowned unless he or she competes according to the rules. And Paul himself, at certain points, has this fear of being disqualified.

And I personally think it's more than just being disqualified from ministry. It's a healthy fear. We know that God has saved us, and we are going to heaven, but perhaps we should live as if we could go to hell.

There is, in a sense, a balance there. I think we can sometimes be too overconfident of our salvation, as if God has saved me, and there is nothing that can undo that, and so I will live the way that I want to live.

[24 : 14] That isn't a proper understanding, in my opinion. Parents and grandparents, can you remember the first time that you saw your children take a step?

You remember those days? You remember when they first learned to walk, and when they began to take a couple of steps, you distanced yourself a little bit, you backed up, and you became the object for them, didn't you?

And all of those children, I love children, they look at their parent or their grandparent, and what is their facial expression? It's that frozen, bug-eyed look.

The mouth is open, and there's a little bit of fear, but a whole lot of hope and trust, isn't there? And they begin to take a few walks, a few steps, and they are so happy when they meet the parent or grandparent, and they're embraced when they make it, and they know at that age, they have to keep their eyes fixed on their parent.

And we too are called to fix our eyes on Jesus. And note here that I've emphasized the word Jesus today. The book of Hebrews emphasizes the word Jesus, not Christ.

[25 : 25] And I think the answer is so simple. It's to emphasize His humanity with us. Jesus too was given a race by His Father, wasn't He? And He is human as we are human.

He is forever human. He is one of us. He is perfect. And yet He was given all kinds of temptations and trials in His life. He had the hardest course of anyone to run.

And yet He ran it. And the author, I think, emphasizes Jesus to identify that He can sympathize with us. That's what He says in 4.15. He sympathized with us because He too is human and faced temptations, trials, and the pressures of this life.

And so we are to fix our eyes upon Jesus, our elder brother, the one who has come to accomplish salvation for us. In the second part of verse 2, we must imitate the attitude of Jesus as we run.

There's the word joy there. It doesn't say grumbling and complaining. Jesus endured the greatest trial, the greatest race of all time, and He did it with joy.

[26 : 36] And that is a needed reminder for all of us to hear. Fully divine. Fully human. The supreme example for us. He did not shrink back as we spoke briefly on Wednesday evening.

The point here that I want to make is that when you read Hebrews chapter 11 and know that those people are surrounding us, men and women mentioned in the Old Testament, it's okay to take your eyes off of Abraham and Moses and all of those people, but you can never take your eyes off of Jesus.

That's the great hope that we have. Jesus brings our faith to perfection, 2.10. Then, He is qualified to be our mediator and redeemer.

The cross of Jesus Christ and the resurrection is the epicenter of all history. So why was Jesus joyful? How could He endure with joy? And there could be several answers to this.

Here are a couple, just two. Because of a great harvest and because of a great homecoming. Jesus knew that in His work on the cross, that there was going to be a great harvest across this world and that people would believe in the gospel, in what He had done.

[27 : 49] And He knew that one day God would save thousands and thousands of sinners on this world. And He has done that and He is continuing to do that. God is working in this world, around this world.

And many people are coming to faith in Jesus Christ. What's another reason why Jesus could have endured with joy? Another reason could have been the fact that when Jesus rose from the dead, when He went back into heaven at His ascension, that was a new day in heaven.

That was something that had never taken place before as the risen Christ enters heaven and takes His seat at the right hand of God as our sitting priest. He is not a standing priest.

As He intercedes for us, His sacrifice is done. Imagine the joy in heaven when Jesus entered after the ascension, a great homecoming, as the eternal Word of God enters again, human and divine, forevermore.

Jesus endured with joy. And I think that clearly implies something very simple, that as we live our Christian life, we are to be happy people. We are to be people that are filled with joy.

[29 : 05] We are not to be filled with sorrow all the time and complaining and bitterness. We are to be happy people that love one another and have a message that we want to share with the world.

And so I want to encourage you to ask God to help you endure with even greater joy, an infectious joy of who you are. In Jesus Christ. In verse 3, remember how Jesus endured.

Consider Him. That's the word that we get today, logarithm. Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself so that you may not grow weary or faint-hearted.

The author, if he has to state that, he must know that like us, like myself, we easily become weary and faint-hearted, don't we? There are many illustrations in Scripture calling us Galatians, let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap if we do not give up, Galatians 6.9.

Jesus faced all kinds of opposition from the moment He is born. Someone wants to kill Him. And so He is taken off into Egypt eventually, and He faced opposition from the moment that He enters the desert, the wilderness.

[30 : 21] The Spirit leads Him there and is testing. He faces opposition from the religious leaders, from Caiaphas, from Herod and Pilate. All of these people, many are abusing their authority.

They are distorting justice. And yet Jesus continues to trust confidently in His Father in heaven. Jesus never stopped trusting His Father.

Does that ever happen to you, where you stop trusting your Heavenly Father? It could be something little in life that happens, and you begin to doubt God's goodness. Jesus never did that. The word consider, again, is where we get the word today, logarithm. When students are studying in high school and college, they're thinking deeply about their homework, aren't they? When they're studying something like that.

And so we are called to think deeply about Jesus Christ. To think in our lives about what He has done. How can I remember Jesus today or tomorrow? How can I be absorbed with Him in the daily routines of life?

[31 : 25] Mothers taking care of your children in the home. And the children may not be behaving that well in a particular day. You can share the gospel with them and teach them about Jesus Christ, even in those simple or dull moments of life.

That's what Paul says in Philippians 3. The more we remember Jesus, the easier it is to endure. The more we stop to meditate and think about His great work for us, the easier it will be to endure even life's most difficult trials.

I've met many Christians in the last several years that have faced incredible trials in their life. And many of these Christians are still happy. They're joyful.

They are trusting their Father. They have not turned their back against God. And they are testifying that this trial did them good. They are still running the race.

[32 : 40] And they are intently focused on crossing that goal someday because their eyes are fixed upon Jesus. The more we remember Jesus, the easier it is to endure.

There are many ways to remember Jesus when we fall into times of discouragement, of weariness in our Christian life. The author calls us to meditate, to contemplate on who Jesus is, on what He has done, even when we face obstacles that seem insurmountable in our life.

You can pray and ask God to help us meditate upon Him more. Sometimes we can sing individually in a family. We can, at times, enter fasting, asking God to help us.

We meditate on Scripture. We read the Gospels. Read books by the spiritual masters who have thought deeply in some of these things and benefit from what they have written over the years.

One of the best ways to remember Jesus is, as a church, when we observe the Lord's Supper, we think deeply about what He has done for us. When we hold the elements, they represent something, don't they?

[33 : 53] They represent a real man who came and died for us. Again, Proverbs 4 reminds us to guard our hearts diligently. As we come to a close, I'll quote a statement by Chris Lungard.

As he summarized Owens in Modern English, he says, Let the sorrows of your Savior on the cross move you. Imagine the cries and groans on your behalf. Imagine this until your heart breaks.

Daydream about much love, how much love He showed you as He hung on the cross, naked in your place. And see if the baits and lures of sin and the flesh don't grow ugly and repulsive.

Will you give your hours to fantasizing about the dwelling on and longing for vile, evil things that nailed the love of your soul to the cross, that cursed tree?

Again, what he is saying is when we are consumed with Jesus Christ and His work and what He has done, there isn't room for sin. And so we are called to think, consider deeply who Jesus is.

[34 : 58] For those of you that are here tonight and you have never professed faith in Jesus Christ, I want to ask you, why aren't you in the race? Why haven't you believed yet? I think what Jason said this morning was quite profound.

God doesn't reward those that wait. He rewards those that believe in faith. You believe in faith that Jesus Christ is your Savior, that He has saved you from your sin.

And He will put you in the race. I can't sign you up. Your parents can't sign you up. Your friends can't sign you up. God will save you. He will put you in the race. And from that point on, you will run the rest of your life in faith by His grace day by day.

Jesus was given a race Himself and He finished it well. Through the incarnation, all of His life, He lived a perfect life. He fulfilled all righteousness, died on the cross, and rose again so that we might be saved.

You that are following Jesus tonight, don't cross. Don't quit until you cross the finish line. If Jesus does not return in our lifetime, don't quit.

[36 : 09] Run your race well and cross the finish line. Your rest will come when the race is done. Heavenly Father, we thank You for these few verses in the book of Hebrews.

Thank You for putting Hebrews in the Word of God for us to study. And Lord, I pray that You would help us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ. Help us to run, Lord, the race of faith by Your grace day by day.

Lord, help us to encourage one another when we know that a fellow believer, a sister or a brother, is struggling or going through a trial in life. Thank You, Lord, for the help You give to us in the church.

And I pray, Lord, again this evening that You would bring a lost sinner who is looking to You. Lord, that that person would believe and You would put them on the starting line.

And Lord, that by Your grace, they would be able to run the race well in faith until the final days of their life. Thank You, Lord, for Hebrews. Help us to persevere.

[37 : 12] In Christ's name we pray. Amen. Amen.