

# Running The Race – with Endurance

Hebrews 12

Read verse 1 to 17

Let us consider the story of Israel as they come out of Egypt since the writer of Hebrews has that as a backdrop as he writes

Here is the version of the travellers

- Out of Egypt – into the wilderness – what kind of freedom is that?
- And they are taking the long way around – the promised land was actually quite close
- They just get going on their way to the promised land when Moses leads them to turn back camp between the Egyptians and the Red sea
- Once they get through that they end up travelling three days without finding water
  - Travel by day and night
- When they do, it is the bitter water at Marah
  - fortunately Moses works a miracle – Ex 14:22
- They get to Elim and there is plenty – but they are not allowed to stay there – Ex 16
- Two and a half months in (wilderness of Sin) and they are hungry
  - At least they had food in Egypt
  - Worried they will die (but then get quail and manna)
- Then they are told to camp at Rephidim
  - Where there is no water – again
  - fortunately Moses works another miracle
  - useful fellow to have around while you are in the wilderness – Ex 17
- Amlek attaches them
  - What do they know about fighting
  - They have been slaves for 430 years
  - Somehow having Moses up the mountain with his hands up saves the day - fortunately
- Then comes Sanai
  - Terrifying sights on the mountain
  - Moses disappears for 40 days (is he alive or not?)
  - Are left to fend for themselves and decide to make their own gods to go before them (idolatry)

From a human perspective one understands their troubles

- We can almost have sympathy for their grumbling
- Maybe even understand them taking matters into their own hands and creating the golden calf

Of course, from God's perspective we see:

- The unbelief
- The disobedience
- That they were stiff necked
- Their idolatry
- That they were failing all of God's 'tests'

From His perspective we see that the wilderness is to 'test' them

- So that they get to know Him
- To train them through 'discipline'
- So that they are ready to take possession of their allotted inheritance when the time comes

Along the way:

- He reveals Himself to them in a multitude of ways
- He provides for them (food, water, clothes and shoes that do not wear out)
- He guides them with His own presence (pillars of cloud and fire)
- He keeps them from having to fight the Philistines before they are ready – even if they means they take the long way around
- He delivers them in the battles they do face (slowly trains them in warfare and in trusting Him to fight for them)
- There is nothing 'fortunately' about any of the deliverance, provision, etc. that Moses is part of
  - It all by God's design

And yet:

- They never quite learned to trust Him
- To walk by faith
- They grew weary and fainthearted in the wilderness

1 Corinthians 10:1-13 comments on this as well

- They fell in the wilderness
- They were overthrown
- Did not overcome
- Did not endure

From the perspective of the book of Hebrews they:

- Did not walk by faith
  - Persevere in faith
- Did not focus their attention on God being with them
  - And what He was revealing of Himself
  - Or on what He was teaching them – training them in
- They focussed rather on their troubles in the wilderness
  - Just wanted those to go away
  - Grumbled
- Fell into idolatry and sin
- And they forfeited their inheritance
  - Did not receive the promises

The writer of Hebrews writes to warn the Jewish believers of the day of the danger of the same thing happening to them.

It is a book of exhortation and encouragement.

By implication it is a warning and an exhortation and encouragement to us as well

He presents Jesus as the Son of God seated at the right hand of the Father

- A place of favour
- A place where He represents us

He presents Jesus as our High Priest:

- Who offered up His own blood as a perfect sacrifice once and for all
- And who understands our struggle in the world
- He sees and has compassion for us in our troubles
- But he has also himself endured

He outlines the reasons we can have the full confidence of faith

- Our sins are remembered no more

He tells of those who did persevere

- A great cloud of witnesses

He reminds us of the Father who is training us in love so that we will be able to endure

He tells of the promises of God that are ours to receive

- Through faith and patience (endurance)
- Persevering faith

There is a reward on offer

- We can share in His holiness
- We can gain the peaceful fruit of righteousness
- We can receive the fullness of His grace at work in our lives on a daily basis
- We are receiving a Kingdom that cannot be shaken

How do we endure?

- Fix our eyes of Jesus
  - He is the author and perfecter of our faith
    - This is His work
    - Through the Holy Spirit
  - He Himself endured and received His inheritance
    - He is seated at the right hand of the Father
    - The first part
  - He is receiving the second part of that
    - In the saints His Church
    - And in the continual extension of His Kingdom
  - We can have all that is in Him
  - Like Him there is a joy set before us
    - The hope of glory
    - And an eternal inheritance
    - A reward for enduring – being overcomers
    - A reward in the fruit we bear through the Holy Spirit
  - Like Him we can endure – empowered by the Holy Spirit
- See the whole of our lives through His eyes

- Throw of every weight
  - The Holy Spirit will show us what those are
- And sin...
  - Getting Egypt out of us
- We learn to be worshippers
  - Bring Him the acceptable sacrifices of a surrendered heart
    - A living sacrifice
  - Avoid idolatry
    - Putting anything before God in our lives
- We take up His cause as what we live for – the Kingdom of God
- We learn to be good athletes and warriors
  - See the whole of our lives through His eyes
  - See and receive the ‘discipline’ of the Father
  - Even in the most severe troubles of the wilderness
  - Work with Him as He uses everything in our lives
    - To train us to run the race and fight the good fight of faith

#### Because of Him

- We do not grow weary or fainthearted
- We run with endurance the race that He sets before us
- We receive the promises

## Heb 12:1–29

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also (like them) lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. <sup>4</sup> In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. <sup>5</sup> And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.

<sup>6</sup> For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

<sup>7</sup> 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? <sup>8</sup> If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. <sup>9</sup> Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? <sup>10</sup> For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. <sup>11</sup> For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. <sup>12</sup> Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, <sup>13</sup> and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. <sup>14</sup> Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. <sup>15</sup> See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; <sup>16</sup> that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. <sup>17</sup> For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.

### **A Kingdom That Cannot Be Shaken**

<sup>18</sup> For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest <sup>19</sup> and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. <sup>20</sup> For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” <sup>21</sup> Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” <sup>22</sup> But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, <sup>23</sup> and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, <sup>24</sup> and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

<sup>25</sup> See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. <sup>26</sup> At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” <sup>27</sup> This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things

that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. <sup>28</sup>Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, <sup>29</sup>for our God is a consuming fire.

### **1 Co 10:1–13**

For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, <sup>2</sup>and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, <sup>3</sup>and all ate the same spiritual food, <sup>4</sup>and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. <sup>5</sup>Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. <sup>6</sup>Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. <sup>7</sup>Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” <sup>8</sup>We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. <sup>9</sup>We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, <sup>10</sup>nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. <sup>11</sup>Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. <sup>12</sup>Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. <sup>13</sup>No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.