

Sunday, April 30, 2023

1 Timothy 4:13, "Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching."

Title: Keeping Our Focus on the Way

Series: People of the Way ... 3

Text: John 14:1 to 7; Hebrew 12:1 - 8

Purpose: I want to PERSUADE my congregation that the discipline of the Father is to train us in the art of staying FOCUSED.

Last Sunday's devotional was from Acts 2:36 - 47 (42) and was entitled "The Example of the First on the Way":

- ~ 1. They Devoted Themselves to...the Apostles' Teaching
- ~ 2. They Devoted Themselves to...the Fellowship
- ~ 3. They Devoted Themselves to...the Breaking of Bread
- ~ 4. They Devoted Themselves to...the Prayers

1. Focus Point Number One is the Race:

~ Hebrews 12:1, "...and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,"

Insert of ancient Olympic Stadium.

I am at the race as participant NOT a spectator! Look at the stadium. Was it built primarily for the runners or for the spectators?

Remember the Word of God in Ephesians 4:11 - 12.

~ Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

We are all called to be participants!

"run with endurance"; my own experience running the 880 in Calgary and then on to cross-country on the University of Calgary grounds. The difference in spectators to the 880 and cross-country. The key to endurance is proper training, commitment, and focus. We run by faith not sight!

2. Focus Point Number Two is the Lord Jesus Christ:

~ Hebrews 12:1 - 2, "...and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

~ Matthew 11:28 - 30, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (30) For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

~ Christ Jesus is our trainer, coach, guide, and running partner!

~ Video insert

3. Focus Point Number Three is Shed Off Sin:

~ Hebrew 12:1, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,"

~ "lay aside every weight" or encumbrance (prominent, burden or weight). Country music singer Granger Smith is leaving country music, says he will devote life to church. He has a master's degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; he felt that he needed to follow Jesus and give his time to ministry.

~ "and sin which clings so closely" weight and sin are not the same thing; sin is willful disobedience to the counsel of God and resistance to the Holy Spirit.

4. Focus Point Number Four is Expect Discipline:

~ Hebrews 12:6 - 8, "For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives. (7) It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? (8) If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons."

~ Am I dealing with my known sin?

1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

~ Am I open to continuous correction?

1 John 1:8 & 10, "(8) If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (10) If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

Conclusion:

If I will purpose to keep FOCUSED on these race markers I will finish the race course; I want to be able to say as Paul did, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4:7)

I do not want to be identified with Hymenaeus and Alexander, "holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme."

1 Timothy 1:19 - 20