

Thank you, again...Tom West
Speaker for today

Persistence and Endurance

“Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.” Hebrews 12:1.

“Brothers and sisters, I do not regard myself as having taken hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 3:13-14

September Birthdays

6 Melinda McCollum 11 Marie Burruss 15 Marcos Perales
16 Jim Burruss 30 Dortha Gentry 30 Kurt Hoffman

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

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The Christian Race

By Dan Jenkins

We have watched those moments when athletes are about to start their race for the Olympic gold medal. They have done this so often since they first lined up to race, perhaps when they were still in grammar school. In various ways the official has said, “On your marks, get set, go.” The starting gun sounds, and the race begins.

Those starting words vary depending on the place and circumstances. In England, the words sometimes used are, “On your mark, steady, go.” As I grew up, the phrase most often used was shortened to, “Ready, Set, Go.” It is interesting to see how these three words are used to apply to our Christian lives.

The Christian is “ready.” You see this in Paul’s letter to the Romans. After he said that he was a debtor to all men, he said, “*So as much as in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also*” (Romans 1:15). When he said, “*as much as in me,*” he emphasized how devoted he was to getting the gospel to all mankind. He gave as much as he had! When he used the words, “*to you who are in Rome also,*” the word “also” emphasized that he felt the same toward teaching in every place.

When Paul wrote Titus, he said, “*Remind them...to be ready for every good work*” (Titus 3:1). Faithfulness to God causes us to see a work that needs to be done, and then because we are ready, we do it! As the runner crouches to start the race and awaits the starting gun, so the Christian is “crouched” and his “starting gun” is seeing something needing to be done.

The Christian is “set.” The book of Hebrews describes our lives as being participants in a race in which we are surrounded by a great company of witnesses. Evidently those witnesses are the heroes of faith mentioned in chapter eleven. The writer then says, *“Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith”* (Hebrews 12:1-2). The race is set and so are we! Our affections are firmly *“...set on things which are above, not on things on the earth”* (Colossians 3:2).

The Christian is prepared to “go.” When Jesus called men to follow Him and become fishers of men, they responded, but there was no way they could have understood all that was involved in following Jesus. However, just before He ascended, He gave them detailed instructions of what being a follower of Jesus involved. They were told to go to all nations, to every creature and teach them the words Jesus had given them (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15). The response to the invitation to “come” is then to “go.”

So, as we run your race, remember that it involves three things - ready, set, go. Let’s run the race faithfully.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

By Jon Mitchell

“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.” 1 Corinthians 13 :1-3

You know, loving Jesus is all about obeying his commandments (John 14:15, 21, 23-24). Those of us who truly love God will do our best to obey all that he has commanded of us in his Word. We

will preach his gospel without changing it in any way. We will worship him the way he told us to. We will go to church and be a part of the right church. We will be evangelistic, benevolent, churchgoing, Bible-reading, praying people. And that’s a good thing.

However, it is very possible for us to, without realizing it, start to do all of these things that God has told us to do...without love. We might start sharing the gospel with people for no other reason than filling the pews and increasing the contribution, with the saving of their souls never even being a major factor in our minds. We might start worshiping God ritualistically in the way he told us during the worship hour and treat our brethren badly after the final “amen” (James 3:9-12). We might be very faithful in our church attendance, be involved in a lot of charitable organizations and functions, read our Bibles every day and pray every night...and do it all without real, agape love for all our fellow man. And if that is the case, how long will it take before we lose our love for God? Not long (Matthew 15:7-9).

What is real, true love? Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. It’s patience. Kindness. It’s not envy. It’s not pride. It’s not rude. It’s not selfish. It’s not irritable. It’s not resentful. It’s not happy when wrong is done. It’s happy when truth occurs. It is willing to bear all things. It gives others the benefit of the doubt first. It always hopes for the best. It is willing to endure for a very, very long time.

Sounds like God’s love, doesn’t it? That’s how God wants us to be...like Him (2 Peter 1:4).

“Through these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world on account of lust.”