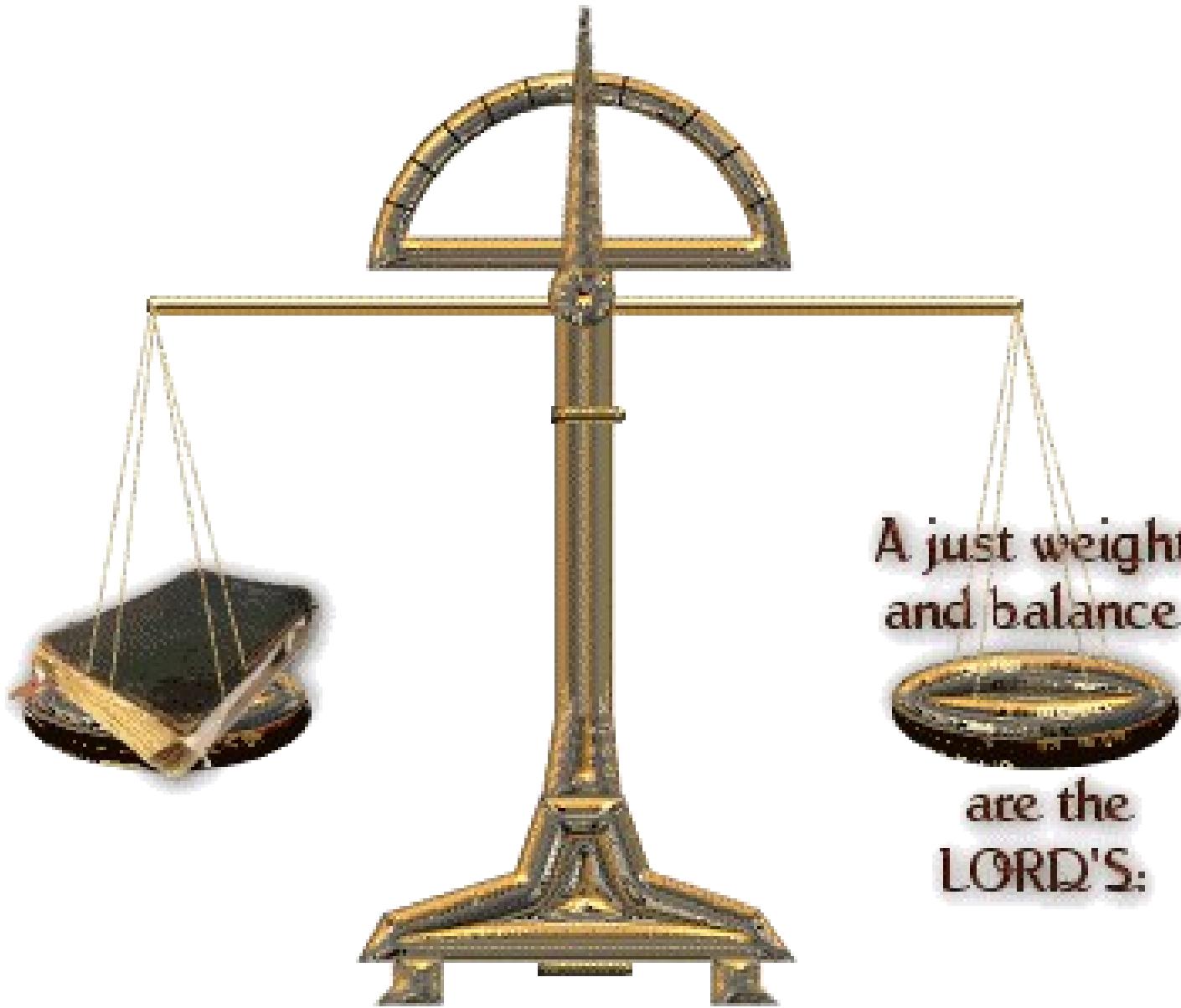


- Church Web Site

**[www.tryonchurchofchrist.com](http://www.tryonchurchofchrist.com)**

All sermons are posted here  
plus additional resources



*Thus saith the Lord...*

- When the **Civil War** broke out in **1861**, there were many in the north who didn't imagine that the war would end up being as long as it **actually turned out to be**,
- Nor as **bloody** as it actually turned out to be either.

- Those initial assumptions were particularly evident in the lead up to **the first major battle** of the Civil War, **the Battle of Bull Run,**
- Or what some have since nicknamed the **Picnic Battle.**

- When Lincoln ordered some 35,000 troops to take on a Confederate force of roughly 20,000,
  - There were many in the North who thought that that battle would be swift and decisive and relatively bloodless union victory.

- So much so, in fact,  
**that a throng of spectators**  
from Washington, D.C.
- Followed the advancing  
Union Army southward  
in order to  
**watch the battle unfold**  
while they enjoyed  
**a picnic.**

- A number of civilians
- Several dozen congressmen,
- Journalists, food vendors,
  - Women and children set up near the battlefield with opera glasses
  - To watch the battle unfold and enjoy a picnic as they did so.

- **They were so confident**  
in a swift and bloodless  
**union victory.**
  - The new recruits that  
were marched south  
to take on this Confederate force
  - Were only signed up for  
**a 90 day term.**
  - **Few imagine the war**  
would last any longer than that.<sup>8</sup>

- Yet, as that July day unfolded, it became increasingly clear that everyone carried **naive expectations** about the length and the brutality of the conflict that would endure for **months** and **years**.

- By the end of the day,  
not only was the  
Union Army  
in retreat,
- So too were  
the spectators.

- The picnic battle  
**was no picnic.**
- Hebrews urges us  
**that in our battle**
  - And in the  
**grueling race.**
  - He tells us to  
**take it seriously.**

- Hebrews tells us

**don't underestimate**

**the challenges**

that we face

along the way.

- **It is no picnic!**

- Hebrews warns us  
**not to water down our faith**  
and retreat into the world.
- The specific temptation of  
the Jew  
was **to revert** to the  
old Jewish covenant system.
  - Going  
**“AWOL”**
  - Therefore,  
**avoiding persecution.**

- Though the race  
is grueling

**we are reminded**

we have a

**great cloud of witnesses**

to look to

as we run.

- But these witnesses aren't anything like the spectators  
**at Bull Run.**
- The witnesses that we look to as we run the Christian life are those who have **already run that race**
  - And who have endured **a multitude of sufferings** themselves along the way.

- When we become Christians, it's as if we're registered into a great race,  
**a marathon of sorts.**
  - In the first **three verses** of our passage, our author plays off this metaphor of a race to explain what it looks like to run the Christian life from our **conversions** until our **death**.

- In describing these Old Testament believers as a cloud of witnesses, it's as if we're invited

**to imagine them as**

**spectators**

in attendance at a stadium  
in which we run  
the Christian life.

- But this imagery needs to **be qualified** a little bit,
- Because it's not as if these Old Testament saints **are watching us** and cheering us along.
  - **It's us who look to them** for encouragement.

- We look back to those  
**who have gone before us,**
  - Those in the Hall of Faith  
in Hebrews 11,
  - And we learn  
how to run  
the grueling race of the Christian life well.

- We also look to those in our church family who have suffered loss,
- Who have endured real sufferings and hardship,
- And yet have endured.
- We look to them to know that endurance is possible.

- Then we are instructed to "to lay aside every weight and the sin which clings so closely."
- Did you ever use the term "Beggar lice" ?
  - Those little seeds that clung to your clothes.
  - Every little weight.

- **How** does this applies to us in our race?

- We have to be **mindful** of both the sin that prevents us from running well,
- And of those things **that might not necessarily be sinful** but aren't altogether helpful either.

- There are a number of things that we entertain in our lives
- that aren't necessarily sin**
- or inherently sinful,
  - But they just **aren't** building us up spiritually or helping us mature as well as we could.

- Ask yourself  
the following question:

- Where am I  
investing  
a great deal of time,
- And how are  
those investments  
helping my spiritual life?

- How you answer that question will go a long way

**in identifying those things**

that might not necessarily be sin

- But aren't

**entirely helpful**

in running that race either.

- As important as it is that we **look upward** to the cloud of witnesses,
- It is equally important **to look inward** to our own hearts,- And any weight **that is holding us back.**

- Next we are advised to fix our attention  
on Jesus.
  - Who he calls,  
**"The founder and perfecter of our faith."**
  - These two words are words  
**are loaded with significance.**
    - But what exactly  
**does this tell us**  
about Jesus?

- Some versions use the word “pioneer”.
- Someone who has blazed the trail by suffering, reproach and injustice.
  - The worst injustice known to man and yet endured.
    - So that we can know that endurance in this life is possible.

- To be called the  
**“perfector”**  
means that Jesus  
just didn't  
**pave the way for us,**  
but that he also  
**conquered the way.**

- More than just an example to look to, Jesus is also the source of our faith.

- The one who holds us steady along the path of faith until glory

- Jesus endured the shame, mockery, suffering in a state of humiliation,
- He still pressed forward with joy.
  - How is that possible?

- What we suffer as the people of God **could never compare** with the sufferings of Christ.
- James 1:2-3,
- "*Count IT all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,*
- *for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.*"

- **How** can we possibly count it all, joy, when we face the kind of sufferings that we face in this world?
  - The only way is by **staying fixed on Jesus.**
  - The riches of heaven **makes it possible** to endure the slums of earth.

- Now the whole great sermon argument of chapter eleven is lost if we do not read the first verses of

## Chapter 12:1-2

- *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely,*
  - *and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us,*
- *looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame,*
  - *and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

**(Hebrews 12:1-2 RSV)**

- We are  
**"surrounded by  
a great cloud of witnesses,"**

- These people  
are **saying something** to us,
- They are **testifying** to us.
- **What** are they saying?
  - You never say  
**"Yes"**  
to Christ without saying  
**"No"**  
to something else!

- “*Let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us*
- This advice just makes sense.
- No serious runner wants to load himself up with things which will get in his way when he runs.

- **Let us lay aside every weight,**
  - A word which comprises  
**all the obstructions**  
in our course.
    - The **fear** of man,
    - The **cares** of this life.
    - The **love** of riches.

- Note the term:  
**“that is set before us”**.
- Whatever is done for God  
**must be done**  
according to his will.
- **Not mere exertion**  
that is required.

- But running according to God's rules.
  - The course is “**set before us**,
  - In matters of faith we are not left to **human conjecture.**
    - Not like **Cain.**
    - But guided by **the oracles of God.**  
**(1 Corinthians 4:6)**

- We are not to devise means of our own for pleasing God.

- Jude 1:11

*Woe unto them!  
for they have gone  
in the way of Cain,  
and ran greedily after  
the error of Balaam...*

- The sacred scriptures must be our only rule.

- Those who take human reasoning alone as their guide are running into error, and of being finally lost.

- **2 Peter 2:15**

***Which have forsaken the right way,***

- ***and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor,***
- ***who loved the wages of unrighteousness;***
- **2:16 *But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.***<sup>41</sup>

- **The most fatal heresies**

have at all times  
been introduced by human reason  
**in opposition to revelation,**

- He that would run  
the christian race  
with success

**must make the word of God**  
**his standard in all**  
he believes and does.

- ***It must be the light unto his feet  
and the lamp unto his path.***

- **Jeremiah 10:23**

***It is not in man to direct his own steps.***

- In beginning this race it is of great importance **to see that we begin right.**
- The starting point must be:
  - **Faith**,
  - **Repentance**,
  - **Confession**,
  - **Baptism**.
- **No righteousness of our own.**
  - **John 4:24**  
***God is a Spirit:  
and they that worship him  
MUST worship him  
in spirit and in truth.***

- Many difficulties present themselves as one begins the race.
  - We may have to begin **our course alone,**
  - **Those of our own house** may rise up against us,
- But we are to stop for no difficulties.
  - **Matthew 10:36**  
*And a man's foes  
shall be they of  
his own household.*

- The path to glory has all ways been **littered with thorns.**
- We may meet with **worldly losses,**
- With daily **reproach;**
  - But we must not **go out of our way** to avoid them.
- ***And it is through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom.***

(Acts 14:22)

## Hebrews 12:2

### *Looking unto Jesus.*

- Not only do we have the example **of old-testament saints** to witnesses our conflict,
  - But we have also the example **of Christ himself.**
- **Who suffered nothing to hinder him** till he had fully completed it,
  - ***And is now set down at the right hand of God.***  
**(Hebrews 12:2)**

- Christ however  
is not only  
set before us  
as our example,
  - He is also  
the fountain  
from whence

**“ten thousand blessings flow”**

(# 117)

- We therefore  
look to Him  
**as our example.**

- He was encouraged in  
his great redeeming work  
by looking  
“**at the joy**”  
set before him.
  - There is also  
**a joy set before us**  
if we continue faithfully  
in our journey  
by looking unto Jesus.

- We are to be like a traveler  
who continues his journey,  
not distracted  
by every object  
along the way.
- If we take our eyes off Jesus  
we lose our balance.
  - (2 Corinthians 7:5)
    - In seasons of darkness  
when without are fightings  
and within are fears  
let us wait upon the Lord,  
and be of good courage,  
and he will strengthen our hearts.

- When overwhelmed with a sense of **guilt** and **unworthiness**, **surrounded with temptations**,
- Let us still look to Jesus, who is able to supply all our spiritual needs.
- Ephesians 3:20  
*Now unto him  
that is able to do  
exceeding abundantly  
above all that we ask or think,  
according to the power  
that works in us,*

- **Hebrews 12:3.**

*Lest ye be wearied  
and faint in your minds.*

- We are ever prone to **depart** from God,
- To grow **weary** in well doing.

- **2 Thessalonians 3:13**

*Be not weary in well doing.*

- Those who preach the word are also apt to be discouraged.
- Such was the case with Isaiah, who cried out,
  - “*Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?*”  
(Isaiah 53:1)

- **Jeremiah** also was so disheartened that he was ready to say:  
***“He would speak no more in the name of the Lord.”***  
**(Jeremiah 20:9)**

- So difficult is it to walk by faith, and live by faith,  
**when under persecutions**  
and **reproaches**,  
**worldly losses** or  
**the loss of friends**,  
**we are apt to sink and die.**
- Many have fainted under such circumstances, and walked the ways of God  
**no more.**

- The only remedy is to be looking unto Jesus.
  - Who endured the opposition of sinners:
  - Mocked by Herod,
  - Reviled and mocked by His own people.
  - Scourged by Pilate,
  - Crucified on Calvary.
  - All this he endured for our sakes,  
and for ours only.

- **Hebrews 12:4.**

**You have not yet resisted  
unto blood,**

Therefore  
never give up.

- **You are not yet killed!**

- **Fight on!**

- And the **victory**  
and the **crown** will be yours.

- The Christian is  
**not an unconcerned stroller**  
along the byways of life.
  - He is a wayfarer  
**on the high road.**
  - He is not a **tourist!**
  - He is a **pilgrim** who is for ever  
on the road of righteousness.
    - As a Christian  
**he is going somewhere.**
  - That somewhere being **heaven.**

- In the Christian life  
**we have a cheering section.**
- We have the unseen  
**cloud of witnesses.**
- Are we going to  
**let them down?**
  - **How** can we  
with an audience like that  
cheering us on?

- Their number is such that they are said to be “a cloud”.
- Like an assembled multitudes seen on special occasions to witness some extraordinary spectacle.
  - But, be aware!!

- We are also compassed about  
**with a cloud of enemies**  
from **earth** and **hell**,
  - Who with eagerness  
**observe the manner**  
in which we journey.
  - We have one group  
interested on  
**our success,**
    - And another  
**in our failure.**

- In the Christian life,  
as in golf,  
**we have a handicap.**
  - The handicap of  
**our own sin.**
  - If we would travel **far**,  
we must travel **light**.
    - There may be  
**habits, pleasures,**  
**self-indulgences, associations**  
**which hold us back.**
    - And we will need  
**the help of Christ**  
to enable us to run the race.

- To encourage us along the way

**we have an example.**

- **Jesus himself.**

• For the goal  
that was set before him,  
**he endured all things.**

- A cross  
was a humiliating thing.
- It was for criminals,  
for those whom  
society regarded  
as the dregs of humanity
- Yet he accepted it.
- If Jesus could endure like that,  
so must we.

- The wonder of the Christian life  
is that we press on  
surrounded by the saints,
  - Oblivious to everything  
but the glory of the goal
  - Forever in the company of him  
who has already made the journey  
and reached the goal,
    - Hebrews 12:2  
*and is seated on the right hand  
of the throne of God.*
    - And who waits  
to welcome us  
when we reach the end.

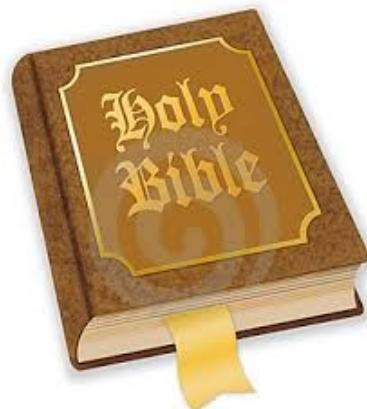
•The secret  
of persistence  
is in this phrase,  
**"looking unto Jesus."**  
**(Hebrews 12:2)**

- Think on these things
- Philippians 4:8

**The doors of the church  
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride  
Say  
“Come”.**

**Revelation 22:17**



- 12-11-2022 Tryon

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