

How to win in the race of your life

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[0:00] How to go the distance in the Christian life, the running the race of your life. And as we face life's challenges, we all have need of endurance. We have to keep on running this race.

Now, it's true that some people are like old fridges. They just keep going. Who's had a fridge like that? I know Julie and I, we're young in our married life.

We got a trusty old fridge. And it lasted for years. It lasted some 27 years, we reckon. And we moved that fridge between nine different houses over our married life.

As we moved from here to there. And back again and away again. So, nine different moves in the furniture truck. And it still kept going. And it just kept on going.

We threw it out. Even though it was still working, it was just getting a bit noisy. So, that trusty old fridge just kept on keeping on. We see that really a picture there of what we should be like.

[1:02] Amen? As God's people, we should keep on keeping on. In contrast, it seems like there's an inclination to not enduring. In many people, it seems there's not a strengthening but a weakening.

There's not a growing but a weakening of our walk. And that's a sad thing. Where there's an indifference, a loss of strength. Because these are days that call for strength. We should be a strong people.

These are days that call us not for decreasing our love and zeal, but for a reviving of that. These are days of heightening unbelief and apostasy.

Of lukewarmness in the wider church. Of a ramping up of worldliness and the love of the world and the cares of this life. The love of multiplied other things. And so, I urge you tonight that it's needful for us to have persistence and forbearance.

Perseverance, if you like. I know there's the perseverance of the saints. Well, there is a rightful perseverance of the saints. We should be a persevering people. We should be a people who have that quality of persevering.

[2:08] And it boils down to stickability, really. And that's a quality that's sadly lacking these days. It's been noted that postage stamps are getting more expensive. But at least they have one attribute that most of us could emulate.

They stick to one thing until they get there. Stickability. They stick to one thing until they get there. And that should be the same for you and me, shouldn't it? As God's people, as we live the Christian life, that we go the distance with our Christian life.

There's trials and difficulties that we're going to face. We must face them. We can expect challenges ahead. But let's keep on running the race. Keep running that race. And go the extra mile.

Keep on going until that finishing line. This is not a time to flag or to faint. We're entering times of testing. Perilous times. You can be an overcomer.

And so in order to be a winner in the Christian walk, the Christian life, this marathon event, it's essential for our spiritual life that we have that need of endurance. Paul demonstrates that for us when we read about it here in Philippians 3, verse 14.

[3:14] Paul says this. He says, I press toward the mark. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He says, Ahead of me, there's this mark.

There's this object, this goal that he's running to. This finishing line. And Paul compares that life of faith as a light to a running race. It's a long distance event.

But how easily people can seem to falter. They don't press on. And this is the sad reality. Many stumble. They don't finish well. And we can ask, what's stopping you?

What's getting in the way? As Paul says, Galatians 5, verse 7. He says, You did run well. Who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth? Now, we can expect some hindrances along the running race of our life.

Maybe it's not an elephant that's in the way. I don't think that would be a common place for you to be running down a running track and for an elephant to be in the way. But sure enough, there's obstacles ahead.

[4:12] Amen? There's obstacles ahead of one kind or another that you're going to face in your Christian walk. And oftentimes, we get in the way. We are the ones that get in the way our own selves.

That we can be our own worst enemy. So we call to our faith and know that God is able. And it's not our work, our performance, but His.

As we read on here, it's His work, it's His performance that matters. And we need to get out of the way, really, don't we? And stop hindering God's work in our own lives.

Let's place our faith in the One who holds us safe. All the while, let us trust Him to do His good work within us. The Greeks had a race in the Olympic Games of the time that was unique.

And these runners raced this race, but the winner was not the runner who finished first. It was the runner who finished with his torch still alight. Interesting thought, isn't it?

[5:10] We can run the race and the light goes out. We want to run the race and the light's still shining bright right at the end. That was when there was a reward. We want to run all the way with the flame of the torch shining bright, still alight for Him.

And Paul says, being confident, this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. We've got this race that started and we've got to continue in it.

Keep on running that race, knowing that He's the one who's going to enable us to get to the end. He's the one who's going to finish His work because it's all His starting it. Here's the finishing of it. Here's the one who'll help us to get through this running race of our Christian life. And let's be honest, it's easy to get discouraged in the Christian walk, isn't it? We get setbacks.

It's constant. We all have times of discouragement, of conflict. We must persevere. Don't you quit. Keep on persevering. And sometimes we've got to be persevering with others as well.

[6:16] You know, I can relate. As I drove the church bus a little while now, we've got others helping drive the church bus. But even that, the bus driving ministry, you've got to be persistent.

You've got to be persevering. In a sense where there's certain demands on your time and application of energy and patience and forbearing. There was a time where there was a young boy, Norman Geisler.

He was a child that was invited by some neighbour children to a Sunday school class. And this young boy, Norman, would go to Sunday school classes for 400 Sundays he went.

And every week, the bus driver faithfully picked him up. Week after week, he attended church. But he never made a profession of faith in Christ. And finally, as a senior high school student, after being picked up for church over 400 times, he committed his life to Christ.

And what if the bus driver had given up on Norman at number 395 times, picking him up for church? What if the bus driver had said, this kid's going nowhere spiritually.

[7:22] Why waste any more time on him? But no, this young boy, Norman, trusted Christ as a teenager. And then he was greatly used of God and became a preacher in his adult years.

And he was a testimony for God's grace. And so it's the same as we might on a Sunday school ministry, children's ministry, isn't it? You get some that might be testing and difficult.

You forbear with them. You keep on persevering. Keep on sharing the gospel. And it's likewise with adults too, isn't it? Persevering with one another, forbearing one another. And there'll be a result as we keep that persevering heart.

And that need of courage. To overcome discouragement, we need encouragement. And the Bible says how we can be part of encouraging others or comforting others.

It says here in 1 Thessalonians 5 verse 11. Wherefore comfort yourselves together and edify one another, even as also you do. For this word encourage or comfort, it's got the sense of coming

alongside others.

[8:29] So have that heart where you're not only encouraging yourself and you're persevering yourself, but you're helping others persevere. You're helping others who need that helping hand, that pat on the back, that prayer, that comfort, that encouragement.

Be an encouraging person of others as well as encouraging yourself. And the Bible tells us how we should not be overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

So when we see others that might be flagging or fainting, that might need a lift, an encouragement, let's encourage them. Let's be part of supporting them to endure. Part of supporting them to persevere.

To cheer them on. To not be a critic, but a coach. To stir one another into more good works, in good ways. To lift up others. We can be all a part of doing that.

And let's give that word to others that lifts and blesses others. As we are that encouraging kind of person. Have we got a heart to others when we see others that might be stooping?

[9:30] You know, loaded down. Heavy laden. It says that heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop. It bows it down. It makes it loaded down. But it says a good word maketh it glad.

It seems that amongst us there could be others that might be flagging or fainting. Let's have a heart and a look to others to see how can we lift up others that seem to be fainting or flagging.

I pray that you will be encouraged tonight by the good word of God. It's our great source of comfort.

It talks about the comfort of the scriptures. If you're faltering, I pray that you'll find new strength.

To gain new strength in that race that we're all running. Fact is, Satan wants to take you out of the race. And I see this all too many times with people. They don't press on.

I was in a conversation with someone lately that was saying, Oh, this or that is some kind of obstacle for them to fellowship here. And really, it's just the devil trying to take people out of the race.

[10:31] To find something, some disagreement, some obstacle, some imagined fault or concern that then becomes such a huge mountain out of that molehill.

And it stops people from fellowshiping. And they're taken out of the race. They're basically hindered from that running. Who has hindered you? You're running so well.

Something slows people down. It takes them out of the race. It could be a misunderstanding. Some stumbling block. We don't want to be part of any stumbling block to others.

We want to rather be those that bring a good word. That encourage others. That stir others on. To spur others on in the race. And of course, we may all expect some attacks against us.

For some reason, well, you know, think it's too cold, too hot, we're too tired or, you know, to fellowship, whatever it be. There's always something that can make us otherwise occupied.

[11:25] Maybe it can be we encounter grief or loss or heartache or trouble, trial, testing. We will suffer persecution. The Bible says so. And we can expect it.

And we can also get weary in well-doing. You know, think of it for our brothers and sisters in other lands. The heartaches and hurts and the real trauma and testings that they face.

You know, this map here shows where those countries are coloured, that there's persecution going on. The red is the worst. The orange is less so.

And then the yellow is less so. And of course, we're in the other countries that really have scarcely any persecution for being a Christian. But friends, if we were living in some of those countries that are coloured on that map, we can certainly expect that it would be probably illegal for us to even be here tonight.

That we would be banned. That there would be police roaming the streets to try to shut down a meeting like this because it would be illegal. That we would dare to even have a Bible and be teaching it or opening it and reading it.

[12:33] That we would dare to sing the songs of the faith. That this would be something that there'd be a hostility from the government that is in power. And we've got such liberty here tonight to be here.

As Paul writes to us, So brother, sister, if in this running race that you're running, that you encounter some suffering or opposition, that's actually normal.

That is the normal. And we should keep the right spirit. Keep our heart in right accord with God and man. Lean on God's strength to see us through whatever test comes. And I know in certain workplaces, I've copped it.

We can cop it in workplaces where you're the minority, you're the only, if not the only, one of a few of Christians. And oftentimes you're the one that's targeted and scorned and criticised.

We must steel ourselves for this and for the days ahead. And know God's strength in that time. To be like Daniel. We saw Daniel where it was illegal for him to pray.

[13:43] But he held fast. He was steadfast in his devotion to God. Even in the face of death. He knows what happened to Daniel. He went to the lion's den, didn't he? The lion's den.

Because he loved God so much that he wouldn't stop praying. And then we think of the young men like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Their steadfast faith.

They did not bow to the king's idol, the false god. They were thrown into the burning, fiery furnace. And yet they remained steadfast, didn't they?

They were steadfast in their faith. And the fourth man joined them in the fire. The Lord Jesus effectively was there present. And they trusted God to protect them.

So, brothers, sisters here tonight, as we face, I expect, increasing persecution in the days ahead, it's all the more important that we steel ourselves to soldier on, to trust in God's care and control, to know that God is with us.

[14:43] And we'd rather be in the fire because that's where our Lord will be, to be in his will, to be in his care and control. So, keep steadfast.

We can expect trials and temptations. We can expect attacks and hatred, discouragement and doubts. And people will fail and hurt us too. We must continue to press on.

Continue to be faithful. And be patient. Wait on God's timing. And understand that God's timing is perfect. Now, sometimes in the present, when difficulties happen, we can wonder, why is this happening?

We can get impatient. But we need to understand that we're waiting on God's timing because his timing is the best. There was a time where it was a stormy night in Birmingham, England, and a preacher, Hudson Taylor, was speaking at a meeting place.

And it was such a stormy night that the people there were telling Taylor that it's not likely to be anyone going to come. And Taylor, the missionary, said, I must go even if there's no one but the doorkeeper.

[15:57] And so there was less than a dozen people showed up. But the meeting was marked with spiritual power, unusual spiritual power. And half of those present either became missionaries or gave their children as missionaries.

And the rest were faithful supporters of the China Inland Mission for years to come. So we can think, well, it's too hard or this or that, some reason why, it's hard to fellowship.

But we might miss something special. We might miss something special. By failing to be here. So press on.

Press on. The Bible speaks about the sufferings of Paul. And his life was filled with many tests and suffering, many perils. It says, he reads, he tells us here, 2 Corinthians 11, 23.

He says, Are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool. I am more. In labours more abundant. In stripes above measure. In prisons more frequent. In deaths oft.

[17:01] Of the Jews five times received I 40 stripes save one. So stripes, it talks about the scourging. You know, he was beaten. Flogged.

They lashed his back. And he was in prison. He was close to death. He was in fear of death. In risk of his death.

And then it reads on. He says, Thrice I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Thrice I was suffered shipwreck. A night and a day I've been in the deep.

In journeyings often. In perils of waters. In perils of robbers. In perils by my known countrymen. In perils by the heathen. In perils in the city. In perils in the wilderness.

In perils in the sea. So Paul's life was filled with all these perils. In other words, dangers. It's saying here that they beat him up with rods. They bashed his back with these thick pieces of wood.

[18:00] And they beat him down with these rods. That they tried to stone him to death. That he suffered shipwreck. And all of these things.

These various perils. Perils after perils. And then it reads on. In perils among false brethren. In weariness and painfulness. In watchings often.

In hunger and thirst. In fastings often. In cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without. That which cometh upon me daily. The care of all the churches. So it's saying he had a lot of weariness.

A lot of painfulness. In watchings often. So he had these sleepless nights. In hunger and thirst. Fastings often. He was hungry.

And he had the care of all the churches. So he was very burdened. And yet he persevered.

[18:56] He pressed on. We must have the same heart as Paul. May we not let any difficulties or discouragements deter us. From doing the will of God. Paul was in the centre of God's will.

When he was amongst all these perils. And it can be true for you. Brother, sister. When you go through perils. When you have dangers. Beset your Christian walk. Don't be deterred.

Press on. Our Lord says. Blessed are they. Which are persecuted for righteousness sake. For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you. When men shall revile you. And persecute you. And shall say all manner of evil against you falsely. For my sake. And our Lord says.

Rejoice and be exceeding glad. For great is your reward in heaven. For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Notice there all those things. People reviling you.

[19:52] Cursing you. Bad mouthing you. Saying all manner of evil against you falsely. Saying falsehood. Falsehood. What are we to do?

Rejoice. Rejoice. You know I've had that happen to me. People bad mouthing me. For no reason at all. Our Lord says rejoice. He says there's a reward.

A reward for that. If you face a test. Endure. Endure. We have much need of endurance. And we must press on.

No matter what the setbacks. There was an old preacher one day. Rebuked by his deacons one Sunday. Before the service. And the deacon said this.

Pastor. Something must be wrong with your preaching. And your work. There's been only one person added to the church. In a whole year. And he's just a boy. And the preacher listened.

[20:50] His eyes moistening. His hand trembling. I feel it all. But God knows I've tried to do my duty. He replied. And one day the minister's heart was heavy. As he stood before his flock.

As he finished the message. He felt a strong inclination to resign. And after everyone else had left. One boy came to him. And asked. Do you think if I worked hard for an education.

I could become a preacher. Perhaps a missionary. Again tears welled up in the minister's eyes. Ah this heals the ache I feel. Robert I see the divine hand now.

May God bless you my boy. Yes I think you will become a preacher. And here's the man. As he. Was later in life.

Here's a picture of him as a younger man. And many years later. This man. Robert. Came home. To London. From Africa.

[21:46] And his name was spoken with reverence. And nobles invited him. To their homes. He'd added many souls. To the church of Jesus Christ. Reaching even some of Africa's.

Most savage chiefs. His name. Was Robert Moffat. The same Robert. Who years before. Had spoken to the pastor. That Sunday morning. In the old Scottish Kirk.

Lord help us to be faithful. Then give us the grace. To leave the results to you. And sometimes we might labour. And it seems like there's not much. To see for it.

Yet. God knows doesn't he. God knew that this young boy. As he was. Back then. Which seemed to be the only. Fruit. For that old preacher's labour.

Would be. A world changing missionary. Labouring. For the Lord. In Africa. And. We can find. Lots of reasons. Why. Setbacks come. And.

[22:40] Lots of. Ways. That we can get discouraged. There's a preacher. Wesley. He said. Of three main methods. That. A believer. Can be discouraged. Satan.

Will try to discourage you. Here's how he put it. Three different ways. That. Satan. Can discourage. The believer. It says that. Satan. Will try to damp. Our joy. Satan.

Will try to attack. Our peace. And. Satan. Will target us. Especially. In times of sickness. And pain. Friends. You can trust. In the faithfulness. Of God. You can trust him.

Know that. The devil. Will try to attack. Your joy. Your peace. And get you down. In sickness. And pain. But you can trust. In the faithfulness. Of God. He's ever for you. He's ever with you.

And you can't find joy. Even in the time of trial. James says. My brethren. Count it all joy. When you fall into diverse temptations. In other words. Different kinds of trials.

[23:37] He says. Count that something that is joy. Knowing this. That the trying of your faith. Worketh patience. In other words. Endurance. But let patience have a perfect work.

That you may be perfect and entire. Wanting nothing. He's saying here. That the trying of your faith. Is going to lead to patience. It's going to lead to perseverance. And endurance. The trying of your faith.

Is going to produce that. It talks in the word of God. That after the night of weeping. There comes the joy. In the morning. There's times when we can get cast down. And discouraged. And feeling despairing.

Feeling like quitting. Feeling like we've lost hope. As we face obstacles. Sometimes we've got to have a good heart. Honest talk with ourselves. With our own soul.

And tell ourselves to get over it. And get back into the race. We see that in Psalm 42. Verse 11. It reads. Why art thou cast down? O my soul.

[24:33] Why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God. For I shall yet praise him. Who is the health of my countenance. And my God. So when the obstacles come.

When the setbacks come. When the trials. When the discouragement. When the disappointments come. Get your praise on. And get on with it. Really worry is a waste of the mind.

The devil wants to dog our steps. To make us drop out of the race. To take our joy. To steal our fervour and zeal. To make us drop out of fellowship.

That's a sure fire way to slow you down. As I talked about. This man that I've been talking to lately. He's struggling to find a church. And yet. This church is the one.

That he counts. The best of the bad bunch. I suppose. He had that kind of view. That he's struggling to find a church. But yet. He's found some difficulty.

[25:33] Some obstacle. To stop in fellowshiping. Friends. That's the devil. That's the devil. The devil wants you to stop fellowshiping. The devil wants you out of church. Out of the assembly. Out of that place where you can encourage one another.

And be encouraged. It's a sure fire way. To slow you down. In your faith. And Satan sends discouragement. Defeat. Obstacles of all kinds.

Whatever he can throw at you. To discourage you. We can expect that. We can easily lose heart. If we just look at the difficulties. We can get disheartened.

But let's think about. Some of the examples of scripture. Moses got weary. And worn down. But he persevered on. By the power of faith. He endured. Despite all the many discouragements.

That Moses had. Constant murmuring. Let's be like Job. Despite much suffering. And grief. And loss. He held fast. Let's endure like David.

[26:33] He struggled with loneliness. With mourning. With broken heartedness. Over his sin. And the guilt of it. Yet David found praise.

David found God's mercy. And forgiveness. Jeremiah. It's another Bible example. He was known as the weeping prophet. He suffered from constant rejection. By the people that he reached out to.

And Jeremiah was attacked. By his own brothers. Beaten up by a priest. A false prophet.

Imprisoned by the king. Threatened with death. Thrown into a system.

By government officials. Opposed by a false prophet. Simply for following God faithfully. But even in the midst of all of this. Jeremiah endured.

He found his hope. In God alone. As he wrote in Lamentations 3. It is of the Lord's mercies. That we are not consumed. Because. His compassions. Fail not.

[27:28] They are new. Every morning. Great. Is. Thy faithfulness. And he says. The Lord is my portion. Saith my soul. Therefore will I.

Hope. In him. The Lord is good unto them. The Lord is good unto them. That wait. For him. To the soul that seeketh him.

It is good that a man should both hope. And quietly wait. For the salvation of the Lord. You know. We can naturally. Humanly get impatient. We want answers. We want God to. Do something. And to fix something. Sometimes we've just got to wait. Just got to wait. Quietly wait. Patiently wait. The Lord is my portion. Saith my soul. And heartaches and hurts.

That can happen to all of us. We can all find. Reasons to despair. Let's be like Paul. He himself. Endured many hardships. Elijah was another one.

[28:27] He got down in the dumps. He got discouraged. He was exhausted. He was weary. Afraid. We can relate to Elijah sometimes. Can't we? He was a man of like passions.

As we are. He was human. Amen. It's a blessing. That the word of God. Paints the pictures. Of these men and women of God. That they're very human. They've got the same passions. Like passions. Such as we are. What did Elijah do? He endured. He prayed on. Says the effectual fervent prayer. Of a righteous man. He prayed through. He got the victory.

Friends. We've got the same resources. All of these men and women. Of the word had. Surely discouragement. Will come our way. We're going to have Elijah moments. Jeremiah moments. Paul moments.

That is certain. Question is. What will you do? Don't you quit. Don't you quit. I would urge you. When your strength. Gets depleted.

[29:24] You have an unfailing resource. The Lord is my portion. Saith my soul. You have an unfailing power source. That is here for you. Always for you.

To draw on. To constantly find that resource. The word of God. Prayer. Fellowship. We have to learn patience. Like David. He testified this.

In Psalm 40. I waited. Patiently. For the Lord. And he inclined unto me. And heard. My cry. He brought me up. Also out of an horrible pit.

Out of the miry clay. And set my feet. Upon a rock. And established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth. Even praise unto our God.

Many shall see it. And fear. And shall trust in the Lord. He brought me up out of this horrible pit. I was in a horrible place. I was in this pit. I was in the depths of this dark dungeon.

[30:23] He brought me up. Out of that miry clay. And he put my feet on a rock. That's what he does. Doesn't he? And he put a new song in my mouth. So brother, sister.

I guess my message here. Is to exhort you. In those moments. That we go through. Know that the Lord is your portion. Trust him.

Wait patiently for the Lord. His timing. Trust him through those waiting times. Of life. When he seems far, far away. It says he takes us out of the pit.

Out of the miry clay. He sets our feet on the rock. For the meantime, while we're waiting. There's need for endurance.

There's a steadfast faith. He has put a new song in my mouth. Even praise unto our God. Press on. Don't quit.

[31:19] Paul urges Timothy to endure hardship. Hardness. As a good soldier of Jesus Christ. In the context, he speaks also of a striving athlete.

And of a hardworking farmer. He's talking about hardship. He's talking about hard things. Hard times. There are hard times. He doesn't take the hard times away.

But he gives us endurance in the hard times. There's a certain resolve here. Think of it, brother, sister. And I know this is real for some.

And there's people going through grieving. There's tough things happening. Sickness. Tough things happening. Friends, there's a hardness. Endure. God will help you to endure. God will help you.

He'll help you to see you through those things. Have that resolve of your heart. God will help you to have that heart to resolve, to endure, to resolve that faithfulness.

[32:20] He'll enable you to do it. We've got a commission to fulfil. It's our duty to serve our great commanding officer. He'll enable you to be that good soldier.

That good soldier. And you can grow in spiritual maturity. Those hard times can be the making of us. We don't always appreciate it in the present. But looking back to the hardness that we've got through, that that was the making of us.

And we can be a testimony to others. And at the end of it all, there will be a crown. A harvest. As we endure, Paul urges again, Let us not be weary in well-doing.

For in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. So there's times when we're feeling weary. It's irksome sometimes.

It's heavy. It's stress and strain. It's effort. There's a weariness. And that can even be when you're doing exactly what God wants you to do.

[33:27] It can be a weariness in it. But do not be weary. In due season we shall reap, if we faint not. So, it's interesting.

One of the characteristics of the Antichrist is that he will wear out the saints of the Most High. It's an interesting thought, isn't it? Daniel 7, 25. He will wear out the saints of the Most High.

I think that's just what the devil wants to do. To wear us out, doesn't he? God doesn't give us more than he's going to enable us to carry. And God's not a hard taskmaster, a slave master.

But it's our glad service to serve him. And to have that heart, I'm not going to get weary doing that which is right. I'm not going to get weary doing that which is his will for me to do.

The devil wants to wear out the saints. We can humanly be inclined to get weary. But let us not faint. Let us not faint.

[34:26] It's all the more reason we should determine to keep on keeping on. There's a harvest ahead. It says in due season. In due season. In God's good time, there's going to be a harvest. You know, that old preacher didn't know that young Norman would become a missionary who would change a continent.

We don't know the little things that we might do for God that might seem insignificant. It might seem like there's not much to show for decades of ministry.

Yet God helping us, we're planting seeds. God will bring that which he wants to bring to fruition. God will do that which he can do.

We simply do our little bit. Our little part in the harvest field. And one day there will be a reaping. There'll be something to show. There'll be some result. And God will be glorified. Which is what it matters, isn't it?

What really counts is that God will get the glory. And there is a harvest ahead. So, brother, sister, if you're laboring and there's an inclination to get weary, don't quit.

[35:31] Keep on laboring. Keep on enduring. Do not be weary in well-doing. For in due season we shall reap if we faint not. So, for the meantime, endure. There's a harvest ahead.

Think of that race that we're running. There's a certain strain, a certain intensity to it. There's a certain application of energy. Press on.

Press on. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you that we can know by your grace that saving of your hand. Lord, that we can be a saved people.

Thanks to your mercy and the great gift that you've given at the cross of your son in our place. Lord, for every soul here, every family, every heart, every home.

Lord, that each one individually might know what it is to be saved. Lord, that you've begun a good work in us. It's all praise to you. And you're going to do that good work and you're going to perform that good work that you've started.

[36:31] You're going to see us through to that finish line. Lord, we want to finish well in our Christian life in this marathon. Help us, Lord, to have that application that we'll endure whatever comes our way.

Like the Bible heroes that have gone before us, as much as they had like passions and many failings as we do. Yet, Lord, you use them for your praise and glory.

Lord, be glorified in your church, in every life that is here, that we might be such a people that would be a people unto your praise. And, Lord, that there will be a harvest. Help us, Lord, each one, as we do our little bit in your harvest field.

We do our part to encourage others, to encourage our families, and to reach out with that message of hope that we can all play a part, that there will be a harvest yet ahead as we faint not.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.