

# The Finish Line

Running life's  
race well.



The following notes are from a sermon given by Pastor Wayne Flowers  
at Smythe Street Church on Sunday August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020

## **The Finish Line – Smythe Street Church – Sunday August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020**

**Last week...**

**An Overcoming Life.**

We should be inspired us to face and overcome our giants (obstacles of life).

Like David, we can have the conviction, the courage and confidence to overcome!

**Today...**

The Finish Line - Running Life's Race Well!

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last for ever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9:24-27

**Life is a race to be run. We need to run well. We need to finish well.**

**My goal for today...**

Help you to focus on winning the race.

That we would know what it takes to run successfully.

Running is a spiritual metaphor for life.

There are many scriptures that talk about running well.

I talked with **Mark Kozak** – he leads **Soul2Sole** in our church – and I was very inspired to see how many parallels there are and how many applications can be made to our life in regard to the running life's race.

As I listened to Mark and I pondered the scriptures, I decided I would ask the following questions about "running the race of life."

**#1. Are you training properly?**

Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last for ever. 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 9:25

**What if we applied the same intensity and effort to our spiritual lives as a serious runner did in preparing for a race?**

Are we to nonchalant about the race we are running?

To be a serious runner takes a lot of commitment and discipline.

Dedication to routine. Training the body and mind.

Enables you to give your very best on race day.

You can always tell who has spent the time getting ready.

Running the race of life is about the behind the scenes activities.

The regimens of daily training that include those early morning runs, no matter what the weather is. The changes in diet and insistence on going to bed at a decent time.

## **#2. Do you have a strategy?**

Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 9:26,27

**What is your plan to stay on pace? Are you expending energy wisely?  
Do you know where you are on the course?**

Paul said that he “did not run aimlessly.”

A prescribed path. Markers and boundaries. Check points.

You know where you should be at a certain point and at a certain time.

### **The point is...**

Running aimlessly in life means paying little attention to purpose, goals and plans.

How does God want to use my life? What are the priorities in my life?

### **Another important point...**

Paul said that he “strikes a blow to his body and makes it his slave.”

If we are going to cross the finish line we must remember that the appetites and inclinations of the natural person must be kept in line.

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, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1-2

### **A key phrase...**

**Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles!**

Runners run with the right gear. They run light.

They are not weighed down by heavy clothing or shoes that are ill fitting or heavy.

So it is in life! There are things we must not be carrying if we plan to finish well.

- Excessive cares and worries.
- Bitter regret.
- Unforgiveness.
- Real or perceived hurt and rejection at the hands of others.
- Unfruitful distractions and time wasters.
- Areas of disobedience.

- Things that we have not surrendered to God.

We may think they are of little consequence. We would be wrong about that!  
They entangle us. Like a show with a lace untied.  
Like running with a rope around our waist and dragging behind us.

### **Are you paying attention to the pace of life?**

Paul said...

And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

Although there may be sprints and dashes along the way, life is about endurance, and endurance is about pace. Some people go out too fast, too hard...they deplete themselves quickly and have no reserves left to finish well.

### **#3. Who is running with you?**

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. Heb. 12:1

### **Who is cheering you on?**

Who is helping you to stay focused?  
Who is keeping you on track?  
Who is the friend that is counting on you?  
Who is that person who inspires you to stay in the game?  
Who are you helping to run well?

A running buddy can make all the difference in the world.  
When you know that they are lacing up their shoes and planning to meet you on the trail at 6:30 you are encouraged to do the same.

Some in the race are a little more advanced and they pull out a little more in you.  
Some are just a little behind, and they need you to pull out the best in them.

### **Are you aware that you can “hit the wall?”**

Your body runs out of fuel and starts to shut down.

Three things...

1. **Fuel!** Your body needs some fuel. What is spiritual fuel?
2. **Fortitude!** There is a mental block to push through. I can do all things...
3. **Friends!** Someone to encourage you! You can complete the race.

#### **#4. Do you think about the finish line?**

The time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day – and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 4:6-8

#### **We must begin with the end in mind.**

There is a lot of inspiration to be derived by thinking about crossing the finish line.

In life there are various “finish lines.”

It is nice to have completions along the way. We did this! We reached the goal!

But there is also the final finish line of life.

#### **The best race is one where you have “a negative split.”**

You can run a better time in the second half than you did in the first half.

#### **There is still some “kick” in you!**

There is energy in reserve!

You are not going to limp over the finish line!