

SUBJECT :

The Race

BIBLE BASIS:

Lesson Scripture: 1Corinthians 9:24-27, 10:1-13

BIBLE TRUTH:

We must have a winners attitude. Heb. 12:1-3

MEMORY VERSE: 1Cor. 9:24

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain

Lesson Aim:

That we will make a new commitment to live a exemplary life style that reflects the discipline required of disciples

Introduction

- This passage is one of the great challenges of Scripture. This weeks lesson describes Paul's feelings about the believers life in terms of athletes, the runner and the boxer. No true believer can approach the Christian life style without training and disciplining himself. Matt. 16:24-25, Luke 9:23
- No genuine Christian can indulge the body and its lusts and expect to win the incorruptible crown of the Christian life. James 1:12
- Corinth was known for the Isthmian Games which were second only to the Olympic Games of the Grecian and Roman world. Therefore, everyone in the Corinthian church knew the point Paul was making.
- Paul says that a true believer is to live a life just as disciplined as an Olympic athlete. He actually says that we are to keep *our bodies* under control just as much as the athlete. Your body represents a message center to the soul that must be dealt with. Rom 7:23, 1Peter 2:11
- God's spirit is a message center to the renewed spirit in us and must be heard. Our souls must learn to what the spirit is saying to the church. Rev. 2:7
- This is a lesson on what it takes to be a winner. Winner don't make excuses for the weakness of flesh. We owe it to God to let Him live through us. He only needs our co-operation. Phil. 2:5-13, Rom 12:1-2

Run The Race To Win

- 1 Cor. 9:24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.
- In the athletic contest every runner enters the race for one purpose only: to win. However, only one receives the prize. We must not be satisfied with just participating, we must have that winning attitude. Showing little concern for winning is unacceptable., Eph. 3:20
- Salvation is more than a fire insurance policy. Some believers seem to only be concerned about being saved by grace and escaping hells fire. They live undisciplined lives and continue to make excuses for the weakness of their flesh in spite of the fact that the scriptures exposes such attitudes. Rom. 13:13-15
- The point is this: the believer must go all out like and athlete participating in the Olympic Games. The believer must put out his best game in order to be pleasing to God. Rom 12:1-4, Phil 2:14-16
- This passage is not talking about salvation, salvation is by grace through faith. It's a done deal. Eph. 2:8-10, Heb. 10:9-14
- This is a discussion about the rewards that awaits a believer for good works. A believers works play a very important role in his witness. Our life style is our witness to the world and is for the benefit of humanity. Matt. 5:13-14, Rom. 4:1-8
- There are crowns awaiting the victorious believers; Crown of life, victory, joy, righteousness. These awards accompany salvation, every believers work will be tried as to what sort it is. 1 Cor. 3:10-15

A Life Style Is Required

- [25] And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.
- Paul says, every runner and boxer is disciplined in all things. He is disciplined, in body: what he eats and how much he eats. Therefore, he does not allow anything to *enter* his body that is corrupt, impure, that pollute the body. How serious should we be about our eating habits according to the word of God? Prov. 23:2, 1Cor. 6:19-20
- We should be disciplined in mind and thought: we must be focused our attention on the Word of God as the means to developing our thought life, and mind to that end. Rom 8:5-7, Isa. 55:7-9
- We should be disciplined in spirit: in keeping our spirit strong and motivated for the work and preparation necessary to work out consistently day after day to reach our goal. Gal. 5:22-25, Matt 6:34
- The word “striveth” means agony. We discipline ourselves to the point of pain. The believer works out consistently in ministry and is willing to sacrifice the success trappings of this life. 2Tim 2:3-5
- The athletes in Paul’s day ran for a corruptible crown or wreath of olive or pine leaves. The believer runs to obtain an incorruptible crown which will never pass away. 1Pet. 5:4, 1Pet. 1:3-4
- There are crowns awaiting the victorious believers; Crown of life, victory, joy, righteousness. These awards accompany salvation. 2Tim. 4:8, James 1:12, 1Peter 5:4, Rev. 2:10

A Confident Runner And A Focused Fighter

- [26] I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:
- As a runner, Paul is focused; he keeps his eyes on the goal. The believer runs and fights with certainty and without distraction. He knows where the track is; he knows where the lines on the track are, and where the finish line is. 2Tim 2:4-5, Phil. 3:14
- Commitment is necessary, commitment that sacrifices and strains to the point of hurting. Rom. 13:14, Rom. 6:12
- As a boxer, Paul knows where the ring is, and he knows his opponent. He was not merely shadow boxing, his fight was real. Eph. 6:12-20
- He knows the mark and the target, so his punches are planned, deliberate, controlled, and accurate Therefore, he does not beat the air as a boxer who misses his target. He is not just swinging wildly, hoping to hit the mark. He fights with confidence. He does not walk out of the ring in the middle of the fight; if he is knocked down he gets back up and keeps on fighting. Luke 22:31-34
- Every believer should be able to testify in good conscience at the end of the day of Gods approval of the race they ran. 2 Tim. 4:7-8

Live A Disciplined Life

- [27] But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway
- The believer must guard against letting the undisciplined body causing him to be disqualified. Paul was concerned that his talk matched his walk. He knew the Lord would not tolerate hypocrisy in the life of the believer. Rom. 2:21-24, Matt. 7:16-21
- We are to preach righteousness, and we are to live righteously, live exactly what we preached. Mark 7:6, Titus 2:12-13
- The judgment or chastisement feared by Paul was that of being a castaway. The word “castaway” means reprobate, rejected, disqualified, failing to stand the test. Rom. 1:28
- What does Paul mean? Some writers think that Paul is referring to his works being disqualified. Others understand Paul to be dealing with salvation. Confessing but not Possessing. 2Cor. 13:5-7, Gal.5:16
- Paul was perfectly assured of his salvation; he was perfectly assured that he would run the race and win. Rom. 8:29-39, 2Tim.1:12, 1Pet. 1:3-5, Jude 24
- Paul was convinced that only those who were born again and walked in the Spirit and were committed to a deadly struggle against sin were saved and given the absolute assurance of their salvation. Rom. 8:1-17
- Paul was not perfect, and he confessed the fact, confessing that he was far from perfect. Phil. 3:12-14

The Warning

- Eternal security of the believer is one of the great doctrines of the Bible. Unfortunately, the doctrine has too often been taught with an inadequate understanding and to the neglect of the warnings. Isa.29:13
- The result has been tragic, for it has brought multitudes into the church who have not been genuinely converted to Christ, and it has given them a sense of false security and over-confidence. Multitudes think they are Christians and followers of Christ, but their lives do not match their profession. Eze. 33:31
- One of the greatest problems facing the church today are those of false security. But Scripture is clear...A person may think and say he is saved, but he may be wrong. Saying and thinking do not make a person safe and secure in Christ. Saying and thinking are not the reality or the evidence of salvation. Matt. 15:8
- A person may be baptized in water and partake of the Lord's supper and belong to a church, but baptism and membership in a church do not make a person safe and secure in Christ. Matt. 7:22-23
- A person may be gifted and very active in the church, but it is not these things that make a person safe and secure in Christ. Rom. 11:29
- This was the problem with the Corinthian believers. All of these things were true, and they felt safe and secure in Christ. But they were wrong, and needed to be strongly warned lest they be doomed.
- Jesus gives us the only bases for eternal security when he told Nicodemus you must be born again. John 3:1-6

Paul Teaches Us A History Lesson

- 1 Cor. 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;
- There is a continuity between the O.T. saints and N.T. believers. Gal 3:29
- Paul gives us a history lesson and uses Israel as our example. All Israel shared in the blessings and privileges of God. All left Egypt (a type of the world) under the protection of God in a cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. Ex. 13:21-22
- All passed through the sea on dry ground. God delivered an entire nation and destroyed the entire Egyptian army that held them captive. Ex. 14:23-29
- Then they all began their journey to the promised land (a place of provision, not heaven); but, what should have been a 14 day journey ended taking 400 years because of unbelief. Heb. 3:10-12
- Many did not truly believe and trust God. They felt safe and secure because they were being protected and provided for by God. God saw to it that the believers had what was necessary to journey through the wilderness of life. He would provide for their every need. If they needed water, he would provide, If they needed food, he would provide. But they were still in the wilderness, not in the promised land. Ex. 16:12-20

They All Participated

- [2] And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; [3] And did all eat the same spiritual meat; [4] And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ..
- Israel was baptized unto Moses. Moses stood as a type of Christ and mediator between God and Israel. Heb 3:1-6
- God gave Israel the leader it needed to reach the promised land. Therefore, any person who followed Moses through the Red Sea and under the cloud was baptized, immersed, and given over to Moses. Similarly, those rescued from spiritual bondage under the new covenant are baptized into Christ. Gal 3:27, Rom 6:3-4
- Once Israel passed through the sea, they found themselves in the wilderness, and relied on God to provide them both with food and drink. (spiritual means it came from God) Ex. 16:4-15
- The Church also has carnal ordinances which parallels the ones mentioned here; church membership, water baptism, the Lords supper. Being a member of a church and being baptized and taking the Lords supper is not the ultimate proof that a person is saved. Only Christ can save. John 3:3
- Note, it was Christ who was guiding and providing for Israel through its wilderness journey toward the promised land. Deut. 32:4;

God Was Not Pleased With Them

- [5] But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness
- What happened to most of the believers of Israel is tragic. There were over six-hundred thousand men alone who broke away from the enslavements of Egypt and began the journey to the promised land. This means that including the women and children there were well over two million who stepped out to follow God to the promised land. Ex. 12:37; Num. 1:46
- But the critical question is this: How many remained faithful to God through the wilderness journey? How many actually turned away from the fleshly desires aroused by the delicious foods, drinks, and bodily stimulations of Egypt? How many actually disciplined their bodies, subjected their desires, and kept their eyes and hearts upon the promised land? How many were faithful and steadfast, unmovable and always abounding in the work of the Lord until they reached the promised land? How many entered the promised land?
- Only two! Caleb and Joshua. They alone remained faithful to God. Everyone else, over two to three million, perished in the wilderness. They were overthrown, that is, scattered as corpses all over the wilderness. Why? Because they did not please God for without faith it is not just hard, but impossible to please God. Heb. 11:6, Heb. 4:2-12

A Bad Example

- [6] Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted...
- The Bible says, what happened to Israel is a warning, to the church and a example to us. Rom 15:3-5
- It is critical that we know what caused Israel to be destroyed and what kept them from entering the promised land. Mark 4:19
- They lusted and craved for the delicious foods of Egypt. We cannot seek to satisfy the lust of the flesh nor the lust of the eye as Israel did. They were tired of eating only the manna that God provided for them. They remembered what they had while in captivity and felt it was better. Num. 11:4
- As a result of them satisfying their lust for the things of Egypt, a plague broke out among the people and killed many of them. Num. 11:31-34
- The Bible lets us know that all that is in the world is the lust for the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life. 1John 2:15-18
- The wages of sin is still death. Sin is still the most deadly disease known to man. Sin has the tendency to distort the moral scenes. This causes us to start calling wrong right and right wrong. The only remedy for sin is to repent and have faith in the redemptive blood of Christ. Heb. 9:22

Don't Be An Idol Worshiper

- [7] Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play
- There was the sin of idolatry which means the worship of a false God. When Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the law, the people became restless waiting for the Word of God. Therefore, they decided to go ahead and create their own form of worship. The image of the golden calf was only to help them picture and imagine God. Ex 32:1-5
- The point to see is this: If we are not careful to discipline our lives to live by the every Word of God, we will find ourselves creating gods of our own imagination; gods that agree with our theology, and justify our sin.
- The people eat, drank, and played. They carried out their religious order, but, they rose up to play, which means their life style was dominated by sin and undisciplined. This is the life style that God is not pleased with even today.
- This was the danger the Corinth believers faced. If they participated in the social functions of unbelievers, they might fall into sin. Whether the function was held in the temple or in the homes of the unbelievers, the likelihood was they would slip into the same idolatrous behavior of the unbelievers. 1Cor. 5:9-10; 6:9 1John 5:21, Deut. 11:16, Isaiah 42:8

Don't Be Guilty Of This One

- [8] Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. [9] Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. There was the sin of fornication or immorality. This was a gross sin of some of the believers of Israel. Over twenty thousand of them committed immorality with their neighbors and as a result they were judged and condemned to destruction, banned from the promised land. 1Thes. 4:4-5, Num. 25:1-9, 1Cor. 5:9-10; 6:9
- There was the sin of tempting Christ. The word “tempt” means to try the Lord’s patience; to see how far a person can go; to test the patience of Christ. The believers of Israel...often felt that God and His leader Moses demanded and expected too much. Jesus uncovered this same problem in his day. Matt. 25:23-25
- The children of Israel often longed for the things of the flesh which they had formerly known in Egypt. They became discontent with the things God provided, and longed to return to Egypt. Num. 21:5-6
- Young or immature believers often feel that they are missing out on something in the world. They often find themselves sinning willfully feeling that God will forgive them, even if they do look, even if they do taste, even if they do touch, even if they do slip a little, even if they do hold back a little. Deut. 6:16, Heb 10:26-31

Be Thankful

- [10] Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.
- There was the sin of murmuring and complaining and grumbling. Some of the believers in Israel were always complaining and murmuring against God and Moses. Num. 14:2, 36;16:11, 41
- The result was judgment and punishment by the destroyer, that is, an angel sent by God to execute judgment. They perished in the wilderness and never saw the promised land. Ex.14:11;15:24;16:2; 17:3; Num. 11:1;14:27; 20:3; 21:5
- How many believers grumble and gripe? How many become dissatisfied...with the direction God gives through His leaders? With the food God gives through His leaders? With the way God guides through His leaders? with the words God gives to His leaders?
- How many voice their complaints to others? The warning is clear to the believers of God's church. Phil. 2:14-15, Prov.19:3
- To avoid this sin of murmuring and complaining, the believer must learn to give thanks in all things. To be thankful when things go right and be thankful when things go wrong. 1Thes. 5:18, Eph. 5:20

Take The Warning

- [11] Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. [12] Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.
- The point is unequivocal—receive the warning. The things that happened to the believers of Israel are examples and warnings to us. We must heed them for three reasons. The end or climax of the world (age) has come upon us. Since the advent of Christ, believers are living in the last period of human history. This simply means that Jesus Christ is the final revelation of God, the only way God will ever deal with men again.
- Men must now approach God by faith in Christ. This age is what is known as the age of grace, grace being the way God now deals with men. The age of grace is the last age of human history. Therefore, we must recognize and heed this warning to us today.
- A person can fall, especially if he begins to think that he stands, that is, if he begins to feel safe and secure without the life style to validate the claim. James says is vain. James 2:14-18
- Note this verse, for it is a straightforward warning that is usually neglected and ignored: “Let him that thinketh he standeth [is safe and secure] take heed lest he fall. Luke 18:9 1Cor. 8:2, Gal. 6:3

He Is Faithful

- [13] There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.
- There is a way to escape temptation, but to escape temptation the believer must know three great truths. All temptation is common to man. The word common means a human temptation that falls to the lot of all men.
- This is an amazing promise. No temptation is superhuman or is unique or is beyond man's capacity to handle it. All men face the same temptation. We the enemy tries to do is isolate you and make you think your issue is unique to you alone. Then try to get you to justify your disobedience. Prov. 14:12
- God is faithful: He does not allow a temptation to confront a believer that would destroy him. God knows what we can bear and how much we can bear; therefore, He limits every single temptation within our limits to overcome it. God is faithful. Deut. 7:9-10
- Then, because he is faithful, he always makes an escape route. He always gives us the strength and faith to walk through or over the temptation or else to turn and flee from it. Luke 10:19, Rom. 16:20, Heb. 2:18, James 4:7
- There is also times when we fail and need to repent, even then is he faithful. 1John 1:8-9