

The Christian Race

by Keith Daniel

The sermon encourages believers to run the Christian race with patience and purpose, focusing on Jesus and the responsibility of passing on faith to the next generation.

Duration: 59:56

Scripture: Psalm 71:17, Psalm 92:12, 1 Timothy 4:12-14, Hebrews 12:1, Hebrews 13:7

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience of participating in a race. Initially, the speaker starts running with enthusiasm but soon realizes that they are the only one running while everyone else is still at the starting line. Confused and discouraged, the speaker questions what they have done wrong. However, they are encouraged by the realization that what matters is not how they started or the obstacles they faced, but the fact that they didn't give up. The speaker emphasizes that in the race of life, it doesn't matter if we stumble or crawl at times, what matters is that we keep going and finish strong.

Transcript

Father, we just thank thee for this lovely hymn that we could pray from the depth of our heart. And we pray, Lord, thou would answer that prayer. In all of our lives, we praise thee, Lord, that this morning we can bow before thee, while millions and millions and millions which serve the powers of darkness, we bow before God.

We separate our lives from this world to be with God's people and to bow before the living God and worship him and serve him and seek. He is enabling to be able to go back into that world and walk in light and holiness. And so, God, we ask thee to bless this time.

Come and minister to us in mercy by the Holy Spirit through thy word. In Jesus Christ's name. There's two portions of scripture that have come in my heart this morning.

The one you all know very well. In Hebrews 12, verse 1, Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about, we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, and because of that, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us. And let us run with patience.

I like that word. Let us run with patience. The race, the race that is set before us.

And then 1 Peter, chapter 5. A book I love to preach on. I hope one day I'll be able to preach on these books to you. They've burned in my heart.

I just love all these letters in the New Testament and to bring them as they stand. But 1 Peter 5. The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed, feed the flock. He's speaking to the elders here.

Feed the flock. The Amplified says, Tend, nurture, guard, guide, and protect the fold, the flock God has given. That is the younger generation and your responsibility.

So elders, feed the flock which are among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly. Not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock, being examples to the flock. When the chief shepherds shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away, you elders.

Likewise ye younger, submit yourselves to the elder, submit yourselves unto the elder. May all of you be subject one to another, be clothed with humility. For God resists the proud and giveth grace to the humble.

Humble yourselves therefore unto the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time, some way along the road, when you're ready for it. Likewise ye younger, submit yourselves to the elder, submit yourselves to the elder. And so we have this verse, again, that I just want to bring briefly.

Let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking to Jesus. I love that.

Looking to Jesus, the author, the finisher, the one who started it, the one who finished it, of our faith. Looking to Jesus when you're running with patience this race that is set before you by God to run. And he says, you run for me.

Looking to Jesus as you run, in case you grow weary, in case you grow confused about how to run, looking to Jesus all the way along, running for Jesus. I was telling you about my sons last night, three sons that God gave me. We wanted daughters too.

It wasn't God's will. We wouldn't change these three for a million daughters now that we've got them. Oh, we love them.

There's Noel, Joy, and then along came the surprise, what we call a laat lamaki. In the Afrikaans, in South Africa, that means a late little lamb, a flock. He just came along, this little last addition to the family.

What a joy he's been, little Samuel. He's in the meeting, by the way, somewhere with his mummy. Well, Samuel is the joy of our home.

I hope you don't mind me saying that in front of him. I do say it to him, you know, he doesn't seem to really know what I'm saying. But he is, to his brothers and his mummy and to me.

Samuel went to a preschool. Back in Cape Town, there's a particular preschool that if you can get into, you're so fortunate. It has something of a tremendous foundation for little boys and girls.

And it's before schooling, but they take things seriously in this preschool. You'd think it was a university sometimes. My word, everything is so incredibly earnest in that preschool before they were even reaching school.

Samuel just loved to go to. He loved, he was off with his little, he wanted to be like his brothers, you know, with statues and schoolcases. I want a statue.

Anyway, at preschool, this particular preschool, very exclusive little school, they even have a sports day. So earnest that you'd think it was one of the real high schools, inter-schools. There were all the children sitting along with all the ribbons and the flags and down the field.

And all these little fellows, little girls, little boys, all sitting down to make classes with their teacher. They're all cordoned off. All the mommies and daddies all crowded around the field.

And, of course, some of these little fellows and girls, they were so small, they didn't quite know whether they were running the right direction. One was running the wrong direction. But they still cheered him.

Anyway, then came the mommies race. That was quite something for Jenny to run in. But she had to.

And then the closing race, the final big event, the climax of the whole day, after all the screaming, the applauding, all the excitement, was the daddies race. And that was something. Because this was my little art lumberjee, my little baby.

I had big boys. Now all the other men, this was their first little... They were younger fellows, you know, all these young men. They just had these young babies.

I had big boys. This was our little last one. I was much older than them.

And I felt it. And I tried to get out of it. I reluctantly, I said, Jenny, I can't.

Please, I'm not up to it today. And I looked at these young fellows. How am I going to run against these fellows? And Jenny says, You can't not run.

Look at Samuel. There's Samuel. Come on, Daddy.

Run for me. Come, Daddy. You're going to win.

Win, Daddy. Oh. So I went and stood there, and I saw these young fellows who looked like they all spent their day in the gym.

There they were, getting ready, getting their breasts, you know. I said, Oh, my word. What am I going to do? And I looked over again at Samuel and all the children screaming for their daddies, and Samuel caught my eye, and he said, Win, Daddy.

So I looked at him, and I thought in my heart, Oh, God. Wouldn't it be wonderful if I did win? Just for Samuel. Just for Samuel.

Look at him. Oh, my. There he is, expecting me to win.

And he's watching me now. Well, they told us some ridiculous things about this race. You couldn't believe it.

It wasn't just running. It was push-ups and all sorts of things that you had to do. Once you ran over there, push-ups, on your face, all back and this sort of things, all these incredible... These days, you know, when we were younger, it was just a race.

These days, you've got to be able to swim and ride bicycles and everything to run in a race. Well, they had some sort of idea incorporating a lot of things to win. So I listened carefully, and I looked over again at Samuel, and bang, the gun went, and I just ran.

Oh, I poured myself as I ran against the wind. Did all these silly things, ran back, and all the push-ups, and I stood up, and I looked around, and there was no one there, and I said, what have I done wrong? And I looked across the field, and there they were all running still, and some fellow caught up, and he started, and I looked at him, and he's trying to give two push-ups he didn't quite get past to, and I said, oh my word. And I looked at the principal, and I looked at the teacher, Samuel's teacher, who was standing right by.

I said, what have I left out? What have I done wrong? What am I doing wrong? And this teacher said, you've won, don't worry, you've won. Oh. Well, you know, the first thing I did, there was no applause, there was just like this stunned silence all around.

The first thing I did was look for Samuel, and there he was, all he knew is that he had won, and I ran over to him, you know, I didn't look at the crowd, I didn't want the crowd, I didn't think of it, I just thought of Sam, and I looked at the joy in that little boy's face, he was just overwhelmed, and he just, yeah. You won, and I said, daddy ran for you, I ran just for you. You know, then the crowd started applauding, and there was something different about the way they applauded, because they saw who I'd run for, why I'd run like that.

They realized there was something of a consciousness suddenly, of the joy that had brought Samuel, and that's all I wanted, to see his face, to see his joy, the way I ran. The way they applauded, there was something so different, it's so different when you run out of love for someone else, and when you're running just for yourself, you know, you run so differently, there's something so totally different, everyone's aware of it, everyone's aware of it, especially the one you ran for, the joy it gave him, when he knows it was for him.

I hope you're running this race for Jesus, I hope it's giving him joy, you're not running for yourself, just because you're right here amongst the runners, I hope it's not a heavy thing for you to run in this race that's set before you, if you run with one purpose, one intent, oh, I didn't look at the crowd, I didn't look for any other face, when I knew I'd won, I'd look for one face, one face, the one I'd run for, to see what it meant to him, to see his smile, that's all you're running for, looking on to Jesus, the one who set you out in this race, looking on to Jesus, the author and finisher of the faith, well, I was at school, I loved to run, I loved sport, every sport, Jenny was the same, she was in everything, you know, nothing that she wanted to miss, every sport there was, she

arrived, and I loved sport too, oh, especially athletics, and it was always the two of us, right from boarding, right through schooling, that were the fastest runners in the school, and I used to know, this is our little boy, I'm running against him, sometimes I beat him, sometimes he beat me, but it was always the two of us, we ran, knowing it was just the two of us we had to run against, yeah, we respected each other, we didn't come much nearer than each other than that, right through schooling, but suddenly at high school, this fellow and I had to run together, now that's different, in a relay race, now a relay race is where you run as a team, and our high school decided that they would put the fastest runners, of course they choose all the fastest runners, and there were about four or

five of us who had to run, representing the school and the inter-schools, sports, athletics day, where they come from all over the country, the best runners, and all the, those who could get to the stadium, filling

thousands and thousands from all over to just cheer on their school, in the event they were chosen, having been selected, running against all the different schools, now to run the best, and here we were, selected, and this fellow was going to run, just before me, and the other faster runners, but he was the one, second last, to run, with the baton, and we had to place the baton, in each other's hands, the next runner, I was to be the last runner, the one who would take the baton to the finishing line, and we learned a lot of things about the relay race, you don't wait until the

baton's in your hand, you start running, before it's in your hand, you build up speed, and you've got to put that baton in your hand, carefully, you pass the baton on, the runner has to run now, the last lap, and you don't look back, while he's going to pass it on, you just run, you've got to put it in your hand, and you're running, as you're putting it in your hand, where are we so trained, now I don't know what happened that day, but they realized the record, the South African record, was going to be smashed, beyond all belief, by this little school of mine, they excelled, and I was the last one, and I realized something wonderful was happening, they were just cheering, screaming, from everybody by this time, not only our school, and this fellow comes along, and I was running, waiting

for the baton, but I don't know what happened to him, I never ever asked him, something made him, not put the baton carefully in my hand, something made him throw the baton, he just threw it, I didn't wonder what was going on, and I turned back, he threw it, and the baton went right past me, fell on the ground, bounced up, bouncing right off the field, you know it so shook me, I fell, I fell, and somehow I got up off the ground, in agony, crowds just, there was this amazed cry of despair, across the whole stadium, of what happened, the baton dropped, the winning team dropped the baton, by the time I got the baton, the other fellow had passed, another school, and he ran, oh he ran, I picked up the baton, I began to run, I was gaining ground, and gaining ground, and gaining ground, but he

went over the finish line, you know nobody cheered, not one of the thousands cheered, because the team that should have won, lost, because the last lap, the baton fell, the one who was to carry the baton the last lap, let me tell you, the grief that caused, to my school, there was a silence in our school, no one ever spoke to me about that, no one ever came and talked to me, not even my sports master, he wouldn't look at me, for a long, long time, he just couldn't speak, there was a grief, we lost, when we should have won, one generation brings a standard, to the next generation in the church, he carefully passes the doctrine, this uncompromised standard, to the next generation, the next generation takes it, and as they, the older they hold it out to the next generation, the younger, let

me tell you something, in case you're not aware of it, you're running the last lap, don't doubt it, this is the last lap, the baton, the doctrine, the holiness standard, has been held out to you, and you be careful now, we must be careful now, as elders, in our weariness perhaps, and in the state of the world, not to just throw the baton, and it falls, we've got to put it so carefully into the hands, of all the younger generation, that have to run the last race, the last lap, we've got to place it so carefully, all the doctrines, the standards, so carefully, you don't lose it, you don't lose a grip of it, you're running, but we've got to put it so in your hands, you've got to be careful not to do, what so many missions, so many churches, so many movements across the world, that held the

standard right through, and suddenly this generation, this generation, they've thrown it away, they dropped it, to take up a more acceptable standard, a more acceptable message, we mustn't, don't lose, when you're running so ahead, be careful now, I want you to listen to these scriptures, that God held out, look at the groan, of the elders, Psalm 71 17, O God, thou hast taught me, from my youth, and hitherto, have I

declared thy wondrous works, now also when I'm old, and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not, until I have sold thy strength, unto this generation, thy power, to everyone that's to come, O, 2 Timothy 1 13, Paul says, hold fast, and follow the pattern, and wholesome, and sound preaching, which you have heard from me, the old Paul now, talking to the young Timothy, hold fast, and

follow the pattern, and wholesome, and sound teaching, which you have heard from me, in all faith and love, which are for us in Christ, God, and keep with the greatest care, the precious, and excellently adapted truth, which has been entrusted to you, by me, Timothy, O God, keep it with the greatest care, the precious, and excellently adapted truth, which has been entrusted to you, the Amplified says, 2 Timothy 2 2, instructions you've heard from me, along with many other witnesses, transmit and entrust, entrust as a deposit, to reliable and faithful men, who will be competent, and qualified to teach others also, we've got to entrust it, as a deposit, to reliable and faithful men, who will keep that standard, that's what we're doing, as elders, O, the old Paul cries out to the young

Timothy, I have fought the good fight, Timothy, I finished my race, I finished the race, I've kept firmly held, the faith, is made up of victor's crown, for me, but Timothy, I entrust this to you now, keep it, guard it, what you've learned of me, you've learned of me, O, keep and guard, remember them, which have the rule over you, Hebrews 13 verse 7, the Amplified says, remember your leaders, and superiors in authority, observe attentively, and consider their manner of living, the outcome of their well spent lives, imitate their faith, their leaning, their, on the entire human personality of God, absolute confidence, and his power, and wisdom, and goodness, listen to what, God says about the elders, who pass the baton on to me, I can give you names of men, when I say their names, I say it

with reverence, at the memory of their lives, thank God for their example, but listen to their, what God says, Psalm 92 verse 12 in the Amplified, the uncompromisingly righteous, shall flourish like a palm tree, they shall be long lived, safely, all that was them, when I think of them, upright, useful, and fruitful, they shall grow like a cedar, in Lebanon, majestic, stable, durable, incorruptible, they shall still bring forth fruit in old age, verse 15, their living memorial, to show the younger generation, of the Lord's faithfulness, to his promises, living memorial, that the elders are, to show the younger generation, in their faithfulness, their uprightness, their godliness, their uncompromisingly righteous life, Hebrews 13, 17, obey your spiritual leaders, submit to them, continually

recognizing their authority over you, for they are constantly keeping watch over your soul, and guarding your spiritual welfare, as men who will have to render account of their trust to God, do your part, to let them do this with gladness, not with sighing and groaning, for that would not be profitable to you either, Hebrews 13, 17, oh, now I want the elders, to look carefully right now at the younger, in the way that God looks at them, this is something very precious to me, the elders must be very careful, to look at the younger, in the way God looks at them, not in the human level, they're going to make great mistakes, in this race that God, has set before them also, He chooses so differently from what we did, what we look for, you don't remember when we were boys, choosing teams in the

park, and we were going to play our games, it was a terrible thing, to not be the real sporting type, they always chose the outwardly, the ones that were tough, you know, so one person was the team leader, the captain of whatever team, we were going to play with his football, the horrifying thing is you choose, oh, this one first, so the next fellow chooses that one, terrible when you're the last one chosen, you know, that's because you're not very sporting, you know, when Jesse was sent by God, to choose the king, the person who God had chosen, he goes, sorry Samuel, he goes to Jesse's family, and he looks at all these

strapping sons of Jesse, and he says, this must be him, look at this, to lead Israel, to be the future leader, the king, this is who God surely has chosen, no, God says,

not this one, or the next one comes, this must be him, in the end, the one they overlooked, even bring, he says, is there no one else, oh yes, there's David, bring him, near God bypasses the outward, what we would choose, these strapping, wonderful looking fellows, with all their abilities, they could fight a soldier, here was a little fellow, tending the seat, he comes in, God says, this is him, God doesn't look on the outward, as men do, this is the one I've chosen, and this was the right one, we mustn't look on the outward, look, we see outwardly at the first, happening, God so different in choosing, those who will now run to win, who are going to be the ones who win, I remember my son Roy, you've heard about Samuel now, Roy, we had a problem with, he was so thin, he's not anymore,

thank goodness, but he was so thin, that we got into trouble, you can't believe how thin Roy was, I said, what on earth is wrong with him, just bones, you know, there was no flesh even, hardly any flesh, just bones, and I said, what are we doing wrong, we try to feed him, we said, more, eat more, well, the principal of the school, even called and said, you know, the teachers are actually talking, we're worried here, do you feed this child, and then he was so embarrassed, he said, well, we really do feed him, well, then he took him to the hospital one day, the nurse said, I don't know whether to report this, you're neglecting this child, and he said, we're not, we took him to the doctor, the doctor said, listen, don't worry, he's healthy, that's all you've got to worry about, he's fine,

don't force him to eat now, well, he was really thin, poor little Roy, some mop of hair, you know, white hair, with a couple of crowns, we didn't quite know what to do, to keep it down, I used to have one crown, but he had crowns all over, look for Roy, just look for those white, pitch white hair and crowns, poor little Roy, oh, he really looked out of place in life, even his poor principal kept a watchful eye over him, fearing he was so brittle, one day, Roy stunned us, he had a cross country, now a cross country is when you don't just run around a track, they really sit quite a few kilometers, and of course at school, they were going to have this cross country around a golf course, it's a very large golf course in South Africa, you just go on and on, we were all sitting up on the

stands, all the teachers and all the parents, all around in the cars, even sitting looking at our children, there they all start running, hundreds of boys in the cross country, and of course Roy, of course runs too, and he loved to talk, he wasn't too interested in his run, you know, there I watched him talking, just talking, oh my, but he was running, and then eventually some, and so we were all watching, when suddenly he decided to run, and he just saw this little fellow flying past everybody, and I couldn't believe it, I said, is that Roy? and I saw as he was just flying, but the way he floated, it wasn't like he was floating, I stood up and looked at this boy, the principal looked back at me, good Roy, but he didn't win, he would have by miles if he had started like that, and the next

day at the school, I was gone to fetch him at the school, and the sports master was coming towards me, now everything I had to speak about to teachers, was pretty fearful when we had to speak about Roy at school, we didn't know what was going to be coming, and this fellow came up, and you know I almost felt something nice was going to be said about Roy, by the sports master, so I looked at him coming towards me, and he said, Mr.

Denham, did you see the way Roy ran yesterday?

I said yes, and it surprised me, you've got a world champion in your hands here, and I laughed, he said, oh don't you laugh at me sir, don't you laugh at me, he said, I'm telling you something sir, don't push him, to break him, he's not mature enough, don't push him to break him now that we see something's there, show all the patience, he's just confident, don't criticise him, that's all he's wanting now, he's got it, world champion, runners are born, look at the great runners in South Africa, they're all just thin fellows running along, look at this fellow, he's a born runner, he's just a runner, that's all he is, but don't push him now, we've got to just teach him, carefully, teach him how to run, give him good starts, good hints, when he's ready, when he's ready for it, he's ready by

our training, to run to win, and he's going to win, he's going to win, now be careful, how we look, elders, at the young ones that seem, to put the spear in our hearts, and think what's going to become of this fellow spiritually, what hope is there for this fellow, look at him, God sees differently, and I tell you in the long run, the ones that win, in the spiritual race for Christ, are the ones we didn't expect, many times, most times, forgive me for saying, the ones with all their gifts and talents, to somehow disappear, many times, not always, but the ones that we thought were helpless, hopeless, not going to make much, they just strolled ahead, listen to what Paul cries out, to the young Timothy, let no man despise thy youth, be thou an example to the believers, let no one despise or

think less of you, because of your young, be an example, a pattern of the believers, in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity, till I come, devote yourself to reading, to exhorting, preaching, to teaching, instilling doctrine in your heart, don't neglect the gift that's in you, you're young, that special endowment that's been given to you, practice, cultivate, pour yourself wholly into the ministry you have, so that your progress may eventually be seen by everyone, The Amplified says that Paul was crying out to the young Timothy, oh we must be careful in our dealing with the runner God has chosen, if they fail at first, if they even cause disaster, if they fall badly, God says something wonderful here, you that are spiritual, I love that word, you that are spiritual, you'll

soon see who's spiritual when you see who falls, those that are not spiritual will condemn him, will wipe his hands of him, will not give him a chance, those that are spiritual will fight for him, they see just the hope, they see what will come, you can notice a spiritual man by what happens when someone falls, the carnal will judge him, and wipe his hands of him and want him out, don't you doubt that, I was once at the Bible school, theological seminar where I went, we had a day we combined with another theological seminar, very high standard, this place also in Cape Town, these two Bible schools have been gone on for a hundred years, they train thousands of the best workers, the greatest of workers on the mission field across our continent, oh they revered these two Bible colleges, and

we have once a term coming together, and having a time of fellowship, time of fun also, laughter, we're young, laughing isn't sin when you're young, don't be old before your time, so long as it's sanctified laughter, it doesn't grieve God or man, there's a thin line, and if you're right with God, you'll never grieve anyone, or hurt anybody, no fool is jesting, there's something about laughter, there's something about youth, don't lose, but we had laughter, and we had little games, two colleges together, in the hall we put socks together, and passed this thing around, to get it to the other side, lots of laughter, these grown up young fellows, 18, 19, 20, 21, here we were all playing against the other Bible college, and while we were playing, and running around, we got a bit rough

sometimes, and this one girl, who was at Bible college with us, pretending to be a missionary, she fell, she somehow fell, but she fell so hard, it was just a gasp, in silence, right onto her face, and I stood there, and

I looked, and I looked suddenly, within seconds, the reaction of every single person in that room, they all reacted differently, when someone fell, you can't believe some of the reactions, there was some there, that obviously didn't have much time to her, they started laughing, she lay in agony, some shaking their heads, clicking their tongues, the Bible school, if you don't have much time to them, clicking your tongue, shaking your head when someone falls, there was some standing there, shocked, at the fall, but unable to help, incapable, nothing in them that would help,

just look, they just look when someone falls, in shock, they don't do a thing, and when I saw this reaction, and I saw no one was going to do a thing, but laugh, click their tongues, and look, I ran, and I lifted her up, I lifted her up, and I was the only one, that had the privilege of seeing, the gratitude in those eyes, she was more hurt, than what people had seen, she was so embarrassed, and physical hurt, someone had lifted her up, and I said to her, I'm not going to let you go, so you can look me in the eyes, and say oh good, I'm right, are you alright, you're not going to fall, and you stand, I won't let you go, don't worry, and the gratitude in those eyes, to the one that helped, her up when she fell, no one else saw those eyes, no one else saw that gratitude, in the week four,

God said, he that is spiritual, he that is spiritual, you go lift him up, taking care of yourself, but you the ones I looked to, to lift him up, are you spiritual, when someone falls in the spiritual world, he that is spiritual, you'll be known by that you know, be careful, in this race when someone falls, when someone falls, the other way also, we must remember this please, if we see someone who's been in the race a long time, not just someone who's, the elders looking down, or those on the road looking down, at someone falling in the young, and saying oh, no good here, be careful, it works the other way too, and it's going to happen in your life, I guarantee you, it's going to happen in your church, I guarantee you, I don't say it, that I want it to happen, but I've seen something in

all missions, in all movements, we see someone who's been in the race a long time, fall, they're nearing the end of their race, it's possible they can fall you know, what do you do?

Excommunicate them, somehow, in the weariness of life, it happens that those who've ran the race for a long, long time, they must be careful, not to judge, not to throw them out, but to encourage them to get up, not to condemn them, it could happen to you, and what you do to others, I guarantee, comes on you one day, so be careful, I've seen it, it's a circle, I've seen it on people, I've watched them, how they've done it, I saw coming back on them, and everybody did just to them what they did, but it happened to others, be careful, it could happen to you, someone in the race a long time for, don't you as young people, even if they cause despair, encourage them, with compassion, not to give up, but to get up, the greatest race in South Africa, it's a world renowned race, people, the best

runners of the world, go to South Africa for this race, now it's become so esteemed across the world, it's called the Commerce Marathon, it's the most grueling race, in Africa, there's no doubt of that, one of the most grueling races in the world, when I was a boy, daddy took us to see this race, he knew all the runners, my uncles were the race, some of them won, we as children would be taken by daddy, who loved to see this race, oh, he encouraged them, he drove alongside of them, come on, it's not far, he watered out to them when they needed it, in the early days, before all these points were set up, when everything became so professional, there was daddy, when we were boys, they were running, well, we knew most of them, they were coming in our homes, the winners, daddy loved the sport

of running, and I'll never forget this one year, how we were going along with daddy, we used to go the whole way with the car, get out the car and run sometimes with him, stand there cheering, but it was the finishing, of this particular year, that struck me, it always ended in Peter Maritzburg, or back to Durban, vice versa, each year it changed, but in Peter Maritzburg from Durban, some 70, 80 kilometers, oh, sorry, miles, those days, well, there was a big sports stadium, where the crowd would all go at the end, and there would be this ribbon, making a passage, around the field, right down to the center, where the winner would run, all the end of this race along the road, all up the mountains, down the hills, through the valleys, up and down, up and down, until this gruesome, almost

mountain, before you get up to Maritzburg, the city, where it all ended, and there we drove in, we were waiting, for the winner to run in, and along he came, this strapping fellow, Oberheimer, and he ran, like the wind, right at the end, where did this strength come from, after all those miles, it's unbelievable, that last strength, to run, he ran, and the crowd cheered, and I cheered as a little boy, looking at this fellow coming in, until the ribbon was gone, and then the second, last fellow came in, the one who was second, to win, here he came in, but this fellow was tired, he was ahead of others, there were, oh a few thousand set off, by the way, I think something like ten thousand, start these days, very few finish, but here was this fellow, the second, to come in, but he wasn't

running, like that first fellow, but he was way ahead of the most, and here he was, tired, oh, he was finished, he was exhausted, he was pulling himself, as he got in the field, the crowd cheered, oh they cheered, come on, as he was coming, in his weariness at the end, it had been so hard for him, that right, suddenly he fell, he began to crawl, he began to crawl, the crowd was just saying, go on, get up, he got up, he started running the wrong direction, he started running, he went back, he was stupefied in his tiredness, he started going back, the crowd, I never forget the crowd, my daddy just burst into tears, looked around, there wasn't anyone, there wasn't weeping, no one was condemning, everyone was just in agony, crying, you're going the wrong way, you're going the wrong way, turn

around, please, listen, turn around, like he didn't hear, till eventually he got through, he turned, and he faced the right way again, and he started, not with strength, but God, cries of the crowd encouraging him, go on, go on, until he came through to the end of the race, you know that man got more applause than the winner, and he deserved it, the farm wasn't the winner, he made it, so he crawled, so he fell, so he went the wrong direction, he went the wrong way sometimes, we don't stand condemning them when it happens, you just cry in compassion and love, get up, don't give anyone up, in this race, oh brother, how much time have I got left, 15, well I'm amazed, I didn't think I'd get through this today, I'm so glad I can end with this, because this meant a lot to me as a boy, I

remember the National Geographic, I loved the National Geographic magazine, and I particularly went after a young fellow, in Australia, who shook the whole world, when I was a young fellow, this young teenage boy decided he was going to go across the whole world, in a single sailing boat, with no engine, no radio control, no special equipment and food that could be stored in there, and safety devices you know, Sir Francis Chichester of England was the only man who'd ever done that, on one single sailing boat, but he had engines in case things went wrong, he had radio controls, he had all things poured in of the best equipment, the best little stuff to feed, to help with every sickness, here this little fellow's taking no equipment, going to go across the whole world by one single sail,

and Chichester said, don't let him do it, he'll die, he'll never make it, you can't do it, but this fellow did, he set off from Australia, in this little yacht of his, single sail, and off he goes, now the National Geographic,

started looking when he actually made it to the next continent, he made it, nobody following him, he was there, they came to him and said, look we're going to take photographs, we want you to take photographs, we want to put it right across every step you take, seeing as you're so serious about this, so it's issue, I used to wait you know, how far is this fellow now, has he got any further, has he finished, has he drowned, has he given up, no one was really taking it too seriously you know, but the National Geographic made it become something, now that people were

aware of everywhere, well this fellow just went on, comes to my country, across the great Atlantic Ocean, as he was a, oh I don't know, a few hundred kilometres out in the sea still, the storms there are the most ferocious in the world I believe, the Cape of Storms, this little fellow, was in storms where the sail was smashed, the boat began to fill up with water, and then the storm subsided and the sun came on him, the food was gone, the water was gone, no land, he just lay there, ready to die, faulting, the heat of the sun burning through him, sunstroke, somehow the boat drifted up right through to where Jenny and I live, Cape Town, just out of Cape Town in the Heart Bay area, there's fishing, taller going along and they see this little thing, fill of water, drew alongside near the

body, smashed, boat smashed, no sail, no mast, they took his body, got a saw, got him to hospital, pumped all, somehow, miraculously, he regained strength, they saved him, they had to put him into a mental home, his mind had gone, the sun, they had to do all treatments, try and bring him back to a way where he could function again in life, then he did something, one day when the newspaper reporters, were talking about this terrible thing he'd endured, when he finally got out of that institution, he said, I'm going on, and his father flew, from Australia and said, you're not going on, no, I'm putting my foot down, I'm going on, and nothing is going to stop what I set out to do, now the whole world suddenly, the front page of the newspaper, this boy's going on, National Geographic, the main

article, front page is right through, half way, pictures, everything, stories, suddenly the world was looking at someone who wouldn't give up, wouldn't give up, off he set, eventually restoring his little boat himself, working on it, no help, so it's ready to go, off he goes, in absolute silence, weeks and weeks and weeks, weeks and weeks, then he was sighted, gone right around the world, back to Australia, and when it was realised who they reported was being sighted, out there, things started happening, royalty from England came, the Prime Minister of Australia came, his hometown came in masses, orchestras, brass bands, flags, thousands, stands, he didn't know what was waiting by the by, here he comes, oblivious to what was coming, all he knew was he was baking, then suddenly all the

boats in their thousands coming out, flowing with hoghorns, all the boats available come out to meet him, he looked at all this lot coming and he suddenly realises, the helicopters hovering, photographing him, it was for him, they're all welcoming him, as he comes in the harbour, he has the band, the orchestra, he sees all the crowds and the applause, and he stood up, tears are coming, he realises it's for him, it's for him, they were photographing him, then they got hold of him and they asked him this question, that was the end of the articles of him, the last words in the National Geographic, as they showed his photograph of the tears, he looked at the crowds welcoming him, screaming one, he said what went on in your mind, when you saw and realised that welcome was to you, they were

cheering you, what did you think, he said I thought to myself, to think I nearly gave up, to think I nearly gave up, think how I came to nearly giving up, I would have missed this, then I thought but that doesn't matter, it doesn't matter that I nearly gave up, it doesn't matter that I lay dying, all that matters is that I didn't give up, all that matters to me is I didn't give up, I made it, that's what I was thinking, beloved, it

doesn't matter if sometimes you crawl in the race, it doesn't matter if you went back with the wrong direction at times, until you heard and the compassion of those that loved you, you went back as they cried you back on the right path, it doesn't matter if you nearly gave up time and time again, all that matters is that one day you will, look at the welcome

God gives you and the crowds of witnesses, and you see the face of Jesus, the one you ran for, and the joy you gave him, though you once crawled, can I end with these words, will you listen carefully, in case the baton, is on the ground, in many of your lives, fallen from your hands, it isn't carefully in your hands yet or in your heart, the standard, the doctrine, in case you haven't submitted your heart, to the elders message and standard and truth, because you've got it firmly gripped in your hands, in life and heart, and you know you're not going to let loose of it, you're going to run with it, you're going to keep it, and win this race that they ran and passed on to you, the standard, right to the end you're going to carry it, you've got such a firm grip, in case you rebel against

this message, of separation, from worldliness, and a high standard of holiness in this world, no matter how unholy, the rest of the world becomes, you become holy and stay more holy, in case you're rebelling against, the message God wants you to take up in your heart, in case you as an elder, are tired and weary, through the generations, you're with, exhausted at the end, of your course, and you haven't, with carefulness, and sense of urgent responsibility, to be sure the younger get that baton through you, in case you're criticizing them, and have no patience with them in this generation, and you haven't accepted all of them as God's choice, you fail to hand to them patiently, knowing that who God chooses, will win, if you just pass the baton carefully and train them, till they grasp it,

I need to ask God today, just in case, I haven't got this baton, in case my heart hasn't embraced it so firmly, the standard the generation of elders, I need to ask God, a fresh consecration, I need to dedicate myself here, freshly, to this great call of God, that I need to dedicate, afresh right now, as never before in my life, to run with patience, the race that is set before me by God, the standard I have to run, the baton I have to carry, right to the finishing post, in case you need to dedicate your lives, to this which has been held out to you, before you leave this place, as you used to go on and run, in case you need to dedicate to what you dedicate, and God consecrates, you need to let God consecrate you afresh, you need to dedicate yourself to this race afresh, because it hasn't

been firmly, Oh God, I'm going to take everything, and I'm going to hold on, as an elder, I'm going to look at them differently, I'm never going to disturb anyone, or look upon them as useless or worthless, they're the ones you chose, that's why they're here, God, I'm going to, I'm going to dedicate myself as an elder, afresh to this race I'm in, to do my part as an elder, to do my part as a youngster, to make it easy for the elders to take it, to take it without any fight, without any grief to them, all of you who need to dedicate yourself, in absolute sincerity, to God at this point of your life, afresh, and you know you do, so that you'll make it through, without having lost the baton, the standard, will you please rise, those of you that really need to do that to God, can we bow our

heads in prayer please, Father, take this people, every one of them, as they dedicate their lives to the afresh, consecrate them, in the race that Thou has set before us, help each one, though they feel very unworthy, and very weak, and unable to be meaningful, to realize God has put them in the race, and who knows they can run to win, they'll take the message, they'll take the standard, take every one here Lord, as they dedicate themselves afresh, to the standard God has held out to this church, consecrate their lives right now, God has vowed, to see them dedicating themselves in their hearts, submitting to the elders,

carefully, carefully, nurturing and watching over the younger, living out in the race, the things they've heard today, right to the end, even if there's times they've

crawled, and will crawl, or fall backwards, it's not the end, help us all to do, what we have to, to make sure everyone reaches the finishing post Lord, we dedicate ourselves to God, afresh, perhaps for the first time, utter dedication, consecrate us Lord, right now by the blood of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, fill us now God, everyone, take complete control of us, yielded vessels, fill us with the Holy Spirit, take us through to the finishing post please, we look for one thing God, for thy faith, for it's for thee we run, right to the end, in Jesus Christ's name, Amen.

I wonder if the leader of the meeting could come up, with any announcements.

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