

FAIRVIEW MEMORIAL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH  
WINTER BIBLE STUDY  
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## **LESSON TITLE: CROSSING THE FINISH LINE**

Scripture Text: Revelation 14:(12-13)

*Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*

*And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

When I think of the title of this lesson, scriptures like these and others certainly come time . Consider these verses from Hebrews 12:(1-2). *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside 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 finisher of our 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.*

I don't suppose a lesson that is based on such a title as what I have before me could be complete without the consideration of scriptures such as those I read from Revelation 14 about the great and final day when our race is over, and we go home to be with the Lord, to rest forever from our labors. However, when we consider the thought of **CROSSING THE FINISH LINE**, even though that ultimately takes place when we die, we are not forced to consider that line as the only one we cross.

Let's consider for a while what we can take from these verses in Hebrews 12. The Hebrew writer instructed us to lay aside every weight, and the sin that does beset us, that is, that surrounds us or perplexes us, and run with patience the race that we are to be running. As the people of God, we certainly need to be determined to stay in the race all the days of our lives. We may reach a point where we won't be able to run as hard or as fast as we once did, but we certainly need to stay in the race! However, we also need to consider that it is a race we need to be running on a daily basis. Luke 9:23- *And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.* Since Jesus instructed us to take up our cross daily, doesn't it stand to reason that we could look back and reflect on our lives on a daily basis. Not only to look back at the end of our earthly life and ask, Did I carry my cross? But to look back at the end of each day and ask, Did I carry it today? Not only to look back one day and reflect

upon our entire life and ask, Did I run the race for the Lord? But to look back before you go to bed tonight and ask, Did I run it today?

Notice if you will these statements that were made by Jesus and Paul. In John 17: 4, we have record of this statement made by Jesus while he was praying: *I have glorified thee on the earth: **I have finished the work** which thou gavest me to do.* Before Jesus went to the cross and gave his life to purchase our redemption he said, Father, what you gave me to do is finished. What was it that he had finished? Well, it may not be in reference to this only, but I certainly believe he was speaking of having organized his church. We also find recorded in John 18:30 this account of Jesus on the cross: *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, **it is finished**: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.* In 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:6-7, Paul wrote to Timothy and said: *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, **I have finished my course**, I have kept the faith.* Again let's notice in this that Paul spoke of being finished, before he had actually been put to death. The Apostle Paul was very zealous in the Lord's work. When he knew that he would shortly be put to death, what great peace and consolation it must have been to him, to be able to say, it's alright, I have finished what God gave me to do. It would have no doubt been very disturbing to Paul when he knew his death was near, if he would have had to say, It's time for me to die, and I haven't been obedient to God, I haven't done the work that he gave me to do.

The point that I want to make here is this, as we run the race, we need to run each day. There are finish lines that we will cross, before we cross the final one. God may give you a task that you need to finish today, he may give you one that will need to be finished in a month, a year, or a decade. This can be true in whatever capacity you serve the Lord. Church clerk, Sunday school teacher, etc. Should you cross the finish line with any of these things, if you are not supposed to continue, don't. Perhaps it's time for someone else to take it up. I am not going to make this just about preachers, because it's not. But I do want to spend some time there, because I suppose this is especially true for those whom God has called into the ministry.

Acts 20: (22-24) *And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:*

*Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.*

*But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, **so that I might finish my course with joy**, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*

Paul wanted to finish his course, to run his race, to complete the work that God had given him, and obviously from the scriptures I read from 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4, he did. Paul's course took him on many journeys, many missions. Lets look at one of them.

Acts 20: (vs. 17) *And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.*

*(vs. 18) And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons.*

*(vs. 19) Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears,, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:*

*(vs. 20) And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,*

*(vs. 21) Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*(vs. 22) And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:*

*(vs. 23) Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.*

*(vs. 24) But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*

*(vs. 25) And now, behold, I know that ye all among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.*

*(vs. 26) Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.*

*(vs. 27) For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*

*(vs. 28) Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

*(vs. 29) For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.*

*(vs. 30) Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*

*(vs. 31) Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.*

*(vs. 32) And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

*(vs. 33) I have coveted no mans silver, or gold, or apparel.*

*(vs. 34) Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.*

*(vs. 35) I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring, ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

*(vs. 36) And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.*

*(vs. 37) And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him.*

*(vs. 38) Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.*

As ministers, if we are going to stay on course, we must be willing to follow the Lord wherever he leads us, and labor in the field of his choice. That includes going when he tells us to go, and leaving when he lets us know that we have crossed that finish line!

Paul's work at Ephesus:

1. He served the Lord with humility- (verse 19)
2. He kept back nothing that was profitable- (verse 20)
3. He felt the peace of knowing he was free-(verse 27)
4. He commended them to God- (verse 32)
5. He left when God told him to leave- (verses 36-38)

Conclusion: As you run your race, travel your course, consider these scriptures.

1. Love God with all your heart.- Matthew 22:37
2. Gladly assembly with the saints.- Psalm 122:1
3. Reverence and obey God. Ecclesiastes 12:13
4. Tell others what he has done for you. Psalm 107:2
5. Hold fast to the ways of truth.- Jude: verse 3

**KEEP RUNNING, THE FINISH LINE IS JUST AHEAD**