

Hebrews 12:1-2

Introduction:

1. I can only imagine what it would have felt like to have played in the Olympic Games, knowing all those who have played before and the success and records that have been set. What an awesome idea to think that many trainers who train young athletes today were athletes once themselves.
2. I have had many coaches in my life for hockey; some good and some bad. Most every bad coach that I had did not come from their lack of zeal or passion for the game but a lack of understanding of the actual game itself. Yes there are those who know the basics of hockey and can explain the game to a person rather simply and without much effort. There is a difference from those who “know” the game, from those who have played and truly know the game...
3. In Hebrews the 11th chapter we see a very prestige’s list of men and women who truly knew God and how to serve God, not by knowledge alone but by experience and lifelong pursuit of pure love towards Him. The author of the Hebrew letter is giving encouragement to people who are looking to return back to Judaism and give up on this Christianity. They seem to be allowing sin to entangle their lives so that they cannot run that great race which leads to eternal life.
4. The Hebrew author wants them to learn from those who truly know the race of a godly lifestyle and to fix their gaze upon the one who has made it all possible...Jesus. Can we learn from this same message today?

Body:

I. The Problem

A. They would not lay down their sin (1b)

1. They were carrying around their sin and needed to just to put it down
2. I imagine a man walking through the woods hiking and he can barely stand but as soon as he takes his pack off for a rest, the feeling of relief that he would feel.
3. Encumbrance- The sin was a weight to them, it was literally to the point where they could bear it no longer but still tried to push on
4. People do not like getting rid of sin no matter how much it may hurt them or others

B. Not Running

1. Easily entangled
 - a. Well circumstanced
 - b. They did not put in much effort to avoid or try to get rid of sin
 - c. Their sin stopped them from being able to run the race
 - d. Sin- this is the general form of sin and not a specific sin, sin itself needs to be cast away to run the race of faith
2. They were to be running the race
 - a. In a race if one is not running, they will not win
 - b. Run- rapidly or quickly
 - c. I can just imagine somebody in a race who is just running so sluggish that they are not even picking their feet off the ground

II. The Plea(1a)

A. Look Around

1. Therefore- Reference to Chapter 11
2. Great- great in number
3. Witness- one who has knowledge and therefore can give information concerning the matter
 - a. Experienced it first hand
 - b. Refer to hockey illustration above
4. Surrounding- I imagine a coliseum and walking into the Olympic Games and having all the greatest athletes and coaches surrounding a person cheering them on but even greater for the

Christian, we have all the great men of the bible and of faith surrounding us cheering us on. Not for a perishable crown but the an imperishable crown of eternal life

B. Endure- to hold out until the end (1c)

1. We have great confidence knowing that when we hold out until the end we will receive a crown of righteousness
2. This sums up the book of revelation; endure, hold fast and you will overcome
3. The Race- this word denotes a competition, not a leisure race we have without friends but one people trained for and have the greatest desire to win
 - a. This also is not a short run but a marathon
 - b. The training needs to meet that of the race.
4. "When the going gets tough the tough get going!!!"

III. The "Perfecter" (2)

A. Fix Eyes Upon (2a)

1. The word fix literally means to take your eyes of something to be able to focus upon something else
2. We cannot be fixing our eyes on Jesus and the world at the same time
3. This fix is more than a mere look at, but when a person is running a race, they cannot look to the crowd or any which way but they need to look where they are running to focus all their energy at the task at hand

B. Completion(2b)- we complete the race because of Jesus

1. Author (pioneer)- at the cross
 - a. The word here refers to one who takes the lead or sets the example
 - b. At the cross Jesus set the perfect example of submitting to the will of God
 - c. The thought passes from earthly examples now to the ultimate examples...great men of faith can help us get started in a race but only fixing upon Jesus will help us endure and finish the race
2. Perfecter of faith- at the cross
 - a. In Christ, faith has its full expression and ultimate consummation
 - b. Before Christ, people knew of and had faith in a Messiah but when Christ came and fulfilled God's plan it was completely revealed and understood, or should have been.
3. Endurance
 - a. This word endure is different than the previous, this means to remain after all others have gone
 - b. Jesus though forsaken and was crucified, still died for our sins so that we may have a relationship with God...AMEN!!!!
 - c. Jesus is the ultimate example of endurance and the cross His final "lap" and He ran it like it was His first, with God's will first!!
4. Ruler of all- the ascension
 - a. Jesus took His place back as God in Heaven
 - b. He rules over the race and advocates for those who are running
 - c. I imagine the Roman games where the emperor would sit in His seat and watch and either point his thumbs up for life and down for death. Jesus does not want any to perish like His father but he can only advocate for those who are faithful and obedient.

Conclusion:

1. Competitions are tough and are not to be taken lightly
2. If we follow the right examples and run the race according to Gods will, looking unto Jesus we will succeed. Without the Christ we are nothing and therefore He is our true guide to eternal life.
3. We as the family of God can help one another in our pursuit of the prize, to be united with our Father in Heaven and to live a life of eternally praising and glorifying Him.