

Finishing Well

2 Peter 1:10-15

Intro

In April of 2015, a University of Oregon runner was in first place as he entered the final 100m of the Steeplechase...

Unfortunately, the runner began to celebrate a little too early and as he encouraged the crowd to cheer him on, a runner from the University of Washington passed him near the finish line...

- Sadly, the stunned Oregon runner failed to **finish well**...

*And while celebrating too early — which is a result of **pride** — is definitely a way to not finish well, there are many other ways that we must be aware of...*

Because though we may or may not be in shape to run **physically**, as disciples we are to keep running **spiritually**...

The Apostle Paul often referred to the life of a disciple as a spiritual race of faith...

Acts 20:24 (NKJV) *[facing threat of persecution in Jerusalem]*

“But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”

1 Corinthians 9:24 (NKJV)

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.

2 Timothy 4:7 (NKJV)

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

These are wonderful exhortations that we should come back to often because — as disciples — we are confronted with many obstacles to finishing well...

The **ungodly world system**, our **sinful desires** and the **demonic forces** hinder us as we seek to finish our race victoriously...

And celebrating too early is just one of the potential pitfalls...

Sometimes the race of faith seems both **uphill** and **unending**...

- During those seasons, **discouragement** becomes the primary temptation...

We just want to stop running because it doesn't seem like we are getting anywhere...

- At other times, **distraction** is the primary temptation...

We are tempted to leave the race that is set before us because something or someone has distracted us...

We think to ourselves, “why keep running when I can focus on something or someone that is much more exciting?”...

Now, as we consider these dangers, we would be wise to admit that **pride**, **discouragement**, and **distraction** are simply three of the *seemingly countless ways* that we can fail to finish well...

- The **good news** is that as believers we have been given **all** that we need to finish well...

By the empowering of the Holy Spirit, we are to simply keep the main things the main things — so, if you would, please turn to...

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NKJV)

1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, [examples of faith-based running...]

let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, [let go of anything that hinders our race of faith...]

and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, [choose to persevere in your individual race-course...]

2 looking unto Jesus, [focus on the Lord Jesus...]

the author and finisher of our faith,

[the Lord Jesus is the originator and completer of our faith — we are not...]

**who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross,
despising the shame,**

[Jesus completed His race by focusing on the joy set before Him — our salvation and His return to glory...]

and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

[the Lord Jesus sits as victor at the Father's right hand — the race doesn't last forever...]

Now, as we turn to 2 Peter and continue our study of this short epistle, we see something similar to the Hebrews 12 passage...

We see Peter contemplating the end of his own race of faith — and as he does so, he exhorts believers to ***finish well...***

So, if you would, please follow along as I read our passage...

2 Peter 1:10-15 (NKJV)

10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;

11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

12 For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.

13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you,

14 knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.

15 Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.

I've divided this passage into two sections...

1) Running Without Stumbling (vs 10-11)

2) Receiving Reminders (vs 12-15)

Let's move into our first section...

1) Running Without Stumbling (vs 10-11)

Now, in order for a runner to finish well, it is important for that runner to avoid stumbling...

- [ex. The 800m — it is a very treacherous race — it is easy to stumble...]

And as we consider the race that the believer is called to — the race of faith — we realize that our race is not only much longer than the 800m — it is also much more challenging...

- Thankfully, Peter has given us solid instruction that will aid us as we seek to finish well...

And to properly understand what the Apostle Peter is communicating in this section, let's put our text back into its context by looking back to...

2 Peter 1:2-9 (NKJV)

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,

3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,

4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

These verses speak of the amazing treasure that we possess as believers...[expand]

5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,

6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,

7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

As we discussed last week, these are ingredients in the recipe for discipleship...[expand]

8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we are active disciples, we will be fruitful...[expand]

9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

A failure to participate in active discipleship leads to spiritual nearsightedness — a fixation with this present world and a failure to focus on the world to come...

- This also causes the distracted disciple to forget that he was forgiven and washed from his sins...

[ex. take your car to the carwash — leave the car wash and splash through every puddle you can find...]

So, in light of the truths that Peter has shared so far — and in light of the danger of becoming a distracted disciple — Peter gives instruction on how to run without stumbling...

10 Therefore, brethren,

*This is a very important word — **brethren** — it is a reminder that Peter is writing to **believers**...*

2 Peter 1:1 (NKJV)

**Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ,
To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the
righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:**

With this truth in mind — the understanding that Peter is writing to believers — let's continue on in vs 10...

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure,

diligent — *earnest commitment in discharge of an obligation; eagerness, willingness, zeal...*

So, in light of the danger of becoming a *distracted disciple* — a danger for each of us — Peter exhorts believers to **be even more diligent to make your call and election sure...**

- Now, as we seek to understand Peter's meaning — it is vital that we once again remind ourselves that Peter is writing to **believers...**

With this in mind, I will argue that Peter brings up the reality of **call and election** not for the purposes of *theological debate* — but for the purpose of **practical encouragement...**

- Think about it this way — if I have to prove myself everyday to remain a part of the family of God then I will have no peace...

My focus will constantly be on myself — I will be striving everyday to make sure I am in the family of God — to make sure I'm ok...[ex. works-based relationship...]

- On the other hand, if I wake up every morning fully convinced that God loves me and that He has demonstrated His love for me by giving His Son for me then I will be enabled to run well...

I will be assured that I am a full member of His family and as a result I will be encouraged to run the race of a disciple...

As I take these truths to heart, I will be running the race of faith because I have ***already been adopted into God's family*** — not because I trying to become worthy of adoption...

- And this is a vital truth to live by — because ***no*** human being — is *worthy* of adoption into God's family...

We are all sinners and none of us is worthy — but it is not about our worthiness...

- Instead, We have been adopted into God's family because God loves us — because Jesus died for us — and because the Holy Spirit led us to place our faith in Christ...

So, when Peter exhorts us to ***be even more diligent to make [our] call and election sure***, he wants us to have that settled assurance that we are ***loved, called, and chosen*** by God...

- [ex. unhealthy relationships — “do you really love me?” (over and over again)...]

call — *invitation to an experience of special privilege and responsibility...*

election — *describes a choice or something that is chosen...*

Knowing that we are ***called*** and ***chosen*** — that our salvation was God's idea and not our own — will empower us to continue adding the ingredients of discipleship to our lives...

*As we continue adding the ingredients of discipleship, we make our call and election **sure**...*

sure — *something that can be relied on not to cause disappointment, reliable...*

So, as we run the race of faith, adding the ingredients of discipleship, we will make our call and election sure — we will experience *the increasing confidence that we are children of God...*

- This is a very important point — disobedience to the Lord brings relational conflict but obedience to the Lord brings relational peace...

As believers, we should trust that we have been **called** and **elected** — that we have been **forgiven** and **adopted**...

This assurance leads us to continue running the race of faith...

Now, putting all of 2 Peter 1:10 together we read...

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;

stumble — *to lose one's footing, to trip...*

In other words, if we continue to add the ingredients of discipleship we will not **stumble** in our race of faith — we will finish our race well...

One commentary

“Living a holy life will keep us from stumbling. It is not a question of falling into eternal perdition; the work of Christ delivers us from that. Rather, it refers to falling into sin, disgrace, or disuse. If we fail to progress in divine things, we are in danger of wrecking our lives. But if we walk in the Spirit, we will be spared from being disqualified for His service. God guards the Christian who moves forward for Him. The peril lies in spiritual idleness and blindness.”

11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As we put the pieces together we see that Peter is offering a choice to us as disciples...

Choice #1 — We choose to be disciples who fail to diligently add to our faith virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love...

- With this choice, we will ***stumble*** and miss out on wonderful opportunities that the Lord has called us to...[expand]

Choice #2 — We choose to be disciples who diligently add to our faith virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love...

And even though we live this out imperfectly, we will find that we are maintaining a long obedience in the same direction...

And Peter writes that these sort of disciples can expect a wonderful homecoming...

for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

entrance — *act of arriving at a destination...*

supplied — *granted as a gift...*

abundantly — *richly, largely...*

everlasting kingdom — *a kingdom without an ending...*

of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ — *this everlasting kingdom belongs to the Lord Jesus...[another clear indication of deity...]*

As we put the pieces together, we see that this is an amazing offer — we can choose the sort of homecoming we are going to have when we get Heaven!...[expand]

- [ex. GI Joe birthday party — 4th grade? — it was awesome!...]

F.B. Meyer wrote that this idea of an “abundant entrance” was really a choral entrance. The idea was of a Roman conqueror coming into his city, welcomed by singers and musicians who would join him in a glorious, happy procession into the city...

“Will your entrance into heaven be like that? Will you enter it, saved so as by fire, or to receive a reward? Will you come unrecognized and unknown, or be welcomed by scores and hundreds to whom you have been the means of blessing, and who will await you?” (F.B. Meyer)

So, every day we are choosing what type of party we are going to have when we get to Heaven — the question is, will we choose the party that the Lord wants for us?...

Because the Lord wants it to be awesome — He wants it to be lavish and exciting...

The Lord wants to empower us to run through the finish line without stumbling and enjoy an abundant entrance into His everlasting kingdom...

With this in mind, let's move into our second section...

2) Receiving Reminders (vs 12-15)

12 For this reason

In other words, “In light of the present and future implications of our conduct”...[expand]

The Apostle Peter continues...

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things,

Because Peter wanted disciples to run without stumbling, because he wanted them to finish their race well and because he wanted them to have a lavish homecoming — he continually **reminded** them to grow in the faith...

And I find this to be incredibly encouraging...

Because in some ways I teach the same basic things *every week* — it is all variations on a theme...

- And though I do it imperfectly, this is what my life has basically become — reminding myself and others to keep running the race of faith...

The Lord keeps encouraging me to run the race of faith and I am to encourage others to keep running the race of faith...

- 🎉 It is my earnest desire that every believer I know receives a lavish homecoming 🎉...[expand]

Continuing on in vs 12...

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.

So, even though these believers knew the **truth** and were **established** in it — Peter wanted to continue to **strengthen** them in the truth — he wanted to continually **fortify** them...

- [ex. daily encouraging ourselves in the word of God — fortifying ourselves by the truth...]

Don't forget about spiritual entropy — we need to continually put energy into the system if we are to continue growing...[expand]

Moving on to vs 13-14...

13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you,

14 knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.

Peter was convinced that it was right for him to continually remind believers of the truth for as long as he was in **this tent** because he knew the day was coming soon when he would put off his tent...

- The **tent** is a reference to Peter's body...

And this is very helpful imagery because it reminds us that our earthly bodies are **temporary** — they are simply **temporary tents**...

- If we think about it, our life on this earth is one long campout...

[ex. Tabernacle (tent) in the wilderness / Temple (permanent structure) in Jerusalem...]

So we are dwelling temporarily in our tents in the wilderness of this world but the day is coming when we will receive our permanent structures in the heavenly Jerusalem...

For more on this subject, would you please turn to...

2 Corinthians 5:1-8 (NKJV)

1 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,

3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.

4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.

5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.

7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

Now, as we turn back to 2 Peter 1, let's look again at vs 13...

We see that Peter refused to simply sit in his tent until the Lord came and got him...

Instead, he redeemed the time by reminding fellow believers of the truth...

stir you up — *awaken the mind...*

And I believe that it is up to us to put ourselves in a position to be mentally stirred up by biblical truth...[expand]

Let's look again at vs...

14 knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.

Peter understood that he was going to die soon...

- Now, we know from the end of John's gospel that the Lord Jesus had told Peter that Peter was going to die as a martyr...

And it seems clear from vs 14 that the Lord Jesus had given additional revelation to Peter that the time for his martyrdom was drawing near...

And please don't miss this — Peter didn't view his approaching death as a reason to quit on the ministry that the Lord gave him...

Instead, Peter viewed his quickly approaching death as a stimulus to motivate him to focus on those who would remain on this earth when he is gone...

- [ex. I love to study — but what if I lose my memory some day? — instead of being a **reservoir** for knowledge, I should be a **conduit**...]

I read recently that “**Everything not given is lost**”...[expand]

This brings us to our final verse...

15 Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.

Peter left a reminder of these things through this letter and through his input in the writing of the gospel of Mark...

- Again we are reminded that our lives are not about **ourselves** — our life is about **God** and **others**...

As we live with this others-centered focus will we experience the abundant life — even as we are dying...

Lastly, let's look at the word decease that we find at the end of vs 15...

decease — *Gr. exodos* — *departure from one location to another...*

2 Timothy 4:6 (NKJV)

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.

- [expand — removing the lines from a ship before the ship sails away...]

Peter is on his way to the ship — but he wants to give some final reminders before he goes...

- And what if we treated every day like this — what if we treated every day as a day where we might set sail for that heavenly shore?...[expand]

Conclusion

We will stop here for today — but before we move into our time of communion I would encourage each of us to...

Keep running the race of faith, knowing that we do not have to stumble through this life...

Instead, as we seek to run obediently in the power of the Holy Spirit we can look forward to a lavish homecoming as the Lord Jesus welcomes us into His everlasting Kingdom...

Our time on this earth is fleeting — the time for putting away this tent is drawing near — but let's continue reminding ourselves and others to keep moving forward until it is time for us to sail home...