

DAY 35 MONDAY

HEBREWS 12:1-3 FINISH WELL

¹ 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. ² Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

God has planned our path since the moment of creation. On that path we can see the footsteps of countless others who have preceded us. Before us and beckoning us on is Jesus himself. He has cleared the obstacles and instructs us on how we are to travel and even what lies ahead, in this life and beyond. But there are two things that no one else can do for us. First, only we can rid ourselves of those things we bear that will prevent our passage. Second, only we can persevere when the path gets long and our legs tired.

To successfully negotiate the narrow path we must rid ourselves of all the worldly equipment that we think we need, but in reality only over burdens us for the journey. But in addition, we will not be able to make much progress unless we lose the shackles of our sins. If we try to carry our burdens and hide our sins we will surely succumb to weariness.

The path is a lifetime long and there are steep windy inclines as well as deep marshy valleys. Both the moments of exhilaration and those of depression will impede us. But if we keep the promises of God as manifested through Jesus Christ in our mind's eye, we will never lose heart.

The exhortation I heard from my coaches as an athlete, and one with which I have exhorted my own children, was "finish well." I have found that it is a challenge that fits most of life's activities, whether they are in the areas of education, business, social, or spiritual activities. You put your all into whatever you are called upon to do until the job is done. There will be plenty of time to rest and recover later. Persevere in the race of life; finish well. After all, we have been promised entry into the very rest of God once we finish the race.

Open my eyes so that I might see you Lord Jesus. Keep my mind focused on you rather than my feet and the aches and pains of the race, real or imagined. Through you only can I finish well. Lord I give my life to you. Amen.