

Finish Well

As we come to the end of the year I am reminded of the importance of finishing well. Not just finishing the year having completed our goals for the year, but looking to the future and taking the necessary steps to ensure that when our life draws to a close that we will leave a legacy of having finished well.

One of my favorite verses in this regard is Philippians 1:6 “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”. The Christian has a moral obligation to stay in the race and finish well. The Christian cannot quit living for Christ and serving Him. There is too much at stake. There may be agonizing moments along life’s journey that may hinder us from finishing well, friends may forsake us, family may forsake us, fellow laborers in the ministry may forsake us, but do not lose your spiritual vitality. There will be disappointments, but don’t quit the race just because the race is hard. Determine that you are going to keep living the Spirit filled Christian life and finish well.

What it means to finish well: 1) It means that you have received Christ as your personal Savior. You are trusting in Christ for your salvation, not your own self-righteousness. 2) To finish well you must be committed to walking with God personally to the end of your life, not just when it is convenient, but all the time. 3) Finishing well means to make a consistent contribution to God’s work with your time, talent and treasure. Get involved in the work of God and stay with it until God calls you home. 4) Finishing well means to leave a heritage through both biological and spiritual children who will continue the work of God. Pass your faith on to others. 5) Finishing well means to refuse to be dissuaded from your commitment to Christ because of the rejection and hostility of the culture.

Do's and don'ts that are necessary to finish well. 1) Do not focus on what you do not understand. There will be things that come into your life for which there seems to be no bible answer or solution. Claim Romans 8:28 and keep running the race. "All things work together for good to them who love God". 2) Do not become embittered toward those who do you wrong. Forgive others as well as yourself. 3) Do keep your faith fresh by continually looking for new opportunities to serve Christ as the Holy Spirit gives you direction. 4) Do be willing to take spiritual risks. Those who succeed in business often failed many times before they achieved success. Likewise, if you are to do great things for God you must be a spiritual risk taker, meaning you must be willing to take bigger and bolder steps of faith. If you fail, confess it and get back in the race and keep on taking those bold steps of faith and you will finish well.

Many Christians have gotten out of the race and failed to finish life well because they thought the temptation and burdens of life were too great. Paul tells us in first Corinthians 10:13 that God will not put more on you than he will put in you to bear it up. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (I Corinthians 10:13)

Whatever your weakness or whatever your challenge, it is not anything that other Christians down through the ages have not themselves experienced. Many others have faced exactly the same problems you have experienced. There is no temptation or challenge that is insurmountable through the empowering of the Holy Spirit. We must learn as Paul learned, that God is not nearly as interested in getting us out of trouble as He is in teaching us how to live with contentment while in trouble. Philippians 4:11-13, "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to

be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." As we traverse life we may lose a few battles. You will most likely stumble a few times requiring God to pick you back up and get you back on your feet and in the race, but remember that God will use your mistakes and stumbles to teach you and make you stronger.

As we close out 2009 may we be thankful for the blessings as well as the challenges that we have encountered during the year and lets determine with Gods help we are going to take the necessary steps to finish well and cross the finish line of life a winner.

Pastor, Randy Mason www.libertybaptistofmarshalltown.com
Liberty Baptist Church of Marshalltown