

Jesus, the Pioneer and Perfectioner of Faith 12 Pentecost C

Last week we heard from the text of Hebrews on the quality and character of faith: “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.” We read about those who lived out a faith of trust in God in accordance with that definition: men like Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Elsewhere we hear of women like Rebecca, Leah, Rachel, Rahab, and Ruth. And today we continue that faith journey that is compared to a race in our second reading.

1. Run the race as though you lost 20 pounds.

Lay Aside Every Weight.

It is well known that race car crews, drivers, and engineers try to achieve every advantage by removing weight if possible and shifting weight in their cars in order to maximize their speed.

- Weight distribution is critical.
 - § Center of gravity height
 - § Center of gravity forward or back
 - § Roll angular inertia
 - § Yaw and pitch angular inertia (polar moment)
 - § Aerofoils or Spoilers
 - § Composite Materials

What if I told you that I took these items from a magazine on health? And they use similar terms for describing weight control?

What value do we give to certain experiences of life? Are some more weighted than others? The weight or emphasis placed on a person's experience can give strength and endurance to one's faith. How does hearing a faith story affect your life's journey? Does it make you a stronger person? Do you give value to walking a closer walk with God?

2. Run with Perseverance the Race set before Us. Eric Liddell, Scotland's champion in 1924 Olympic Games. He ran for God's pleasure – (Film: Chariots of Fire).

1. Steadfastness, constancy, endurance (found in scripture and liturgy).
 - a. in the NT the characteristic of a person who is not swerved from one's deliberate purpose and one's loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings

3. Run with Determination and Resolve – to know Christ and make him known! Reward: in the race and the end of the race. Holiness or the wreath?

4. Look to Jesus the Pioneer and Perfector of Faith.

a. Pioneer: Archegos: *ar-khay-gos'* (Architect)

1. the chief leader, prince
2. one that takes the lead in any thing and thus affords an example, a predecessor in a matter, pioneer

3. the author

b. Perfector

1. a Perfector is someone who wants to see it done right. Master Craftsman.

2. One who has in his own person raised faith to its highest standard and the highest example of faith. Gold standard – 24 karat

3. *tel-i-o'-o* - to make perfect or complete (God's will for us in Jesus Christ).

a. to carry through completely, to accomplish, finish, bring to an end.

b. add what is yet wanting in order to render a thing full.

5. Discipline is Painful but needed to run any Race. (Time: 10:15 for the Navy fitness run)

Righteousness: peaceful fruit

Endure trials

Make Straight Paths

6. Pursue Peace with Everyone and Holiness

Peace and holiness are the best awards God can offer in our race.

Peace comes from knowing we have run the best race of our lives.

We've given it our best shot. And when we are at peace with ourselves we can be at peace with everyone.

Holiness is being in the presence of God. Both are a gift from God when we love him and pursue him just as we would a mate.

Jesus is the lead runner, the "pioneer," and architect of our faith. He shows us how to run in the journey of faith. Without Jesus leading the way it would be impossible for us to run at all. The goal of the race for Jesus was the joy of delivering other runners across the finish line (2:10). In order to achieve this joy, Jesus endured the pain of the cross, "disregarding its shame." Seeing the disciplined, passionate, and steadfast way that Jesus ran the race should give us desire to be in training and get us ready to take our turn when the baton is passed and we sprint to the finish line.

Amen!