

Hebrews – teaching #10

A Call to Perseverance

Opening thoughts

Main point of Hebrews –

- Part #1 - Keep your eyes on Jesus!
- Part #2 - Don't give up!

Growth always seems to come in the struggles of life.

Anything worthwhile never seems to come easy.

- “No pain no gain.”
- That’s why we say we are being “stretched”. If we don’t learn to stretch we snap & break.

The victorious life always requires perseverance – tenacity – stick-to-itiveness - endurance. You can’t give up even when everything in you wants to.

The turtle and the hare – Tenacity always wins in the end. It isn’t a matter of talent as much as stick-to-it-ness.

- Examples of men I respect – Jim Steiner, Monty Ralston, Bob Caldwell, Ken Wild.
- Vision & true passion will always last longer than gifting or money.

We dislike what James says because we know so well that it’s true:

James 1

²Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴Perseverance must finish its work [?] so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything...

Perseverance in Gk. = “steadfastness under trial” which produces three things

- Maturity – seasoned, experienced, well developed. It is a quality developed by how much we have learned while undergoing trials.
- Completeness – weaknesses and imperfections are being removed from our character.
- Not lacking anything – blind spots of the past have been corrected

The Christian experience is likened to an endurance race: (1 Cor. 9:24)

Hebrews 12 [Living translation]

¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us. ²We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish.

Lesions learned on a marathon between L.A. & S.F in 1965.

- San Luis Obispo to Moro Bay – 15 miles through the fog and moonless night.
- Running line to line not knowing when the lights of Moro Bay would come.
- Wondering if my father would ever come as he had promised.
- It was an issue of faith & hope.

Main Text

Hebrews 10

¹⁹Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. ²⁵Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Jesus has given us the provision to do it – Therefore “Let us”:

- **Faith** – ²²let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of **faith**, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.
- **Hope** - ²³Let us hold unswervingly to the **hope** we profess, for he who promised is faithful.
- **Love** - ²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward **love** and good deeds.
- **In the context of fellowship** - ²⁵Let us not give up meeting **together**, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another [*and warn each other – Living translation*] —and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Warning concerning the consequences of giving up and falling out of the race.

²⁶If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, ²⁷but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. ²⁸Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. [*Another Old Testament picture of the reality of our choices*] ²⁹How much more severely do you think a

man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? [The rejection of God's gift of grace and sanctification] ³⁰For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." ³¹It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

- We have a choice in the matter concerning the provision of Christ.
- The reality of Hell & eternity.

Stay in the Race! Don't grow weary – don't shrink back – and stand your ground.

³²Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering.

Life is a great contest – It isn't if you suffer, but how you respond when difficulty comes.

Did you:

- Draw near to God or drift away and lose confidence?
- Hold unswervingly to the hope you professed or lose hope?
- Did you continue to bless and love or withdraw and fall into self pity?
- Were you tempted to withdraw from fellowship & encouraging others?

These are the great tactics of the enemy!

Romans 12

¹¹Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹²Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

³³Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. ³⁴You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. ³⁵So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. ³⁶You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. ³⁷For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay.

³⁸But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him."

³⁹But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.

Conclusion

Romans 5

³Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

- Maybe you're running an endurance race in the dark and fog.
- Maybe you're tempted to lose faith and hope – not feeling loved.
- Maybe you're tempted to withdraw and isolate yourself.

1 Corinthians 13

¹²Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; [*now I am running in the fog and the darkness of night – I can only see one line at a time in the road - but*] then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.