

**Mark 8: 34-38 and Hebrews 12: 3 -6; "Run; Considering Him who Endured", Sermon # 67 in the series – "Astonished at His Teaching",
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on April 18th, 2010,
In the Afternoon Worship Service.**

Over the past 15 sermons I have been trying to give you, in an overview, the life of Christian Discipleship. I have approached this from the standpoint of discipleship being a house that we live in. Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant, it says in Hebrews 3: 5. And so you and I as servants of Christ are building something with our lives to the glory of God; as a testimony to His powerful grace. I took you through all the rooms in this house, and we finally came to the Basement level where the Exercise Room was. After looking at this room, we stepped outside the House into the World of Christian Discipleship and we began to see what it meant to run the race of the Christian life. We are running to do all that we do to the glory of God. We are running to win the prize which will be awarded to every faithful disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Day when they see Him; on that Day of His appearing. On that Day, the crown of righteousness which is mentioned in 2 Timothy 4: 8 shall be awarded to each one who has been faithful. Are you looking toward that great day? Are living in light of it? Last week we looked at Hebrews Chapter 12, verses 1-3 and we saw that it is necessary to lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily besets us, if we are to run and win the prize. You cannot run to Christ's glory; you cannot win the prize, if you do not do this. In 2 Timothy 2, verse 5 it says, "And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules." Let me ask you this morning if you are competing according to the rules of the Word of God? Are you turning increasingly away from sinful things, and worldly things? If not; you are not running the race. You say to me, "But I do not think that I have the power to live the Christian life." And I would ask you, "But are you willing; do you want to run for the glory of God and for the glory of His dear Son who gave His life for you? Do you love Him and want to keep His commandments? If you say, "Yes", then remember this; Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, and you can, and you should pray for His power to be more clearly seen in your life.

Now we have been talking about running this race with endurance; that is, that we would be able to run and keep running all the way to the finish line which is the day of our death. I know that many people love to think about the Lord Jesus coming back again before they die; they are looking for the Rapture of the Church to deliver them from all of their troubles and afflictions and problems. But beloved, you do not know the day or the hour of Christ's literal physical return. Yes, you by faith are "looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ", because you are living your life in light of His return, even now; even today in the things that you are doing, even though He may not return today or for another thousand or more years. You rather, if you are wise, know that

you must live in light of what will in all likelihood be a much nearer meeting with Christ. You must run the race with endurance now; looking unto the Risen, Living Jesus now, by faith. The object of living the Christian life is to run until you see Christ face to face. What does that mean practically? It means that your spirit on the day that you die will behold the face of the Savior. You will indeed be wafted up by the angels to realms of endless day, to the throne of God in heaven, and there reside as a part of the cloud of witnesses who have faithfully gone before you if you have been faithful here and now. So our goal is not to be delivered and taken out in the Rapture; our goal is to be faithful to Christ in this generation, in this life that you and I are now living. You will not miss the Rapture, dear one. When you die; if you have believed in Christ, your spirit goes immediately to Him if you have believed in Him with saving faith. Your body awaits the resurrection of the dead, and the resurrection of the dead will take place on the Day when Christ returns. So no true Christian will miss out on that; not one Christian will be left behind. And when He returns, there will be no more Christians to add to His body, the Church. When Christ returns, literally and physically, it will be too late to run. But what is even more important to consider, is that when you grow old and die, it will be too late to run. It will be too late to do anything for Christ's glory in terms of winning the prize, the crown of righteousness. So you must learn to run now, or you may never run at all. Now, this morning we want to ask the question, "How can we endure to the end of our life in this race?" "How can we bring glory to our Savior? How can we be more righteous and holy? Our text here in verse 3 says that we should "consider Him". We should consider Jesus. Three things that we should consider: Consider 1st; that Jesus endured the cross so that you would gain the victory and have the grace to bear your own cross. Consider 2nd- that Jesus endured hostility so that you would not become weary or discouraged. And 3rdly, consider Jesus, as the Captain of your salvation, was made perfect through sufferings.

1st of all – Let us consider that Jesus endured the cross so that you would gain the victory and have grace to bear your own cross. (Verse 2)

In running our race we pick up our own cross and follow Jesus Christ. Ours is a strange sort of race; running with a cross. But we do it by looking at Jesus. "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." You should understand and consider this morning the fact that if you have faith in the Lord Jesus to the saving of your eternal soul, that Jesus is the author of it. He is not simply the founder of another religion. He did not simply do certain things and teach certain things and you are supposed to gather up His remains in terms of His history and His doctrine and run with that. That is not enough to run with, in order to glorify God. You need Jesus to personally be the author of the faith that you have in your heart, and you need to see Him in that way. He died for that. He died so as to "found" the faith in your heart, and perfect it in an on-going basis. Faith and love are in Christ Jesus. They are found by looking to Him. Turn with me in the book of Hebrews back to Chapter 10, verse 5 and you will

see how He merited the favor with God on our behalf, so that He could create faith in our hearts. "Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: 'Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.'" "In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure." "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come—in the volume of the book it is written of Me—to do Your will, O God.'" "Previously saying, 'Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them' (which are offered according to the law), then He said, 'Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.'" "He takes away the first that He may establish the second." "By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." "And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins." "But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool." "For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified." This is how Jesus founded your faith. Consider Him. If you are a believer in Him; He founded your faith by coming into this world, taking upon Himself human nature with a body to go with it; and He came to do God's will in every particular in accordance with all of His law; He came on your behalf. Since sacrifices and offerings according to the law, the shedding of the blood of a lamb or a ram in sacrifice, was not enough to save you from your sins and to purchase for you a new heart; the Lord Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice on the cross in your place. It was "one sacrifice for sins forever". And by that sacrifice, we who believe in Jesus, are "perfected forever". Those words do not mean that we are perfect now, but they mean that Jesus has done everything necessary at the cross to purchase the grace and merit the favor great enough to encompass the forgiveness of all of your sins, over the course of your whole lifetime; your past sins and your future sins, and all the grace that will be necessary for you to live the Christian life, run the race of faith and obedience, and after your physical death; all that will be necessary to open heaven's gates to allow you to come and be with Him forever. He purchased grace that was great enough at the cross to see to it that you would have a glorious resurrection on the Day that He returns with you and all His believing people, to this earth when He judges the world in righteousness. By this one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. Are you being sanctified? Are you being more and more changed into the likeness of Jesus Christ by His grace? You should know, that victory is yours through Jesus Christ your Lord.

It is not only a future victory that we are talking about here. It is a new and living way that is presently given to you the believer, to walk in righteousness, and to run the race by faith; looking to Him, with His Spirit working in your heart every day. Jesus is the author of a living faith which He Himself has placed in your breast in conjunction with the purpose of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit. Look at Hebrews 10: 19. "Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw

near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful." This new and living way is something that we enter upon, through Jesus' having endured the cross, having come through His sufferings to now run the race for the prize of righteousness being seen in our lives to His glory. He consecrated this way for us through the veil of His flesh being torn. The picture here is of the veil of the temple being torn from top to bottom when Jesus died; thereby allowing us to draw near to God through His sacrifice; to have the assurance of faith that all that He did was accepted by God, so that we could have our sins forgiven and our conscience cleansed, so that it would not accuse us any longer and be an evil conscience, not performing its job right. So let us draw near and consider our Lord Jesus in faith. Because He is the author of our faith, He is the perfecter of it as well.

"I heard an old, old story, how a Savior came from glory." "How he gave His life on Calvary to save a wretch like me." "I heard about His groaning, of His precious blood's atoning, then I repented of my sins and won the victory." "Oh, Victory in Jesus; my Savior forever." "He sought me, and bought me with His redeeming blood." "He loved me, ere I knew Him and all my love is due Him." "He plunged me to victory beneath His cleansing flood."

Jesus endured the cross so that you would gain the victory and that you would have the strength to pick up your own cross.

Now Secondly – We need to consider Jesus in this way; that He endured the hostility of men so that you would not become weary or discouraged.

(Verses 3 and 4)

"For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls." "You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin." Let us remember the object in view in running the race of being a Christian disciple. The object is to win the prize from the hand of your Savior and Lord; the crown of righteousness. In order to become more righteous in all of your behavior you have to basically do two things. First, by faith, you will go about to keep the commandments of God. Jesus says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." In 1 John 2: 4, John says, "He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in Him." The Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7, verse 19, "Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters." This keeping of God's commandments in order to glorify God, comes after we believe in Jesus Christ. In order to be a righteous person and to keep God's commandments in a way that pleases Him, you must first believe in Jesus Christ. You must submit to God's righteousness. Your own righteousness is very deficient in God's sight no matter how righteous that you may think that you are. When you believe in Jesus Christ, however, His perfect righteousness is then imputed to you. I am talking about the perfect righteousness that He worked out for you while he walked here upon the earth, before He went to the cross. Everything that He did and said was

perfect. His heart and His motives were perfect; His words and His actions were all perfect. He was perfect in His love to men and to God. He was perfect in His hatred and opposition to what was sinful, and in his enduring suffering from the people who sinned against Him. This righteousness, I'm saying, was charged to your legal account when you believed in Jesus. When you believed you were declared righteous by God, based upon Christ's righteousness. He was raised from the dead to prove to all men that God had accepted His righteousness. Jesus was delivered up for our transgressions and He was raised for our justification. So now, you the believer are seen by God as perfectly righteous. God sees you as clothed in Christ's righteousness. It is the garment that you run in. When you have received this righteousness, which comes to you apart from law; apart from anything that you can do for God to keep His commandments, or to merit favor with Him; then out of a thankful heart, you go about to do and keep His commandments. He tells us that we are to observe all that He has commanded us. This is our being made His disciples. It says this in Matthew 28, verse 20. And He also gives us this assurance along with it: "Lo, I am with you always," Jesus says, "even to the end of the age." You obey God's commandments out of the position of being justified by faith in Jesus. You run, fixing your eyes on Jesus' obedience and learning to obey more fully as time goes on. You know that "all of your righteousnesses are like filthy rags, but you keep running anyway, with your eyes fixed on Jesus. You keep obeying His commandments as He strengthens your faith. You keep confessing your sins and seeking to obey Him more, because He is perfecting your faith. In this way you pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (2 Timothy 2: 22)

The other thing that you must do if you would be righteous in all of your behavior is to resist evil. But in doing this, you must once again realize how important it is that you consider Jesus. If you do not consider Him, your fighting the many battles against evil may lead you to much weariness and discouragement in your soul, it says here in the text, because there is so much evil in the world in every generation. "The whole world lies under the sway of the evil one." (1 John 5: 19) And you must also remember that there is not only evil in the hearts and lives of sinful people around you, but there is also much remaining corruption in your own heart. It is enough to discourage anyone who is serious about being godly. How are you to run the race so that you might win the prize and not become discouraged and quit living for Christ; when you see just how much evil there really is; how many people are so confused even about the gospel itself? Remember the words of our text. It says here that we are to "consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself." In the King James Version it says, "who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself. It is a contradiction of everything that Jesus was and did, that any person in His day should have been hostile to Him. It is the same now, in our day. Jesus was perfect in love and grace and truth. He was full of mercy; He was kind and compassionate. He taught people the truth and showed them the way to have eternal life. And yet many men around him; many religious men who should have known

better, were hostile and hateful toward Him. There was no reason for this; no logic in it; except for the logic of sin. Jesus would save me, but I don't want to be saved. Jesus would die for me, but I think that I am good enough as I am. Jesus would be my King and save me from all my enemies, but I do not want Him to rule over me. Consider that this, dear saint is the way that unbelieving people think apart from God's grace. But yet our Lord Jesus persevered. He asks you to persevere too. Do not let the hostility of people around you, to your pursuing righteousness, make you grow weary and discouraged in your mind, when they treat you badly, but consider Jesus, and pray to Jesus, so that you will not grow weary and faint in the day of adversity.

If you turn over to John 15, verse 18, you will see that Jesus Himself knew that there would be a temptation among His own Apostles to become weary and faint in their souls and minds when they found out the magnitude of the opposition and hostility which would come to them when they were simply trying to preach the good news of the gospel. Jesus says, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you." "If you were of the world, the world would love its own." "Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." "Remember the word that I said to you, "A servant is not greater than his master." "If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." "If they kept My word, they will keep your also." "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me." "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin." "He who hates Me hates My Father also." "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father." "But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, "They hated Me without a cause." There is no cause to hate Jesus, and yet people hated Him. Consider it with me. The reason that they hated Him was that He told them the truth about themselves and their sin. He spoke to them about it. He spoke to them in such a way that they would not be able to find any excuse for their holding it to themselves. You and I should realize that this will happen to us as well. If we are trying to be faithful to our Lord; trying to explain to our loved ones and our friends and others what the gospel is; we will try to show them that they are sinners in the more sincere; the most loving way that we can. We want to win them to our Savior. But let us understand that whenever we put our finger on any particular sin of theirs, they will react like a patient whose doctor is probing a wound in them. They will feel it, and unless the grace of God is being poured out in their heart, they will not want us to tell them again. It is only when the balm of Gilead, the grace of Christ is poured out in the heart and soul of a person knows the reality of that grace, that they can find relief from the wounds of sin, and the conviction of sin which they will have if we speak to them of their need of Christ. If they have grace, they will not resist the great Physician of souls, our Lord Jesus Christ. Then they will want Him to come to them and show them where the problem of sin lies. When the Lord Jesus comes with saving, healing power to the soul of any

person, He is irresistible in His grace. He will overcome every obstacle to that person's believing in Him. He will show them how much He has suffered for them, and how by faith, that they can be forgiven, cleansed, and given a new heart and life.

But what about those friends and relatives that do not respond in this good way? What about those people who will speak against us, and persecute us for telling them the truth. Will you and I be weary and discouraged and go mourning all the day long? This is what had happened with some of the people who the writer to Hebrews was writing to. They had indeed suffered for righteousness sake. But they were tempted to give up, to give over, and to go back to the Judaism that they had been raised in. In Hebrews Chapter 10, verse 32 it says, "But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven." "Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward." "For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: (the reward and the promise that he is talking about is the prize of the crown of righteousness; because of what follows) Verse 37 – "For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry." "Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him." "But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul." You see, these dear people had had their goods confiscated, they had been reproached, and they had experienced real tribulation in being persecuted for taking their stand for Christ, for the gospel, and for the Apostle Paul. The unbelieving Jews of that day were against all of these. These people were running the race, but there was this temptation to cave in, and not continue to hold to Christ and to follow where faith in Him would lead. It would lead to sufferings at some point. In our text it says that they had not yet resisted evil to the point of shedding blood; but they knew that it was possible that would come.

Paul says to them, "You have need of endurance, so that you may receive the promise." The promise is the prize of the crown of righteousness, but where is the strength to endure? Where does that come from? Well turn with me to Isaiah Chapter 40, and verse 27. "Why do say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel: My way is hidden from the Lord, and my just claim is passed over by my God?" "Have you not known?" "Have you not heard?" "The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary." "His understanding is unsearchable." "He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength." "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Now I want to close this sermon by giving you my third and final point in relation to these verses that I have just read to you.

3rdly - Consider Jesus, as the Captain of your salvation, was made perfect through sufferings. (Verses 4-6)

"You have not resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin." "And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: 'My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.'" "If you endure chastening, God deals with you as sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?" Now you may find these words hard to understand. Perhaps you are thinking to yourself; I thought that my Lord Jesus was the One who was scourged in my place. It is "by His stripes that we are healed". If Jesus suffered and I am not punished for my sins, then why would God need to scourge me? It is because you, like the Lord Jesus need to be perfected through sufferings. "If you suffer with Him (if you endure various sufferings for His name's sake and for the sake of righteousness), you shall also reign with Him," it says in 2 Timothy 2: 12. In other words, you shall win the prize; you shall obtain the crown. Now, I hope you realize that the Lord Jesus was always sinless throughout His whole life. And yet to fulfill His mission to save you and to become the author of your faith, He submitted to His Father's chastening, which was to allow Him to suffer at the hands of sinners for a time and then to die at their hands, also bearing our sins in His body on the tree. He did so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. His own chastening was not for sin, but to perfect His righteousness. I hope that you noticed the connection between chastening and resisting sin. "It is for discipline (or chastening) that you endure". God deals with you as with sons. He doesn't chasten (He doesn't spank and child-train) the wicked. He lets them have their way in this life. He lets them have their pleasures and their riches and their own thoughts and ways of living their life out, and then at the end of it He judges them according to their own thoughts and words and deeds. He judges them because they do not love Him while they lived. They loved their own sinful thoughts and selfish ways. They did not want to lose their life so that they might find it in Christ, so He punishes them forever in hell. Not so, with the righteous. With them, He loves them so very much, and this is the reason that He chastens them. He won't let them go on in their sins. He, out of His great love for them in Christ, brings them to the place where they desire to resist sin, even to the point of bloodshed if need be. Let me show you a couple verses as we close that will let us consider ourselves in relation to the Lord Jesus once again. Hebrews Chapter 2, and verse 10. "For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bring many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." The word for Captain here is archegos, the same Greek word which we found translated "Author" in Hebrews 12: 2. Jesus became the Author of your faith through sufferings, and He became the Captain of your faith in taking the lead in the battle, showing you the example, of how you could resist and strive against sin, and learn to endure in the process, the chastening of the Lord. He is bringing many sons to glory. You are one of them if you are trusting in Him. See to it that you do not have this thought in your heart, that all the chastening

which the Lord gives you, is chastening for your sins. Chastening will help to take us off from whatever sins are in our life. But you are to see all the hostility of sinful men, all the trials, and persecutions that you go through for Christ's sake in this holy way as well. You are God's sons and daughters through faith in Jesus Christ. If He, being perfect suffered in this way, you who are becoming like Him will also have to learn to run in this way. "Though He was a Son," it says in Hebrews 5: 8, "yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered, and having been perfected, He became the author(aitios in the Greek; the first cause) of eternal salvation to all who obey Him."