

Sermon or Lesson: Hebrews 12:2-3 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Running The Race

INTRO: When you were growing up, perhaps you played some sport with your father. Even into adulthood, though, did you find that you could never beat him because his performances were nearly flawless while yours were plagued by frequent errors, bumbles, blunders, mental lapses, misjudgments of distances, getting out-of-bounds or off course, and etc.? [You can add a short specific example here from your own upbringing to personalize and connect with your audience, and frame its presentation to fit with the form of this sermon/lesson.]

TRANSITION: In life, we likewise get off course from what God has “marked out for us” (v.1). Let’s look at our passage to determine how we can stay on course as we are running the race.

READ: Hebrews 12:2-3 with verse 1, and summarize the context

[Lesson Question: In this passage, what are the dynamics of making the example of Jesus our focus to help us stay on course as we are running the race?]

SECTION POINT: Make the example of Jesus your **focus**, keeping your attention continuously fixed upon Him.

v.2 “**let us fix our eyes on Jesus**” and v.3 “**consider him**”:

“fix our eyes on” = Strong’s #0872 “looking at and considering attentively”

- - We are to establish our thinking foundationally upon Jesus.
 - - Jesus is the One who authored or created our faith, and He perfects or completes our faith in us. (v.2)
 - - As author and perfecter, Jesus knows what faith should be, which He personally demonstrated for us when He was here on this Earth about 2,000 years ago.
 - - Consequently, we are being directed to cause His example to pervasively and strongly influence us.
 - - This means we are to maintain focused attention on Him continuously - "let us fix our eyes on Jesus". (v.2)
 - - Fixating our focused attention on the example of Jesus is like having preoccupied tunnel vision - the only thing that is in focus, and our vision is not mis-directed, not diverting, not wandering away from looking at it. [Make a pair of binoculars with your fingers and hold them up to your eyes as a demonstration.]
 - - An example is horses that pull buggies have blinders partially cupping their view so they do not look around and get off course, because they step in the direction their face is looking. [You can demonstrate this with your hands as well.]
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[Lesson Question: How can the example of Jesus be our guide, particularly in our suffering situations?]

SECTION POINT: Make the example of Jesus your **guide**, trusting that God will bring good out of your suffering situations which you endure with joy and love like Jesus did.

v.2 He “**endured the cross, scorning its shame**” and v.3 He “**endured such opposition from sinful men**”:

- - Jesus was following the Father’s agenda. (Matthew 26:39,42)
 - - As we proceed through life and especially in difficult situations, we are to follow God’s agenda and not our own - like Jesus did; but we want smooth sailing.
 - - We should keep in mind that just like in Jesus' situation, God has good outcomes He is working to bring about, even in the midst of difficulties and which we may not be able to identify.
 - - Whatever the circumstances, we are to exercise faith - while we continue to actively follow God's agenda.
 - - And we are to simultaneously possess the right attitude, like the "joy" (v.2) and the "love" (John 3:16) that Jesus had while He was enduring the horrific pain of being tortured and executed on the cross.
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[Lesson Question: What aspects in the example of Jesus can you find that will provide motivation for you?]

SECTION POINT: Make the example of Jesus your **motivation**, being steadfastly invigorated by faith that one day God will excellently reward you for successfully persevering in your work to fulfill your mission God has for you.

v.2 “**who for the joy set before him endured the cross**”:

- - In Jesus' situation, the objective for enduring the cross was to provide salvation, an invaluable blessing for other people. (Romans 3:22-25)
- - Jesus took on this objective as His mission, what the Father had for Him to do.
- - Similarly, each of us is to take upon ourself the mission God has for you personally.
- - Let that mission identify and define and motivate and dominate who you are, what you do, and how you handle the negative situations occurring in your life.
- - But always remember that rationales or excuses which hinder your work to fulfill your mission are considered invalid and not acceptable to God. (v.4)

v.2 He “**sat down at the right hand of the throne of God**”:

- - The relief, the justice, the rewards, the blessings came for Jesus after His mission was finished, culminating when He arrived in heaven.
- - At that time, after the end of His mission, Jesus was exalted by the Father for the suffering He had endured.
- - By faith, we are to keep in mind and be motivated by the certainty that God will bless you and reward you for successfully persevering in your work to fulfill your mission (v.1) - maybe not in the present but definitely on Judgment Day.

v.3 “**so that you will not grow weary and lose heart**”:

- - As we consider the plight of Jesus and the hardships He went through while working on His mission, we are not to become weary and discouraged and unmotivated - not get drained, bogged down, diverted, or burned out.
 - - We are not to fizzle out or quit - even if the mission God has for you is not going the way you want it to.
 - - So, our motivation will stay intact and be energized if we continuously consider the example of Jesus and the suffering He endured.
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BIG IDEA: Make the example of Jesus your focus, your guide, and your motivation so that you will stay on course as you are running the race God has marked out for you.

IMPLICATIONS:

[Lesson Question: In this passage, what expectations from God are implied here for us as we believers run the race He has marked out for us?]

Some additional and implied expectations from God are:

- - God expects us to do the things He wants us to do, submitting to Him like Jesus did.
 - - God does assign us things to do that bring suffering, hardship, difficulties, opposition, discouragement, and etc., similar to what Jesus endured.
 - - God expects us to endure the suffering, hardship, difficulties, and opposition until the end, similar to how Jesus did until death for Him.
 - - God expects us to draw on His strength in the midst of enduring, like Jesus when He was regularly praying to the Father, especially during the night right before He was betrayed and arrested.
 - - Fulfilling, handling, and accomplishing these things in God's way will be a good witness, like the "great cloud of witnesses" (v.1) in Hebrews chapter 11; this gets the attention of, attracts, and impacts others around us for the Kingdom.
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APPLICATION:

- - Study this passage and list all the verbs in it, both stated and implied, of what God wants you to do.
- - Start right now today to deliberately take the steps to make the example of Jesus your focus, your guide, and your motivation.
- - Train yourself to keep your eyes fixed on Jesus.
- - Change your perspective about your life, and how things are going for you in your life.
- - Restructure your priorities to align with what God is saying in His Word and in this passage.
- - Throw off all hindrances to working on the mission God has for you.
- - And get back in the race - back on course.

- - Do everything God has for you to do.
 - - Start or restart right now.
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Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

"Strong's Greek Dictionary". *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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