

# Run the Race

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[ 0 : 00 ] The Bible compares the Christian life to a running race.! Hebrews 12 is where we're going to go.! As believers, we are like runners on a race, on a racetrack.

And we're called to run the race that is set before us. It's a race. It's like a marathon event, you could say. Not really a short 100-metre dash, but it's not so much like a sprint, but it's a long-distance event.

And life is likened to that, especially really the Christian life. In Hebrews 12, we read that familiar passage, verses 1 and 2 of Hebrews 12.

It reads, Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside the weight, every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us.

And let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of the faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

[ 1 : 23 ] It's telling us there of a race to run. Run the race. The Christian runner plods onward, forward, by faith.

Fast or slow, strong or weak, they just keep on, keeping on. And the word race here is agon, from which we, of course, we get the word, you tell me.

Agony. It's an endurance event. There's an endurance factor here for the plotters who put the one foot after the other. That's life, isn't it? It's an endurance event.

So how must we run? The Christian race calls for, I put to you number one, determination. There's a determination for us. It tells us in Hebrews there, let us run with patience.

It means stick to it. There's a consistent effort. There's an endurance there. There's a perseverance, a determination. Keep on. This race is by faith.

[ 2 : 29 ] In the context, Hebrews 11, the hall of faith, some call it, a whole chapter telling us about men and women of faith. And it says, by faith, in Hebrews 11, 21 times, indicating that secret of the endurance of faith.

And really, sin is the opposite of faith, isn't it? It's unbelief. In Romans 14, 23, it tells us that whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Faith is really that sin conquering factor, isn't it?

That if we have faith, if we believe that we have God. And the endurance here, the determination that's called for, it's really an urging for us to not muck around.

Don't stroll around and coast along. Don't wander around aimlessly. How quickly time evaporates, doesn't it? It wasn't that long ago, I remember my dad's 40th birthday.

And I think the company gave him a company car or something. There was something special. It was a Ford Falcon. And it was just the bee's knees at the time.

[ 3 : 46 ] And now I just think for myself, 40 seems so long ago for me now. And time goes, doesn't it? Just poof, it's gone. And we can't afford to waste time because it's a finite resource, isn't it?

And the call here is to be a steady Christian, isn't it? To not put things off. Don't get discouraged in that running race. Don't let discomfort take away your hope and trust.

Patience and strength is called for in this race. There's obstacles ahead of you. There's discomfort that's going to be dogging you.

There's lots of reasons that could take away your hope and trust. But you're called to this determination. And this patience, it develops that inner strength, doesn't it?

The strength of character. The patient runner won't be put off by discouragement or opposition. And friends, our race means, at times it could mean pain. You get that second wind, don't you?

[ 4 : 48 ] He remembers as a youngster maybe running and you get the second wind. You've just got to go through the stitch, don't you? That you get. Maybe the bruises, the hurts, the strains, the discomfort, the disappointments at times.

You might lose some of the races, the challenges along the way. And think of it for yourselves, brother, sister today, that you're in this marathon, this marathon race. And it's going to take some stamina, some grit, some determination, character, focus, consistency.

Keep up the pace. Perseverance, endurance. Even if you might have a few hiccups and a few scrapes and falls, don't give up. Don't give up.

Keep pressing on. Run through to the finishing line. It's just ahead. It's just ahead of us. Amen.

Don't relax before you hit the tape. Get up when you fall. And keep trusting.

Keep on keeping on. Pace yourselves in that race that you're called to. And it's going to cost you.

There's a sacrifice. There's a giving up of time.

[ 5 : 51 ] But when we think of the finishing line, think of the glory. The glory to God. The honour unto him. And so we have need of determination. Also, we've got need of direction.

We've got to make sure we're running in the right direction. You hear of these stories where some people miss the cone and they end up running down the wrong road and they're getting lost. We've got to make sure we keep on the right track, don't we?

To fix our eyes on Jesus. It calls for a purposeful stride, doesn't it? A singleness of mind. To focus, it says. To fix your eyes. To look unto the Lord Jesus.

To Jesus alone. That he is there ahead of you. He's urging you on. He's there. He's barracking for you. And we have that faith that is in Christ.

It's looking unto him. You know, in everyone's individual way, they express that today. Those that gave testimony. And there's different ways of expressing that faith, isn't there? You might have just a bit of a quiet, humble faith.

[ 6 : 50 ] Maybe you're not such a big-mouthed Christian. But if you've got that faith, that's what matters. That's what counts. That saving faith. Even that simple faith. The faith that you use even as a little child.

And so that's why I grilled some of the little ones there. I wanted to make sure that they're definite. They're not just doing it because mum and dad wants them to. Because that can be a problem, can't it? But it's an individual.

It's a personal faith that they believe in Jesus. They believe in him. And that can be as simple as we heard just before. And at the end of this Christian race, we can expect to hear the author and the finisher of our faith.

And he's going to say, Well done, good and faithful servant. As Matthew 25, 23 puts it. You're in a race. Every one of us are in this. I trust in this race.

And if you're not in this race, you can get into this race. As an opportunity for you, even if you're a late starter. You can start in this race even if you're older in life.

[ 7 : 51 ] There's no time limit to entering the race whilst you have breath in your lungs. And this race is not some meaningless, exhausting lapse around a field that gets us nowhere.

This is a contest of athletes. This is a gold medal event. This is the great race of life, isn't it? We want to make sure that we're running in the right direction. That we're running unto Jesus.

That we're looking unto him. Not looking unto philosophy. Not looking unto religion. Not looking unto our own mind of this or that. But looking unto the Lord Jesus. And we've heard some strong testimony of Christ today.

That we'll be, as it were, looking unto him. And there's different people looking unto him around the cross. Like we heard before, wasn't there? And everyone's got their own facet of that.

But if we can look unto Jesus as our saviour. I like to think of another man that wasn't mentioned as the thief. Who looked unto him, didn't he? The thief, he didn't have anything to commend himself.

[ 8 : 48 ] He couldn't do any good works while he was pinned there to the cross. He couldn't even get baptised. But he looked unto Jesus, didn't he? And he got saved. He looked unto Jesus. Even though it was his last breaths that he breathed.

The last cries that he cried. He looked unto Jesus. And that can be true for you today. God calls us to race towards that great goal. And there's all kinds of incentives along the way.

When you're in a race, it's extremely important where you look. You know, you don't look at your feet. You don't look at the competitors. You don't look at the crowd. You look at the finishing line.

That finishing tape, don't you? You look unto that banner that says the finish line. You're looking unto Jesus. He's there. And nothing's going to throw you off stride or slow you down like looking at your feet or looking at other runners.

Maybe looking at yourself and thinking, oh, I'm just not going to make it. I'm just not able. Or looking at the crowd in the grandstands, maybe getting distracted. The Christian race is the same.

[ 9 : 46 ] What should we be looking at? Looking unto Jesus. Looking unto Jesus. Some may look too much at themselves at what they are doing. Some might focus on others, what they are doing.

But the Lord Jesus is the one we should look at. He's the one who will help us. He's the one that can save us. And by faith, we can look to him. That's what the writer in Hebrews 12 encourages us to do.

To look unto Jesus. And it's interesting, it's present tense. And it implies the idea of a constant attention during the race. So it's looking. It's keeping on looking. It's that really intense gaze, that focus that is continually upon him.

Here's the one who will help us run this race. Here's the one that will win this race for you. The Lord Jesus, he saves us and he strengthens us. There's nothing more important in life than seeing Jesus.

Now we can go through life and some people, it says their minds are blinded, aren't they? They can't see Jesus. And that's the most important thing, that we see Jesus. That we look unto Jesus. And the Lord Jesus, it says that he creates and he perfects our faith.

[ 10 : 46 ] He's the beginning and the end. He's the author and he's the finisher of it. So fix your eyes upon Jesus today. Lay everything else aside and just look to him. Look to him.

You know, there's a sermon that Spurgeon counted as when he trusted Christ and the text was, Look unto me and be ye saved. And that was just the simple truth.

Spurgeon got that and it was indelibly imprinted on his mind. Look unto me and be ye saved. We must look unto Jesus and he's the one who will save us. Not ourselves, not our own thoughts or philosophies.

And we can easily get distracted through life. When Nehemiah was rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem, God gave him that mission to do. Building that wall, that project that God had called him to do.

Along comes Sanballat, the enemy. And he says, come down and let's talk about what you're doing. You know, let's have a little, let's have a coffee and a chat. But Nehemiah knew what he was about.

[ 11 : 43 ] He knew that Sanballat was God's enemy and that they thought to do him harm. So Nehemiah said, I sent messengers to them. He didn't go himself. He said, I'm doing a great work so that I cannot come down.

Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you? That's Nehemiah 6 verse 3. So Nehemiah wouldn't be distracted from his focus. He had what God had put on his heart to do. He had what God had told him to do. And that's what he focused on. He wasn't going to be deterred. And it's got to be the same for you and me. There's lots of things that can try to take away our focus. We must keep the focus looking unto Jesus.

So run the race that is set before you. Run. It's a race. Go for it. Towards the finish line. Run with determination. With direction. And thirdly, run with discipline.

Hebrews 12 verse 1, it talks about lay aside every weight. And the sin which doth so easily beset us. Now, we know in athletics, in competitions, there's banned substances, aren't there?

[ 12 : 46 ] Someone's got banned substances, they're in big trouble and they don't get the prize. And there's some banned substances for runners in this race. It says lay aside, lay aside every weight.

Now, sometimes you need weights. I know Julie's keeping fit and she's got some weights. And she's going to be carrying those weights to help her build up her muscles and strength.

And, you know, when you're training, you might carry some weights. But when you're in the real race, you lay aside the weights, don't you? Because you don't want anything to bog you down, to slow you down. You lay aside the clutter.

And think about the weights that we can carry in our own lives as these runners in the race of life, and the runners in this Christian race. Those hang-ups that we cherish.

Maybe it's some hang-up, some problem, some stuff that we keep in the back of our mind. Maybe some resentment, some unforgiveness, some cherished grievance.

[ 13 : 43 ] Or maybe it's old sins. Or maybe it's something you can't even seem to forgive yourself. You're fouled up and it's dragging you down and you're thinking, wow, I messed up and I'm just really not a good enough Christian because I've got this stuff that happened to me, the stuff that I

did, that I'm ashamed of.

But like we heard before, if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins, to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. So no matter what it is that is in your past, you might be someone who's come to Christ later in life and there's memories, I mean there was testimony before of things that we're not proud of, of things that we're ashamed of.

But Christ has cleared that all up. It's forgiven. It's gone. That's the old you, isn't it? When you get saved, that's the old person that you used to be. And you don't need to hold on to that because it's gone.

Christ has forgiven you of that. And those things that we might weigh ourselves down with unduly, Christ has forgiven you and he's cleansed you. Maybe it's things as you're running this race, there's attitudes or activities that sap our time or energy.

[14:55] As a runner in this race, we can get diverted like the runner that gets off track. We can be pulled away from that focus on God. And what are these weights?

We can all think of that for ourselves. The things that slow us down in our progress, in our spiritual life, whatever it be. The things that slow us down. Things that absorb our time and energy that would otherwise go into the race.

Maybe identify that for yourself. You might want to make a little list. Yeah, there's some things, maybe they're weights for me and I need to get rid of them. We all of us have our individual race to run.

All of us have our own particular weights to lay aside, lay aside that weight. There's some things in my life that are not sinful but my race forbids me from doing them.

You know, there's things, you might have convictions about things and say, well actually some might say that's not wrong but it's wrong for me because it's a distraction. It's a detour. It stands in the way of my faithful service to God.

[15:55] So I'm going to lay it aside. I'm going to put those things aside. That gets in the way of my running this race. I don't want to have any encumbrance. And some particular things may hinder your race but they would not hinder mine.

We can come to those personal convictions about all kinds of things. So what things are hindering our spiritual progress in this race? Let's get rid of that old garbage.

You know, there's talk about garbage before, isn't it? The things that were garbage. The things that were lost, says Paul. The things that are counted as dung, you know, as refuse, as the foulest of the foul.

The things that were of credit to Paul, he laid them aside. He counted them as loss. And what is it that for us, for you and me, we might count it as garbage. There's things that are maybe sinful or just an obstruction that is cluttering up our lives.

It could be burdens that we carry. It could be worry. As I say, unforgiveness. Maybe it's a fear of this or that. A fear of others. A fear of failure. A selfishness. Maybe there's drugs there.

[16:55] There's some have addictions to pokies or whatever it be. Or there's something that's immoral. Or something that's questionable. Maybe it's the love of the world. There's things that, oh, it's doubtful.

I better not touch it. If in doubt, don't. You know, if there's a slightest taint of, hmm, it's a bit sus. Don't touch it. Don't have a bar of it. Rock and roll music. It could be all kinds of things.

For different people, it can be a burden. A stumbling block. It could be pressures or hindrance. And look, for these things, you might say, well, that's not a problem for me. Or that's something that I don't feel a conviction about.

It's an individual matter that you've got to face up with God. Be honest before God about. And if you think, yeah, that's something that's hindering me. I need to deal with it. I need to ask God to help me.

To throw that off. To lay it aside. All of those hindrances or encumbrances. And we may enjoy doing relatively harmless things. And it can get so that it takes our time. I know I heard a testimony about that lately.

[17:53] Something that's, you know, nothing sinful about playing chess, for example. Or something that might be just something that is just absorbing all my time. And I know that that's a problem for me.

And we can all get individually convicted about that. We can get so engrossed in something and then have no time for God. You know, social media, it's a bit of a trap, isn't it? Time consuming. Anything that weighs you down and hinders your walk with God or slows your progress in the Christian race. Lay it aside. It's a weight for you. You know, the runners in the ancient times, they used to really strip down to next to nothing.

So that they removed just about everything that would hinder or slow them down. They didn't want anything to slow them down, even a tad. And we see that with runners. And in recent times, they've worn these skin-tight type things, haven't they, that give them less friction from the, you know, less air resistance.

Yeah, that kind of thing. And we must lay aside the weight, is the point. Anything that would hinder you running that race. If it's taking your time from fellowship, if it's taking your time from worship, if it's taking your time from time-consuming communion with God, then lay it aside.

[ 19 : 08 ] It's going to mar your performance and maybe it's going to cause you to trip and fall or get slowed down. Lay aside the besetting sin. It talks about the sin which does so easily beset you.

What's stopping you from being an active Christian? More active than you could be. Let's be honest. Maybe there's some changes we need to make. And so this thing, it says it so easily besets us.

It's like it entangles us or might cause us to trip up and such or get tangled up. Lay it aside. It's like a picture of dirty clothes.

You don't want to be wearing those dirty clothes. Lay them aside. Put them off. And we see another reference to this running of a race. There's another passage where Paul tells 1 Corinthians 9 of this race.

He says, No, you're not. That they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize. So run that you may obtain. He's saying, have that attitude. I'm going to so run.

[ 20 : 09 ] I'm going to run just so. That I'm going to win that prize. I'm not going to settle for being a slap-happy Christian. I'm going to be a fair dinkum one. And it talks here in verse 25.

Further, it reads that every man that striveth for the mastery. It's talking about taking an effort. It's talking about self-control. It's talking about everyone who competes. It means a struggle.

It means difficulties and dangers. Striving towards an agony. Again, this word agony here, from which we get the word agony. This race. It takes self-control.

And so the Christian runner needs discipline. It's really self-discipline, isn't it? Everyone who competes, it says, is temperate. In other words, self-controlled or self-disciplined.

When we think of athletes today, I know there's no way that I could be an athlete, especially a swimmer. You know, they get up before the sun comes up and they dive into a freezing cold pool, like these ones who shortly know it's not going to be freezing cold.

[ 21 : 14 ] But they dive into this freezing cold pool early in the morning and they do, you know, however many laps. And they train hard for 10 months. And the last month of their training, back in Corinth, they were trained for these 10 months, solid training.

And the last month of their training, they had daily supervised workouts in the gym and on the practice fields. And these athletes would prepare themselves, abstaining from pretty much everything that they could gorge themselves with, food, etc.

And to win the race, they had to be self-disciplined. And it's a picture here of these athletes. They worked so hard. They exercised this great self-discipline. And this verse, it talks about how they obtain a corruptible crown.

So it was just like a small wreath out of plants or vines. And it represented fame, acclaim, and the life of a hero. But give it a few months and that just crumbled and faded away.

And this was what made them famous back in the time of Corinth. But it was short-lived. It did not last. And Paul's comparing that with you that are runners in this race, the race that really counts, that you've got a crown that will not corrupt.

[ 22 : 26 ] It will not fade away. It will not perish. Now, it's a fact that Paul tells to some in Galatia, he tells some Galatians, you did run so well, who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth?

He tells us some they were running well. You were doing so well. What happened? What's going on? You were running so well.

What's hindered you? That can happen to you and me. They're running so well. And then, where are they? What's happened? What's gone wrong?

They're not got the zeal they're used to, the enthusiasm, something's gone wrong. We can be hindered. Friends, I can be hindered. We can all be hindered. Again, it's looking at what's hindering and dealing with it. Paul talks about, again, in 1 Corinthians 9, how we should run not as uncertainly.

[ 23 : 30 ] So, not kind of hit and miss, but run certainly, run definitely. And he talks about keeping his body under subjection. In other words, that self-discipline.

And he tells her, lest I should be a castaway. And this word, it means disqualified. We've been looking at that as we've been going through Hebrews. There's some that they could be disqualified. People in the Bible that have got disqualified. Now, they're still God's people, but their testimony has got damaged.

For example, Samson, he messed up because of the temptation of a woman. He was hindered. Now, God restored him, but there was a shameful chapter for Samson.

Absalom, he was disqualified because he had this temptation of pride and power. Ananias and Sapphira because of the temptation of money.

[ 24 : 29 ] Noah was greatly used of God to save the world through the flood. Later in life, he got drunk and his sons had to cover his nakedness. You know, there was a reproach there for Noah.

That there was a shameful point for him. Eli was the last of the judges, but towards the end of his life, Eli compromised.

He wouldn't correct his sons. You know, the Bible tells us warts and all, doesn't it? It doesn't paint everybody in a rosy picture. Solomon was another greatly used by God.

As a young man, he built the temple. He unified the kingdom. God gave him great wisdom because he didn't ask for money or power. He asked for wisdom. But in the end, he had multiple wives and concubines.

He was drunk on riches and power. And he didn't properly train his children too. What a shame. Such potential, he was hindered. He messed up on the race.

[ 25 : 31 ] Isaac was superactually born of Abraham and Sarah in their old age. He was heir to the messianic line, but he accomplished very little in his life.

Now, we want to finish well, don't we? I know there's a story, and I know one of our folkers talked about it lately, of an Olympic runner that kept going, even though the race had already finished. And he'd injured his leg, but he kept on going right to the last to get across that finishing line because he wanted to finish well. He wanted to finish the race. And it's about how we finish, isn't it? It's important that we are determined to cross that finishing line and we'll stay on course.

We'll keep on running. Keep on running. When we finish and cross the line at the end of our race, our saviour will be there with his outstretched arms. As Paul describes to Timothy, he says, I've fought a good fight.

I've finished my course. I've finished my race, he says. I've kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.

[ 26 : 42 ] And not to me only, but to all them. Also that love is appearing. There's a crown for you. There's a finishing line for all of us and it says that there is a crown that the righteous judge will give you, you that love is appearing.

Finishing this race is pressing on. That race of faith, of hope, that persevering, that enduring. Run the race with patience.

I urge you today, go through the discouragement, the pain factor, lay aside the weights. Friends, I've been thinking of late about life and death.

You know, just last week, I helped with a funeral of a sister in this church and it puts it really in your face when you're at a funeral and especially when you're stood at the end of a hole in the ground. And friends, life is very short, isn't it? Truly it is. It's exactly.

[ 27 : 47 ] And are you going to run your race with patience? There was a woman, an older woman who said this.

There was a troubled face before her and she said, did you ever notice that when the Lord told the discouraged fishermen to cast their nets again, it was right in the same old place where they'd been working all night and had caught nothing.

If we could only go off to some new place every time we get discouraged, trying again would be an easier thing. If we could be somebody else or go someplace else or do something else, it might not be hard to have fresh faith and courage.

But it is the same old net in the same old pond. The old temptations are to be overcome. The old faults are to be conquered. The old trials and discouragements which we failed yesterday must be faced again today.

We must win success where we are if we are to win it at all. The Master himself, after all these toilsome, disheartening efforts that we call failures, bids us try again.

[ 29 : 02 ] You know, we might think, I've been running this race and I've failed. I've fallen. I've disappointed my Saviour. He says, try again.

He says, put the nets in again. He doesn't send the disciples off to a different part of the lake. He says, put them right back where they were before. Even though you think it's not going to work. Even though you feel you're a failure. Even though you feel everything's against you. It's the same with life, isn't it? When we face trials and temptations and we feel like we're failing, God will help you to try again, to find his help to overcome whatever's bogging you, slowing you down as a Christian.

So let's run that race towards that mark. And let's be conscious, we're all making our mark. As I say, this funeral on Friday, there was some 300 plus people. There was a very much loved lady and she did know the Lord, which I was glad to, having known her myself as well, to be able to commemorate her life and what a blessing that was.

And it's going to come to all of us. What will we leave behind? What will we leave behind us? 1 Timothy 6, it tells how contentment, godliness with contentment is great gain.

[ 30 : 17 ] It says, for we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. We can carry nothing out, but we can leave something behind. We can leave a legacy to our children, to people that we're reaching and touching for Christ.

We can impact other souls that will live on behind us. And God grants each one of us a life. We've only got so much of it. Ultimately, we're all going to stand in front of the maker, the judge of the universe, our creator.

And we can trust him as our redeemer before we meet him. I trust you will. What mark will you leave behind? What is your life?

James asks this question. In James 4, 14, he says in part, What is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time and that vanisheth away.

What is your life? Are you making it count? What kind of portrait are you painting? What kind of life story are you writing? You are building something every day.

[ 31 : 20 ] It's the race that you're running. What will people say about you when you're gone? When they stand around your grave? A great mum? A great dad? A kind person? Or maybe really they're thinking a thief?

A cheat? A liar? A drunkard? A saint? Or a fool? You are writing your own epitaph. You are making your imprint on planet Earth.

You're making an impression. A mark. And what matters most is the reckoning up of that last day. Do you know the Saviour?

That is what matters most. And like was talked about earlier, on your tombstone, what will the dash represent? You've got your birthday and you've got your deceased day. Was it the DOB?

Date of birth. And then the DOD? Date of death. That's what they put in the, that's what the funeral, that's what the undertaker is going to write on that certificate. The DOD. You don't know when the date of your death is going to be.

[ 32 : 20 ] But in the middle is the dash, isn't it? The dash. What will the dash represent? Is it just a dash between two dates? It's the measure of a man.

And it's not how did he die, but how did he live? Not what did he gain, but what did he give? These are the merits to measure the worth of a man as a man, regardless of birth.

Not what was his station, but had he a heart. And how did he play his God-given part? Not what was his shrine, nor what was his creed, but had he befriended those really in need?

And does he know the Saviour, the creator of his life? You're running a race, every one of you, running a race. David is an example of a man making a mark. He ran the race.

And David, for all his faults, he got through that running race of his life. Think of David just as one example we could give as we close. David was anointed the king of Israel.

[ 33 : 21 ] Saul was still on the throne. David could have seized that power, but he waited for God's timing. Even when Saul led an army to attack David to try to kill him, David showed grace and love

to Saul.

And one night when David was able to sneak up on Saul, his men were urging him to finish off Saul. But David said, far be it from me to touch the Lord's anointed.

David called Saul the Lord's anointed, even though most of what he had done as king showed otherwise. So that night, David just cut off a piece of Saul's robe and gave it to him to show him mercy.

When David finally was king after Saul's death, he did his best to look after Saul's family. He said, is there anyone left in the household of Saul to whom I can show kindness?

And he found Mephibosheth, one of Saul's grandsons, who had this physical disability. And David brought him into his home. He gave him the land that would have been his right as the grandson of Saul.

[ 34 : 22 ] And he assigned people to work the land for him. David inspired the whole nation of Israel to see what it means to live in relationship with God and to treat people fairly.

Imagine a leader like that, that a whole nation would have a leader like that, who showed that power does not have to corrupt and that doing the right thing has its own reward. And these actions confirm what God had said about David when he was a boy.

I will put a man after my own heart on the throne of Israel. And it seemed God had done just that.

Well, so it seemed until one dark day. David, the passionate singer, songwriter, met his downfall.

One evening, David was up on the roof of the palace feeling good about all the great things he had done for the people of Israel. He looks and he doesn't avoid sin. He sends Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, to the front lines so he's deliberately killed in action.

David's not only guilty of adultery but now he's a murderer as well. And yet, God continues his working in David's life. David's still running the race and the prophet Nathan tells David a story of a rich man and a poor man and one small sheep and how the rich man steals even that little poor man's little old sheep and leaves the poor man with nothing.

[ 35 : 44 ] And David's anger and it says, that man, that rich man should be put to death. And Nathan says, David, the rich man is you. So David responds, I've sinned against the Lord and suddenly David is back on the track of faith.

He does what he can to fix the mess he has made and then he composes a song, Psalm 51, create in me a clean heart, O God, renew a right spirit, within me.

Cast not thy Holy Spirit from me, restore unto me the joy of my salvation, renew a right spirit within me. God restores David. You know, this running race that we run, it might be all up and up but we might have some downward bits, we might have some bits that we're going off track.

You know, through life we can think, oh, I've sinned, I've done something wrong. Get back on the track. Get back on the track. God restores David and makes him an even better king because people who've received forgiveness and mercy and grace tend to give it to others, don't they?

Grace, it's undeserved. David knew grace, David knew faith and we can be like David, we can repent, we can know God's grace, we can know God's promise, we can know God touching us and helping us to get back on track.

[ 36 : 58 ] David made his mark. It wasn't always a good mark but he left a mark and all of us here, you're going to leave a mark, you're going to leave a dash on your tombstone if you depart before the Lord's coming, you're going to leave something behind.

Make your mark, make your life count in how you treat others in your relationship with God foremostly. So run the race with patience, press towards the mark by faith, press towards the finishing line looking unto Jesus, press towards the mark and also make your mark, make your mark.

Looking unto Jesus by God's grace knowing his saving, making your mark, live for him, live for Christ, live the rest of your life that you have to live, live it for Christ, run the race with patience.

I pray you would know the Saviour this day, that you would know him, truly know him and follow him looking unto Jesus. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that we're all running this race of life, we know there's still a racetrack ahead, we see those that have trusted you, we are looking unto Jesus.

We pray each one might have that heart's trust, that despite whatever life throws at us we'll see that you are the one who's given us life. You're the author of life, you're the author of our salvation.

[ 38 : 22 ] Lord, you're the author and the finisher of our life, our faith. Lord, we pray help us to have that faith that believes in you, that follows you. Help us to run towards that mark, to press towards

the mark and also help us to make our mark that will make our dash count that our life, whatever life you've yet to give us, we'll live it well, we'll live it wisely, we'll finish well on that running race of our life.

We pray in all these things that you would be glorified. We know it's not by our own effort, it's not by our own volition even, in effect, it's your grace that grants such a gift that we can simply reach out and receive it.

Lord, help us to simply by faith say, yes, Lord, I trust in you. You died on the cross for my sin. You're risen from the dead. You're my saviour and I want to run my life running unto you, looking unto you, my great saviour.

And pray each one might have that heart's trust today. In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen.