

Are you Living and Looking Aright and Ready for Eternity?



Introduction

We are entering into middle of the year and we need to live with the correct outlook or better still, the uplook in life. Paul used many metaphors to describe the Christian life. We are described as a soldier, farmer, steward and ambassador as well as an athlete in a competitive race. Paul, the author of Hebrews uses this same figure elsewhere in his writings to stress steadfastness in advancing toward the completion of faithful Christianity (Heb 12:1-4; 1 Co 9:24-27).

The author of Hebrews offered comfort and encouragement to fellow believers in the race of life. We are involved in a long and tedious race and by God's grace, we will finish the course.

Consider the following 4 looks:

1. Look Outward

As we run the Christian race like Christian in Pilgrim's Progress through the many obstacles in life, note there are many potential dangers to be reckoned with but there are others who have made it already. They are called witnesses (or martyrs in the original Greek) and many worthy examples are given in Hebrews 11 including Abraham, Moses, Joseph, David, Samuel and others. We are not to be ignorant of this for it brings us great comfort and mutual strength.



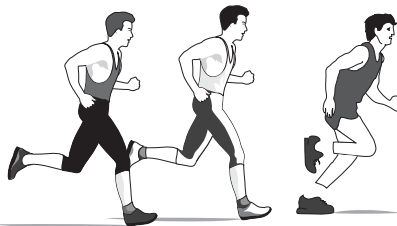
There is joy when we see others who are going through the same race as us and have made it finally. This must be kept foremost in our minds as we seek to follow the Lord. Life is not about ourselves only. There are other precious souls around who need Christ as their Saviour.

2. Look Inward

We are also to examine ourselves as the author of Hebrews speaks of the putting off of the great encumbrance of sin. Have we offended God today? If we have, seek the Lord to forgive us and cleanse and purify us for all our iniquities. Let us search our hearts daily as the psalmist says in Psa 139:23-24, *'Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'* Is my life one which follows a holy course? Am I useful to the great God in heaven? In what areas do I need to be more holy today? How have I been of greater blessing to others today? Is there a desire to obey God's will and change if necessary? There must be strict adherence to the rules or the Word of God (1 Co 9:24-27; 2 Tim 2:5). Our yesterdays are irretrievable, we cannot erase what have been done already but we can rest in Christ assured that our sins have been forgiven when we confess and repent of them! 1 John 1:9 says, *'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to*



cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Seek Jesus right now in prayer and He will forgive us.



3. Look Forward (and Not Backwards)

We need to make up our mind to forget (Phil 3:13) the unedifying past and move on with the present and into the future. This is not a failure of remembering only but also understanding that which has no bearing or influence on our present outlook or conduct. It will take disciplined efforts to do this. We are not to be governed by the past and be bogged down by it without making spiritual advances for Christ. The runner who constantly looks back will never be able to finish the race. The supreme example is Christ here who died for us and is victorious over the grave and is now seated on the right hand of the throne of God. There is to be a ready resolve to go forward regardless of the cost of discipleship in the Lord. Luke 9:23 says,

'And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.'



4. Look Upward

It is possible for us to experience the joy of salvation as we run the same race by looking up to Christ in heaven! How can we be joyful when we are tempted, discouraged, often weak, and seeing many others ahead of us? Isa 45:22 says, *'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.'*

Do we not often feel that it is tiring and even hopeless to run and complete this race? Carefully consider the above pointers which tell us how we can run the race of life and find joy in doing so. Look not to men or self or the world but to Christ alone and press on

and He will supply us with strength and pardoning grace.

Applications

1. Let us all run toward the right goal that is in Christ Jesus and to yearn for the great coming of our God. Tit 2:13-15 says, 'Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee'.



We should desire to reach the point of maturity which will afford a complete knowledge of Christ. The goal of Christianity is understood by two phrases, Holiness in God and Usefulness for God. It is Holiness because in 1 Thessalonians 4:7, Paul says, 'For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness'. We have been called to holy living and must diligently strive toward it every day!

Usefulness to God as stated in Joh 15:16 which says, 'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you'. If we profess to follow Christ, we are to be useful to our Master and His church as His faithful stewards! We are not to be satisfied with our attainments but to look to Jesus with perseverance till He comes.

2. Consider Christ and God (Mt 5:48; 1 Pet 2:21-24). Do not be like some who compare themselves with other Christians who are not making much progress, and who are quite contented. The Bible offered negative examples of those who thought that they had arrived at perfection in their own eyes (Rev 3:1; 3:17; Jud 16:20). As a warning, we should never be content with ourselves but always look to Christ our God! (Psa 42:1-2)

Realize that we must press on daily with God's strength for Christ's sake despite opposition and discouragements. Exert yourself with every strength that God supplies in pursuing this eternal goal of glorifying and serving Christ. Be intense in seeking and following Christ as your King and Saviour. May we be careful that

we do not place a greater interest in golfing, fishing, work, wealth making and pleasures than in God and spiritual things!

3. Realize that Christ expects us to go on! (v. 12) Our race is long and tedious but when we look at the right things or the right Person, (Heb 12:1-2) there is much encouragement and comfort. There is an innumerable host cheering us on to the end. We do not run by our own strength. Christ is present to give us spiritual strength and help (Psa 46:1; Eph 6:10-16; Phil 4:1, 13, 19).

To recapitulate, let us look upward, forward, outward and inward and

do not succumb to the temptation to quit and then fail to complete the race (Eph 4:30; Heb 3:10, 17).

We must persevere with patience and press on and not disappoint God!

The Christian must devote himself to a singular objective. He refuses to be involved in things that seek to draw his efforts and energies away from Christ (Neh 6:3; Jas 1:8). Those who allow themselves to be caught



up in worldly trivia may not be wholly devoted to their heavenly calling! (Lk 14:16-21).

Let our priorities be centered around “one thing” and that is the joyful, serving, fearing God and obeying Christ and His gospel’s objective of saving souls and personal growth in holiness and usefulness for Christ till He comes!

We are involved in a race that is crucial to our eternal destiny. We must run well to its completion till Christ returns as we will be taken home one day. The one who runs the race with these principles will find great eternal joy and meaning in life. We are to obey Him and respond to His holy will. Strive to lay hold of the goal of Christ for which He has set for us.

Conclusion

What in the world are you living for today? Is it for self? Wealth? Health? Possessions?



World? All these will avail us nowhere one day. Serve and know the right Master and you will have a bright eternal future. **With Christ, it is an**

endless hope, without Him, a hopeless end.

In closing, we need to soberly contemplate and reflect upon our own lives and ponder seriously about eternity. At the point of writing, the H1N1 flu pandemic is spreading in many countries and many have been infected in Singapore. Some countries had severe floods or earthquakes that had killed many people and these reminded us that our lives are so fragile and they can vanish away any time.

Are you ready to leave this world, my friend anytime when called? If you are not ready to die, you are not ready to live.



We have an invitation for you today from the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords in Isa 55 1-3, 6-7, ‘Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk

without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that

which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. **Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:** Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and **let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon**'. Our Lord Jesus has a gentle call for all of us in Matt 11:28-30 which says, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light'.

Are you tired, weak and depressed with the weight of sinful encumbrance? Come to Christ right now and He will forgive and carry you through life's trying moments.

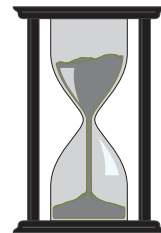
Good works, morality and philosophy cannot save us. Only Christ who gave His life for us on the Cross and who rose again on



the third day, victorious over the grave and hell can save us. We can have eternal hope, peace and life and the reconciliation with a thrice holy God today.

Heed these everlasting words to repent of our sins and seek and embrace Jesus Christ, as Saviour and Lord and confess and forsake our sins before our time is up. **DIN (Do it now)**

before it is too late! The end of the world is coming soon and Christ will come to rule and judge this world with perfect justice and truth.



Dr. Jack Sin

NB. This was a message preached at the Dutch Reformed Church (Chinese congregation) in Istanbul, Turkey on 3rd May 2009.

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