Preparing to Finish Well (Heb. 11:35b-12:6)

**Introduction:**

***1 Cor. 9:26-27*** – Paul didn’t want to run in vain.

***2 Tim. 4:6-8*** – It is possible to arrive at your destination with confidence and expectation.

1. **Finishing well requires the ability to see beyond the finish line.** – *“so that they might obtain a better resurrection”* (Heb. 11:35)

***Heb. 11:1*** *–* Faith is seeing and acting on the invisible because God promised it.

***Heb. 11:16*** – Abraham saw a future city as if it was already there.

***Heb. 11:17, 18*** – At God’s call, Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son.

***Heb. 11:19*** – He saw the resurrection after the sacrifice.

***Heb. 11:35*** – The people spoken of here saw resurrection happen for other people. They wanted to wait for the resurrection to glory.

***Phil. 3:10, 11*** – There is a resurrection coming that will bring us into the presence of God.

1. **Finishing well doesn’t always mean finishing smoothly.** *– “destitute, afflicted, ill-treated…”* (Heb. 11:36-38)

***1 Kings 1:1*** – Though the Bible is filled with glorious stories, David’s ends with him struggling to keep warm in his old age.

***1 Kings 1:11-14*** – At the end of David’s reign, others easily manipulate him because of his fragile grasp on kingdom happenings.

***Heb. 11:35-38*** – These verses give the record of nameless heroes whose stories ended in suffering.

***2 Tim. 2:5*** – Those who run the race must run with integrity. Running correctly won’t always guarantee fair treatment.

***1 Thess. 4:16*** – Though my last words may be barely audible, Jesus will shout for me when He returns.

***Mal. 3:16-18*** – No one else may know the Christian’s name, but God has it recorded in His book.

1. **Finishing well gets you affirmation from God.** – *“of whom the world was not worthy”* (Heb. 11:38)

***Matt. 3:17*** – At the Baptism, the Father affirmed He was pleased with Jesus, His Son.

***Mark 9:7*** – On the Mt. of Transfiguration, the Father once again called people to listen to Jesus.

***Phil. 2:9-11*** – The early church spoke of the exaltation Jesus would one day receive.

***Rev. 5:13-14*** – John, the Apostle, got to see this future exaltation of Jesus take place.

***Heb. 11:16*** – God declares His pride in humans who exercise great faith.

***Heb. 11:38*** – God says the world was not worthy of those who exercised faith.

***1 Sam. 18:1*** – It makes sense that Jonathon connected himself to David after Goliath’s defeat.

***Heb. 11:32*** – God included Samson as one of these who brought Him glory.

***Judges 13:5*** – Samson did not finish the mission; he only began it.

***Judges 14:6*** – Samson’s strength did not impress God; God was the source of his strength.

***Heb. 11:6; Judges 16:30*** – At the end of his life, Samson expressed faith in God’s existence and God’s goodness.

***Matt. 10:32, 33*** – Jesus said He would claim all who claimed Him.

***Job 1:8*** – God spoke of Job with pride before Satan

***Job 42:7*** – Even when Job, in pride, complained against God, God still claimed Job.

1. **Finishing well demands that we work as a team.** – *“apart from us, they would not be made perfect”* (Heb. 11:40)

***Eph. 1:22*** – God has positioned us in a team. He is the team’s leader.

***John 15:5; Acts 1:8*** – God is the source of the team’s power.

***Heb. 12:3*** – Jesus is the team’s example.

***1 Cor. 12:17, 18*** – We need the strength of others to shore up our weaknesses.

***Heb. 11:22*** – Joseph could not make it to the Promised Land on his own. He needed others to carry his bones.

***Eccl. 4:9-12*** – The person who runs alone doesn’t have others to help when he falls.

***Gal. 6:1*** – Those who fall spiritually need the gentle help of others to recover.

***Heb. 12:14-17*** – The team must work in unity to accomplish its goal.

1. **Finishing well can be inhibited by distractions.** *– “fixing our eyes on Jesus”* (Heb. 12:1-3)

***Heb. 12:1*** – There are witnesses all around us who have already run their race.

***Psalm 27:4*** – David focused on one thing: to dwell in the house of the Lord.

***Phil. 3:13, 14*** – Paul left his past to seek the prize God had waiting for him.

***Acts 20:23, 24*** – Even when Paul’s friends warned him of danger in Jerusalem, he moved forward toward that goal.

***1 Cor. 7:34, 35*** – Paul cautioned people about the distractions a married person faces. It’s easier to focus on the mission when single.

***Luke 19:10*** – Jesus’ focused mission was to save the lost.

***Matt. 4:2, 3*** – Jesus honed His focus through fasting and prayer.

***John 4:4*** – Nothing would distract Jesus from His need to go through Samaria.

***John 4:34, 35*** – When Jesus’ disciples tried to turn His attention to the food they brought, He turned their attention to the people who were starving for spiritual food.

***John 6:15*** – Jesus’ mission was not to become King yet, so He withdrew from those who pushed their agenda.

***Mark 8:32, 33*** – When Peter tried to distract Jesus from His mission, Jesus pushed Peter out of the way.

***Luke 9:51*** – Jesus set His face toward Jerusalem

***John 17:4; 19:30*** – Jesus was intent on reaching the finish line; “It is finished!”

***Matt. 14:29, 30*** – When Peter lost his focus on Jesus, he started to go under the water.

***Heb. 12:2*** – We must fix our gaze on Jesus as our goal.

***Psalm 73:25*** – When you desire Jesus more than anything else, focusing on Him will not be an issue.

1. **Finishing well is impossible for quitters.** – *“not grow weary and lose heart”* (Heb. 12:3)

***2 Tim. 4:10*** – Paul wrote of Demas who defected because of his love for the world.

***2 Tim. 4:16, 17*** – When all others left Paul, he took comfort in Jesus’ presence.

***Matt. 24:12*** – Jesus prophesied that people would walk away. He knows how betrayal feels.

***Gal. 5:7; 1 John 2:15*** – Some people quit because of distractions.

***1 Sam. 15:17*** – When Saul was small in his own eyes, he listened to directions.

***1 Sam. 18:8*** – Saul got distracted by the praise David received.

***1 Sam. 31:8-10*** – Saul’s race ended with him beheaded and his body hanging on the enemy’s wall.

***Heb. 12:3*** – Quitting in your heart or head leads to quitting in reality.

***Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 10:5; Phil. 4:8*** – Getting our thoughts where they need to be is crucial.

***Matt. 24:13*** – True disciples endure to the end.

***John 6:67, 68*** – When others left Jesus, His disciples proclaimed their undying allegiance. Jesus had what they needed – life.

***Matt. 11:29*** – Jesus also offered rest.

***Psalm 103:14*** – God knows our weakness and need for rest.

***Matt. 14:13; Mark 6:30-32*** – Jesus attempted to take the disciples away for some rest.

***Isaiah 40:28-31*** – Strength comes from waiting on the Lord.

***Matt. 26:41*** – Exhaustion increases temptation’s power.

***Gal. 6:9*** – We will succeed if we don’t give up.

***1 Thess. 5:11, 14*** – Jesus will send others to strengthen your faith.

***Phil. 4:1*** – Paul took courage in the lives he had impacted.

***Heb. 12:2; Phil. 1:6*** – Jesus began our race, and He will complete it.

***1 Thess. 4:18*** – No matter where you are in the race, yours will end when Jesus comes back.

***1 Cor. 15:57; Heb. 6:19, 20*** – Take courage; we win!

1. **Finishing well is God’s desire for His children.** – *“those whom the Lord loves He disciplines”* (Heb. 12:5-6)

***2 Cor. 12:8, 9*** – Our weakness in the race causes us to depend on God.

***Rom. 14:10*** – Jesus will evaluate our race one day.

***1 Cor. 3:14*** – Jesus will reward us based on His evaluation.

***Rev. 22:12*** – Jesus will bring His reward with Him when He returns.

***1 Cor. 9:23-27*** – The race requires disciplining ourselves.

**Conclusion:**

The biblical writers understood your questions and your doubts. But they answered both with courage and hope.

***1 Cor. 13:12*** – We don’t now know why everything happens the way it does, but one day, we will see Jesus; that will be enough.

***2 Cor. 3:18*** – At the end of the race, our face will reflect Jesus’ face.