

Perseverance

Many people run the comrades marathon. They start off strong and many drop out of the race along the way due to various reasons such as fatigue, pulled muscles, etc. Many are tempted to give up even when they're really close to the finish line and most finish purely because of perseverance. Likewise the Christian life is a marathon and many grow weary towards the end of the race and are tempted to give up. This is the time when perseverance is now needed.

Hebrews 10: 19 - 39

1) Preparation (19 – 25)

- Draw near to God
 - Prayer is our communion with God where all things begin
 - Without a solid relationship with God we won't be able to endure all that life throws at us. It gives us the strength to get to the finish line knowing that we are getting there in His strength and not our own
 - He calls us to draw near to him because He has made the way possible for us to do so in the blood of Jesus.
 - He calls us to draw near to Himself for He desires to fellowship with us.
 - He calls us to draw near because He wants us to grasp His mercy as we draw near to His mercy seat.
- Understand God's grace
 - As we draw near to him we start getting a glimpse of His absolute grace upon our lives
 - We understand that we are what we are only because of that grace.
 - We are saved by grace, we live by grace and we persevere because of that grace which has given us the hope of eternal life.
- Look to the hope that he's given - the goal
 - We set our sights that that hope because without hope there is no reason to live
 - 1 Peter 1: 3 – 5 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.
 - What marathon runner would be able to just keep running if there wasn't a finish line? But there is a finish line and that's what keeps the runner going. He's striving towards the end goal.
 - Our end goal towards which we strive is the hope that God has given us in Christ Jesus
- Walk together
 - We can't walk this walk alone. We need each other.
 - The Bible is full of "one another" verses revealing that God never meant us to walk alone but to uphold one another on the journey.
 - There's a story of an autistic little boy who ran a race but the boy who was coming second tripped and fell. The first little boy ran and stopped just before the finish line and turned and looked back. He then went back, helped the other

little boy up and both ran across the finish line together. This is what the Christian life is about. It's not running towards the goal to win the prize on our own but assisting others to the finish line to win the prize together.

2) Temptations and distractions

- Sin
 - Sin can easily lead us away from the goal towards which we are running.
 - A number of years ago Zola Budd had a confrontation at the Olympics with Mary Dekker where Dekker tripped on Budd's shoe and fell. Budd also became distraught and ended up not winning the race either
 - In this sin can entangle us so that we start looking around at the world and lose sight of our goal.
- Conflict & Insults
 - Conflicts with other people can cause us to be distracted from our heavenly goal.
 - We can become so engrossed in the conflict with someone, never forgive them, that we forget what Christ has done for us even if we do go to church regularly.
 - Conflicts can cause us to be so bitter and twisted that we don't have the energy to persevere in the Christian life.
 - Sometimes people can insult us so much that we can get discouraged and want to give up. Remember that Jesus was constantly insulted but always kept his eye on what His purpose in earth was and so persevered to the cross and after that came the resurrection.
- Suffering
 - When a marathon runner enters the last few kilometres of the race he can become very weary with aching muscles, blisters and psychological temptations to give up the race.
 - If you are going through suffering in any way this is the time to grit your teeth and persevere to the end.

3) Perseverance

- Confidence in your reward
 - We have a confidence that we will be rewarded.
- Persevere in the will of God
 - We know that because we are persevering according to the will of God He will give us what He promised and God keeps all His promises
- Persevere knowing that the Lord is coming
 - We persevere knowing that the Lord is coming for us.
 - We know that when He comes we will be changed in the twinkling of an eye.
- Persevere in faith
 - The righteous will live by faith
 - Our perseverance is faith in God and what He has promised.
 - This faith causes us to press on and not to shrink back but to move on to our full salvation – the glorification of our bodies.