

Theme: Spiritual warfare is a lifelong battle, and we must draw strength from Jesus so that we do not grow weary but endure until final victory.

I. Intro - Wartime Picnic

- A. July 21, 1861 First Manassas/Bull Run - armies
- B. People from DC went out to picnic and watch
- C. Sure Union would whip Rebs and war over
- D. Union troops joined for 90 days!
- E. Confederates routed Union; soldiers fled through picnics
- F. South also thought war would be quick; lasted 4 years, 620,000 dead
- G. Wars are rarely quick and easy; same with spiritual war

II. The Call For Endurance

A. Spiritual warfare calls for endurance

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with **perseverance** the race marked out for us...

³Consider him who **endured** such opposition from sinful men, so that you will **not grow weary** and lose heart....

⁷**Endure** hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?
Hebrews 12:1, 3, 7

- 1. Endure - 3 times (same Greek root)
- 2. Also - don't grow weary (v3)
- 3. Same idea in book of Revelation

If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. **This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints.**
Revelation 13:10

This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus. Revelation 14:12

- a. Context - beast, false prophet warring against saints
- b. To remain faithful in spiritual warfare calls for patient endurance
- c. This is same word as 'endurance' and 'perseverance' in Hebrews 12

B. The Christian life requires endurance - but victory is assured

- 1. The Christian is a marathon - not a sprint
- 2. Like the American Civil War, our spiritual warfare is a protracted battle, requiring great endurance
- 3. The reality is that the only way the North would lose was if it simply gave up. If they endured, victory was assured because of far greater numbers, industry, weapons, etc.
- 4. In our spiritual warfare, victory is assured - unless we give up
- 5. This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints!

III. The Source of Endurance

A. Endurance comes from God's faithful witnesses

Therefore, **since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses**, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Hebrews 12:1

1. This refers back to the people in Hebrews 11
2. Primarily they testify to God's faithfulness to them
3. These witnesses display enduring faith until victory
4. Secondarily they are observing and cheering us on in our own race
5. We endure as we consider God's faithfulness to His people down through the ages into our present day
6. If you feel your endurance failing
 - a. Read historical sections of Scripture to see God's faithfulness
 - b. Read biographies of saints in the past to see God's faithfulness
 - c. Fellowship with others to be reminded of God's faithfulness and to pray for each other

B. Endurance comes from throwing off hindrances

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, **let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles**, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Hebrews 12:1

1. We must throw off sin that can so easily entangle us

2. We must cast aside whatever weighs us down so that we may run effectively with endurance
3. The language is purposefully very broad - not a specific sin, but sin in general, so that it applies to each of us
4. Silly costumes at road races today - but not at ultra-marathons!
5. In our lifelong spiritual war we can not afford the hindrance of sin weighing us down and tripping us up!
6. If you feel your endurance failing
 - a. Ask God to reveal any sin weighing you down
 - b. Be serious about repenting from sin! Not about being accepted by God, which we already have in Christ - sin weighs us down, creates havoc in our lives, and removes our joy

C. Endurance comes from Jesus!

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12:2-3

1. To endure, we must fix our eyes on Jesus
2. Jesus is the ultimate witness to the faithfulness of God
3. As good as it is to consider other believers to see God's faithfulness, nothing can replace a gaze fixed on Jesus Himself
4. No one has ever endured to victory like Jesus!

5. If we keep our eyes fixed on Him, meditating on His Person and example, we will not grow weary and lose heart
6. Weariness and losing heart is usually a sign that our eyes have wandered from Jesus to other things

IV. Applying the Word - Looking To Jesus

- A. Our greatest need is to draw near to Jesus!
 1. He is the greatest witness to the faithfulness of God
 2. He is our source of strength and endurance
 3. We do not need a formula or 'keys to success' - we need Jesus
- B. Feeding upon Jesus for strength to endure
 1. At this Table our hearts feed upon Christ
 2. If you are weary, come and feed upon Christ
 3. If you are discouraged, come and feed upon Christ
 4. If you are weighed down by sin, come and feed upon Christ
 5. At this Table fix your eyes upon Jesus, and receive fresh strength to endure to victory

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it. 1 Thess 5:23–24

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. ² Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12:1–3

Enduring to Victory

Hebrews 12:1-3

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Communion

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

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