

## **Live it Out**

Hebrews 12:1-4

### **1) Our Spectators (1a)**

- i) “Great Cloud” – literally means “an untraceable mass”
- ii) These Heroes of the Faith are bearing witness to us that God is faithful to see us through all trials and suffering.
- iii) Some churches pride themselves on being “New Testament” churches. This saddens me because they are missing out on some great answers to how God can take their bad situations and make them glorifying to Himself.
  - (1) **Romans 15:4** says “For whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures.”
- iv) Some of the examples of these heroes lives are:
  - (1) Noah – Experienced ridicule for doing God’s will
  - (2) Abraham & Sarah – Couldn’t bear children
  - (3) Joseph – Family problems
  - (4) Moses – Had a job too big for himself, gave up the riches of Egypt
  - (5) Isaiah – Ignored by the King of Judah
  - (6) David – Tempted to get revenge on Saul
- v) This brings us to the next part of verse 1 and our next person to look to.

### **2) Ourselves (1b)**

- i) Many athletes wear weights in their training, but would never compete in them because it would drain their endurance. We also wear weights that must be removed before we can compete at our finest. What are these weights? They are anything that hinders our spiritual growth. This means that there may be things in our lives that are not sinful, they may even be good things in other’s eyes, but if they keep you from relying on God, then you need to remove them. It may be a relationship, not that all non-Christian relationships are bad, but any relationship that brings you down and farther away from God must be removed. This may also be a choice in music, television, or movies. It could be a hobby or a habit. It is anything and everything that takes God’s place as number one in your life.
- ii) Paul goes on to say “and the sin that so easily ensnares us.” This is the perfect word to describe sin, “ensnares”. Sin is like a baby snake. It’s harmless when it is little, but if you feed it, give it more room, get comfortable with it, and next thing you know you are entangled in a six foot python’s deadly grip. Sin is not a polite house guest and as a Christian your heart is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament has much to say about our hearts and their ability to serve two masters. Jesus in Matthew 6 says, “No one can be a slave of two masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other.” Sin will take the highest place in your life if you do not cut it off.
- iii) Paul does not name a particular sin, but leads us to believe that the sin that must be thrown off is the sin of unbelief. It was this sin that cause an entire generation of Israelites to forfeit the Promise Land. And it is this sin that causes us to forfeit our spiritual inheritance. Paul uses the phrase “by faith” or “through faith” twenty-one

times in Hebrews 11 to describe how the Heroes of the Faith endured through their times of trouble.

iv) But who is it that we place our faith in to receive this endurance? Glad you asked because He is our final and most important point.

### **3) Our Savior (2-4)**

i) Athletes follow the example of their coaches. They are taught correct form, breathing, and in times of desperation, they look to their coaches for encouragement to finish strong. Christ is our coach, the author and perfecter of our faith, the encourager in our times of struggle, and our example in life. Jesus was mocked, run out of towns, and eventually murdered, but He still ran a perfect race to set the example for us. Hebrews 4:15 says that He was tempted in every way as we are, but He never sinned. We see that Jesus even trusted His Father in Heaven to provide all of His needs because He prayed to Him.

ii) “To look to Jesus” literally means to trust Him. It is less of an action, and more of an attitude. It is a choice to live everyday believing that God will see you through each and every situation.

iii) In Jonah 2, we see Jonah in what seems to be a hopeless situation, but yet in his prayer He praises God for the deliverances He had done in the past and God’s unchanging faithfulness. What has God done for you in the past? Are you clinging to those times in faith that He can and will deliver you again?

iv) The greatest thing Jesus did for us was endured the cross. This involved shame, suffering, mocking from the people He was dying for, and even the rejection of His Father for a time. He gave up perfection, so that we could be made pure. He endured rejection, so that we could be accepted. As Christians, this is our shelter. At the foot of the cross is the place we must run to in times of need and hardship. It is our joy in suffering. But how was He able to endure the cross? Although Christ was fully God, with all the power that His father possessed, He never used His divine power for personal gain or even to ease His suffering. He knew from Psalm 16:8-10, that he would not remain in the tomb forever. He knew the “joy that lay before Him” was the completion of His Father’s will, His resurrection, but most of all the joy of presenting believers to the Father in glory. Jesus did that for you. He did it for me. The letter to the Hebrews has a running theme of looking forward, not back. Jesus looked forward to the cross, forward to the resurrection, and forward to the presentation of the believers =

v) The final verse pushes us forward in the battle against sin reminding us that we have yet to shed our blood for our sins, but Christ as done it for us