

Speaker : Senior Associate Pastor Petrina Guneratnam
Title : “Keep Running your Race with Joy”
Text : Acts 20:24, 2 Timothy 4:7

“But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24).

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7).

Introduction

Linford Christie was an Olympic runner who competed in the 1996 Olympic Game. He was one of the 100 meters runners. However after two false starts, he was disqualified and had to watch the race as a spectator. There was an empty lane that should have been filled with a champion.

You and I are champions. God has a lane for you and me to fill, a ministry, a calling, that you have received from the Lord. Just as Apostle Paul had a ministry which he received from the Lord Jesus, the ministry to testify to the Gentiles, the Gospel of the grace of God.

To bear testimony of the Gospel of grace is the Call to every believer:

“19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen” (Matthew 28:19-20).

Paul’s determination to finish his race with joy consists of three elements.

1. Never Stop Speaking

“But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24)

“1 Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you.
2 And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith” (2 Thessalonians 3:1-2).

“9 Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent;
10 for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city” (Acts 18:9-10).

2. Never Stop Serving

“And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49).

“6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;
11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord” (Romans 12:6, 11).

(Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:13-27)

“6 In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.

11 We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies” (2 Thessalonians 3:6, 11)

“4 But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses,

5 in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings;

6 by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love,

7 by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

8 by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true;

9 as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed;

10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things” (2 Corinthians 6:4-10)

“7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

9 And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

3. Never Stop Singing

“23 And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely.

24 Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them” (Acts 16:23-25).

“In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

“Be joyful always” (1 Thessalonians 5:16)

Conclusion

- “1. Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and **let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,**
2. 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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1-2)

“Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

Never Give Up – Paul’s focus was to finish his race with joy. Paul ran his race with endurance and finished it victoriously following our Lord Jesus’ example when He died on the cross and said, “It is finished.”

Paul **did not give up.**

Derek Redmond **did not give up** in his Olympic race.

You and I **must not give up.**